



Patient Participation Groups

A natural route to world-
class engagement

To learn more about these examples of excellence, please contact graham@napp.org.uk

This document has been produced as part of the Growing Patient Participation campaign (www.growingppgs.com) which brings together the British Medical Association, the Royal College of General Practitioners, the NHS Alliance and NAPP, with funding from the Department of Health.

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This document describes how Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) can encourage the formation of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) and help to make them as effective as possible. It draws heavily upon the work of pioneering and committed PCTs from across the country.

What are Patient Participation Groups?

At the start of 2009, four in ten English GP practices had a PPG. Each one is different and they evolve to meet local needs. PPGs are run by volunteers who are keen to make a difference to their communities and to their GP surgery. The most common activities are as follows:

Critical friend: Advising the practice on the patient perspective and helping to ensure that services are well designed to improve the patient experience.

Health promotion: Running health promotion events and promoting self-care so that patients play as full a part as possible in understanding and looking after their own health.

Improving communication: Raising awareness of the activities of the practice and other support that is available to patients, as well as relaying information back to the practice.

Influencing commissioning: Contributing to commissioning decisions and advising on redesign of services so that resources are used effectively and efficiently.

Supporting the practice: Helping in a multitude of ways, including carrying out research, raising funds, running volunteer services, organising support groups and so on.

“ Developing more PPGs is part of our patient and public engagement strategy. PPGs are good for practices to help them understand and act on the needs of their patients, and great for us in terms of capacity building and World Class Commissioning.”

NHS Hillingdon

How Primary Care Trusts are Helping

Over the past year, the National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) has been working closely with 11 PCTs to promote more, and better, PPGs. Outstanding progress has been made in some areas. There has been a significant growth in the number of PPGs, and in the confidence of established PPGs. Here is what PCTs can do.

Map existing PPGs and activities

Carry out a mapping exercise by contacting practices to find out where your PPGs are, what they do and how they can be contacted.

Share learning

Organise workshops for practices that are keen to get started.

Be ambitious

Set targets for the number of new PPGs that are to be developed.

Network the PPGs

Bring existing PPGs together at networking events to swap experiences and ideas.

Allocate resources to support PPGs

Dedicate a pot of money to support the development of each PPG.

Identify local champions

Identify PPG members, practice managers and other staff who can mentor new PPGs and help to ensure that they get off to the best possible start.

Build PPGs into practice-based commissioning quality schemes

Require every practice to have an effective PPG, thereby serving as building blocks for lay involvement in the commissioning process.

Link PPGs into local health campaigns

Support PPGs to play an important part in addressing some of the key local health challenges and in getting messages to people who would not otherwise be reached.

Value PPGs

Establish annual awards for PPGs that showcase successes in the different areas of PPG activity.

Spread the word

Raise awareness of the successes and activities of PPGs through the local media and other channels.

to see examples from other PCTs and download practical resources, please visit; www.growingppgs.com