

DRAFT

Patient Participation Groups

Tool Kit

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Introduction

This guide is to help members of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) at GP surgeries to understand more about their role and to work together more effectively. For those interested in the wider context, it also gives some information about various organisations and their roles in the new health and social care landscape, with a focus on understanding how knowing about this can help PPG members to make a difference locally.

Each section of the guide can be copied (or printed from the electronic version available online) as required for PPG use.

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

What is a PPG?

GP practices have Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) as a way for patients and carers:

* to work with GPs and practice staff to improve local services and the quality of care
* improve communication with patients
* promote health and wellbeing
* ensure practices remain accountable and responsive to patient needs.

PPGs generally have their own terms of reference, agreed between the GP practice and the founder members, and should act as representatives of their patient population.

**Why are PPG members valuable?**

As a PPG member, you can suggest ideas for improvements and voice any concerns about how services are organised or managed. PPGs have an important role to play in enabling patients to have a say in the way services are delivered to best meet their needs and the needs of the local community. PPGs look at services within the surgery and also discuss with the local GP Federation and Primary Care Networks (PCNs) the local services that they plan and commission (buy).

You may find it interesting to read the NHS North East London Working with People and Communities Strategy, which talks about why involving patients is important.

**How does a PPG work**?

PPGs can work in a number of different ways. They usually include volunteer patients, the GP practice manager, and maybe one or two GPs. The GP practice may provide some administrative support.

Most groups have regular meetings at the surgery. Some also involve a wider group of patients who do not usually attend meetings, using e-mail to communicate news and seek patient views. Some GP practices only run a ‘virtual group’ of this kind, having found that this is the most effective way to engage with local patients and carers.

An effective PPG is patient-led and self- organising. Practice staff should not lead the PPG: their role is to help and support the PPG, and to work in partnership with the group.

What does a PPG do?

PPGs can work with practices in a number of ways. They might, for example:

* provide feedback to the practice about the patient experience
* help to design and carry out patient surveys, asking for local views about services
* help with communication between the practice and the local population - members who are active in their local communities and involved in neighborhood groups often make a very important contribution to this
* offer practical support to the surgery with organising health promotion days or supporting annual flu jab clinics
* review the practice website from time to time to ensure that it provides information that patients require and can understand
* review anonymised complaints information from the practice (numbers of complaints, and sufficient detail to identify any themes but PPGs do not raise or consider individual patient complaints, which should always be referred into the GP practice’s complaints process)
* contribute if the practice is inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC – a national inspection agency) – usually the CQC will want to talk to the PPG chair, and possibly some other members too, to seek their views



**Meetings and activities**

Working together effectively as a PPG involves the patient members taking responsibility for organising and running meetings well – supporting the PPG chair, and working to agreed ‘ground rules’ in meetings and when talking to other patients at the surgery or in the community. Suggestions for working together effectively are given in the Top Tips information sheets.

The group should also work together to agree what activities they will undertake e.g. gathering views and opinions by arranging to talk to patients in the surgery waiting room. Whatever methods the group chooses for promoting the PPG and seeking views from patients, including the views of all patients and carers should be part of the group’s vision.

**How can a PPG include the views of all patients and carers?**

It is important for the GP practice and the PPG to reach more people than are able to attend formal PPG meetings, to obtain their views. The patient and carer population are diverse e.g. people who are housebound, people who do not speak English as their first language, children and young people, people with disabilities and people who cannot come to meetings because they are out at work when meetings are held. Some people may not wish to come to meetings or be interviewed if this would involve the possibility of revealing private details of their health and/or social care needs.



Empowering people to share their views, anonymously, is always possible with some creative thinking e.g. visiting a secondary school to give a short talk and asking the school to put a link to a ‘healthcare experiences’ survey on its website; or planning and publicising a ‘listening’ afternoon/evening annually when an interpreter can be booked for a ‘tea and chat’ listening event in a local community centre, to reach a local non-English speaking community.

How to run PPGs

How to run PPGs

All members that attend meetings have a part to play. You will need to be prepared and be able to take part in the discussions and work as part of the group according to the agreed aims.

When and where

Getting the right day or time to suit everybody is always a challenge when organising meetings. There is no right or wrong time; it is often a process of trial and error to find a date and time that suits most of the PPG members, most of the time, and which can be accommodated within the working schedule of the GP practice.

Some groups find it is best to stick to a regular day and time in the month. Others find that it works well to vary the time or day of meeting. Whichever approach your PPG takes, ensure that dates and times of meetings are circulated and advertised well in advance to ensure people can arrange to be available and have an opportunity to prepare for the meeting.

Most PPGs will meet at their surgery, in a space that can accommodate the group. This choice of venue usually means it is conveniently located for people to get to and easily accessible for people with disabilities.

Ground rules

It may be helpful to have some agreed ground rules for PPG meetings which could include the following:

* We recognise that this meeting is not a forum for individual complaints and single issues.
* We aim to start and finish on time and stick to the agenda.
* We aim to avoid disruptions to the meeting including the use of mobile phones.
* We respect all members of the group - all views are valid and will be listened to; one person speaks at a time; questions and contributions are usually directed through the chair of the meeting.
* Silence tends to indicate agreement.
* We recognise that constructive, honest debate is useful.

## Confidentiality

*When you join the PPG, the practice representative may ask you to sign a confidentiality agreement: from time to time confidential information may be discussed at the PPG (not relating to confidential patient information, but confidential to the business of the GP practice) and you will be asked to treat the information accordingly. If you are asked to sign any such agreement, the staff member will fully explain the details and purpose before you agree to sign*

How to run PPGs

# Top Tips for drafting Terms of Reference

Each PPG should draft and agree a simple constitution or ‘Terms of Reference’. This document should be reviewed regularly and made available to new members of the group. The Terms of Reference should include an outline of the vision, objectives, work of the group (what it will do), outline roles and responsibilities within the group (who can take part) and outline how the group will carry out its functions.

