



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

Patient Engagement Survey

Headline Findings and Key Themes

December 2016



Introduction

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project started in July 2016. The project aims to support London GP practice teams in working collaboratively with their patients to shape high quality services and secure the future of their practice.

In August and September we conducted a patient engagement survey, offering practices the opportunity to help inform our Patient Engagement Project's development and delivery by sharing their experiences of patient participation groups (PPGs). The survey went to **practice leads** (the member of staff at the practice responsible for patient engagement, normally the practice manager) and **patient leads** (the patient responsible for leading on patient engagement, normally the PPG chair).

Survey responses illustrated a broad spectrum of practice and patient experience of PPGs across the capital.

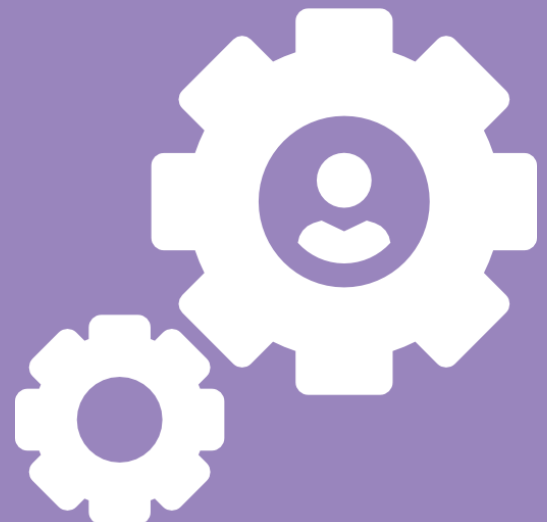
- PPGs vary widely in size, in diversity of membership, in whether they meet face to face, virtually, or both.
- The majority of survey respondents reported that their PPG supported their practice and benefited patients, however some respondents were unsure of the impact of their PPG and some practice leads reported their experience of their PPG as entirely negative.
- Common characteristics of effective and active PPGs included an open culture of partnership working between practice and patients, aiming for PPGs inclusive of the diversity of local patient populations and ensuring clearly defined roles and expectations are owned and shared by both practices and patients.

The priorities for the development and delivery of the next stage of the Patient Engagement Project are based on what survey respondents said they wanted, headline survey findings and key themes. This report concludes with an outline of the practical support the project is currently offering to practices working with patients to foster and develop PPGs that make a positive impact on service development and practice sustainability.

The majority of all survey respondents reported that their PPG had been operating for more than three years.

The state of general practice in London and the future of the NHS were reported by the majority of all survey respondents as being on the agenda of their PPG.

- 60% of responding practice leads reported that their PPG positively influenced practice service delivery.
- 69% of responding patient leads reported that the work of their PPG had made a positive difference to services received by patients at their GP practice.
- 59 % of responding practice leads reported that patient participation was definitely supportive of their practice.
- The main barrier to participation reported by all survey respondents was "lack of patient interest".
- 36% of responding patient leads reported that they were not entirely sure of their role.
- 45% responding practice leads reported that their PPG was not representative of the demography and diversity of their local patient population.
- 29% of responding practice leads reported that they had some support from external agencies in developing their PPG.



Key survey themes

PPGs can, and do, improve service delivery and support practice sustainability

The majority of respondents to the survey reported that their practice and patients benefited from the work of their PPG. Individual respondents gave a wide variety of examples of benefits, including PPGs acting as a critical friend; direct participation in shaping and targeting service delivery; fundraising and acting as a conduit in two-way communication between the practice and its wider local patient population.

The majority of respondents reported that service development and the state of general practice and the future of the NHS have been on the agenda for their PPG. There is some indication that when practices share information about challenges to their survival and ask for the support of their patients then their PPG will act to support them in meeting those challenges. Examples directly related to supporting the practice in this context given by practice leads in patient participation included support in relation to CQC inspections and to NHS England special measures.

