



Framework for Patient Participation Groups

Introduction

This framework has been created by Healthwatch Kent in partnership with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), as a guide and resource to enable PPGs to achieve the following:

- To obtain, review and respond to a variety of sources of information that describe the views and experiences of patients and carers visiting their GP Practice.
- To influence the quality of the services provided by the Practice with the aim of improving the standard of service quality experienced by patients and carers

This framework has been created in response to a detailed and extensive project that Healthwatch Kent undertook to explore the issues and challenges facing PPG groups in Kent. PPGs across Kent were clearly asking for support to guide them in their work.

The framework is designed to be a useful and flexible tool for individual groups to use to meet and support their own challenges.

Additional support can be found on the National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP) where many tools are free to access <http://www.napp.org.uk/bestprac.html> although there is also a member's area which entails a joining fee.

What is a PPG group?

Broadly, PPGs are voluntary groups of patients, working in partnership with practice representatives to make constructive contributions to practice services and facilities, benefiting patients and practice alike. NAPP defines a PPG as:

'...groups of volunteer patients, typically based at a single general practitioner (GP) surgery. They evolve to meet particular local needs. Each one is different, free to choose how to organise itself and where to focus its activities. They typically require support from the practice to get started but, over time, they should be run by the patients themselves. It is important that good relations with the practice are retained, so that PPGs can contribute to the partnership between practices and their patients'





The Guidance



PPGs have a vital role to play to ensure the voice of patients are heard by their local GP practices.

They are also supported by a series of legal frameworks and national guidance.

Including:

- NHS England aim to make “working in partnership with patients and the public central to the way we work” both in personal healthcare and service development.
- The NHS Constitution places a statutory duty on health organisations to engage and involve patients in the planning of healthcare services
- The Health and Social Care Act (2012) advocates the evolution of the patient’s role from ‘passive recipient of medical care’ to an ‘active, empowered and informed co-producer of health’ where shared decision making becomes the norm
- Since 1st April 2015, all GP practices in England have been contractually obliged to form their own PPG
- Practices are obliged to make reasonable efforts for the membership to be representative of the various sub-groups that make up the practice population
- Practices are also required to engage with their PPG at a frequency and in a manner agreed with the group, and to review patient feedback (whether from the PPG or other sources - Friends and Family Tests, patient surveys, etc.) with the aims of the practice and PPG agreeing improvements that could be made to services. They should act on suggestions for improvements, where the practice and PPG agree.
- Practices are required to declare in the annual electronic practice self-declaration (eDEC) that they have fulfilled these requirements.
- The Care Quality Commission now places increased importance on the feedback given by PPGs about practices during their inspections



Key Elements for an Effective PPG Group

Area	Criteria	Action/How	Evidence
Leadership	PPGs should be run by the patients themselves (defined by NAPP). Committed leadership is important and there should be the opportunity to develop into this. Leaders should be good communicators at both a strategic and patient level. To relieve pressure on one person, joint Chairs or Deputy Chairs are a good idea.		
PPG-Practice relationship	A good relationship based on trust must be established with the practice providing support to the PPG. The roles and remit between both should be clearly defined. Patient engagement should be embedded into the culture of the practice		
Governance	The group needs to have a clearly defined terms of reference and structure with clear objectives and an action plan to deliver them. How often does the leadership of the group stand for re-election? (A defined number of years or period of time) Does the Practice participate in the meetings? Is the difference between participation and control clear?		
Access to Information	The group should have access/directed to clear information about their local population, the relevance of commissioning structures, the evolving health context and policy developments regarding primary care. This should include clear information about where the PPG fits within this structure and the important role they play.		
Access to support	Is the group involved in other networks and groups? Suggestions would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local PPG Chairs group organised in most cases by the CCG • Healthwatch Kent newsletter and Community Champion • Linked to local PPGs in your vicinity to share ideas/best practice 		



Key Elements for an Effective PPG Group

Area	Criteria	Action/How	Evidence
Visibility & Status	<p>PPG should be very visible to both staff and patients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an official, monitored PPG email with a named contact • Suggest an 'opt out' rather than and 'opt in' email contacts list among patients. Include this on new patients registration form • Create a communications strategy using all methods available to you, to reach different parts of your community such as a Newsletter, posters in surgery and other key community places, leaflets given to regular patients • Be creative on how to get your message to different parts of your community - church, pub, school, scouts/guides, village shop, library, face to face visits, • Social media • Can you work with other local PPGs to produce joint promotional material? 		
Membership	<p>Not all PPGs can be truly representative of their practice. However, groups must actively seek ways to encourage membership from as many parts of their practice as possible and be adaptable about the time and place of the meetings to enable participation</p>		
Engagement	<p>Does your PPG engage with the CCG? Does your Chair (or another) attend the monthly PPG Chairs meeting with the CCG? Information and actions from these meetings should be shared in a useful format with the group Do you have an active link with Healthwatch Kent? Do members receive the Healthwatch newsletter? Are any of your members Healthwatch volunteers?</p>		

Building better participation insert link is a framework of four inter-linking Areas:

- Getting PPGs in place
- Helping PPGs work well



Key questions



Summary:

If you can answer these questions, then that will provide a sound basis for setting up a PPG or making an existing PPG more effective but still allow the flexibility to adapt the Framework to suit your particular practice.

1. What is the agreement between the PPG and the practice to make sure you can work well together?
2. What do you plan to do as a PPG to help your practice in its work with patients?
3. How do you make sure all patients of the practice have the opportunity to take part in the PPG?
4. How do you communicate with patients and find out what they want?
5. Are you able to access other health and social care organisations beyond the practice and, if so, how?
6. What resources are available to help the PPG and practice achieve their goals? Which would you use and how?
7. Have you made a difference for patients and how will you evaluate that?
8. How will you develop in the future?