**Aims/Purpose**

**Membership**

**Structure**

**Reporting**

**Meetings**

 Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) in North East London

How to run PPGs

Sample Surgery Patient Participation Group Terms of Reference

## Aims / Purpose

* + To promote good relations between the practice and patients by communicating patients’ experiences, interests and concerns and by providing feedback to the practice on current procedures and proposed new developments
	+ To help maintain good relations and communications between the practice, the local community and other relevant bodies.
	+ To explore ideas and areas for improvement or change identified from patient surveys.
	+ To be a forum for ideas on health promotion and self-care.
	+ Be consulted on service development within the surgery, or wider secondary healthcare services commissioned by the ICSs.
	+ To carry out an annual patient satisfaction survey in partnership with the practice and to assist the practice to implement the resulting action plan.
	+ To evaluate and review the effectiveness of the PPG not less than once a year.
	+ These Terms of Reference may be reviewed according to emerging needs.

## Membership

* + Membership is open to all registered patients aged 16 or over and their carers (who may be registered elsewhere).
	+ Members should be there to support the group, the practice and the local population, rather than to pursue their own personal agenda.
	+ Membership should aim to be representative of the practice population.
	+ Support will be provided by the practice manager and designated staff from the practice as deemed appropriate.
	+ A core group of membership will not exceed 15 members, which will meet quarterly. A virtual patient group will exist to access greater patient views/opinions.

How to run PPGs

## Structure

* + - Chair of core group will be nominated and elected by core group members in March of each year. Term of office will be one year.
		- Secretary of core group will be nominated and elected by core group members in March of each year. Term of office will be one year.

## Reporting

* + - The group’s meetings will be minuted with highlighted action points.
		- The practice manager or nominated practice representative will act as the point of liaison within the practice.
		- The group can expect direction, feedback and suggestions from the practice when required.
		- Minutes will be made available to the wider practice population via information in the waiting rooms/notice boards or via the practice website.

## Meetings

* + - Meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month in March, June, September and December each year.
		- The quorum (minimum number of people required to be present for decisions) for meetings is 6 PPG members plus 1 practice representative
		- An agenda and any meeting papers will be sent to all members in a suitable format for them at least five working days before each meeting date.
		- All members can contribute agenda items. Agenda planning before the meeting will be managed and finalised by the chair, supported by the secretary.

*Agreed and adopted on [date] Review date [date]*

Other example Terms of Reference and support and information for PPGs are available from the National Association for Patient Participation: <http://www.napp.org.uk/constitutions.html>

The role of the chair vs the role of individual members

The role of the chair vs

the role of individual members

**Being a PPG member**

The PPG chair and the person at your GP practice who supports the PPG can help members contribute, starting by finding out what your information needs are and how you like to receive information.

You may know that you have ideas and views to contribute, but be wondering how PPG members are expected to work. Here are some suggestions for being an effective PPG member, who represents the views of local patients and carers:

* + **Be well-prepared** – begin by finding out what you need to know to think about how you can contribute – you may prefer to read about the PPG, or perhaps to ask someone to talk to you about it.
	+ **Work with others** – you may find others who share your views on the PPG, and some people who have different views and priorities to you – think about how all views can be heard and respected, and taken into account so far as is possible -the PPG chair can help.
	+ **Understand what a PPG’s role is, and role of PPG** **members** - read the terms of reference, or ask to have them explained to you - ask the chair for any help that you need.
	+ **It is fine to be a topic ‘champion’** (e.g. diabetes issues, or elderly care) – topic experts make a very valuable contribution, **and it is also important to be able to contribute across a range of issues**; your PPG chair may ask you for help with gathering views more widely as part of your role, and many PPG members say that this is rewarding work to do – through the PPG it should be possible to have opportunities to speak to other patients and carers at the surgery, or to listen to their views (e.g. by looking at survey results), giving you information that you can then bring into PPG discussions.
		- **Help the PPG to work well** – suggest what would make it easier for you or others to be involved in meetings and the group’s work – for example, having a chance to suggest ‘agenda’ items; having a copy of the agenda a week ahead of any meeting, in a format suitable for you and others.
		- **Keep up to date with local health issues, if you can**.
		- **Don’t refer only to personal experience** - and only refer to it when it helps to illustrate a point. Ensuring this will maintain your credibility and focus. Although your own experience is important your role is to represent all patients and carers.
		- **Ideally, develop an understanding of the structure of the NHS and the place of PPGs place within it** - see later in this guide for resources to help increase your knowledge.
		- **Be or become confident that you have a contribution to make** - your views are valuable, so express them clearly and without apology, while respecting all views.

(These tips are adapted from ‘Being an effective user representative’, written originally by the National Childbirth Trust, <https://bit.ly/2DzGrsf>



The role of the chair vs the role of individual members

**Being a Chair**

Being chair makes a valuable contribution to the group – a person who is new to this type of role might ask the chair of another PPG to mentor them informally – or find similar support from someone who has a similar role in another community group.