An open and honest approach to partnership working, including shared clarity about roles and expectations, is highlighted by practice respondents as key to working effectively with their PPGs

The “Top Tips” for colleagues given by practice lead respondents for working effectively with PPGs focused on having a clear, shared framework and taking an open, honest approach. Examples included the following (quoted verbatim);



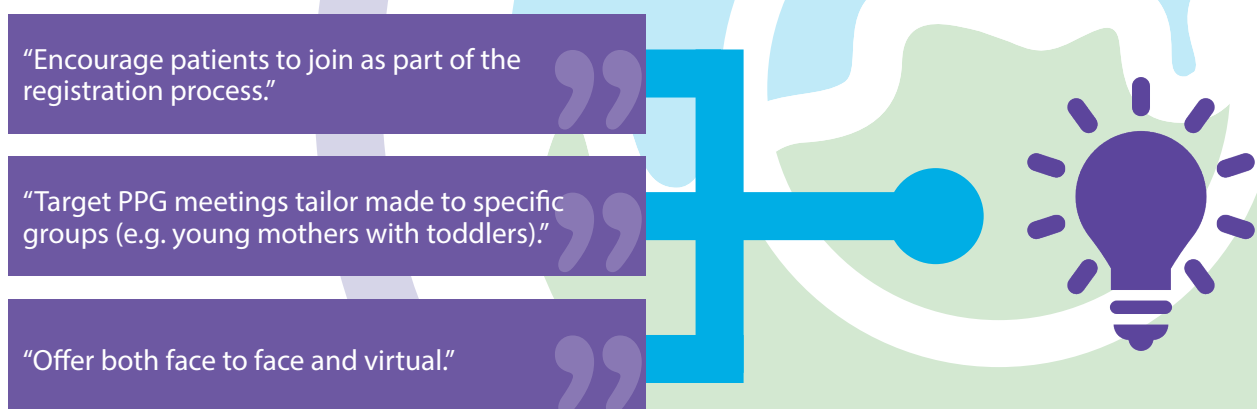
Survey responses indicate that creating a culture of partnership working is not always easy, for example responses from practice leads in patient participation include those that highlight the “attitude” of patients as a barrier to working effectively with PPGs and responses from PPG members include those that cite the “attitude” of the practice team as a barrier.

In addition over a third of PPG member respondents report that they are not entirely clear about the role of their PPG. This lack of clarity appears unrelated to the length of time a PPG has been operating.

Limited participation by patients, including those representative of diverse local patient populations, is highlighted by respondents as the main barrier to the operation of effective PPGs

Over 70% of survey respondents, both practice leads and PPG members, cite “lack of patient interest” as the main barrier to the operation of effective PPGs. Respondents emphasised difficulties in recruiting younger people to their PPG as well as people whose first language is not English, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and people from diverse communities of interest.

“Top Tips” from survey respondents of action to overcome these barriers included practices operating both virtual and face to face PPGs and practices undertaking outreach work to reach and engage particular community groups. Examples given by practice lead respondents included (quoted verbatim):



Respondents also reported effectively maintaining patient participation by ensuring involvement was meaningful; using focus groups of PPG members to act on a particular issue; ensuring that PPG meetings were interesting and included open dialogue, with practice and patients sharing information, and practices clearly feeding back to patients on the results of their participation.

Survey responses indicate that the majority of practices and patients have not accessed local or national resources to help develop their patient participation groups

The majority of survey respondents reported that they had not had support in developing their PPG and it is not clear whether this was because they were unaware of what support might be available or if they found the support available was not useful to them.

The minority of practice leads reported that they had accessed external support to help develop their PPG named the following as providers of that support: PPG Chairs of other practices; CCG Patient Involvement Leads; local PPG Networks; local Healthwatch; National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP); Patients Association; local Carers' Centre; local Age UK.

The impact of the work of PPGs is not always clearly articulated and practices and their patients may have differing perceptions of the difference their PPG makes

Survey responses indicate that practice leads and PPG members are not always able to articulate what their PPG has achieved and whether or not it has made a positive difference to patients and practice.

Survey responses also indicate that there can be a discrepancy between practice and patient perception of the impact of the work of PPGs, for example whilst the majority of both practice lead respondents and PPG member respondents reported that their PPG was supportive of their practice, this was reported by a larger majority (88%) of PPG member respondents than practice lead respondents (60%).

