



# Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

## **Practices and patients acting together as a force for change – collaboration, clarity and what works in practice**

Reporting on a workshop involving London practice leads in patient participation and members of their Patient Participation Groups

August 2017

## Introduction

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project aims to promote patient engagement as integral to high quality, sustainable general practice and provide practical support to London practices to foster and develop their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs).

This brief report aims to provide information that is helpful to practices and their PPGs working together to exert influence beyond their practice.

In March 2017, the project invited London practice leads in patient participation and members of their PPGs to participate in a workshop to explore ways that PPGs and practices might act together as a force for change, exerting influence beyond their practice to benefit both patients and the practice.

The learning from the workshop is summarised in this report, and includes signposting to relevant online resources.

This report includes a case study's by East London GP Dr Naomi Beer (see page 3) on the benefits of patient engagement and how her practice's PPG acted to help save her practice. It concludes with a draft action planning format that PPGs and practices can use to help them agree and act on joint priorities for developing the influence of their PPG beyond their practice.

# 1. Collaboration, clarity and what works for other practices: a summary of the learning from the workshop "Practice and patients as a force for change"

## What PPGs in London are achieving for patients and practices

PPG members and practice leads in patient participation attending the workshop began by sharing some of the achievements of their PPGs. These included:

- patient representation on the CCG [Clinical Commissioning Group]
- working for new premises
- helping to develop other PPGs via CCG liaison for PPGs
- PPG support for CQC [Care Quality Commission] visit
- GPs reviewing patient feedback regularly
- total co-operation of GPs and practice managers
- music in the waiting room
- improved opening hours
- fitness group for patients
- informing patients about the changes and challenges facing general practice

**To share your PPG's achievements** please visit Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project web page (<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/J3PCKLP>).

## Working in a policy context of challenge and change

Workshop participants considered and discussed system changes affecting practices and patients, including the funding available for NHS and social care.

Whilst there was some agreement that these changes could offer opportunities, as well as challenges, participants,

in particular, felt it important that their members had an overview and awareness of the effect that current policy changes are having on general practice and services to patients.

**Useful resource:** Londonwide LMCs have produced some GP State of Emergency (GPSoE) resources for practices. These include a slide set presentation that PPGs can use to help inform their members of the current challenges facing general practice and what they can do to help. Available free of charge [here](#).

## Opportunities for PPGs to exert influence beyond their practice

Workshop participants agreed that being part of a wider PPG network (eg, a local network) was an extremely useful way to share information, experience and good practice and can support PPGs in developing influence beyond their own practice.

Participants considered where PPGs could exert influence beyond their practice to benefit patients and practice. These included:

- wider local patient population
- local commissioners of health and social care eg, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Local Authority (LA)
- local and national policy makers (eg, local councillors; local MPs)
- engaging in public consultation about NHS Services

**Useful resources and contacts:** Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) [www.officelondonccgs.org.uk](http://www.officelondonccgs.org.uk) for local CCG contacts. Your local CCG should be able to tell you whether they fund/know of a local PPG support project and what it can offer. They should also be able to tell you whether there is a local PPG network for PPGs to share learning and information. Find out who your local councillors are, and how to contact them [here](#). Find out who your local MP is, and how to contact your them [here](#).

## Getting the groundwork right

Participants agreed that building trust between the PPG and practice and working collaboratively to achieve jointly agreed priorities was a pre-requisite to PPG success in exercising influence beyond their practice.

When considering developing PPG influence beyond the practice it may be helpful for the PPG and practice together to discuss the following:

- do our PPG and practice currently have clear, shared expectations of each other?
- does our PPG currently have access to wider networks of information and support?
- do our PPG and practice team have a shared overview of how decision making beyond our practice can affect our patients and practice?
- what do we want our PPG to achieve by exercising influence beyond our practice?

**Useful resource:** Please see the draft action planning format in section 3 of this report. Please also see "[Setting the future framework for your PPG](#)" a toolkit produced by Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project in collaboration with the Patients Association. The National Association for Patient Participation website ([www.napp.org.uk](http://www.napp.org.uk)) includes access to a downloadable copy of "Building Better Participation", a guide commissioned by NHS England for practices and PPGs which aims to help PPGs work effectively. The guide includes a section entitled "Influencing Beyond the Practice".

## Participant feedback on their experience of the workshop

Below are some examples of the feedback from participants on what they learned by participating in the workshop:

*"Impact the voice of the PPG can make on decisions in the CCG"*

*"The dire state of the funding and support and for GPs and the problems that they face"*

*"Ideas on how to engage and use the PPG to promote the practice"*

*"The importance of using patients as a resource"*

*"About the impact PPGs can have on other groups"*

## 2. "Engaged patients boost your practice" a case study in PPG influence

**Dr Naomi Beer writes about the benefits of patient engagement and how her practice PPG acted to help save their practice.**

"I want to write about the benefits of patient engagement and the fun we have had.

We started with an appreciation that patients (just like every member of staff) have tons of treasure. By that I mean valuable information about the practice that can help us

understand our service: what works, what doesn't work so well and why. Don Berwick's mantra that 'every organisation is perfectly designed to give the outcome it delivers' needs unpacking and patients can help practices do that because they experience all the outcomes. They are worth listening to.