## An effective chair

* Provides leadership to the group, to help the group work well, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and that the group’s work is guided by its Terms of Reference
* Has the confidence to question information, evidence and explanations supplied by others, in a pleasant way, facilitating a consensus-style of decision-taking when decisions are needed
* Has the ability to see issues from all sides
* Has the ability to communicate effectively, listening to others and actively sharing information both within the group and with other relevant people e.g. the practice and the ICS
* Prepares, or helps prepare the agenda
* Plans the meeting in advance (e.g. thinking about how much time to spend on each item)
* Manages and shapes the discussion on the day, ensuring that all points of view are heard, decisions are made (if possible), and that all of the agenda items are covered during the meeting
* Makes sure that decisions which must be made are made e.g. by stating options clearly, and asking everyone to vote on these, if necessary – although it is usually best to reach decisions by agreement, after a thorough discussion
* Helps the minute taker record the main points of the meeting by summarising key points verbally during the discussions

Running Meetings

Running Meetings

**Top Tips for preparing agendas**

The agenda is an important part of the PPG meeting. It sets out what the group needs to discuss and what actions need to be taken or agreed. The agenda sets out a plan for the meeting, so making sure the agenda is focused will support the aims of the meetings and help to keep members interested.

All members of the group should be able to put forward items for the agenda, which is usually coordinated by the group secretary and agreed by the chair and/or practice representative. Items may be allocated to different members who will lead on that topic. It may also be helpful to allocate timings to each agenda item to help ensure the meeting runs to time and sufficient time is given to allow discussions where necessary.

The text of the agenda and any supporting information or papers should be settled and agreed before the meeting. These ‘papers’ should be circulated to the group in plenty of time ahead of the meeting, to allow members an opportunity to read them and prepare for the meeting. It may be helpful to send out the papers one week, or even two weeks, in advance. It should be agreed with each member in what format they require the agenda and any supporting papers, either via e-mail or hard copy.

Red Apple Surgery PPG Meeting Agenda (sample)

Date: Wednesday 25th April 2012

Time: 7.00pm -8.30pm

Location: Red Apple Surgery, 226 Tree Road

**Agenda Items**

1. Introductions and welcome any new members
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of last meeting
4. Actions/Matters Arising
5. Group Business – include items for discussion, agreement and/or action. (For example, 2012 Patient Survey – Review key findings; Agree items to be addressed; Agree outline action plan).
6. News from the Practice
7. News from the Clinical Commissioning Group/Patient Voice Meeting
8. Any other business

Date/Time/Location of Next Meeting: To be agreed

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Running Meetings

**Top Tips for keeping minutes of PPG meetings**

Minutes form an important part of any regular meetings. They are the written record of the key points of each meeting, the discussions and importantly any agreed decisions or actions. Minutes will also provide your group with a historical record of activity. They can be useful information for new members to refer to and a record of what your group has achieved.

The taking of minutes at the meeting is the main function of the secretary of the group, if your group does not have an elected secretary, at each meeting an individual should be identified to record the minutes. This is not necessarily a role for the practice staff involved in the meetings; however, support may be offered to the elected secretary by the practice.

Each group will probably develop its own format and style of minutes. However, it is important to try to keep to a consistent style that works well for the group. Aim to strike the balance between detail and summarising: keep the minutes brief but informative by capturing key points, agreed actions and all decisions. It usually isn’t necessary to record every single point, or even a summary of what each person has said. You may decide to ask the practice manager, or contacts in your local community who run or attend other formal meetings, to advise you about minute-taking style. Keeping formal records isn’t something that everyone needs to do in their everyday lives: ask for any advice that you need.

## **Typical minutes will include**:

* + When and where the meeting took place.
	+ A list of names of those present.
	+ A list of names of those who were unable to attend the meeting and sent formal apologies in advance, whether by telephone or email or a verbal message given by another member.

Running Meetings

A list of agenda items to include:

* A summary of any discussions
* Any proposals or suggestions
* All official decisions made
* Any actions agreed (and who has been identified to take the action forward)
* A record of any other business or items raised
* Date and details of next meeting
* Time of close of meeting

It is a good idea for the minutes to be drafted as soon as possible after the meeting to ensure that the minute- taker can remember the meeting while

referring to his or her notes, and so make an accurate typed record of all relevant details. Normally the draft minutes would be sent to the chair and/practice manager for checking any amendments, before circulation to the PPG group. The draft minutes are then formally approved at the next meeting – members can keep a note of anything that needs to be changed then, when they receive the draft to check. Sometimes minutes are not circulated until the next agenda is sent out – so members may wish to keep their own brief notes to remind themselves about the meeting. Not everyone has to do this - as long as a few people in the group do, it will help all to contribute to this record keeping of activity. They can be useful information for new members to refer to and a record of what your group has achieved.

The minutes can be one way of sharing information with other patients within the practice about what the group is doing, and with other practices and groups your PPG may be associated with.

Your PPG may want to consider whether to make its minutes available:

* On the PPG notice board within the surgery waiting area
* In a PPG information folder available in the surgery waiting area
* On the PPG page of the practice website
* If you have a virtual group, don’t forget to share information with them regularly too
* With practice staff.

In addition, your PPG may want to consider a regular update to be included in the surgery newsletter. This could be presented as “What has your PPG done for you?” with a supporting list of activities and achievements, followed by “What can you do for your PPG?” with a supporting list e.g. complete a survey, join the group. Alternatively, the practice and the PPG could present changes as “You Said”,

“We did” format, which can be clear and effective.

