

The PPG Guide

Guidance for establishing and running a
Patient Participation Group



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If you require this document in an alternative format, please get in touch with us using the details on the back page.

About us

We are an independent voice for the people of Derbyshire. We are here to listen to the experiences of Derbyshire residents and give them a stronger say in influencing how local health and social care services are provided.

Our mission

We are a strong, independent, and effective champion for people that use health and social care services. We will continue to influence health and care services and seek to improve joined-up care for the people of Derbyshire.

Our vision

We want to see people who use health and social care services centre stage, so that service providers and commissioners listen to what they have to say and use their voices to shape, inform and influence service delivery and design.



Introduction

What is a Patient Participation Group (PPG)?

A PPG is a group of volunteer patients, the practice manager and one or more GP. A PPG is open to every patient on the GP practice's patient list.

PPGs are a route for patients to advise and inform the practice on what matters most to patients and to help identify solutions to problems.

GP practices have 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
- Be a representative of the practice population
- Assist where possible to improve the service
- Ensure the patient's voice is heard and used to influence the provision of local health services.

Benefits of having a PPG

How can a PPG benefit patients, the GP practice, and the local community?

For patients:

- Patients can feel more responsible for their own health and wellbeing
- Have a better understanding of the practice and staff
- Have a greater appreciation of wider NHS policies
- Improve communication of broader patient issues
- Contribute to the practice on National Patient Survey results and Friends and Family Test feedback.

For the community:

- The patient population will have a body through which they can help others in need, they will get an idea of what is needed to improve healthcare
- Encourage the patient population to contribute feedback to the practice on National Patient Survey results and Friends and Family Test feedback
- The PPG can encourage health awareness and patient education to improve health within the community.

For the practice:

- Help support and promote the practice's aims and objectives
- Plan services jointly with patients to increase effectiveness
- Improve communication with patients
- Have a forum to suggest positive ideas and voice concerns
- PPGs can help in meeting targets and objectives.

How can PPGs work with GP practices?

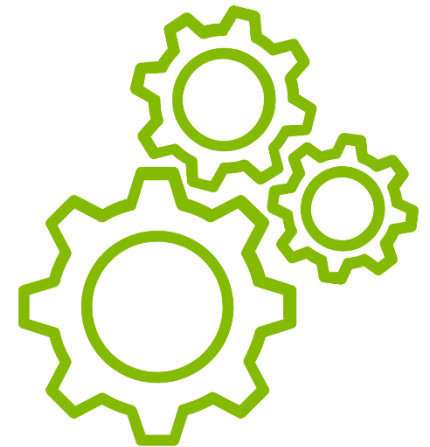
- Help gather feedback for the practice about patient experience
- Help design and carry out patient surveys asking for local views about services
- Work with the practice to develop self-help projects to meet the needs of fellow patients, such as support for carers
- Help with communication between the practice and the local population and monitor the accessibility of the communication
- Support the surgery practically by helping to organise health promotion days or helping at flu clinics
- Speak to charity groups to organise events that can reduce health inequalities

- Support the practice in producing a patient newsletter for the practice
- Encourage health and wellbeing activities within the practice such as basic first-aid training and awareness days
- Contribute if the practice is inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC may want to speak with the PPG chair and other members to seek their views.

Setting up a PPG

How do you set up a PPG?

Some PPGs may be well-established, but it may seem a bit daunting to set one up. It is important that a PPG is meaningful to both the patients and the practice staff. There are various ways to work towards this that are specific to each PPG.



For new PPGs, it may be helpful to join the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP). NAPP can help you to meet the contractual requirement to establish and maintain a PPG. It can equip GPs with the resources needed to establish PPGs and support them with ongoing questions and issues.

In the next section, you will find some recommendations that can be used for a first PPG meeting and a clear outline of the roles and responsibilities of a PPG

Roles

Examples of roles and responsibilities

Be aware that every PPG is different, below is an example of how the roles could be set up. This can be discussed, and responsibilities shared between members.



PPG Chair and Vice Chair

The PPG Chair leads the PPG to enable it to fulfil its purpose and ensure there is an effective relationship between the PPG, the practice, and the patients.

- Establish and maintain the Terms of Reference, if they feel these are needed (template page 10)
- Maintain a good working relationship between the PPG and the practice
- Liaise with the practice and the PPG to develop an agenda for the meeting
- Chair the meetings (a practice could do this instead of a PPG member), conduct them, contribute, and bring them to a close in good time
- Encourage the PPG to develop ideas and initiatives that will benefit the patient population
- Moving to a vote (if necessary) by the Terms of Reference
- Ensure there is a process in place to record minutes and follow up on any actions
- Represent the PPG at other relevant meetings.

PPG Member

- Represent the patients of the practice within PPG meetings
- Contribute views on practice matters
- Read the meeting agenda and be prepared for the meeting
- Provide advice to the practice on how to engage the patients
- Positively represent the PPG.

PPG Secretary

- Helps to plan the meetings and agendas
- May provide administrative support, if agreed with the practice
- Ensure that meetings/agendas are drawn up and sent out in advance
- Take notes during the meetings and distribute minutes following the meeting.