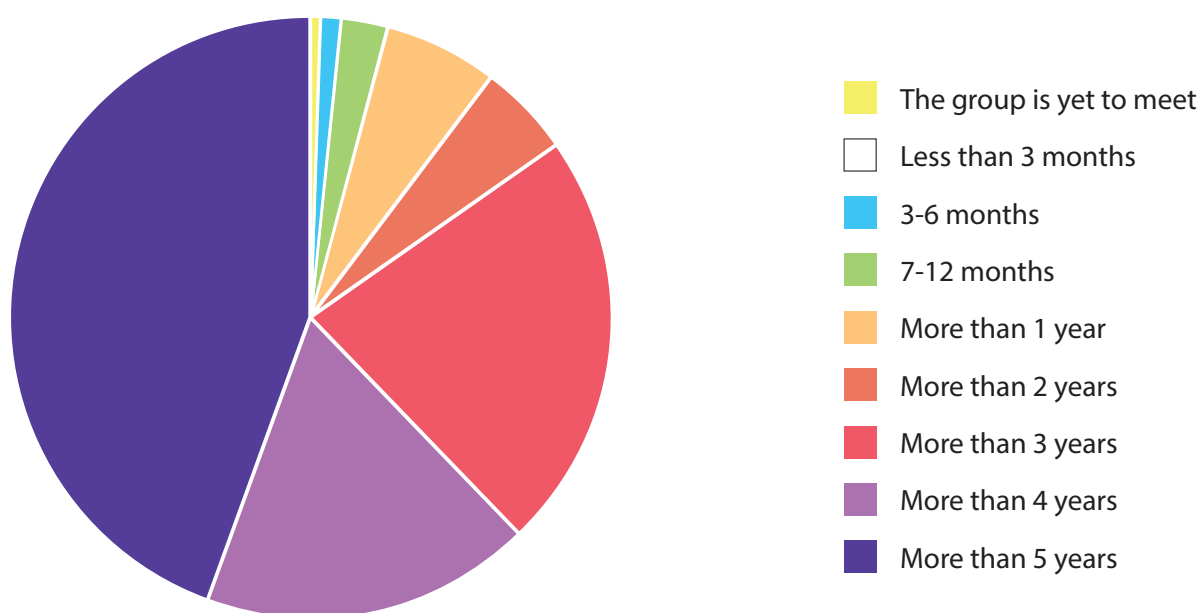
Both practice and patient lead respondents demonstrated a desire to share learning and best practice, this included a focus on support for patients

Practice and patient leads respondents prioritised a desire to share learning and best practice and also highlighted that they wanted templates and support for patients.

Over 90% of all survey respondents indicated that they would like to participate further in shaping the development and delivery of our Patient Engagement Project and be kept up to date with opportunities to be involved.

