



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

 **the patients association**

Setting the future framework for your patient participation group

This is a toolkit to help support your practice and Patient Participation Group (PPG) in working collaboratively to review, agree and act on PPG priorities to improve services to patients and contribute to practice sustainability.

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Introduction

This simple toolkit has been produced by Londonwide LMCs Patient Engagement Project in collaboration with The Patients Association. It aims to support London general practices and their Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) in working to review the focus of their PPG and action plan for future PPG development.

Londonwide LMCs is the professional voice of London general practice, helping practices secure their future and providing specialist advice and guidance on a wide range of local and pan-London issues.

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 PPGs.

The Patients Association is a long established independent national charity with the mission to listen to patients and speak up for change and has a national helpline. Its work includes gathering trends in patient experience, undertaking service improvement projects with the NHS and other Health and Social Care organisations and ensuring that the patient perspective is heard by key policy and decision makers, including MPs.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit outlines a ten-point process for practice leads in patient participation and their PPG Chairs to work together to review the current structure and focus of their PPG and develop and act on their PPG priorities for the future. Whether you have a newly established PPG with a few members or an active PPG with dozens of members, this toolkit can help you to launch your PPG as well as sustain and develop it. The toolkit includes relevant information, practical tips and signposting to additional resources. This toolkit is not, and should not be, prescriptive. Every practice and PPG is different and will have different needs and priorities. To get the most from the toolkit you are advised to look through all of it before employing it, and then feel free to adapt the process to build on the strengths of your own PPG.

Who should use this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to enable patients and practice team to work collaboratively to develop their PPG.

Strategic leadership and support for PPG development from the partners in practice is vital in the development of an active PPG that contributes to the quality of their practice and to its sustainability.

Section 1: Why review your PPG?

PPGs can be effective in improving services for patients; acting as a critical friend to general practice; providing information to patients on service provision within and beyond the practice; helping target resources by bringing a patient perspective to practice decision making; improving the morale of practice staff and acting to champion the practice.

The current rapidly changing and challenging NHS policy environment throws up a lot of unpredictability for the future for general practice. In this context, a review of your PPG can enable both practice and patients to:

Ensure contractual requirements are met

Since April 2015 it has been a contractual requirement for all practices to develop and maintain a PPG for the practice to obtain feedback from the practice population on services delivered by the contractor. Practices should make reasonable efforts for the PPG to be representative of the practice patient population and should engage with the PPG in a frequency and manner agreed with the group. Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspections require evidence that a practice encourages patient participation and acts on patient feedback.

Foster the collaborative working relationship between your practice team and PPG

An open and honest partnership relationship, informed by patient and practice priorities, is consistently cited by the practices and PPGs working with Londonwide LMCs Patient Engagement Project as central to developing and sustaining active and effective PPGs.

Develop and clarify fit for purpose PPG focus and goals

Enable your PPG and practice team to develop and deliver the PPG's role in identifying and addressing current and anticipated patient and practice needs and priorities.

Encourage wider engagement in your PPG

Help people understand what the PPG does, and could do, to benefit them by clarifying the purpose of your PPG, identifying and communicating PPG achievements to date and publicising opportunities for patient and practice team involvement in setting and delivering PPG priorities for the future.

Identify resources and allies beyond the practice to support your PPG in achieving its goals

Local and national groups and organisations, including those in the third sector, can help support and champion the work of your PPG.

Section 2: What helps to make a PPG effective?

To help inform the process of reviewing your PPG and planning and delivering its future work it is useful to bear in mind the resources, information and networks available to your PPG and practice locally and nationally. Please see below for some benchmarking and signposting information that could be helpful.

Top tip: be aware of some of the key components of effective PPGs

These are some of the key components of effective PPGs as identified by the Londonwide LMCs 2016 survey of practices and PPG members:

- Open and honest working partnership between practice team and PPG
- Shared clarity about the purpose of the PPG
- Shared clarity between patients and practice about the roles and expectations of PPG members and of practice team members in relation to the PPG
- Diversity of PPG membership
- Shared decision making by PPG members and practice
- Clear PPG goals and action plan
- Sharing PPG information and requests with patients and practice team using a variety of methods (face to face and virtual)
- Applying learning from what works well and what doesn't work so well
- Celebrating and communicating success

Top tip: be aware that there are a range of PPG development toolkits, templates and information freely available online

Some of the most practical and accessible toolkits, templates and sources of information include the following:

- Londonwide LMCs constituents can contact the Patient Engagement Project patientengage@lmc.org.uk for information about what the project can offer
- The National Association for Patient Participation (NAPP) www.napp.org.uk website 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 on "Getting PPGs in Place"
- The Patients Association www.patients-association.org.uk has a PPG information and support pack, which is a **toolkit to help set up and run Patient Participation Groups**, available free of charge on request from abdullah@patients-association.com
- Brighton and Hove CCG "How to develop and support an online Participation Group" is a handbook for general practice staff that includes practical "how to" information, including templates. Download it here: <http://www.socialsubcultural.com/smmmap/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Virtual-PPG-Toolkit-FINAL.doc>
NB the local contacts and organisations referenced in the handbook apply to Brighton and Hove only.