Treasurer (optional)

A treasurer may not be needed if there is no PPG income or expenditure. If there is, and a treasurer is needed, the account could be managed through the practice.

- Giving receipts for all monies received
- Presenting regular financial reports
- Agreeing budgets
- Arranging for an annual independent audit.

Recruiting patients

Advice from the PPG Network

- **Offer hybrid meetings:** By offering these where people can meet face to face and/or can join in virtually would make meetings less restrictive and mean more people can take part

If PPG members are unsure how to offer online meetings this could be arranged by the practice



- **Open evenings:** One PPG has an open evening for people with a learning disability to understand how they could improve their experiences of the practice. The PPG had a stall at the event to promote the work of the PPG and recruit new members
- **Call for family and friends:** One PPG put a call out to their families and friends to generate interest in joining the PPG
- **Meet and greets sessions:** One PPG arranged to have a meet and greet session within the practice. By speaking with patients as they arrived for their appointments the PPG representative(s) were able to explain the role of a PPG and generate some interest
- **Online mailing list:** This can encourage people to sign up for the patient group mailing list. This enables people to get involved in topics that interest them and reduces the need for people to feel they need to participate in every subject/topic
- **Newsletters/updates on the PPG:** Create ways to update patients on the work the PPG is doing. Encourage patients to sign up for the updates.

- **School links:** One PPG works closely with the local senior schools to recruit sixth-form students. The students are involved in the work of the PPG for a year before they go on to university/work. The PPG Chair contacts the lead teacher once a year who helps with the recruitment

Low membership of a PPG

Where PPG membership is low, there are still many ways that the patient voice can influence practice management decisions.



- Community event attendance
- General patient insight from Healthwatch Derbyshire
- Staff suggestions
- Patient complaints process
- Targeted community initiatives
- Patient comments on social media and websites
- Staff feedback from direct patient interactions
- Patient suggestions
- Service changes – specific surveys
- GP annual survey.

Support

PPG Network

The PPG network meets quarterly online and is always open to new members. These meetings are run by the Joined Up Care Derbyshire Engagement Team. It is a place where best practice is shared, and support is offered to PPG members.



You can go to the Joined Up Care Derbyshire website to find out more:
www.joinedupcarederbyshire.co.uk

National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP)

NAPP can provide several PPG resources and information to support the development of PPGs, as well as ideas for meeting topics. Practices/PPGs can choose to become members of NAPP by paying a joining fee. Visit www.napp.org.uk for more information.

Templates

The following pages are templates for the following:

- The Terms of Reference
- Meeting minutes
- The Constitution
- Code of Conduct



The PPG can decide which templates they feel are necessary for their group.

Terms of Reference

Template

Patients making it better for patients

Name: (The name of the Practice) Patient Participation Group (the PPG)

Association:

- The PPG is affiliated with the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP).

Purpose:

- To develop a working partnership between patients and the [insert name of Practice] to support the continuous development and improvement of the Practice's patient experience.
- It is not a forum for individual patient complaints. These must be fed to the Practice through their complaint procedure.

Way of Working:

- The Practice will normally refer to the PPG membership whenever they are considering changes that may impact the patient experience whilst in the care of the Practice
- Practice reference to the PPG may be via mail/email or through calling a PPG meeting
- Where appropriate, the Practice may ask for a volunteer(s) to work with them on specific projects.

Membership:

- Any patient registered with the Practice, or the carer of a registered patient may become a member. The Practice will maintain a listing of members and will be run following the Practice's Data Protection Policy.

- Membership will normally be a formality, but the Practice reserves the right to turn down or remove membership if a member 's behaviour falls below the expected standards set out in the Code of Conduct
- Membership will cease when the member is no longer registered at the Practice or resigns from the PPG.

Officers:

- A PPG will normally have a chairperson plus one (or two) Deputy Chairs; a Secretary; (sometimes) a Treasurer; and several ordinary Members.
- At the inaugural meeting, and once a year thereafter at the annual meeting, the PPG members should appoint to these officer roles (by vote at the meeting if necessary, using secret ballot).

Management of meetings:

- A pattern of meetings for the year should be arranged (even if some need to be cancelled later)
- Any PPG members unable to attend should send their apologies in advance of the meeting.

Minutes Template

[NAME OF GP SURGERY] Patient Participation Group

Minutes of the meeting held on [DATE]

[LOCATION] of meeting

Present: **[List names and role titles]**

Agenda items:

- Apologies [list names of apologies]
- Introduction
- Welcome to new members
- Minutes of the last meeting
- Actions/matters arising from the minutes
- PPG development
- Patient survey
- Report back from ICB/ICS meeting
- Practice website
- Any Other Business
- Date of next meeting and venue [insert date and location of the meeting]

Constitution Template

The group shall be known as:

Membership will be open to any patient registered with the practice and will include the practice manager or other practice team members as a representation of the practice.

Membership will be via the meeting group or the virtual group.

Aims:

- The group can provide a communication channel between the patients and the practice
- With the help and assistance of practice, the group can seek suggestions from patients for improvements to the service and highlight any areas that need attention
- The group can assist the practice in monitoring quality through patient participation.

