

Patient Participation Groups in North Dorset

Annual Review 2015-16

What is a PPG?

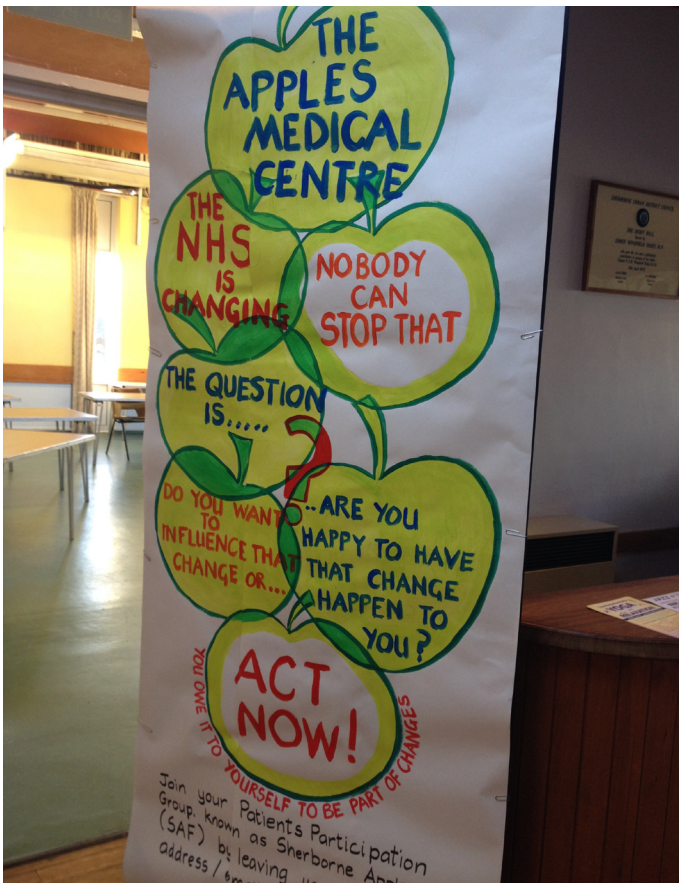
A Patient Participation Group (PPG) represents the views and experiences of registered patients to their GP Practice. Its role is best described as that of a 'critical friend'. Most have a Steering Group of around 8-16 members who meet formally every couple of months with their Practice Manager. Beyond this, all patients are encouraged to become a 'virtual' member of their PPG by providing their email or postal address to receive communications from their PPG. PPGs strive to represent all patients and regularly promote their activities to publicise the role these groups play in improving local healthcare.

The North Dorset approach

North Dorset has nine GP Practices that share management arrangements for the delivery of local healthcare provision and coordinated Primary Care services.

The locality has a patient population of around 95,000. Seven of our GP Practices have an established Patients Participation Group (PPG) that meets regularly and all have a 'virtual' PPG – a database of patients who have signed up to periodically receive information from the Practice and be updated about local developments within the NHS.

A part-time Patient & Public Involvement Development Worker is employed by the North Dorset Locality to support PPGs in working together with Practice Managers and GPs.



For further information on North Dorset PPGs contact:

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Examples of how North Dorset PPGs are making a difference to their local GP Practice and beyond:

Representing patients' views and experience

First and foremost our PPGs represent the views and experience of patients to their local Practice Manager. They provide feedback & ideas and support the Practice staff to continually improve services. Beyond this members of our PPGs also attend national conferences, regional and local health-related events. One of our PPG Chairs continues to fulfil the role of Lay Representative on the NHS Dorset CCG Quality & Medicines Optimisation Group with a remit to provide a patient / public perspective to this formal working group. Another attends the Patient & Public Engagement Group set up to inform the decisions of the NHS Dorset CCG Governing Board as it progresses through its major Clinical Services Review. Our PPGs continue to provide valuable assistance to the NHS Dorset Communications and Engagement Team in raising public awareness of this Review by encouraging people to attend local consultation events. PPG representatives also attend the quarterly meetings of the North Dorset Health Network Group, a forum for discussion and information sharing between providers and users of our local health services.

Developing a coordinated and consistent approach

Our PPG Chairs meet together every 6 weeks to update each other and share information, to provide peer support and coordinate their activity in the interest of developing high quality, productive working relationships between our PPGs and GP Practices.

"The Chairs Group meetings are a valuable opportunity for advice and support between PPGs. And the attendance of GPs and senior NHS managers at these meetings demonstrates that they consider it important to hear what we have to say on behalf of patients." PPG Chair

In November 2015 the PPG Chairs Group organised a PPG Conference (pictured below) for the 35 GP Practices in North & West Dorset. Over 70 PPG members and Practice Managers came together to share their experience of developing PPGs in our doctors surgeries.



Linking GP surgeries with their local communities

Our PPGs act as a conduit between local support services & community groups and the GP surgeries resulting in better links and raised awareness of what is available to help patients to help themselves stay well.

Example: Following the success of the Stalbridge PPG Medicines Amnesty (pictured right) in October 2015 the PPG Chairs Group has organised a North Dorset-wide initiative to take place in Autumn 2016. This will coordinate local activities with a publicity campaign across the locality highlighting the issue of medicines waste and the associated cost to the NHS.