Top tip: identify local contacts that could help support the development of your PPG

Your PPG and practice team members will together already be aware of, or know where to find out about, the existence of local contacts, including local PPG Networks, that could help support the process of reviewing your PPG as well as its future development. For example:

- Your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) should be able to tell you whether they fund/know of a local PPG support project and what it can offer; and whether there is a local PPG Network for PPGs to share learning and information. See www.officelondonccgs.org.uk for local CCG contacts.
- Healthwatch is the “consumer champion for health and social care” www.healthwatch.co.uk There is a local Healthwatch network in London, you could approach your local Healthwatch to explore how you might work together e.g. identify and work towards common goals www.healthwatch.co.uk/find-local-healthwatch
- Carers Trust www.carers.org could help you involve local carers in your PPG. Carers Trust mission is: “to identify, support and involve the UK’s unpaid carers through the provision of action, help and advice.” Carers Trust has 24 network partners (independent carers’ centres) across London. For more information on support for the inclusion of carers in PPGs and on opportunities to work with your local carers centre to identify common goals please contact Moira Wilkinson mwilkinson@carers.org
- To find out about local voluntary and community groups who may be working with specific sections of your community, contact your local (borough) Council for Voluntary Sector (CVS). N.B. not all boroughs have a CVS; try looking at the website of London Voluntary Service Council www.lvsc.org.uk which includes information on health related work across the capital, visiting your Local Authority website and consulting your PPG members and practice team to identify local groups.

Section 3. What should your PPG review focus on?

To get the most out of your review your PPG and practice team should include a focus on:

Where you are now

This can include considering what's worked well and what's not worked so well to date. For example:

- What PPG achievements you are proud of
- How you communicate and celebrate PPG successes with the practice team and wider patient population
- Whether your PPG and practice team have a shared understanding of the role of your PPG
- Whether your PPG has clear terms of reference and an action plan
- How your PPG influences practice decision making
- The range of opportunities for patients to get involved in the PPG and how they get to know about them
- How your PPG and practice team share information on the challenges currently facing general practice and patients in the capital

Where you want to be

You can use the information and tips in Sections 1 and 2 of this toolkit to help inform your PPG priorities for the future. Your priorities will be specific to your practice and PPG and should be agreed jointly by patients and practice team.

You can use Section 5 of this toolkit to draft your top three priorities for PPG action for improving patient services and supporting practice resilience.

The actions you will take to get there

Section 6 of this toolkit is an action planning format to help you define the practical steps you will take to put your priorities into action, who will be involved in making them happen and when you aim to achieve them.

Section 4 : Who should be involved in the review of your PPG?

Patients and practice team together need to be involved in your PPG review if you are aiming for a shared understanding of, and commitment to, PPG development and action based on jointly agreed priorities. Practice partners and other key decision makers in the practice should support the review process and be committed to taking forward jointly agreed priorities and actions for PPG development.

You may want to consider if you'd like help from an external facilitator in taking forward the review, for example to help structure a review meeting involving PPG and practice team members. You could approach your local PPG Network and/or your Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to help you identify facilitators.

The practice lead in patient participation and the PPG Chair should initiate and lead the review process

This might mean either the practice lead or the Chair proposing to the other that there be a review, highlighting the potential benefits and sharing this tool, followed by an initial face to face meeting to discuss and agree next steps.

You might choose to pull together a small focus group for this initial face to face meeting, if, for example your PPG does not yet have a Chair or Vice Chair and/or your PPG is currently entirely virtual.

Top tip: Your PPG review needs to involve at least one patient and one practice team member from the start to develop the shared ownership and buy in to make the review worthwhile. You need at least one face to face meeting. If you think that might be a problem then be open about it with your practice team and PPG and ask them to help identify a person to work with you.

All practice team and PPG members should have the opportunity to be involved in the review

You could use the opportunities that you already have in place, whether face to face meetings and/or online communications, to involve your practice team members and current PPG members in the review. You may also choose to initiate meetings, surveys etc. that focus only on the review.