Running Meetings

Sample minutes of PPG meeting

**Sample Minutes**

**Red Apple Surgery Patients Participation Group (PPG)**

Minutes of the meeting on 25th April 2021

Held at Red Apple Surgery, 7pm

**Present**: List names

**Agenda Items**

1. **Apologies** – list names
2. **Introductions & welcome any new members** – Note any new members
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** on 7th March 2021 – Record if accepted or note any amendments required
4. **Actions/matters arising** – Record updates and outcomes from actions and record any further actions required and completion dates
5. **Red Apple PPG – Development**-Record key points from discussion, decisions made and agreed actions
6. **2021 Patient Survey**-Record key points from discussions, decisions made and agreed actions.
7. **Report back from Primary Care Network** or GP Federation, NHS North East London – Record key points and any agreed actions.
8. **Practice Website** – Record key points from discussions, decisions made and agreed actions.
9. **AOB**- Record any items raised as ‘Any Other Business’ – often mentioned to the chair of the groups in advance, or may be an open forum for raising items that have not been raised in advance.
10. **Next Meeting** 28th June 2021 7:30pm at Red Apple Surgery

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Promoting your PPG

Promoting your PPG

Every PPG is different, but many face similar challenges when considering how to promote the existence of the PPG to the wider practice population and how to recruit new members to the group.

Plan your PPG promotion – Make this an agenda item

Effective communication is key and this will require some thought and planning. The PPG should take some time to consider:

* What do we want to achieve from this promotion activity?
* Do we want to recruit more members to the PPG group?
* Is our main aim to increase the size of the group or its or diversity, or both?
* Is it that we have enough PPG members, but we want to recruit more patients to respond periodically to surveys carried out by the practice/ PPG?

The group should agree and be clear on the aims at the outset.

The group could then consider:

* What PPG communication / promotion has been carried out in the past?
* What communication/promotion is currently in place and how is working?
* What information is in place in the surgery, on the website?
* Are the messages clear and consistent to meet the agreed aims - for example, recruiting more patients to the survey group.
* “Branding” of your PPG – be consistent in what your posters, flyers, newsletters look like.
* What can we do differently to get our promotion messages to the wider practice population?

Different approaches work for different GP practices. It is also worth thinking about how to communicate PPG messages efficiently and effectively by using some mechanisms that may already be in place within the GP practice. Depending on the type of PPG promotion it may worth considering how to get the message into the wider community.

Suggested mechanisms to promote your PPG or PPG Message:

Within the GP practice:

* Creating clear posters and leaflets to have on display/available within the surgery.
* Ensure the practice website is carrying the same clear/consistent messages.
* Use LED digital display board to post a PPG message

Promoting your PPG

* + Use the patient information TV screen to post a PPG message.
	+ Place a “PPG advert” in the practice newsletter (and include a regular PPG item/feature).
	+ Does your PPG have dedicated space on notice boards for information within the GP practice waiting room? Discuss with practice manager how this might be possible within your practice.
	+ Let the reception staff know about the PPG promotion and how they could help by mentioning it to patients as appropriate.
	+ Repeat prescription slips – Can a PPG promotion message be added as a standard item for a period of time?
	+ Existing PPG members may be willing to volunteer to be available in the waiting room area to provide information about the PPG, its activities and its current aims.
	+ Consider including a question in a patient survey – Did you know that the practice has a Patient Participation Group? Would you be interested in finding out more or becoming involved?
	+ Host an open event within the GP practice to promote the PPG; this could be combined with other health promotion activities the practice may be supporting.

Into the wider community:

* + Find out if members of the existing PPG group belong to other groups where the PPG message could be shared.
	+ Think about local community publications such as church or school newsletters, free publications for families and young people.
	+ Other local community groups/orgainisations i.e. Healthwatch, disease specific charities and user groups.
	+ Local media.

Promoting your PPG

Preparing promotional materials

Note that each section below relating to promotional materials can be printed for a PPG meeting and so some elements are repeated – common themes include establishing a clear ‘brand’ and making

the promotional material widely accessible and clear.

Top Tips for Promoting the PPG on the GP practice website

Each practice website is different, and PPGs will need to work with the practice manager to understand the scope of PPG information that could be included on the website. A good starting point is to view the practice website and what information it contains, and then look at the PPG section. It may be helpful to consider the following points:

* + - Is the PPG information available via a link on the home page of the website (or is it hidden on other pages?). Ideally PPG information should be accessible from the homepage.
		- Is the information clear for anyone who has not heard about the practice PPG and its purpose before?
		- Does the website provide clear information on the type of PPG group - for example, when it usually meets, the type of activity or focus of the group?
* If the practice has a virtual group, does the website describe what this means and how can people get involved?
* If new people want to join the group, is it easy for them to do so either online or by contacting someone at the surgery? Make it clear and simple and provide an e-mail address or telephone number.
* Consider what happens next when people register their interest in joining your PPG i.e. does the practice manager telephone them, are they sent any information? Does the website describe what people might expect? Avoid situations where people might say, “Well, I gave them my details, but never heard anything back.”
* Is the information on the website up to date and relevant? Old or out of date information will give the impression that the group is not active.
* Are the PPG messages or promotions consistent with the PPG messages within the surgery? Check this as part of your PPG promotion activity.

Useful resource for free photos [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) [Main\_Page](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

Promoting your PPG

PPG leaflet – Do you need one?

As part of the promoting the PPG you may think about producing a PPG leaflet and/or postcard. Sometimes small ‘business card’– style card can be useful too. This could be available at the surgery and perhaps at other local venues e.g. pharmacies, the local library, and in local primary schools, which often have a ‘useful information’ stand of leaflets for parents.

The PPG should consider:

* + When and where would the leaflet be available to patients of the practice?
	+ Does the practice have suitable space for leaflets within the waiting room? If not, its use will be limited.
	+ Does the practice have a patient booklet – are details included in the booklet about the PPG? If not, consider including a PPG section, to avoid the need for a separate leaflet.
	+ Does the practice prefer to keep all its patient messages in the waiting room on the patient information TV screen? Is the PPG included?
	+ If the group decides a leaflet would be helpful to promote the PPG, what should be included?