Helping GP Practices to communicate with everyone

The most important role of our PPGs is to help improve communication between our Practices and their patients.

Examples: Whitecliff PPG has a Carers Lead who is supporting the Practice to review and improve its support for carers. This has led to an increase in the number of carers now supported by the Practice who were not previously receiving this.

Gillingham PPG has created a database of local organisations and community groups linked to 'harder-to-reach' groups to assist their Practice in communicating with all its patients.



All our PPGs are helping to make their Practice 'dementia-friendly' as part of the iSpace initiative. Most are also members of their local Dementia Action Alliance supporting the development of 'dementia-friendly' communities across Dorset.

Like other PPGs, Sherborne Apples Forum (pictured on back page) has made good use of the annual Flu Clinics to raise the profile of their group to patients and as a result have successfully increased their 'virtual' membership. PPG members even hand deliver to housebound patients saving the cost of postage and keeping themselves fit at the same time!

Sturminster & Marnhull PPG co-produced a Press Release with their Practice highlighting the pressure on GP appointments due to understaffing.

Bringing patients and the GP Practice closer together

All PPGs are independent voluntary groups that work in partnership with their GP Practice. Typically, the Practice Manager provides an update at each PPG meeting creating the opportunity for both parties to inform and consult each other on current issues. The PPG Chair and Practice Manager liaise between PPG meetings to keep each other informed and to review PPG activities.

Other Practice staff are encouraged to attend PPG meetings by invitation and to respond to requests from the PPG for relevant information to inform discussion of agenda items. PPGs may invite relevant external speakers to their meetings establishing stronger links between the Practice and its local community.

Our PPG Chairs are well-informed, interested people who are very aware of the challenges facing their GPs and Practice staff. They are able to steer PPG activities so that these are supportive and add capacity to our Practices' ability to meet the needs of its patients.

Example

Whitecliff Practice routinely involves PPG members in recruitment & selection interviews for new staff.

The Newland PPG Chair recently joined Practice staff at a dementia awareness training session and Stalbridge PPG are co-ordinating a dementia-friendly community public event.

A screenshot of the Blackmore Vale Magazine website. The header shows the magazine's name, a weather widget for WED 15°C Clouds And Sun, and a navigation menu with links like News, Sport, What's On, Jobs, Property, Galleries, Motors, and Directory. Below the menu is a list of local news topics. The main article is titled 'North Dorset medical centres at 'crisis point'' by jspiteri, dated February 26, 2016. The article features a photo of Dr Simone Yule at her desk. The text below the photo states: 'Dr Simone Yule says Blackmore Vale Partnership doctors are often seeing in excess of 80 patients in a working day'.

This article featured on the front page of the Blackmore Vale Magazine (circulation 150,000) raising public awareness of the problems facing local NHS services.

Newland PPG members organised a 'meet and greet' patients in the waiting room of their Practice to make themselves known and to explain the role of the PPG. Over a two week period they signed up more than 100 new 'virtual' members who now receive the Practice newsletter and other relevant information by email or post.

Whitecliff PPG has a Communications subgroup which works with the Practice, Pharmacy and Reception Team Managers to identify communication problems between the Practice and its patients. This group is also working to innovate around better ways to educate patients about optimising the use of GP appointments.

Most PPGs assist their Practices with the production of newsletters which help to keep patients informed and aware of significant changes to services. Our PPGs attend local community events to raise their profile and to invite local people to sign up to receive PPG news. Most also submit regular copy to local press and community publications to spread news from the GP surgery as far and wide as possible. In many cases this has significantly enhanced the GP Surgery's existing communications capacity and its 'audience reach'.

Local Patient Surveys and Community Health Information Fairs

Assisting the Practice to undertake a Patient Survey is another key function of our PPGs.

In some cases this has been entirely devolved to the PPG who have designed, delivered and collated the survey questionnaires themselves.

The information from these Patient Surveys is extremely useful to GP Practices in helping to inform future planning decisions about how changes to Practice systems and procedures may improve services as well as save time and resources.

Our PPGs have been involved in the implementation of the Friends & Family Test which began in December 2014 helping to promote 'real-time' feedback from patients on their experience of visiting their Practice. PPGs in Sturminster Newton, Blandford and Sherborne have delivered Community Health Information Fairs attracting hundreds of visitors. These events help health and care support services to promote themselves to local communities and help people to find out more about how to stay living healthy, independent lives for longer.

Examples: The Sturminster Newton & Marnhull PPG organised the Ideal Health Exhibition, community health information fair which took place on 14th April 2016. Over 40 exhibitors took part and the event attracted 600 visitors.

A Directory of Exhibitors, funded by local business sponsorship, was produced to provide visitors with useful information and contact details for future reference.

What makes a PPG work?

- A core group of committed and able people who share the vision.
- Strong and open partnership with the Practice Manager and GPs.
- Regular networking opportunities with, and peer support from other PPGs.
- Access to support, advice and relevant



Sherborne Apples Forum