Objectives:

- Communication: The group can influence the development of policies in the practice by representing patient views. This will ensure patients make the best use of the facilities available
- Surveys: The group can conduct surveys with patients to inform the action plan
- The group can work with the practice to ensure changes are fed down to local community groups
- The group can be informed of the commissioning plans and policies of the CCG and engaged in consultations when required
- Information can be given to patients through poster displays and the

practice newsletter (if the practice has one).

Rules governing the group:

- The group shall elect a chair to serve for two years and will be elected at a PPG meeting.
- The group will consist of at least a core group of four (4) patients
- A copy of the minutes from the PPG meeting will be sent out to members via the Secretary and will also available be on request or found on the practice website.

Code of Conduct Template

Code of Conduct for [insert name of PPG] Patient and Patient Participation Groups

The role of the Patient Representative within these groups is to represent the wider views and experiences of patients and the public through engagement.

Patient representatives aim to:

Care:

- Seek to understand the views and experiences of others and respect difference/s
- Approach our work with an open mind and a willing attitude toward engagement and change
- Take responsibility for our attitudes, actions, and behaviour.

Compassion:

- Seek to understand the experiences and views of others and use these to inform /improve commissioning and service provision/delivery where possible
- Avoid situations where our personal interests conflict with those of the group and avoid using our position for personal benefit.

Communication:

- Be a good communicator, seeking clarity and understanding to maintain constructive dialogue and respect and value all contributions
- Make written communications accurate, objective, and balanced
- Abide by the rules of data protection legislation.

Competence:

- Display attitudes and behaviours which meet with the expectations and standards of our colleagues
- Never misrepresent facts in any report, publication, record, or other document

- Never collect more personal data than needed: Process personal data in line with the scope the data was provided for, and never store personal data longer than necessary.

Commitment:

- Demonstrate that we are committed to the work of our group(s), and improvement to commissioning, delivery, and standards of patient care as they relate to our work
- Represent a range of different people and the interests of patients with candour
- Treat diversity as an asset and an opportunity for change
- Challenge and question discrimination and other areas where the standard of patient service falls short
- Work closely with others.

Courage:

- Speak up when we believe (in good faith) that standards of good patient care are breached
- Patient representative.

FAQs

Why have a PPG?

- Since 2015, having a PPG has been contractual for all GP practices. It is an expectation for CQC assessments that practices have a functioning, proactive, and supportive PPG.

How many patients should be in the PPG?

- There is no fixed number for a patient group, but it is best to start with a core group of 4-6 members who can commit and participate
- If the practice is set up for it, there can be additional virtual members who participate through the website.

How often should PPGs meet and go to events?

- There is no fixed number of required meetings or events
- All PPGs are different and shouldn't follow a set rule
- Some PPGs meet every 2-3 months, some monthly
- The decision on how often PPGs should meet is based on what is helpful for the patients and practice
- How many events (such as health promotion days) are dependent on the practice and what the PPG members agree is helpful
- Working groups to codesign things such as surveys are again as and when the PPG members and the practice feel is helpful.

What time is best to meet?

- Getting the time right is vital. Timing depends on the preference of PPG members (if you already have them signed up), and the nature of your practice population
- If you have evening/weekend meetings or events, this may attract people who work full-time or have children.

How long should meetings be?

- Meetings should be long enough to discuss the relevant topics, but not too long that people switch off
- Some PPGs meet for one hour, some for longer.

Where can we meet?

- The meeting room should be supplied by the practice
- If the PPG cannot meet at the practice, a space in the community should be found
- Some PPGs hold their meetings online, a hybrid or virtual option can make meetings more inclusive and increase attendance
- PPGs can attend many other events relevant to the practice, such as health promotion days.

Working with Healthwatch Derbyshire

PPGs can work with us in several ways to support their role

- Sign up to our Public Bulletin to keep up to date with current local information on health and social care
- Sign up to our Engagement Update Bulletin to keep up to date with our research projects and insight
- Ask us to come and give updates about the work we are doing and listen to any issues you may wish to share about health and care services in your area
- Follow our social media to see regular updates on health issues and patient engagement opportunities
- Proactively come to us to give feedback about things relating to health and care services in Derbyshire such as phlebotomy, podiatry, care homes

etc. This can be done over the phone, by email or online [Professionals Feedback Form – Healthwatch Derbyshire](#)

- Ask us for signposting information
- Ask us for advice on situations that impact patients e.g. dealing with difficult social media posts, dealing with the public interest if a practice received a poor CQC rating.

Useful websites

[Joined Up Care Derbyshire How to get involved](#)

[Tips and Tools from Joined Up Care Derbyshire PPG Members - Joined Up Care Derbyshire Patient Participation Groups \(PPG\)](#)

[Joined Up Care Derbyshire – Readers Panel \(will provide feedback within 2 weeks on any leaflets and documents\)](#)

Thank you

Thank you to the PPG Network members, Joined Up Care Derbyshire Engagement Team, and Derby and Derbyshire ICB for coproducing this guide.

Thank you to Healthwatch Central West London and Healthwatch Norfolk for letting us use information from their PPG Guides.





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