

Building Patient Participation Group networks across Sefton 15 May 2019

St Stephen's Church Hall, Hightown, L38 0BL

Summary event report



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Background

At the start of 2019, we at NHS South Sefton CCG, NHS Southport and Formby CCG and Healthwatch Sefton began to work together to explore how we could support GP practices to develop their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and to encourage more local people to join their GP practice's group.

This work started in response to feedback received by Healthwatch Sefton and the CCGs from practice, patients and PPG members that it was often difficult to set up and run a successful PPG and that they needed help with this.

In addition, it was agreed that building and strengthening the PPG network would help to support patient involvement in other local health care developments, particularly those in primary care as practices start to work together more collaboratively through the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

PCNs are groups of practices in the same locality that work with a range of local health and care providers, community services and the voluntary sector, to offer more personalised, co-ordinated health and social care to their patients. PCNs are a key part of the NHS long term plan which was published earlier in 2019.

To take this work forward, it was acknowledged that it was important to work collectively with GP practices and PPG members, and so we decided to organise an event with Healthwatch Sefton to start to explore how we might do this.

This report provides an overview of the event, including the outcomes and the next steps.

You can learn more about PPGs by visiting the 'get involved' pages of the CCGs' websites:

www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk

www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk



About the event

Over 25 people attended the event which took place on 15 May 2019 at St Stephen's Church, Hightown. Attendees included representatives from GP practices, PPG members, Healthwatch Sefton Community Champions and staff from the CCGs.

In the months running up to the event, all those directly involved in running PPGs, and with an interest in their development, were invited to attend.

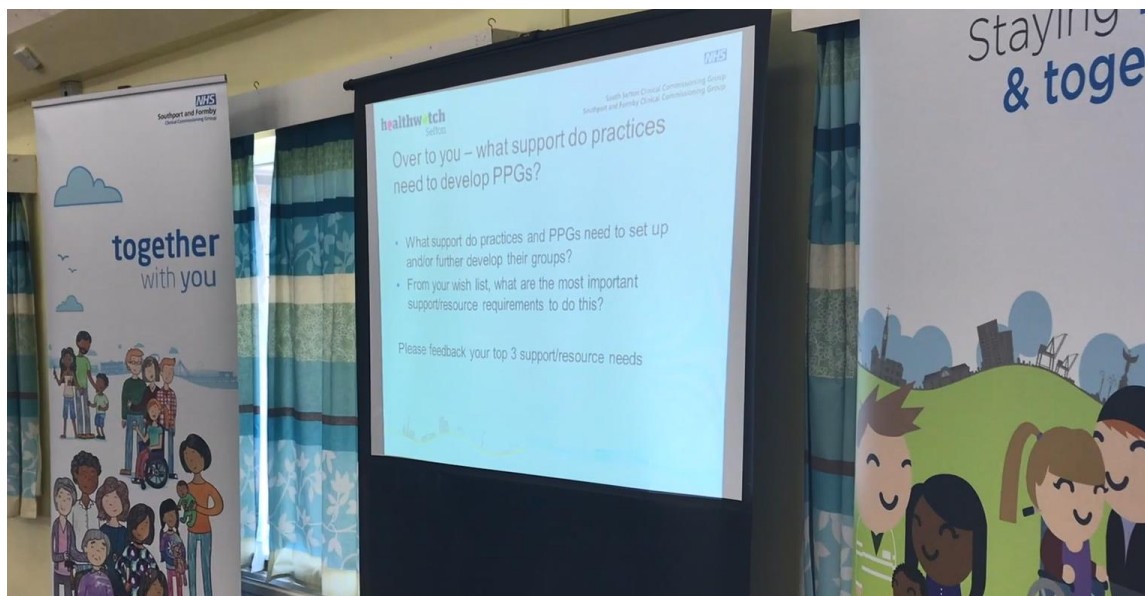
At the beginning of the event we talked about the aims of the session and the opportunity it provided for us to start to work together to support the development of PPGs and to take this work forward.

The key aims were highlighted as follows:

- To understand more about what the PPG network looks like across Sefton
- To hear about those PPG groups that are working well and to share good practice
- To find out what the issues and barriers are to developing a successful group
- To explore how we collectively strengthen PPGs particularly when considering the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs)
- To identify what support practices and PCNs need to develop their PPGs and how could this be resourced
- To develop a plan of action of take this work forward

The format of the event was developed with these aims in mind and included a number of presentations followed by workshop style discussions, which provided attendees with the opportunity to share their experiences, views and ideas.

