



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

Patient Engagement Roundtable Event

Working together to support General Practice in London in fostering and developing patient participation groups

December 2016



Introduction

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project aims to demonstrate and promote patient engagement as integral to high quality, sustainable general practice and to offer practical support to practices in fostering and developing their patient participation groups (PPGs).

This report gives an overview of the project's December 2016 roundtable event "Working Together to support General Practice in London in fostering and developing patient participation groups" and contains details of resources available from the third sector to support PPGs.

Why the roundtable event was held and who participated

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project invited a range of stakeholders with differing perspectives on PPGs to informally share, discuss and debate the key themes the project had identified to date and to help inform its future development and delivery.

The participants, who brought their knowledge and expertise to the event, included representatives of Healthwatch; the Patients Association; the National Association of Patient Participation Groups (NAPP); two GP federations; members of patient participation groups; a practice manager and several of Londonwide LMCs' Medical Directors, who are all working GPs.

What happened at the event

Participants identified what they thought practice teams and their PPGs should be aiming to achieve together

Participants emphasised working in partnership to improve and maintain communication and good working relationships, saying it involves:

- "...building relationships of mutual trust and respect."
- "...working jointly and supporting one another."
- "...finding common solutions to common problems [with a focus on the direct participation of diverse practice populations]."
- "...gathering the voice and experience of as many people as possible to capture views of general practice."

Participants ideally saw PPGs and practice teams engaging patients together in meaningful decision making about the way practices operate, specifically:

- "...involving patients in decision making and new developments [to improve the service provided to local practice populations]."
- "...enhancing patient experience."
- "...improving the work of the practice [and supporting local people in maintaining their own health and well-being]."
- "...communities taking responsibility for their own health."

Ensuring the survival of practices was viewed by participants as ideally a joint undertaking by practices and PPGs, specifically they have a role in:

- "...protecting practices in times of crisis."
- "...ensuring resilience and sustainability."

Key project themes were discussed and endorsed by participants

Participants attending the event were asked whether their work and priorities for practices and PPGs working together are reflected in the [key themes identified by the Patient Engagement Project to date](#).

Participants acknowledged the validity of the key themes which are informing the next stage of project development and delivery, shared their different perspectives and ideas on each theme and gave examples of their own experience.

Key theme: PPGs can, and do, improve service delivery and support practice sustainability in the capital

Some participants had direct experience of local practices and PPGs working in partnership to improve the services provided to patients as well as exercising strategic influence, for example at Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) level, to sustain and develop practices.

The broad spectrum of practice and PPG working relationships and their effectiveness across the capital were highlighted, as was the increasing importance, in the current policy context, of being able to demonstrate patient participation in practice decision making.

Reference was made to the difficulties that smaller practices can face in releasing the capacity to develop and demonstrate patient participation.

Key theme: An open and honest approach to partnership working, including shared clarity about roles and expectations, is vital if London practices and PPGs are to work effectively together

Participants agreed on the importance of collaborative working between practice teams and patients, emphasising the need for partnership working from the start, including the active participation and support of senior partners and practice team members.

Participants emphasised that practice team and patient co-development of aims, ground rules and terms of reference for PPGs are central to effective partnership working. This includes clarifying PPGs' regulatory role; how complaints relating to PPGs work and that the PPG is not the correct forum for discussing personal issues (and the need to agree where that forum is).

Key theme: The impact of the work of PPGs in London is not always clearly articulated and practices and their patients can have differing perceptions of the difference their PPG makes

Participants emphasised the need for clear shared aims for PPGs and practices and ways to measure when these have been achieved. Patients also need feedback on the results of consultations, including surveys, otherwise they will not want to continue to participate in a PPG or its activities.

Participants highlighted how important it is to recognise the role of patients in constructively challenging practices e.g. the role of PPGs as a "critical friend".

One participant highlighted that small changes that are achieved ("quick wins") will gradually build relationships of trust and collaboration.

Key theme: Limited participation by patients, including those representative of diverse local patient populations, is often experienced by London practices and PPG members as the main barrier to the operation of effective PPGs

- Participants discussed ways to address limited participation in PPGs.
- Communication to patients on why they might want to be part of their PPG, how to join their PPG, the role of the PPG and how patients and practice could benefit from patient involvement in the PPG were proposed as prerequisites to PPG recruitment.
- Communicating the difference PPGs make to patient experience (i.e. giving practical examples relating to individual practices) was proposed as one way to encourage patients to join their PPG.
- Virtual PPGs and/or a combination of virtual PPGs and face-to-face meetings or PPG focus groups were given as examples of ways to widen participation.
- Outreach to different communities of interest (identifying and visiting local community groups) by practice staff and/or by existing PPG members was proposed as one way to involve diverse local populations e.g. starting by communicating with local third sector organisations/community organisations such as carers organisations and older people's organisations.

