

Patient Participation Groups 2025

What is a Patient Participation Group?

There is no set model for a PPG, but usually it consists of a group of volunteers meeting regularly with the practice (both the doctors and the practice manager) to discuss the services that the practice offers, and how they could be improved to ensure that the patient experience is as good as it could be, and that the health of the local community is improved.

Since April 2015, it has been a contractual requirement of NHS England for all GP practices to have a PPG and to make reasonable efforts for this to be representative of the practice population.

What do PPGs do?

The theory behind PPGs is that they can:

1. Provide an independent patient view to help practices identify areas of improvement
2. Help the practice to foster links with the local community
3. Help promote health matters (for example by running events at the surgery)
4. Influence the provision of other health and social services provided locally

Each PPG will have its own terms of reference and arrangements for communicating with patients. Before Covid-19 PPGs may have met a few times a year to discuss developments with staff from the practice.

Please note that PPGs are not a forum for discussing individual health issues.



Real or virtual?

Not everyone who wants to participate is able to come along to meetings. Covid-19 has also changed attitudes and the ability to communicate virtually.

Each PPG should decide what works best for them and their practice

How do they work?

PPGs are not all the same, but most have a Chair and a Secretary who are either volunteers or from the practice. The Terms of Reference will outline how things work and what areas the group have agreed as the main focus of what they should do.

A helpful guide can be found by following this link:

<https://www.patients-association.org.uk/patientparticipation-groups>

Oxford City

Most of the practices in Oxford have a PPG. Ask the practice manager or look on the practice website.

Why should I join?

A PPG is open to every patient on the GP practice list. All communities, groups, genders, ages, ethnicities, and disabilities representing the patient list are encouraged to join. There are no other membership requirements except that patients must be registered with the practice.

However, in reality the majority of PPG members are older, retired people - who have more time to participate.

PPGs are always looking to recruit a more diverse group of members to reflect the needs of the whole range of patients registered with the practice.

Doing something useful?

Sometimes people ask what do PPGs actually do? Or they express the view that they are just 'talking shops'. Here are a few examples of activities undertaken by PPGs in Oxford city.

- **Help with IT and digital access**

Some PPGs provides advice and supports the practice with their website. They also offer patients assistance to sign up and use the NHS App so that they can use on-line health services.

- **Health Promotion Days**

PPGs have organised open days for all patients. Sometimes the focus has been on a particular topic - such as health screening, others have been more of a 'health fair' inviting patients to talk with a wide range of community and health groups.

- **Health Walks**

A number of PPG members lead or participate in the Health Walk Scheme co-ordinated by Oxford City Council.

- **Speakers on topics of interest**

PPG meetings often have outside speakers to discuss a variety of issues. For example, diabetes, mental health, tissue bio-banking, research projects at Oxford University etc.

- **Seeking patients' views**

PPGs can run surveys, online or in person, to seek patients views on a range of topics such as waiting times, use of Digital technology or proposed changes to services.

- **Covid & Flu Vaccination Clinics**

PPGs continue to help out with the seasonal Covid booster and Flu vaccination clinics.