How to get to the treasure? We started by asking staff to invite to a group those patients who either complained or praised some aspect of the service. We felt they were most likely to be motivated to see change. We also made strong efforts to engage patients from under-represented communities that we as a PPG felt were important for example, young mothers, patients with mental health problems and ethnic minorities. We advertised the group on our website, newsletter and waiting room screens. The message was that patients' views were important and we wanted to learn from them to improve the service. As time went on, we also reported back and celebrated the achievements of the group - vital feedback as to its effectiveness and its role.

We do several things to prepare for meetings:

We provide a light lunch and the Chair plus a secretary who takes minutes. In addition, at least one GP plus a practice nurse attend the meeting plus any invited guests. Summaries and agendas with previously agreed items are sent out to an email/postal list. A report is given as to the progress of previous actions. Information about services - especially changes, problems or risks - are shared for comment. Patient members' ideas and comments are distilled into agreed action points that are carried forward by named individuals. Agreed minutes are posted on the website. The process is dynamic and on-going.

Obviously every practice is different and the PPG will evolve according to the dynamics of the group. Some practices have been very effective in setting up virtual groups so that certain communities within the practice population who might be more invested in the outcome of a particular issue can be consulted. In this case, simple questions (with yes/no/don't know options) are best.

When we created a forum for exchange of views and ideas we were able to help patients understand things from the practice point of view. We discovered that our patients are incredibly sympathetic and loyal - often the ones who have been loudest to complain! They really want the practice to succeed.

Soon we were fighting for our survival due to the MPIG cuts, the patients quickly understood that we were up for the fight and that we were determined to stay alive for them. They responded by sending messages of support, signing petitions in their thousands, involving their MPs and councillors, getting us air time on local radio and TV, marching on the streets of our borough. Our patient group supported us all the way. Since then, they have assisted in staff training and student education, written articles for our newsletter, helped recruit more patients to the group, been the catalyst for extending health promotion into local schools and providing more self-help information for patients, helped set up groups for patients with particular conditions such as osteoporosis, Parkinson's etc and given us invaluable help with CQC and other regulatory visits. They have been a wonderful source of ideas and support. We call them Critical (spot the double meaning!) Friends."

### 3. (Draft) action planning tool

Participants in the workshop used this draft tool to start setting priorities and planning actions for the next steps they would take to develop the influence of their PPG beyond their practice. Practice participation leads and PPG Chairs worked collaboratively to jointly agree priorities and action for their PPG and practice.



# Practice and Patients acting together as a force for change

This DRAFT tool was produced by Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project for the use of participants in a workshop facilitated by the project in March 2017.

Thank you to the Patients Association for the action planning format.

**A tool to help support your practice and Patient Participation Group (PPG) in working collaboratively to agree and act on your joint priorities for developing the influence of your PPG beyond your practice.**

## Section 1: Do our PPG and practice currently have clear, shared expectations of each other?

**Does our PPG have clear terms of reference?**

**Does our PPG have an up to date action plan?**

## Section 2 : How do we currently communicate with our wider practice patient population?

**What are the ways in which patients can currently find out about the purpose and work of our PPG and opportunities to get involved?**

**What opportunities do patients currently have for getting involved in and contributing to the agenda and work of our PPG?**  
(eg ,attending face to face PPG meetings; virtual group; focus groups; surveys etc)

**Does our current PPG membership reflect the demography of our practice population?**

### Section 3. Does our PPG currently have access to wider networks of information and support?

Is there a local PPG Network accessible to our PPG?

Does our PPG know how to find out about what local and national resources are available to them?

### Section 4 : Do our practice team and PPG have a shared overview of how decision making beyond our practice can affect our patients and practice?

Do the practice team and PPG have a shared overview of the current NHS policy context in relation to general practice in London?

Do the practice team and PPG have a shared overview of our local health and care system?

## Section 5: What are our reasons for wanting to develop the influence our PPG exerts beyond our practice?

Does our PPG currently exercise influence beyond our practice?

What are our main reasons for wanting to develop the influence our PPG exerts beyond our practice?

What do we want our PPG to achieve through exercising influence beyond the practice?

Does our practice and PPG have shared and/or complementary priorities for exercising influence?

## Section 6: Our priorities for action

What are our top three priorities for action to support and develop our PPG in exercising influence beyond the practice?

1.

2.

3.

## Section 7: Action Planning

Please see the table on the following page.

# Patient Participation Group Action Plan

## Action one

Write your first action here:

| What do we need to do? | Who is going to make it happen? | Start date | Date due | What do we want to achieve? | What resources are needed? | How will we celebrate success? |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |

## Action two

Write your second action here:

| What do we need to do? | Who is going to make it happen? | Start date | Date due | What do we want to achieve? | What resources do we need? | How will we celebrate success? |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |

## Action three

Write your third action here:

| What do we need to do? | Who is going to make it happen? | Start date | Date due | What do we want to achieve? | What resources do we need? | How will we celebrate success? |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                        |                                 |            |          |                             |                            |                                |
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