

Healthwatch Patient Participation Group (PPG) Meeting July 2020

1. Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Purpose of meeting
 - To assess the level of interest in developing PPGs
 - To assess the level of interest in developing PPG network within Primary Care Network (PCN) areas
- PPG activity during Covid-19
- Effectiveness of PPGs
- Challenges for PPGs
- E-consult and digital access to services
- AOB

2. Attendees

- Sherard Road Medical Practice
- Vanbrugh/Greenwich Health Centre
- Waverly Practice
- Valentine/Ferryview Health Centre
- Glyndon Medical Centre
- Coldharbour Hill

Attendees included patient PPG members and practice staff. Initial conversations suggest that not all practices had shared the invitation with their PPG members.

3. PPGs during Covid-19

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Most PPGs have not been operational during Covid and (virtual) meetings have not been held. There has been little communication between practices and PPG members during Covid.

Going forwards, some PPGs plan to begin virtual meetings. Whilst virtual meetings may extend membership and accessibility for some, it could exclude those less comfortable with using digital tools, and those without access to technology.

4. Effectiveness and challenges for PPGs

- PPGs are an important way to engage with patients and support the practice in developing services and approaches. However, not all PPGs are effective.
- Challenges vary greatly between larger and smaller practices.
- It is difficult to recruit patients and create a PPG that reflects the patient population.
- Some PPGs find it difficult to keep members focused. A minority of patients join their PPG to highlight personal health issues.
- Not all PPGs are run by patients.
- Not all PPGs have a chair or patient rep who is willing, or able, to take responsibility for their PPG. As a result, this creates an additional administrative burden on practice staff.
- Not all PPGs have an open discussion format. Some are simply a mailing list.
- Active and effective PPGs could be used as a model for less active and effective PPGs.

5. PPG Development

The key areas for support are:

- Recruitment (to reflect the patient population)
- Effective participation (clarifying the remit and scope of PPGs, and what they hope to achieve)
- PPG leadership
- Ways of working with their practice
- Practice support with PPGs

6. PPG Network

There is interest in PPGs meeting within PCN areas. Valentine/Ferryview PPG is not in favour of this proposal.

Borough-wide meetings have been useful for PPGs to meet in a larger group and these should be continued in addition to any PCN area meetings.

7. E-consult and digital access to services

All practices are required to offer digital access to services, in addition to telephone consultations, and face-to-face appointments, when needed.

While many patients are happy to use e-consult, and do so appropriately, a minority are misusing using this facility. For example, falsely listing chest pains or breathing difficulties on the form as a way of ensuring rapid call-



back from a GP. The consequences of this can be grave. It may mean that patients who do have urgent needs have to wait longer for a call-back than would otherwise be the case.

The length of the e-consult form was raised. It is extensive and not service user friendly. Discussions are taking place on 'e-consult lite' which seeks to revise the length of the form.

AoB

None.

**For more information on our work to support PPGs, contact
'jummy@healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk'.**