**Patient Participation Groups:**

Frequently Asked Questions

**What is a Patient Participation Group?**

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a peer-led group of self-organising patients who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience to help improve Primary Care services. They are a proactive group of people who are representative of the local community, and who look for solutions rather than problems. PPGs work with the Practice to offer the patient perspective on the service it provides. The group is outward-facing, meaning that group members seek to learn about innovations which are happening in the local community and bring these back to the practice. PPGs provide a means for patients to become more involved and make suggestions about the healthcare services they receive, whilst also gathering the views of other local people to propose developments or change. PPGs can also support practices in promoting health awareness and health education – e.g. around self-care – and membership is open to every patient on the GP practice list.

A PPG is NOT a forum for complaints. Clear ground rules are needed to ensure that PPG members do not use the PPG as a vehicle to resolve their own personal issues (however PPGs often lead to a reduction in the number of complaints overall). It is also not a doctors’ fan club or just a ‘tick box’ exercise. In order to be valuable, PPGs must have the confidence to challenge the Practice in line with the critical friend model. Being a member of a PPG will have no impact on a patient’s relationship with their GP.

**Who would be a good PPG member?**

People who have the following traits:

* Good listener and collaborative
* Not afraid to speak their mind and to speak up for people who do not have a voice
* Solution rather than problem-focused, with a positive outlook
* Able to come up with original ideas and follow-through on them
* Has positive motivations to be involved, rather than just looking for a vehicle to voice complaints
* Able to engage well in a group setting (either in person or via Zoom) and contribute verbally (or have a carer or technology to enable this)
* Would benefit from learning new skills (e.g. to move into work or other voluntary opportunities – we would provide references)
* Keen to meet new people

**What will members need to do?**

You will work collaboratively with patients and the practice team. You will need to be willing to voice opinions and contribute to discussions, whilst also being able to listen to and reflect the views of other patients and carers. Whilst observing confidentiality, you will talk to other patients and carers to pick up comments and concerns in the practice community. You will need to be able to commit to attending monthly meetings (2hrs every other month) in addition to preparing for the meetings (e.g. reading documents). You will be polite, objective and constructive in discussions, whilst also championing equality and diversity. You will be invited to discuss what skills and experiences you feel you can bring to the PPG, however no qualifications are needed to be able to participate effectively. Key to the success of PPGs is having members who are proactive and positive.

Members will also elect individuals to the following roles (which can be rotated amongst the group), which have the following additional responsibilities:

**Facilitator/Co-Facilitator**

* Sets the agenda of each meeting with practice staff
* Ensures all PPG members have an equal opportunity to contribute to the meeting
* Ensures all agenda items are discussed in a timely manner
* Ensures actions are recorded and steps are taken to follow them up and implement them

**Secretary**

* Supports the Facilitator and ensures the group runs smoothly
* Takes notes at each meeting (including action points) and circulates them
* Ensures notes are shared in using the agreed method of communication for PPG members (e.g. email or post)

**Treasurer (if PPG decides to fundraise)**

* Records transactions
* Issues receipts for all monies received
* Presents regular financial reports
* Arranges annual independent audits

**Communications lead**

* Creates a PPG page on the Practice website, and keeps it up-to-date
* Creates social media content to publicise PPG activities/health promotion, etc.

**What makes a good PPG?**

A good PPG will be embedded in the GP Practice(s) and the local community – linked to community groups and initiatives. It will be collaborative and focused on shared priorities, with a diverse and enthusiastic membership which is representative of the local community. Members will be interested, proactive and well-informed, with a clear purpose focused on impact and adding value.

**Why should I join a PPG?**

You will be able to influence the way in which your GP Practice is run, helping to bring about improvements and a better service. You will enable patients to be consulted about their care before decisions are made, and you will be part of a forum for suggesting positive ideas, voicing concerns and taking action. You will be able to plan services jointly with GPs and Practice staff to increase their effectiveness. It is also a great way to give something back, meet new people and learn new skills.

**What sort of things have other PPGs done?**

* Surveyed patients on their experience of the Practice, collated the results and created a ‘You Said: We Did’ practice improvements section on a noticeboard in the Waiting Room
* Invited services that may benefit patients to come into the Practice and hold a stall/information session (e.g. Citizens Advice, Foodbanks, drug/alcohol support services, social groups)
* Shared information with patients to make them aware of services that are available to them (e.g. online systems)
* Presented problems and solutions to the Practice (e.g. making reception more private, introducing a notice board to share information with patients, setting up peer support groups for people with a long-term condition like diabetes)
* Used the shared influence of the Practice and patients to address wider issues affecting health within the community (e.g. healthy living and exercise activities)
* Been involved in interviews and recruitment for new staff
* Introduced a new appointments system and an easy to operate self-check-in system
* Produced a quarterly newsletter, which included GP and staff profiles and seasonal suggestions on how to keep yourself healthy
* Offered support to other patients (e.g. bereavement support, a carers’ group, hospital visiting, befriending housebound patients, volunteer transport scheme, social activities)
* Organised a health fair
* Recruited individual patients with long-term conditions as ‘expert patients’ who could help those who were newly diagnosed (e.g. with diabetes)
* Represented the Practice locally and nationally when patient voices were needed (e.g. collating responses to government healthcare consultations)
* Encouraged health education activities within the Practice
* Organised training in basic first aid for patients
* Increased awareness of particular illnesses, e.g. breast cancer

**How do I find out more?**

Register your interest [BY CLICKING HERE](https://forms.office.com/e/sbEjSU96k8.) and one of our Practice Staff will get in touch with you.

We are also holding a couple of information sessions in January (with free refreshments provided):

1. Thursday 12th January, 5.45pm-7.15pm at Bradgate Surgery
2. Saturday 14th January, 10.45am-12.15pm at Shirehampton Group Practice