The PPG should consider:

* The ‘branding’ of the leaflet, so that it is consistent with other PPG or practice literature (e.g. have you chosen a standard ‘font’ to use for text; a colour scheme; an attractive and appropriate image or photograph that is available on a ‘free to use’ basis without breaching copyright?)
* What to include – details of the PPG, why people should join, how people can join and the benefits to both patients and the practice, it may be helpful to:
* say that the PPG is not about individual interests or individual patient complaints, and
* include a joining slip/section for completion and return to practice.
* The practice manager will provide guidance on the collection and storage of contact information and personal details that people are asked to provide when registering their interest to join the PPG
* The cost to produce and print the leaflet - who will meet the cost and is it good value for money?
* How quickly is the information likely to go out of date or need revision? This may well affect decisions about how and when the leaflet is produced and printed.

Promoting your PPG

Top Tips for your notice board poster

When creating PPG posters for the practice or PPG flyers, groups should consider:

* The ‘branding’ of the materials, so that they are consistent with other PPG or practice literature (e.g. have you chosen a standard ‘font’ to use for text; a colour scheme; an attractive and appropriate image or photograph that is available on a ‘free to use’ basis without breaching copyright?)
* Check your message is clear.
* Check you have included the key points that people will need to know e.g. date, time and location of any meetings.
* Always include clear contact details.
* Where posters will be placed within the surgery – will people see them easily?
* Ensure any posters/PPG notices displayed are kept up to date – old and out of date notices may give the impression the group is not very active.
* Some practices have created dedicated notice boards for different themed information, one of which could be dedicated to the PPG. This might include current news items, or agenda items or action plans that the group are working on – this will provide interest and may encourage other patients to find out more and get involved.

Red Apple Surgery Patients’ Participation Group (Sample template)

Are you interested in finding out more about Red Apple Surgery?

Would you like to share your views and help to influence the development of local health services?

The Red Apple Surgery has recently set up a Patient Participation Group. Would you like to get involved?

All patients and carers of patients registered with the surgery are welcome to join us.

If you are interested or want to find out more, why not come along to our next meeting? The meeting will take place at Red Apple Surgery, on Wednesday 10th April 2020 at 6pm.

If you would like to come along to the meeting or are interested in the Patient Participation Group then please contact Joe Smith (Practice Manager) on 01234 123412 or via e-mail at joesmith@redapple

tient Participation Groups (PPGs

Patient surveys

**Patient surveys**

One of the main activities most PPGs will already have been involved in is the regular patient survey carried out by the practice and PPG. From 2015 practices were required to participate in the national patient survey known as the Friends and Family Test - NHS England collect and publish monthly data from GP practices.

More information can be found on the NHS Choices website [**http://www.nhs.uk/**](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Pages/nhs-friends-and-family-test.aspx)[**using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/friends- and-family-test-fft/**](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Pages/nhs-friends-and-family-test.aspx)

However, practices may decide that it is still valuable to ask a sample set of patients each year, or at set intervals, about their experiences or views about the services provided by the GP practice. Here are few hints and tips for your PPG to consider when designing your practice survey:

* Ensure your questions are clear and, in a language, that your participants will understand
* Keep the questions short and direct
* Ensure you only ask one question at a time
* Avoid using abbreviations or jargon
* Avoid leading or loaded questions
* Think about the length of the survey and the number of questions (try to avoid making it too long as people may be less likely to complete a long survey).

Think about the type of question that will best collect the information you want. For example, closed questions enable respondents to provide simple yes/no answers, or select a response from a list **“How do you usually book your appointment? -in person; by telephone; on-line.”**

Open questions enable respondents to provide a full response in their own words. This type of question can put some people off giving their full views, and so they don’t complete these questions. Others may take an open question as an opportunity to give full and detailed feedback - this type of feedback can take longer to analyse, which is a consideration for the group when designing the survey. Bear in mind that direct quotations from members of the public – giving a ‘snapshot’ of feelings in a sample of respondents – can provide powerful support for a particular suggestion or argument. Do use this approach carefully, though – obtaining representative feedback usually involves listening to community views over some months, or perhaps even years, and making sure that a diverse range of people, and a significant number, are listened to and their views collated

.

Patient surveys

Ranked/rated/scaled questions enable respondents to indicate easily what is important to them, when rating a service or indicating their experiences of services. For example, these questions could provide a ranking of 1-5 (usually this system has two negative responses, two positive and the fifth as a neutral response option in the middle - taking out the neutral option would ensure respondents give either a negative or a positive response). This approach makes it possible to process subjective comments a little more easily, although it may leave respondents feeling that they have not been allowed to ‘tell their story’ – but if the PPG does not have capacity or support to review and report on detailed stories, this may be the best approach.

Surveys – Sample size

It will rarely be possible to obtain views from every single patient and carer registered with a GP practice. PPGs need to ensure that the sample responding to a survey, which will probably be only a very small proportion of the practice ‘population’ is a representative sample.

Survey results are often used as the “evidence” to make the case for or against a change. The change may involve many people and the reallocation of resources often money.

The group leading the survey needs to ensure that the evidence is of a high quality. This means that even though the sample may well be far smaller than 10% of the relevant population there is a high probability that the results are representative.

In the context of a PPG surgery survey, this could mean managing the survey so that there is a suitable proportion from each of the relevant subgroups. Typically, these include age groups, genders and frequent/ less frequent users of the surgery services. It is up to the survey manger to set up the survey so that each of the suitable subgroups are included. If a subgroup is inadequately represented the survey will be of limited or little use as “evidence”.

