

Patient Participation Groups



What is a Patient Participation Group?

- PPGs represent the patient population of GP practices
- They are generally made up of a group of volunteer patients, the practice manager, and one or more GPs
- They meet to discuss the services on offer and how improvements can be made for the benefit of patients and the practice
- PPGs are vital in ensuring the patient voice is heard as they provide an opportunity for local people to get involved and influence the provision of local health services.

Why do PPGs exist?

- **Contractual Requirement:** Since April 2016, all GP Practices must establish and maintain a PPG.
- **Amplify the Patient Voice:** PPGs ensure that patient perspectives are central to service design, delivery, and improvement.
- **Promote Accountability:** PPGs can help Practices remain responsive to patient needs.
- **Support Inclusive Care:** PPGs can help to reach underserved or underrepresented groups.
- **Build Trust and Transparency:** PPGs can help to encourage open dialogue between the Practice and patients.

What does the GP contract say?

Patient Participation

- **5.2.1.** The Contractor must establish and maintain a group known as a “Patient Participation Group” comprising some of its registered patients for the purposes of:
 - (a) obtaining the views of patients who have attended the Contractor's practice about the services delivered by the Contractor; and
 - (b) enabling the Contractor to obtain feedback from its registered patients about those services.
- **5.2.2.** The Contractor is not required to establish a Patient Participation Group if such a group has already been established by the Contractor in accordance with any directions about enhanced services which were given by the Secretary of State under section 98A of the 2006 Act before 1st April 2015.
- **5.2.3.** The Contractor must make reasonable efforts during each financial year to review the membership of its Patient Participation Group in order to ensure that the Group is representative of its registered patients.
- **5.2.4.** The Contractor must: (a) engage with its Patient Participation Group, at such frequent intervals throughout each financial year as the Contractor must agree with that Group, with a view to obtaining feedback from the Contractor's registered patients, in an appropriate and accessible manner which is designed to encourage patient participation, about the services delivered by the Contractor; and
- **5.2.5.** review any feedback received about the services delivered by the Contractor, whether by virtue of clause 5.2.4(a) or otherwise, with its Patient Participation Group with a view to agreeing with that Group the improvements (if any) which are to be made to those services.
- **5.2.6.** The Contractor must make reasonable efforts to implement such improvements to the services delivered by the Contractor as are agreed between the Contractor and its Patient Participation Group.

What does a PPG do?

- **Work with the Practice:** Collaborate to improve services and quality of care.
- **Improve communication:** Help make Practice information clearer and more accessible.
- **Promote Health and Wellbeing:** Support campaigns, events and patient education.
- **Be Representative:** Strive to reflect the diversity of the Practice population.
- **Ensure the Patient Voice is heard:** Feed into service planning and decision-making.
- **Act as a Critical Friend:** Constructively challenge the practice to improve.

What a PPG is NOT

A PPG is not:

- **Platform for pursuing personal agendas:** It's about collective patient experience, not individual complaints.
- **A Complaints Handling Service:** Formal complaints should go through the practices official route.
- **A Decision-Making Body:** PPGs advise and influence, but they do not make clinical or operational decisions.
- **A Substitute for Professional Roles:** PPG members do not replace staff or take on clinical responsibilities.
- **A Closed or Exclusive Group:** It should be open, inclusive, and representative of the whole practice population.

What could a PPG look like?

- There is no fixed structure
- Some helpful roles include a Chair, Vice Chair, Members, Secretary, and Treasurer (optional).
- No fixed number for members, but a core group of 4 to 6 members who can commit and participate is a great start.
- The frequency should be decided by individual PPGs; some meet monthly, whilst others meet quarterly.

[Healthwatch Derbyshire Guide - Roles & Responsibilities](#)

What helps a PPG to work well?

- Positive relationship and support from the Practice
- Attendance from Practice Managers, Doctors and Practice Staff at PPG meetings.
- Involvement in decision-making within the Practice.
- Motivated Chair and members within a PPG.
- Clear roles and duties within a PPG.
- Gathering insight from the patient population to feed into and inform the work of the PPG.
- Linking in with other PPG's to share experience and knowledge (i.e. via the JUCD PPG Network).