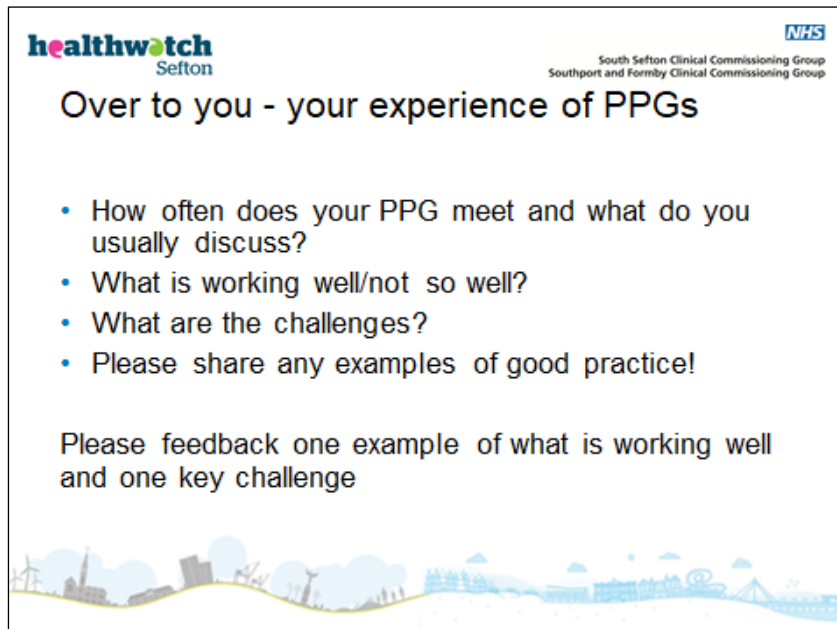
You can read more about what people told us later in this report and you will find presentations, photos and a video of the event on the CCG websites.



What we covered

There were a number of different sections on the agenda for our event, which are described below:

- A short introduction from Healthwatch Sefton explaining more about its services and role in supporting the development of PPGs
- An overview of the role and purpose of PPGs, which included a short film of a PPG member talking about what they do and how the group supports their practice. This session was delivered by members of the CCGs.
- This was followed by a number of table top discussions which provided attendees with the opportunity to share their experiences and views of PPGs, and to discuss the support and resources that practices need to develop these groups further. The focus of these discussions are detailed on the presentation slides we used during the event which are below :



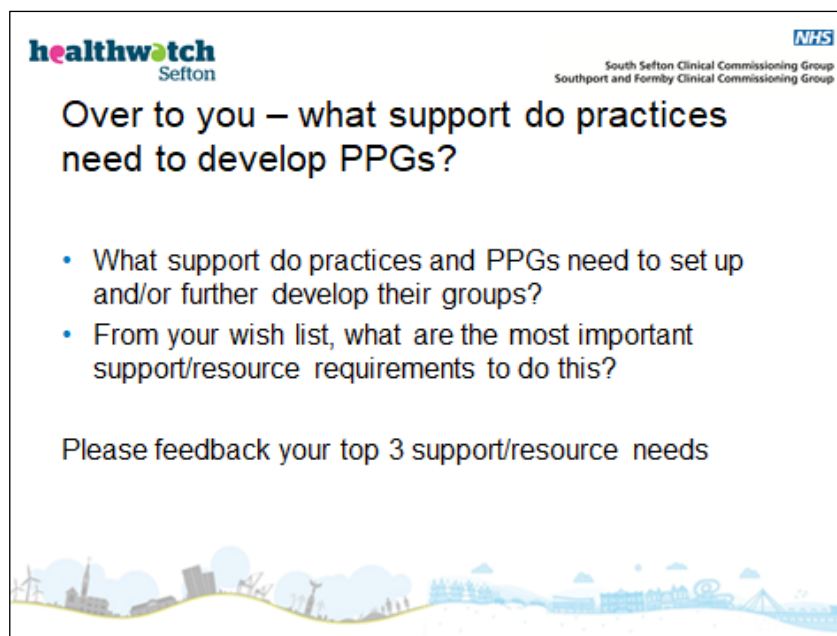

healthwatch
Sefton

NHS
South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group
Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group

Over to you - your experience of PPGs

- How often does your PPG meet and what do you usually discuss?
- What is working well/not so well?
- What are the challenges?
- Please share any examples of good practice!