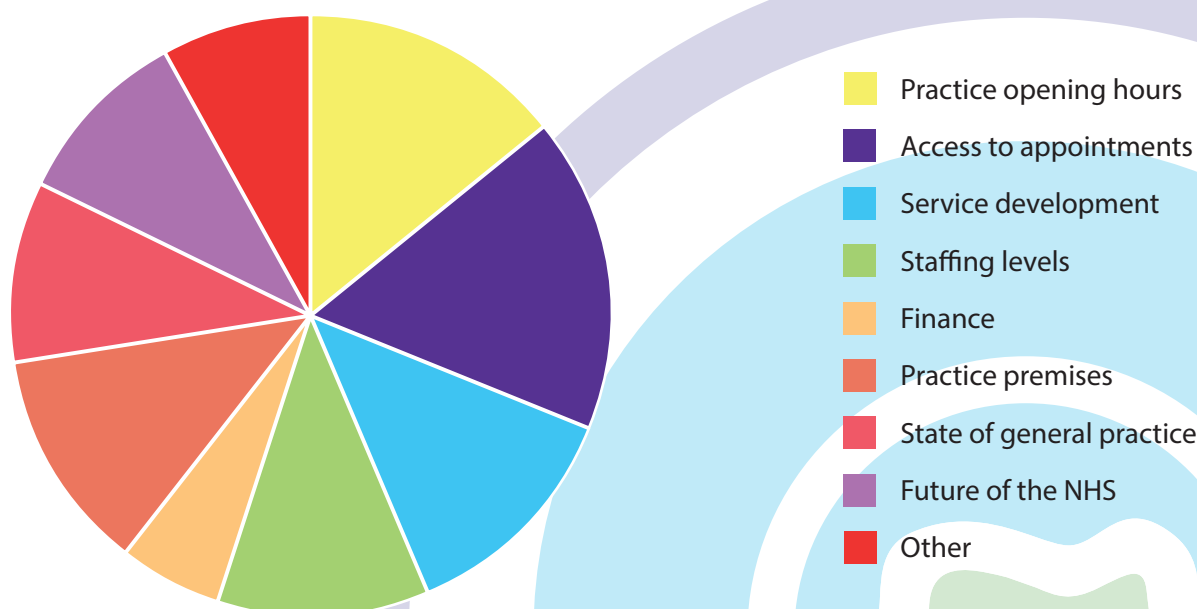
Headline survey findings

The length of time PPGs have been operating in practices



83% of practice leads reported that their PPG had been operating for over three years. Four practice leads respondents reported that the members of their virtual PPGs never meet face to face.

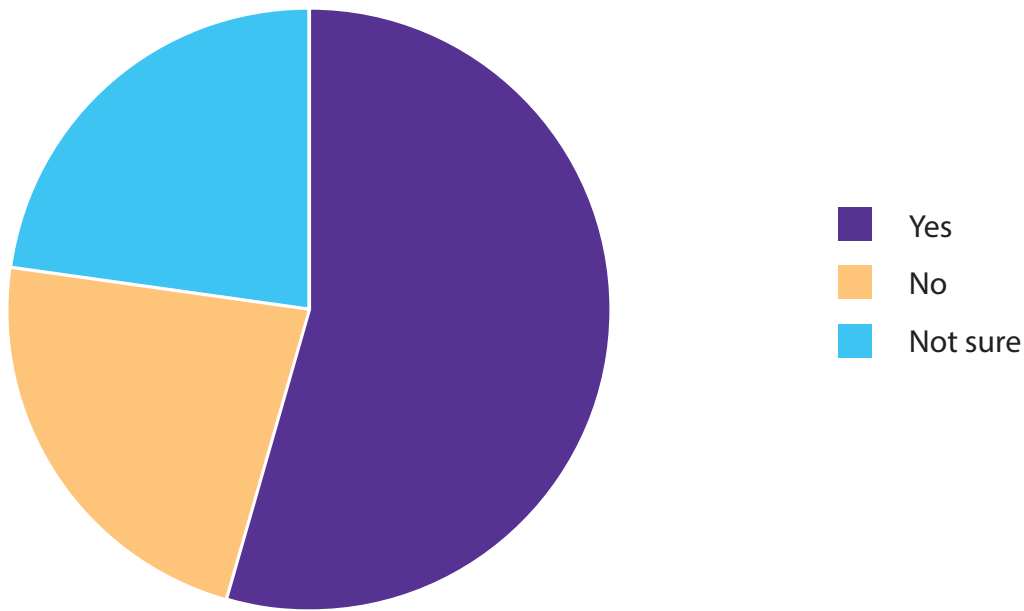
The items discussed at PPGs over the past 12 months



The state of general practice in London and the future of the NHS were reported by the majority of all survey respondents as being on the agenda of their PPG

The majority of all respondents reported that the agenda for their PPG was set by a combination of GPs, practice staff and patients.

The influence of PPGs on practice service delivery



60% of the practice lead respondents reported that their PPG positively influenced practice service delivery

Examples cited by practice patient participation leads of ways in which their PPG positively influenced service delivery included:

“Changes to appointments and improvements to the building through funding by fundraising, supporting patients with travel to appointments and medication delivery.”

“Constructive feedback to our staff.”

“More awareness of GP remit so able to support initiatives i.e. SystemOne; Carers' Champion; Skype; increased opening hours; changes in some clinics to suit needs i.e. baby clinic moved to am from pm; co-ordinated carers' forum with GPs.”

