



Patient Engagement Project

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project was built on the principle that patient engagement is integral to high quality, sustainable general practice. The project has developed tools and resources for London GP practice teams to use for work collaboratively with their patients principally starting with their PPG. Many of us have abandoned our contact with PPGs and other patient representatives while concentrating on the pressing health needs of our patients but the Covid-19 pandemic has made it more necessary than ever to engage patients to meet the challenges it presents to delivering health care for general practice – now and in the future.

Covid-19 has resulted in many changes to how practices are able to meet with patients and deliver care, several of which seek to reduce face-to-face interaction and minimise practice footfall to prevent risk of infection. Communication with patients has changed radically overnight. So what impact is this having on your patients?

Talking to patients can provide invaluable insight into the care journey, highlighting both what adds value to a patient's experience, and those processes requiring improvement. This data is often gathered by discussing issues with patients face-to-face. Techniques for this can range from hosting interviews; meeting with your PPG or focus groups; to passing out short surveys and having conversations in waiting rooms. Now it can take place virtually with your PPG or PPG network.

Here are some reasons to engage with patients in the Covid-19 pandemic:

- to help people to manage their own health and care
- to help redesign and improve services - especially now with the agenda of restoration .
- to design and influence health and social care policy

Research has shown a number of benefits to engaging with patients, including:

- improving an organisation's accountability amongst the public and improving trust and legitimacy in decision making
- increasing people's involvement and management of their own health and care which can lead to better healthcare outcomes
- improving safety in people's care
- improving communication and information provision about services
- empowering people to make decisions that affect them, and
- improving health inequalities.

Londonwide LMCs believes these benefits will be important in protecting general practice for the future.