

# Report to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**21 November 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Patient Involvement in Primary Care
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## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the work being undertaken to improve general practice patient participation groups and wider primary care transformation work.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Good and functional PPGs are an important asset to general practice and serve as a key point of contact in supporting general practices to make improvements to services locally.
- 2.2 Since their introduction in 2016, there has been variance in the quality and effectiveness of PPGs. Following the pandemic some practices have struggled to reinstate them and the ICB is supporting practices to





reinstate and/or improve their engagement with PPGs, details are provided within this report.

2.3 PPGs will play an important role in the transformation of primary care as outlined in the Primary Care Access Report, presented to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board. It is also essential that wider communities are engaged throughout the transformation.

2.4 This report takes the opportunity to provide an overview of the wider public involvement activities being developed to reach people who are not existing members of PPGs.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>People live well and age well – improving patient involvement and understanding of general practice.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities – supporting people and communities to be empowered to take ownership of the health and care needs and to have their voices heard.</p>

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### 4.1 Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

4.1.1 From April 2016, it has been a contractual requirement for all English practices to form a patient participation group (PPG) and to make reasonable efforts for this to be representative of the practice population.

4.1.2 PPGs work in partnership with their GP practice and are vital in ensuring that the patient voice is heard. Groups work in different ways, some meet in person, others communicate with their practice online – all are keen to welcome and involve new members.

4.1.3 PPGs provide an opportunity for local people to get involved with their practice and influence the provision of local health services. Group members contribute their views, make suggestions, and provide feedback on services they may have used. Groups can also get involved with supporting local health initiatives. In some areas, patient groups come together in their local areas or across Primary Care Networks to share good practice, to discuss health issues and raise



patient concerns.

- 4.1.4 The status of PPGs is at various levels across Sandwell. Following the pandemic, some now only meet online, and some have lost key members of their groups. The ICB is supporting practices to rebuild and improve their PPG membership and effectiveness, but also to empower patients with the tools and skills to be key participants in their PPGs.
- 4.1.5 Primary care is undergoing key changes outlined in the delivery plan for recovering primary care and local capacity and access improvement plans. This includes specific requirements for improving the patient experience and empowering patients to do more for themselves.
- 4.1.6 The ICB recognises the value of PPGs and that there is variation across the Black Country. In order to raise standards, the ICB has commissioned training courses for both practice managers and PPG chairs.
- 4.1.7 The **Practice Manager Programme** is an ongoing learning and development offer to practice staff. It consists of a self-learning programme with workbooks and video recordings and is designed to:
- Offer new techniques which help practice managers handle patient expectations of primary care in a positive way.
  - Help improve patient /practice relationships.
  - Engage the support of their patient population when demand is at its highest.
  - Provide practical tools for developing PPGs.
  - Guide practice staff on how to empower PPG members to contribute positively.
- 4.1.8 The **Patient Leaders Programme** was commissioned as a pilot and included skill development sessions which was open to current PPG chairs and those interested in becoming members of a PPG. Topics included:
- Tools and techniques to engage people in discussions about their health and the services they need.
  - The importance of objectivity and overcoming bias.



- NHS structures and the use of technology to encourage people to have a voice.

4.1.9 Due to this being a pilot, places were limited to 20 and open across the Black Country. There were 5 attendees from Sandwell. All those that attended provided great feedback on the programme content and quality.

4.1.10 Since the course concluded, the ICB received a good news story from a PPG Chair in Oldbury. After attending the programme, they worked with their practice manager to put into practice some of the communication tools. After sending out text message invites, they have seen an increase in membership, up from 15 to 50 members. This now means an additional 35 voices are being heard and can influence decisions within the practice. A patient also contacted the practice to say thank you, as she received the text message and was able to join her PPG as typically, the practice only communicated through online channels which she didn't have access to.

4.1.11 To supplement the programme the ICB has created a [dedicated website](#). This includes local, regional, and national support tools including training, templates, case studies of best practice, peer support networks and videos to help PPG members make the most out of their involvement.

4.1.12 The ICB Involvement Team are always on hand to give advice/guidance to practices and PPG members on how to involve local communities in their work.

## 4.2 Wider Patient and Public Involvement Activities

4.2.1 The delivery plan for recovering primary care includes three components to increase public understanding of the changes to primary care services. These include:

- Building confidence and knowledge in the digital access routes to general practice and use of the NHS App.



- Increasing awareness of the extended health care teams available in general practice
- Increasing knowledge of the wider care available to help the public better access the right care by explaining when, why and how to access self-care advice, community pharmacy, general practice, NHS111 and A&E

4.2.2 Alongside national communication campaigns, the ICB will be tailoring local communications to ensure that the developments in general practice and the wider services available are communicated large and wide across all our communities.

4.2.3 Recognising that typical communication methods only reach so far, and that a 'one size fits all' will not work, the ICB will engage a wide range of opportunities to ensure the messages around modern general practice are co-designed with the public and embedded within our communities.

4.2.4 **NHS Primary Care Ambassadors Programme** was piloted in the Black Country during 2022 and worked with 11 organisations across Wolverhampton and Walsall. This was a successful project with positive feedback with over 421 people being engaged.

4.2.5 The project recruited and trained people from local VCSE organisations to act as Ambassadors in their local communities providing information on accessing primary care and how to utilise the NHS App. As a result, 106 people downloaded and are now actively using the NHS App.

4.2.6 The Ambassadors Programme will now be rolled out across Sandwell and Dudley to encourage two-way conversations between the public and the NHS. The scope of these conversations is to promote, share, educate and spread messages about modern general practice across all our communities. It will focus on those who face the poorest health outcomes and worst social injustices. Ambassadors will be equipped with the messages the NHS want to convey e.g. the NHS App,



extended healthcare teams and wider care available. They will also be equipped with the skills to listen and understand the barriers our communities face.

4.2.7 The information the Ambassadors collate from their engagement with the public will be used to influence the ICB's approach to the recovery and transformation of primary care.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.
<b>Risk:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.
<b>Equality:</b>	The ICB are committed to working with our diverse people and communities to improve the connectivity with general practice, and deliver key health messages in a way that works for them.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Improved relationships between practices and their patients by getting involved with their practice to influence the provision of local health services. Patients feel empowered to have their say, but also to take ownership of their health and care.
<b>Social Value:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	No implications directly arising as a result of this report.

## 6 Appendices

None.

## 7. Background Papers



None.