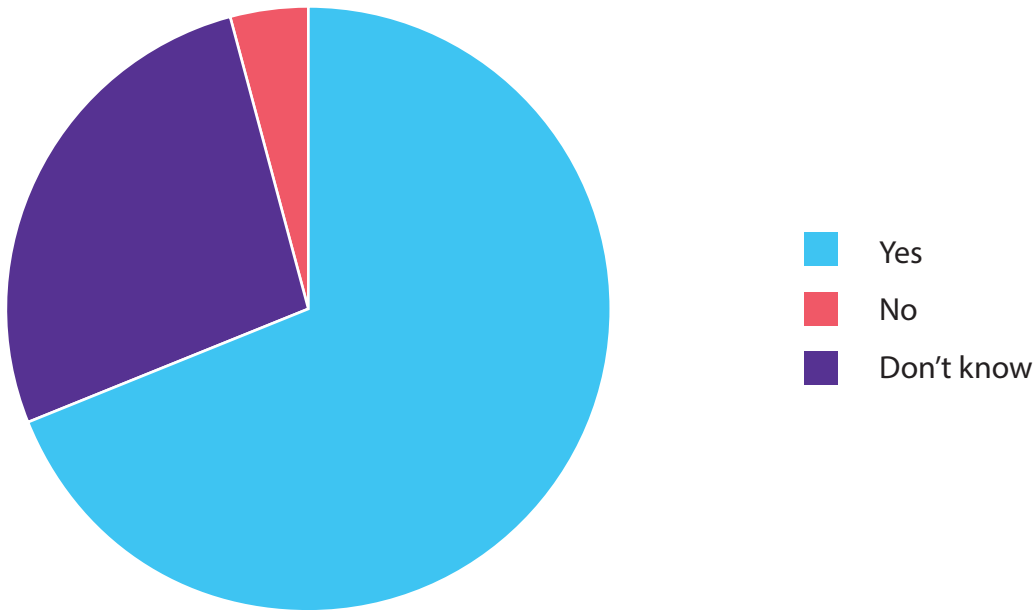
“Telephone systems, appointment system, patient information on notice boards, service delivery, health promotion and practice surveys.”

“Loads of ways e.g Patient Champions (Epilepsy and Carers), improving patient access by phone, newsletter, patient experience etc.”

“We have a long standing and very active PPG who helped with service design when we moved into our new premises and our new 8am-8pm service for patients.”



The difference PPGs have made to services received by patients at practices



69% of PPG member respondents reported that the work of their PPG had made a positive difference to services received by patients at their GP practice

However 33% of PPG member respondents reported that they did not know whether their group influenced planning decisions made by their GP practice about the services the practice provided to patients.

Examples cited by practice patient participation leads of ways in which their PPG supported their practices included:

“Able to influence practice process as we become more aware of patients concerns. We can work together to increase our effectiveness. Also patients awareness of the constraints/processes we work within in the delivery of patient care.”

“Acting as a voice for patients and by helping us to get across messages to patients, they produce a four-monthly newsletter which they deliver to approximately 4,000 households.”