Please feedback one example of what is working well and one key challenge



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South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group
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Over to you – what support do practices need to develop PPGs?

- What support do practices and PPGs need to set up and/or further develop their groups?
- From your wish list, what are the most important support/resource requirements to do this?

Please feedback your top 3 support/resource needs



- The next part of the event focused on explaining more about the development of PCNs across Sefton, how PPGs could get involved in supporting their development and to discuss how individual PPGs might work collectively on a locality footprint to do this. Attendees were asked to use the following questions to focus their discussions:

The slide features the 'healthwatch Sefton' logo in the top left and the NHS logo in the top right. Below the logos, the text reads 'South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group' and 'Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group'. The main title is 'Over to you – how do we develop PPGs to support PCNs?'. Below the title is a bulleted list of four questions: 'What do you think of the idea of developing PPG networks on a PCN footprint?', 'What are the potential opportunities and challenges to this approach?', 'What will practices and PCNs need to do to make this approach work?', and 'Are there other approaches to PPG development that we need to consider?'. At the bottom of the slide, it says 'Please feedback your key points'. The slide is decorated with a stylized cityscape illustration at the bottom.

- The event concluded with a collective discussion to identify the key priorities and action points for taking this work forward. You can read more about these discussions and see the action plan later on in this report.



What people told us

The table top discussion sessions that took place throughout the event enabled attendees to share their experiences, views and ideas. The feedback from these sessions is summarised below.

It should be noted that the number of GP practices and PPG groups who attended the event was limited, and so the feedback may not fully represent the experience and views of all practices and groups in the borough.

To ensure we provide the opportunity for all practices and groups to share their views, we have been providing other opportunities for practices and groups to get involved which are outlined later on in this report.

Over to you - session 1

What is your experience of PPGs?

There were some overarching themes in people's feedback about their experiences of PPGs, which focused on the following:

- **Frequency of meetings** - this varied with a number of practices meeting every three months, to not meeting at all. Attendees agreed that three monthly meetings worked well and some were working towards this.
- **PPG membership** – attendees said that their PPG groups mainly consisted of older retired patients and that recruiting younger members was a problem.
- **Meeting times** – as most PPG members were retired, the majority of PPGs groups tended to meet during the day although there was an understanding that this made it difficult for younger age groups to attend.

What is working well?

The following approaches and activities were noted as working well for some groups:

- **Themed PPG meetings** and patient engagement days inviting practice staff or external speakers to talk about a specific topic or service, such as dementia.
- **Raffles and fundraisers** to support PPG and practice events and other practice focused activities.
- **Informal PPG engagement with patients** like members attending the practice once a week to promote the PPG and to hand out health promotion leaflets etc.
- **Working with other organisations** to support local health initiatives, such as flu clinics.

Some practices commented specifically on their PPG and some of the activities that had worked well for them and these are highlighted in the table below:

	Frequency of meetings	What is working well
Practice 1	Add hoc – working towards three monthly	
Practice 2	three monthly	
Practice 3	three monthly	<p>Introduced a physician assistant (PA) role, so held a session for PPG members to learn more and to meet the new staff member</p> <p>PPG members attend the practice every Friday and sit in the waiting room to hand out health information leaflets and talk to patients</p> <p>PPG organises raffles to raise money for the PPG and practice</p>
Practice 4		Has an established PPG, which includes working age representation

What are the challenges?

The following main challenges were discussed and noted:

- **Recruiting PPG members** - most groups said they had problems recruiting members and that as a result many groups were very small.
- **Limited membership** - as already noted, attendees said that PPG group membership did not tend to be representative of the local population. In particular, members were usually retired and that attracting younger people, working people and parents was an issue. Some attendees felt that younger people tended to have limited experience and understanding of health services and so for these reasons had little interest in getting involved. Others commented that for those in education and/or working, meetings are difficult to attend as they are often held during the day.

It was suggested that engaging with these groups might be easier if other ways of getting involved were available, such as online methods like email and social media. Holding events in the early evening was another suggestion.