PPG Planning

If it would be helpful for your PPG, you could request a planning meeting with the current membership, the Practice Manager and Practice staff to work through:

- **Aims and Objectives:** What are we here to do? What is the purpose of this PPG?
- **Expectations:** What does the NHS and our practice expect from PPGs?
- **Goals and Vision:** What do we want to achieve together?
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** What barriers might we face, and what strengths can we build on?
- **Fundraising:** Will the PPG be involved in fundraising activities?

Recruiting to your PPG



Before you recruit

- **Be clear on the purpose of the PPG:** What is this group for? What is it aiming to achieve?
- **Where is information about the PPG:** Do you have a page on the practice website that you can signpost people to? Is there a flyer or poster available to share?
- **Set expectations for recruits:** What kind of involvement will be needed? Are you looking for specific skills?

Ways to recruit?

1. Promote within the Practice:

- Posters and flyers within the waiting room and reception
- In-person conversations with patients while they wait
- Practice website with a dedicated PPG page and joining instructions.

2. Community connections:

- Ask community groups to share information about the PPG
- Visit community groups to promote the PPG

3. Promote via the Practice Team:

- Liaise with the Practice Manager to discuss the promotion.

4. Think beyond the Practice:

- Libraries, pharmacies, community centres, places of worship, local newsletters, social media, attend local events.

How to increase participation?

1. **Offer hybrid meetings:** These would allow people to meet virtually and in-person at the same time, potentially meaning more people can take part.
2. **Flexible meeting times:** Rotate meeting times i.e. evenings, weekends.
3. **Hold meetings in the community:** Meet in community buildings or during/after local group meetings.
4. **Shorter, focused meetings:** Keep meetings concise and topic-specific to respect people's time.
5. **Use plain language:** Ensure agendas, minutes, and communications are easy to understand.
6. **Offer incentives or recognition:** Acknowledge contributions or offer tokens of appreciation i.e. certificate, thank you notes.

Understanding your population to strengthen representation

- **Know your population:** Review your Practice's demographic data to understand who your patients are.
- **Is your PPG representative?** Compare your PPG membership to the practice population and local inequality data. Identify the gaps in representation.
- **Targeted engagement:** Use this insight to develop approaches for engaging underrepresented groups.
- **Whose role is it?** Consider whether this work sits with the PPG, the Practice or both.

Continued...



Capture the wider patient voice

Engagement Activities:

- **Open days/evenings:** Themed events to engage specific groups
- **Meet and Greet Sessions:** Talk with patients in the practice to explain the PPG and spark interest
- **Pop-up listening booth:** Collect anonymous feedback via sticky notes, comment cards or question boards
- **Visit local community groups:** Attend sessions at community centres, support groups, and events to promote the PPG and listen to community concerns.
- **Targeted surveys:** Use short surveys to gather views from specific groups.


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Digital and ongoing feedback

- **Online mailing list:** Let patients opt into topics they care about without needing to attend every meeting.
- **PPG newsletter/updates:** Share what the PPG is doing and invite feedback or involvement.
- **Use social media and websites:** Share polls, updates, or invitations to contribute.

Existing feedback channels

- **Healthwatch Derbyshire Reports:** Request general patient insight from local healthwatch
 - **Staff suggestions and feedback:** Ask staff to share what they are hearing from patients
 - **Complaints:** Identify any recurring issues or themes
 - **Suggestion box:** Encourage anonymous ideas and feedback
 - **Service improvement/change surveys:** Use surveys linked to specific improvements or changes
 - **GP Annual survey:** Review results to identify gaps and opportunities.
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Additional support

1. **JUCD PPG Network:** We can have a dedicated slot on the agenda to talk through topics and challenges like today (if this has been helpful).
2. **Healthwatch Derbyshire (HWD) PPG Guide:** HWD have produced a guide for establishing and running a PPG - [HWD Guide](#)
3. **National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP):** NAPP can provide PPG resources and information to support the setup and development of PPGs (there is a joining fee) – [NAPP information](#)