As a guide, we suggest aim to survey 300 patients from a practice of 8000 patients and 400 from a practice of 16000 patients. Although the number of patients has doubled, the sample size does not have to go up in proportion.

If you are collecting data per doctor or nurse, aim for at least 50 results and check that different groups in the practice population (e.g. children, teenagers, men, women, older people, people of different backgrounds) are all present in the sample, matching what is known about the whole practice population if possible (this may require some creative approaches e.g. publicizing the survey on Twitter locally.)

Patient surveys

For the finishing touches to your survey, consider the following:

* + - Include a short introduction with your survey that states what the survey is about, who is conducting the survey, confidentiality, how the data will be used and published and why it is important for patients to give their views.
		- At the end of the survey always thank your respondents for taking part.
		- Encouraging people to complete the survey and answer all the questions even if stating N/A (not applicable)
		- In the past the practices will have used various methods to encourage patients to complete surveys, so a good starting point would be to consider and review how these methods have worked in gaining responses perhaps verses staff or costs associated with postage. A guidance cost for mailing a patient excluding a pre-paid envelope is £1 per patient, so this might be an expensive option.
		- Paper surveys – within practice – reception staff briefed and able to encourage patients to complete and return into a secure box. Aiming for a 90% return rate.
		- PPG members within practice – supporting reception staff during busy times to give out surveys in the waiting rooms and take the opportunity to talk to patient about the PPG and its activities – this approach needs to be planned and agreed with the practice staff and the need for PPG volunteers to be sensitive and aware to respect people’s confidentiality.
		- Does the practice have a website – can the survey be included as an on-line survey?

Useful resources for surveys**:** [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com/)

[www.surveymoz.com](http://www.surveymoz.com)

[www.napp.org.uk](http://www.napp.org.uk/) – a sample questionnaire can be found on this page: <http://www.napp.org.uk/ess.html>

**A guide for GP Practices**

**Patient Participation**

Since April 2015, all GP Practice NHS core contracts require GPs to have a Practice Participation Group **(PPG)** The Practice must engage with the PPG throughout each year, at a frequency and in a manner as agreed with its PPG, including to review patient feedback (whether from the PPG or other sources) and feedback from carers of registered patients, who themselves are not registered patients.

The purpose of this engagement is to identify improvements that may be made in the delivery of services by the Practice. Where the Practice and PPG agree, the Practice must act on suggestions for improvement using reasonable endeavours to implement these.

The Annexes to this document provide helpful information for Practices on how to develop a PPG and how to ensure it is representative of the Practice population, as well as links to external guidance for patient participation, patient FAQs, sample contact forms, leaflets and posters.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Patient Participation Group (PPG) is to ensure that patients and carers are involved in decisions about the range, shape and quality of services provided by their Practice. The requirement aims to promote the proactive and innovative involvement of patients and carers through the use of effective PPGs and to act on a range of sources of patient and carer feedback in order to improve the services delivered by the Practice.

The role of the PPG includes:

* being a critical friend to the Practice
* advising the Practice on the patient perspective and providing insight into the responsiveness and quality of services
* encouraging patients to take greater responsibility for their own and their family’s health
* carrying out research into the views of those who use the Practice
* organising health promotion events and improving health literacy
* ongoing communication with the patient population

This guidance supports Practices to meet the contractual requirements and provides examples of the activities that support good participation.

**Requirements**

From 1 April 2015 it became a contractual requirement for all Practices:

* to develop and maintain a PPG for the purpose of obtaining the views of patients and enabling the Practice to obtain feedback from the Practice population on services delivered by the contractor
* to make reasonable efforts for this group to be representative of the Practice patient population
* to engage with the PPG at a frequency and in a manner agreed with the group
* to review patient feedback (whether from the PPG or other sources – FFT, patient surveys etc.) with the aims of the Practice and PPG agreeing improvements that could be made to services
* to act on suggestions for improvements, where the Practice and PPG agree

Practices are required to declare in the annual electronic Practice self-declaration (eDec) that they have fulfilled these requirements.

**Developing a PPG**

The Practice must develop and maintain a properly representative PPG that obtains and reflects the views of its registered patients and carers and enables the Practice to obtain feedback from a cross-section of the Practice population. Practices that have previously taken part in the Patient Participation enhanced service will not need to create a new structure (or PPG), but should review whether the group remains representative of the Practice population. Traditionally, Practices have developed a PPG through volunteers and regular meetings. Some Practices have developed a virtual PPG, an email community they consult with on a regular basis, but which does not have regular face-to-face meetings. The Practice should develop its PPG in the most appropriate way to effectively reach the broadest cross section of its patient population and meet the contractual requirements. This may be a virtual or a face-to-face group or a combination of the two.

Whilst advertising within the Practice premises and in the Practice patient leaflet will help, inviting patients personally to join a group (virtual or otherwise) has been shown to be very effective. Inviting new patients at the point of registration as well as at routine practice visits also helps to reach those people who attend infrequently. This can be done either at reception or at the end of the consultation by simply handing a leaflet to patients. For more information and tools on establishing a PPG see the 'Getting started guide' at Annex B.

Once patients have been recruited to the PPG, a constitution should be agreed between all members of the PPG (patients and Practice) to set out the membership, how the PPG will work and the objectives.