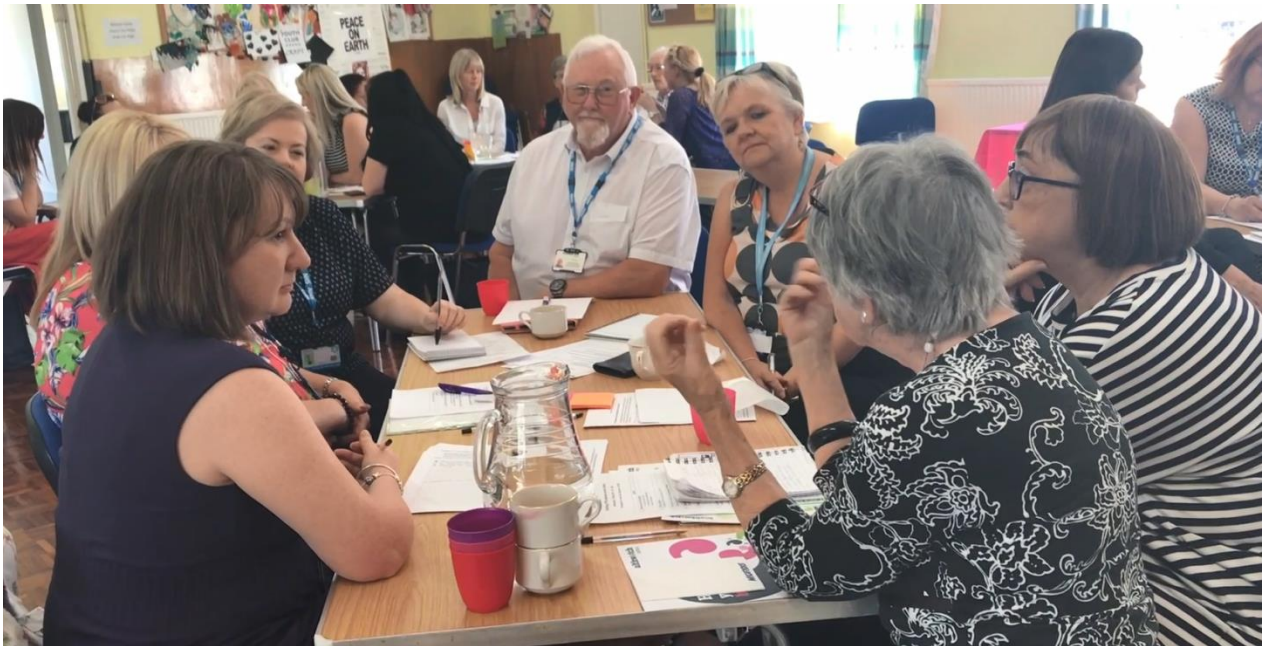
- **Purpose of a PPG group** – both GP practice staff and members commented that there was confusion about the purpose of PPGs and that groups across Sefton worked very differently.

Whilst it was generally agreed that one of the key functions of a PPG was to work collaboratively with its practice to make improvements where possible and practicable, it was not a complaints forum.

To support practices and to standardise how PPGs work, it was suggested that a set of PPG guidelines be developed.

- **Communication and promotion** – there were several comments that patients were unaware of PPGs and other opportunities to get involved and learn more about local health services.

Some GP practice representatives also said that keeping in direct contact with patients had been restricted since the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).



Over to you – session 2

What support do practices need to develop PPGs?

This session focused on the practical support and input needed to help GP practices to set up and develop their groups, which included the following main suggestions:

- **Promotion of PPGs** using the screens in GP surgeries, through adverts in the local press, (highlighting those practices that are looking for members), dedicated website and social media channels and PPG branding.
- **PPG focused communications network** to support developments and activities
- **CCG and Healthwatch support** – to offer support with recruitment, practical guidance on how to run a group and to attend meetings when needed.
- **Access to a PPG support pack** which includes a standardised set of materials which all practices can use as a framework, and which will standardise the function and approach of PPGs across the Sefton footprint.
- **PPG charter** which clearly defines the purpose and function of a PPG.
- **Support and training for PPG members** so that they understand more about their role and can be more effective in supporting their practice and other health and social care initiatives.
- **Access to IT equipment** such as iPad to support PPG members in their work.
- **Financial support** so that PPGs have the resource to develop as discussed.

What are the most important support and resource requirements?

When attendees were asked to identify what the most important support and resource requirements needed to support PPG development, the following were highlighted:

- **Support with PPG promotion and recruitment**, including branded merchandise, material for GP screens, social media activity and practice websites.
- **Development of a PPG focused communications network**, to support and coordinate PPG activity, like developing a regular PPG newsletter.
- **CCGs' input and support**, both practically and financially, for example designing a PPG support pack and standardised materials.