- Open days at the practice for people interested in learning more about PPG membership; producing flyers in different languages and using the contacts and expertise of practice team members fluent in other languages as well as English were ideas tried and tested by participants.

Key theme: Practice leads in patient participation and PPG members in London are demonstrating a desire to share learning and best practice and are not always accessing local or national resources to help develop their PPGs

- Participants at this event valued and learned from the knowledge, experience and differing perspectives brought to the table (this was demonstrated by individual evaluations of the event).
- Existing opportunities for sharing learning and supporting PPG development highlighted by participants included: information and resources accessible via the Healthwatch; National Association for patient participation groups and Patients Association websites (please see point 4 below for addresses and more details) and Londonwide LMCs Practice Managers Forums.
- Participants also suggested seeking (or developing) a local PPG chairs' group or locality PPG meetings; accessing CCG support and/or third sector support for PPGs; training for people who want to join PPGs and/or a mentoring system for new PPG members.
- There was discussion about the need for more opportunities to share learning and best practice, with a focus on sharing and celebrating PPGs' successes in working with practices to improve services to patients and supporting practice sustainability.

Next actions

Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project

- Produce a report of this roundtable event and disseminate it to participants and Londonwide LMCs.
- Build on the partnership opportunities this roundtable event offered to benefit practices and PPGs in the 27 boroughs represented by Londonwide LMCs.
- Deliver a [series of three workshops](#) open to London practice leads on patient participation and their PPG leads based on the key themes discussed at this event.
- Share the learning from the workshop series across Londonwide LMCs and with the participants in this roundtable eventy.
- Consider and/or initiate future partnership working with roundtable participants.
- Co-produce products with and for roundtable participants, PPGs and practices to support their work.

All roundtable participants

- Consider opportunities to promote Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project workshops through their networks and take those opportunities that they think appropriate.
- Consider and/or initiate future partnership working with Londonwide LMCs.

The Patients Association

- Work in partnership with Londonwide LMCs' Patient Engagement Project to design and deliver a workshop open to London practice leads on patient participation and their PPG leads.

Healthwatch

- Work on identifying which members of the local Healthwatch network in London are currently focusing on work directly involving PPG support.

The Carers Trust

- Although unable to attend the roundtable, The Carers Trust will ask their London regional network of Carers Centres to identify how they can support practices and PPGs.

How to find what's offered for PPG support and development in London by the third sector participants in this roundtable event

Carers Trust // www.carers.org

Carers Trust has a London network of 24 partner organisations. For more information about your local Carers Trust network partner, including the support they can offer on the inclusion of carers in patient participation groups, please contact Moira Wilkinson, London Regional Manager: mwilkinson@carers.org.

Carers Trust vision: "to ensure that unpaid carers count and can access the help they need to live their lives.

Carers Trust mission statement: "to identify, support and involve the UK's unpaid carers through the provision of action, help and advice."

Healthwatch // www.healthwatch.co.uk

Healthwatch vision: "working towards a society in which people's health and social care needs are heard, understood and met.

Healthwatch mission statement: "the consumer champion for health and social care."

Go the website, follow the links to find your local Healthwatch and contact them to ask about how they might be able to support your PPG.

National Association of Patient Participation Groups (NAPP) // www.napp.org.uk

As the "national voice for patient participation in primary care" NAPP has developed resources to support GPs, practices and PPGs.

NAPP resources that are freely available via their website include a "Building Better Participation" guide and a getting started guide to creating a virtual PPG. Some additional resources and support for PPGs (and CCGs) requires paid membership.

NAPP aims "to see an effective patient participation group in every GP practice and that each group is based on the mutual interests of the primary care team and patients of the practice. NAPP aims to promote the role of patient participation groups as participants in decision making within the NHS".

The Patients Association // www.patients-association.org.uk

See [here](#) to request a free toolkit for PPGs.

The Patients Association's vision: "for health and social care services that provide high quality and safe care, where patients and their carers are valued as expert partners and recognised as individuals. And for a health system that is compassionate, accessible and inclusive for everyone that seeks to improve and innovate". The Patients Association can offer additional paid support, please see their website for contacts and membership information.





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