Practices should not limit engagement to the PPG. Practices should also promote innovative forms of patient participation to provide accurate feedback from all groups, and allow a better understanding of patients and carer needs. For example:

* promoting innovative forms of communication and insight between the Practice and patients to co-design services that meet the needs of their Practice population
* improving communication channels with people who Practices may otherwise not get the opportunity to engage, particularly vulnerable patients
* developing patient champions who work with Practices to support particular issues, or particular groups such as patients with mental health conditions
* holding annual events with Practice population to showcase progress achieved/future plans
* providing opportunities for patients and carers to find out more about how the Practice and the wider health economy works
* providing opportunities for patients and carers to be involved in wider service developments in the area

Practices may find the work the National Association of Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.) has done in developing PPGs. Best practice case studies and other resources can be found on the N.A.P.P. website

**Representing the Practice population**

Whichever approach they adopt, Practices must clearly demonstrate that they have established a PPG comprising registered patients and their carers, and used best endeavours to ensure that the PPG is representative of their registered patient population. They should also demonstrate that they have made reasonable efforts to engage with any under-represented and seldom-heard groups, including patients with mental health conditions or groups with protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010. Links to guidance on engaging seldom heard groups are at Annex A.

To do this, the Practice needs to understand its Practice profile. This understanding should take into account more than age and sex i.e. this could include factors such as levels of unemployment in the area, number of carers, black and minority ethnic groups, or a large local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual community. Local Healthwatch, voluntary organisations and community and faith groups may be able to support Practices to engage with marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as older frail people or patients with learning disabilities. It may be useful to access the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, available from the Local Authority or CCG which will contain information on the make-up of the local population.

All Practices will have a significant number of registered patients who are children. It is up to the Practice to determine how best to seek their views, subject to parental consent, and Practices will wish to consider other ways in which children can be involved.

It is important that Practices and PPGs also represent the roles of carers. PPGs should include the carers of registered patients, even if the carers themselves are not registered with the Practice.

The Practice and PPG may find it useful to reach out to a particular group of people by doing a focused piece of work to engage them, or linking with local community or voluntary sector groups. The venue and time of the PPG meeting could be changed or running a drop-in session could be considered. Working with local community and voluntary sector groups will be helpful in making links with under-represented groups

Practices should particularly ensure that they comply with the Equality Act 2010 when developing a PPG. Information on compliance can be found on the Equality and Human Rights Commission website, in the Government Equalities Office guide and on the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) website.

**PPG and Practice staff to review patient feedback**

Practices should aim to have continual/regular dialogue around improvement with their PPG and wider registered population, and should reflect on existing and new sources of feedback such as those listed at the beginning of this guidance. The Practice should agree with the PPG how regularly that feedback is reviewed.

Using a variety of sources of feedback, the Practice and PPG should identify areas of priority. These are likely to be based on key inputs, including the identification of themes from:

* patients and carer priorities and issues
* themes from complaints and suggestions
* planned Practice changes
* bespoke survey
* Care Quality Commission (CQC) related issues
* the GP patient survey
* the Friends and Family Test
* working with local commissioners (Clinical Commissioning Groups/NHS England/Local Authority)
* views from local voluntary and community groups, including local Healthwatch.

**Develop action plan with PPG on improving Practice and implementing changes**

Based on feedback, Practice and PPG should agree clear priorities for improvement. Areas of improvement could be around any areas of quality that are important to patients and carers. This could include what services are offered, how services are accessed and delivered or how the Practice engages with patients and carers and the wider community. The action plan could include ways in which the PPG will contribute towards the improvements e.g. supporting volunteering across the Practice.

Practices are recommended to agree a clear action plan, for instance in the form of a report, which the PPG and Practice can use to evidence that feedback has been taken on board and that the PPG has been properly engaged. The report could include details on the make-up of the PPG against the Practice population, sources of information analysed, the areas identified for improvement, what actions were taken to address these priorities and the resulting changes made.

Practices should keep the PPG up-to-date with progress on any agreed actions, for instance through their Practice website, NHS Choices website, posters in waiting rooms, PPG meetings, newsletters etc.

Practices might consider sharing their experiences with a range of groups and organisations including:

* the PPG
* the wider Practice population
* Local commissioners (Clinical Commissioning Groups/NHS England/Local Authority)
* Local Healthwatch (which might facilitate effective working between the local Healthwatch and the PPG)
* Local voluntary and community groups
* CQC - at the time of inspections/registration

**Annex A: Guidance and links for patient participation**

National Association for Patient Participation: [www.napp.org.uk/](http://www.napp.org.uk/)

NHS Networks Smart Guides: [www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/smart-guides](http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/smart-guides)

NHS England, bite-sized guides to participation:

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/2014/03/13/pat-pub-participation/>

NICE Publication, ‘Community Engagement’:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG44>

NICE ‘Patient Experience Guidance in adult Services’:

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG138>

Pride and Practice (Lesbian and Gay Foundation):

<https://lgbt.foundation/who-were-here-for/pride-in-practice>

Centre for Mental Health: [www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/)

MIND: [www.mind.org.uk/](http://www.mind.org.uk/)

Engagement of mental health service users: <http://apt.rcpsych.org/content/11/3/168.full.pdf>

Community Health Champions, Altogether Better:

[www.altogetherbetter.org.uk/community-health-champions](http://www.altogetherbetter.org.uk/community-health-champions)

NHS England Accessible Information project:

[www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/accessibleinfo-2/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/patients/accessibleinfo-2/)

The NHS Youth Forum:

<http://www.byc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NHS-Youth-Forum-Tip-Brochure-FINAL.pdf>

**Creating a PPG – getting started guide**

**Introduction**

The 'getting started guide' has been developed to support Practices in setting up virtual PPGs; it contains a few simple tools that Practices can use at the various stages of setting up a PPG. It should be noted that a virtual PPG may not be appropriate for capturing views from all sections of the Practice population and
other forms of communication should also be considered for engaging with seldom heard groups of patients and carers.