Top tip: Be clear on whether you want to co-produce the review (i.e. involve all, or a group of, practice team members and PPG members in decision making and responsibility for delivering the review process and the resulting priorities and actions) or consult people (e.g. ask for their views and take those views into account when practice lead on patient participation and PPG Chair decide what the PPG should do) or inform them (e.g. tell people what you have decided will happen and why).

Do your best to ensure the wider patient population of your practice are aware of the review and are offered opportunities to get involved in the review

You could use the opportunities that are already in place to communicate with your wider patient population (e.g. your practice website; practice newsletter; regular clinics; health promotion events, PPG noticeboard).

Top tip: Be clear about the purpose of the review, and if you want to consult your wider patient population as well as inform them then formulate clear questions e.g. "Your practice has a Patient Participation Group (PPG); these are the things the PPG and practice think should be the priorities for the group; please briefly say what you think should be the top priority for the PPG; if you'd like to join the PPG please let us know".

Section 5. What are your top three priorities for action?

You can use this section of the toolkit to draft your top three priorities for action for developing your PPG to help improve patient services and contribute to practice resilience. The minimum number of people involved should be the practice lead in patient participation and the PPG Chair (you may wish to identify and work with a PPG and practice team focus group to draft priorities). Those involved should jointly agree on the draft priorities.

Top Tip: Include at least one “quick win”

Include in your top three priorities something that you think you can achieve, and demonstrate that you have achieved, within a reasonably brief period (1-3 months).

Top Tip: Share what you’ve drafted and be prepared to discuss and amend your priorities

Once you’ve agreed your draft priorities share them with all PPG members and practice team members for comment, discussion and amendment.

Patient Participation Group Priorities for Action

1.

2.

3.

Section 6: Action Planning

You can use this section of the toolkit to plan how to put the priorities you have jointly agreed into action. The minimum number of people involved in drafting the action plan should be the practice lead in patient participation and the PPG Chair. You may wish to identify and work with a PPG focus group to agree the action plan.

Top Tip: Keep your timescale for achievement to 12 months maximum

Your action plan can include simple steps towards achieving your priorities. You don't have to plan to achieve everything at once. A 12 month timescale will help keep up the momentum and help you plan realistically.

Top Tip: Ensure that the people who will be responsible for delivering the actions are on board.

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?

Section 7: Communicating your priorities and action plan

Once you have involved patients and practice team in formulating your priorities and action plan then feedback on the results by thanking those who were involved and ensuring the priorities and action plan are accessible to all PPG members and practice team members. Give the wider patient population the opportunity to see the priorities and action plan e.g. via the practice website or newsletter.

Top Tip: Make a commitment to provide updates on how your action plan is progressing

At the same time as sharing your priorities and action plan say when and how you will let everybody know how it is going e.g. by a quarterly or half yearly update on your newsletter or website or PPG noticeboard. That gives you a chance to celebrate successes and communicate the changes you make.

Section 8 : Making it happen

One or two people need to take overall responsibility for keeping your action plan on the road e.g. the PPG Chair and the practice lead in patient participation.

PPG meetings should include monitoring the progress of the action plan.

Top Tip: Apply what you learn as you go along

The action plan is yours, you can amend it as you learn what works well and what doesn't work so well. It's the results that matter: Don't forget to celebrate the positive.

Top Tip: Set a date for when you plan to fully review, revise and update your priorities and action plan

You might want to do this annually.

Section 9: Communicating with all PPG members, the practice team and wider patient population what you've done and what difference it has made

It's good practice to communicate on the progress of your action plan as often as is feasible, at least twice in any 12 month period to inform people but also to help raise the profile of your PPG e.g. show other patients that getting involved can make a positive difference.

Once your action plan is completed you should consider making a big splash of your achievements, large and small, to raise the profile of your PPG both within and beyond your practice e.g. in practice newsletter; practice website; practice noticeboards; Twitter and Facebook; with Londonwide LMCs; with your Clinical Commissioning Group; with your local PPG Network; your local councillors and MP.

Top Tip: All communications should include details of how patients can get involved in your PPG

Section 10: Repeat the review and action planning process

You will want to take forward and build on the successes of your PPG and that is likely to mean taking a step back to look at what you've achieved and learned, consider the changes that are taking place for general practice and patients in London and plan the future activity of your PPG. Your experience and knowledge of what's needed to help improve services for patients in your practice and helps sustain your practice is unique and invaluable.

Please let us know what you think of this toolkit by mailing patientengage@lmc.org.uk

We'd be grateful for your feedback on how this toolkit could be improved; whether you've used it and what you found useful. Thank you.



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