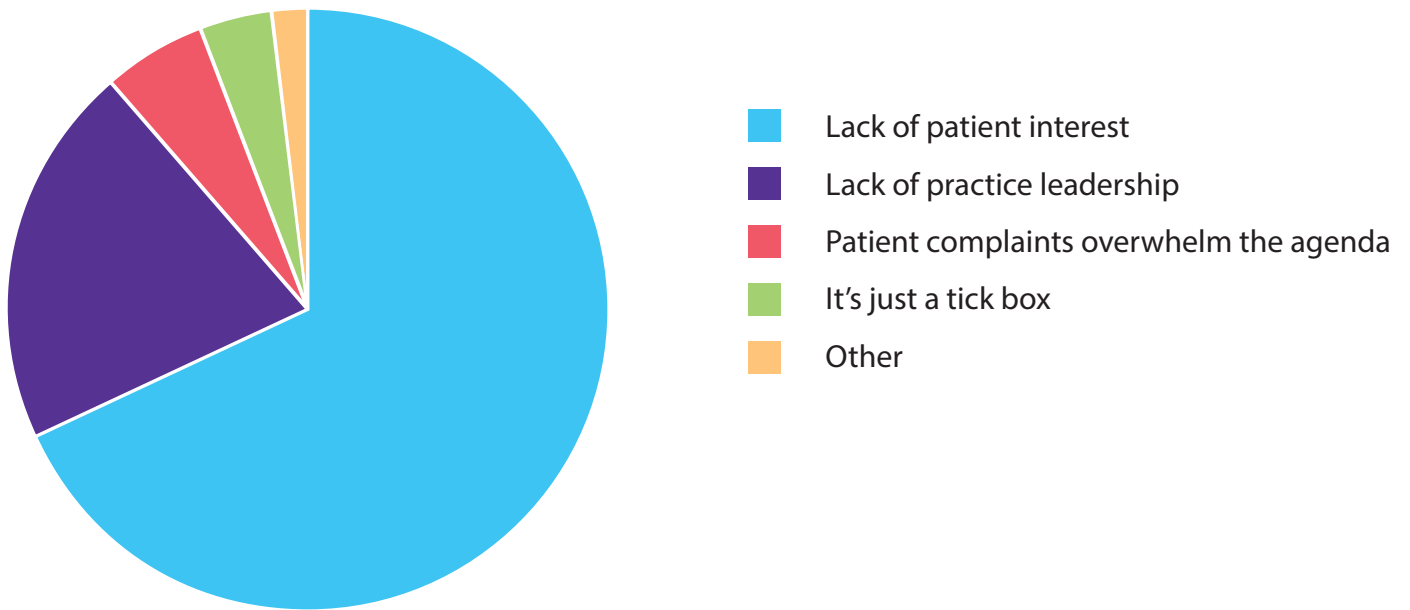
“Support for challenging times.”

“Their support over punitive measures taken by NHS England and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).”

“Supporting and encouraging staff.”



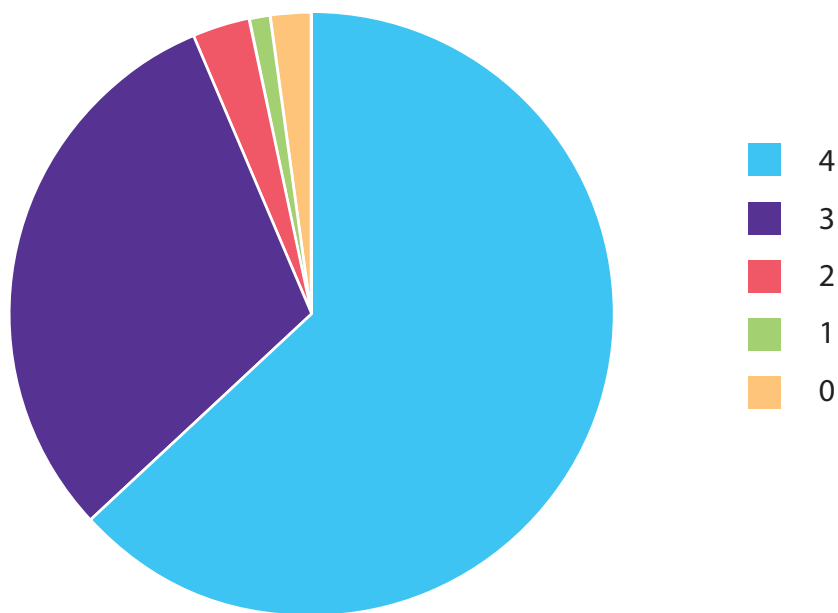
Main barrier to participation reported by all survey respondents



73% of respondents reported “lack of patient interest” as the main barrier to patient participation in their practice. The main barrier to participation reported by all survey respondents was “lack of patient interest”