The DH commissioned the development of this guide in consultation with patients, staff and patient group representatives. It is deliberately simple and 'low-tech' in the hope that it provides a range of quick and easy ways to create a list of patients willing to help Practices by giving their views. Email is a fast and effective way to carry out simple surveys to get feedback from patients.

Your Practice may or may not already have in place a 'real' PPG which meets face-to-face. If it does, it may be simplest to use the 'real' PPG as the main point of email contact. If you do not already have a 'real' PPG, creating an email contact list is a good starting point.

**Common patient questions and answers**

**Why are you asking patients for their contact details?**

We would like to be able to contact patients and carers occasionally to ask them questions about the Practice and how well we are doing to identify areas for improvement.

**Will my doctor see this information?**

This information is purely to contact patients to ask them questions about the Practice, how well we are doing and ensure changes that are being made are patient focused. If your doctor is responsible for making some of the changes in the Practice they might see general feedback from patients.

**Will the questions you ask me be medical or personal?**

We will only ask general questions about the Practice, such as short questionnaires.

**Who else will be able to access my contact details?**

Your contact details will be kept safely and securely and will only be used for this purpose and will not be shared with anyone else.

**How often will you contact me?**

Not very often... [Insert how often you plan to contact patients]

**What is a patient group/patient participation group?**

This is a group of volunteer patients who are involved in making sure the Practice provides the services its patients need.

**Do I have to leave my contact details?**

No, but if you change your mind, please let us know.

**What if I no longer wish to be on the contact list or if I leave the Practice?**

We will ask you to let us know by email if you do not wish to receive further messages.

**Sample contact form**

If you are happy for us to contact you periodically by email please complete your details below and hand this form back to either reception, a patient group representative, or post in the 'secure box'.

*Name:*

*Email address:*

*Postcode:*

This additional information will help to make sure we try to speak to a representative sample of the patients registered at this Practice.

Are you? Male Female

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age: Group | Under 16 |  | 17–24 |  |
|  | 25–34 |  | 35–44 |  |
|  | 45–54 |  | 55–64 |  |
|  | 65–74 |  | 75–84 |  |
|  | Over 84 |  |  |  |

To help us ensure our contact list is representative of our local community please indicate which if the following ethnic background you would most closely identify with?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **White** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| British group |  | Irish |  | Gypsy or Irish traveller |  | Other white |  |  |  |
| **Mixed** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| White &black Caribbean |  | White &black African |  | White & Asian |  | Other mixed |  |  |  |
| **Asian or Asian British** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indian |  | Pakistani |  | Bangladeshi |  | Chinese |  | Other Asian |  |
| **Black or black British** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Caribbean |  | African |  | Other black |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other ethnic group** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Arab |  | Any other |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

How would you describe how often you come to the Practice?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Regularly |  |
| Occasionally |  |
| Very rarely |  |

Thank you.

Please note that no medical information or questions will be responded to.

The information you supply us with will be used lawfully, in accordance with the Data
Protection Act 1988. The Data Protection Act 1988 gives you the right to know what information is held about you, and sets out rules to make sure that this information is handled properly.

**Developing a survey**

Practices are no longer required to carry out a local survey that was included in the Enhanced Service, but if you wish to do so there are a number of online survey tools available which are simple to use and have clear instructions on how to set up a survey. Once you have finalised your survey questions it takes just minutes to set up the survey online. Some free survey tools are set out below:

* Survey Monkey. Mart survey design. <http://s3.amazonaws.com/SurveyMonkeyFiles/SmartSurvey.pdf>
* Kwik surveys. <http://kwiksurveys.com/>
* eSurveys pro. [www.esurveyspro.com](http://www.esurveyspro.com)
* Smart survey. [www.smartsurvey.co.uk](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk)

**Script for patient group members**

Hello, I am a member of a patient group *[insert name of group]*. We want to ensure that the views of patients and carers are being fed into the Practice regarding the services they deliver and any changes or new services that are being considered.

To do this we are compiling a contact list of email addresses so that we can contact you by email every now and again to ask you a question or two.

Are you interested in giving your views?

Please provide your contact details on this form; we will only use information to contact you and will keep your details safely.

**Script for staff in Practices with a PPG**

Hello, Our Patient Participation Group *[insert name of group]* is encouraging patients to give their views about how the Practice is doing. They would like to be able to ask the

opinions of as many patients as possible and are asking if people would like to provide their email addresses so that they can contact you by email every now and again to ask you a question or two.

Are you interested in leaving your email contact details?

If you could fill in this quick form and hand it back to reception (or provide your details over the phone to me) we will pass your details to the Patient Participation Group.

Your contact details will only be used for this purpose and will be kept safely.

**Suggested wording for an LED display**

THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP *[INSERT NAME OF GROUP]* NEEDS YOUR VIEWS! PLEASE ADD YOUR EMAIL TO THE FORM AT RECEPTION TO JOIN OUR CONTACT LIST.

This information could also be added to prescriptions.

Copies of the contact form should be available at reception with the option to drop them into a secure box.

**Suggested leaflet content**

Would you like to have a say about the services provided at *[insert name of Practice]*?

The *[insert name of group or surgery]* would like to hear your views.

By providing your email details, we can add them to a contact list that will mean we can contact you by email every now and again to ask you a question or two.

Fill in the details on the reverse side of this leaflet and hand it back to reception or post it into the secure box and we will add your email address to a contact list.

**Suggested poster content**

Would you like to have a say about the services provided at *[insert name of Practice]*?

The *[insert name of group or Practice]* would like to hear your views.

By leaving your email details we can contact you every now and again to ask you
a few questions.

Contact forms are available in the waiting area.