Over to you – session 3

How do we develop PPGs to support PCNs?

This session explored the potential of developing PPG networks, particularly on a locality basis to support the development of PCNs.

There was a mixed response to this idea. There was general support for practices working collaboratively where possible, and agreement that a joined-up approach could enable practices to share good practice and work on locally focused health initiatives, such as social prescribing. It was also noted that this would mirror the Healthwatch Sefton community champion network which could input and support with PPG network developments.

There was some concern that this approach might dilute the voice of individual practices and indirectly put practices in direct competition with each other, potentially highlighting the differences in GP surgeries and prompting patients to move practice if they perceive one practice to be better than another. There were also comments that the appetite for this approach would likely vary from one locality to another.

Some of the challenges to this approach were discussed and highlighted as follows:

- **Coordination and management of PPG networks** - who would be responsible?
- **Sharing of information amongst practices** - there were comments that some practices were reluctant to do this.
- **Support from the CCGs and Healthwatch** - it was suggested that this would be needed to take this approach forward.

Overall, it was agreed that individual PPGs should remain in place, possibly supported by a six-monthly PPG network meeting focusing on issues and developments that affected practices in a given locality.



Action plan and next steps

Following the table discussions, there was an open room discussion to develop an action plan to take this work forward; this considered the key priorities identified as part of the table discussions.

An outline of the action plan is below:

Action plan
Hold a PPG recruitment and information event to raise awareness and to encourage local people to join their GP practice's group
PCNs to explore the idea of developing a PPG network on their locality footprint and to decide if they wish to take this forward
Develop a set of PPG promotional materials and branding to use locally, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information leaflet/poster• PPG film
Develop practice websites to include a standardised PPG information page
Develop a PPG resource pack including a series of templates, advice and suggestions for all groups to use
Invite PPG members to join a PPG stakeholder list and agree a plan for developing a regular PPG newsletter
Develop links with local schools and colleges and other young people's forums to encourage more young people to become PPG members
Hold a PPG themed Healthwatch Community Champion event to update the champions on PPG developments and to discuss how they can further support
Trial health related training opportunities with a small number of PPGs

What else are we doing to support this work

We understand that it's not always possible or easy for GP practice staff and PPG members to attend events, so we have been offering other ways of getting involved and keeping people informed:

- Through the CCGs' GP bulletins and the regular primary care network meetings, we have been keeping GPs and practice managers up to date with PPG plans and developments, and opportunities to get involved.
- We have contacted practice managers individually to ask for feedback on their PPGs and to encourage them and their PPG members to get involved. This is helping us to build a better picture of PPG activity, what is working well and the challenges.
- We are developing a PPG mailing list, which will help us to keep in touch and work more closely with those interested in being involved with this work as it takes shape.

- Healthwatch Sefton is using its membership and networks to get directly involved in PPG groups and activities, as well as providing feedback on how this work is progressing and supporting its development.

How the feedback will be used

We will use the views and feedback from this event - and the feedback from other sources - to inform our plans as we work together to build and strengthen PPGs, and to help us decide how to best develop PPG networks in Sefton.

As this work progresses and takes shape, we will provide updates on the involving you pages of our websites and also share updates with our partners, PPG members,, Healthwatch Sefton members and other residents who have told us they want to be kept informed.

Our websites also have details about other ways you can get involved in our work – from attending a future Big Chat, to joining our mailing list so you are up to date with forthcoming exercises and opportunities.

Website details:

NHS Southport and Formby CCG: www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk

NHS South Sefton CCG: www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk

If you would like to share your experiences of local PPGs then you can also call PALS, our patient advice and liaison service on 0800 218 2333, or contact Healthwatch Sefton on 0800 206 1304 or email info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk



Healthwatch Sefton

**Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), 3rd Floor,
Suite 3B, North Wing, Burlington House,
Crosby Road North, Waterloo, L22 0LG 0800 206 1304**

info@healthwatchsefton.co.uk

www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk

NHS South Sefton CCG

Merton House, Stanley Road, Bootle, L20 3DL 0151 317 8456

southsefton.ccg@nhs.net

www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk

NHS Southport and Formby CCG

5 Curzon Rd, Southport, PR8 6PL 01704 395785

southportandformby.ccg@nhs.net

www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk

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