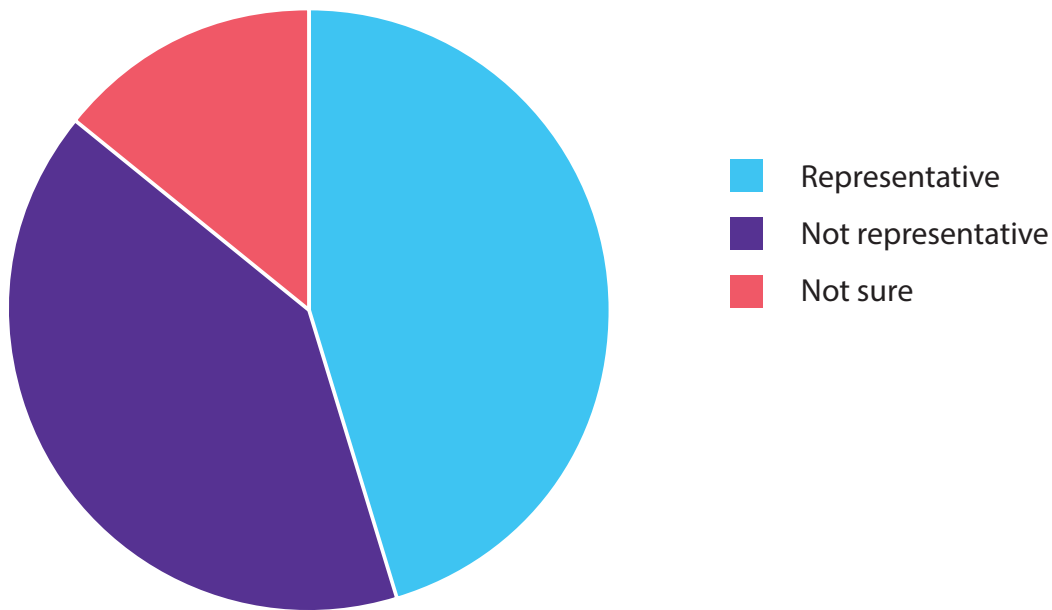
The reported number of patients involved in PPGs varied widely from practice to practice. The lowest number of patients regularly engaging in a group was reported as two. The majority of practice leads reported that their PPG had between six and fifteen members. Some practices reported a small group that met face-to-face operating together with a much larger virtual group. A few practices reported their entire patient list as members of their virtual PPG.

Clarity and purpose of the role of the PPG (where 0 is 'not at all' and 4 is 'completely clear')



36% of PPG member respondents reported that they were not entirely sure of role

PPG representation of the demography and diversity of the practice patient population



45% of the practice lead respondents reported that their PPG was not representative of the demography and diversity of their local practice patient population

An additional 14% of practice lead respondents reported that they did not know whether or not their PPG was representative of the demography and diversity of their local practice patient population.

Both practice lead and PPG member respondents cited the lack of diversity of PPG membership as a barrier to effective patient participation in their practice.

29% of practice lead respondents reported that they had some support from external agencies in developing their PPG

A minority of practice lead respondents reported that they had received some support in developing their PPG. Respondents cited a range of different ways they had accessed support, examples given included local PPG networks and local and national third sector patient and carer organisations.

Survey respondents identified their priorities for practical help in fostering and developing their PPGs as opportunities to share best practice and templates for patients

The majority of practice leads and PPG member respondents reported that they wanted opportunities to share learning and best practice and that they also wanted templates (posters etc) to use with patients. Practice leads also prioritised support for patients and PPG member respondents prioritised opportunities for peer support.

Conclusion

The findings and themes of our patient engagement survey give a clear framework for the development and delivery of the Patient Engagement Project.

The project is acting to share and develop learning and best practice to support London general practices in working collaboratively with their patients to shape high quality services and secure the future of their practice. Current and planned project work includes:

- Sharing survey findings and themes at Londonwide LMCs hosted meetings (e.g Practice Manager Leads Forum) and publications (e.g Londonwide LMCs newsletter)
- Delivering a series of workshops for practice leads in patient participation and their patient leads on reviewing and clarifying the role and purpose of their PPGs; widening the reach and increasing the diversity of PPG membership; practices and PPGs acting together to influence local and Londonwide policy on general practice
- Working with third sector patient and carer organisations to identify local, Londonwide and national resources available to support practices and patients in effectively developing their PPGs

Producing briefings and templates for practices and patients.

Appendix

Survey methodology

From 9 August to 16 September 2016 Londonwide LMCs conducted an online survey about patient engagement in general practice. The survey focused on practice and patient experience of PPGs.

This was the first of Londonwide LMCs' surveys to include members of PPGs. Londonwide LMCs practice contacts were requested to forward one survey to their practice lead on patient engagement and another to their patient lead (e.g. the chair of their PPG).

168 practice leads in patient engagement and 98 members of practice PPGs completed surveys.





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