

What's in  
my pack?

# Information for Patient Participation Groups

**FIRST PRINCIPLES - All PPG members and practices have to abide by GDPR regulations when setting up, maintaining and participating in a PPG group. If you need any guidance on GDPR please speak to your GP Surgery who may have an internally nominated Data Protection Officer (or they will be able to access specialist support) who should be able to offer guidance and support should you need it.**

- **Helpful tips for PPGs and GP Surgeries putting on a health event.**
- **PPG recruitment flyer which can be tailored for your group.**
- **Helpful tips on PPG recruitment.**
- **Helpful tips on setting up an online PPG.**
- **Pros and Cons of different ways to set up an online PPG.**
- **Contact details and information on how Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA), Mansfield CVS, and Newark & Sherwood CVS can support your PPG.**



## Putting on a health event



## Recruiting People to your PPG



## Setting up an Online PPG



One effective way your Patient Participation Group (PPG) can really make a contribution to the work of your GP Surgery is to help in the planning and delivery of a health event. So whether you're planning on putting on a 'flu' clinic, raising awareness on diabetes, show-casing support for carers, or focusing on wellbeing and mental health issues, your PPG can help.

# helpful tips



When planning a health and wellbeing event you need to think about the following:

- **What are you hoping to achieve from your event?**

Although this might seem an obvious question, you need to give real consideration about what you want to achieve on the day as this will influence what you choose to do. Maybe you want to raise awareness about support services, or promote self-care? Map out what you want to achieve so that the activities you put on will best match desired outcomes.



- **Is the event geared towards a particular patient group?** What steps can you take to make it easier for patients to attend and how many people are you expecting?
- **Where are you planning on holding the event?** If it is in the GP Surgery, what space will be available for the event and how will you use it? If your Surgery is very small are there any other possible locations to hold the event nearby?
- **The *pros* and *cons* of when you decide to hold your event** - if you hold your event during normal surgery hours you will potentially reach a larger audience as you will attract 'passing traffic'. However, if your Surgery is small, this may not be a realistic option. Holding the event out of surgery hours will give you more space, but is likely to impact on the number of people who will attend. Consider things like school holidays which may have an impact on the numbers attending. Think about linking in to national initiatives. If you want to hold an event on diabetes, holding your event in diabetes week will give you access to good quality, free promotional material and will give you the perfect opportunity to raise the profile of your event.

- **Who will you invite to participate?** If you are planning on having a marketplace of organisations and support groups make sure that you give them plenty of notice for your proposed event.
- **How will you encourage patients to attend?** What type of activities are you planning for your event? Think of what will bring people through the door. If you are planning an event around healthy eating, you could put on a session aimed at families and children where they could have a go at making simple healthy meals, or you could run a smoothie making class. Be creative, if it appeals to you it should hopefully appeal to your target audience. Approach a local supermarket and ask them to donate a fruit basket. Provide free refreshments - as simple as it sounds this will definitely bring people through the door.
- **How will you publicise the event?** Start publicising the event at least four weeks in advance and **KEEP ON GOING** with regular information to promote the event. Consider sending SMS messages, putting posters and flyers in the surgery, local library, schools, community centres, local businesses, on the surgery website, use social media to promote the event. Try as many different ways as possible to get the message out there.
- **Planning is key** - ideally you will need at least 3-4 months to plan an event.
- **Getting started** - when you start organising your event, you'll need to think about who will help, as you will need other people to help you to organise it.
- **Set up a committee** - give each committee member specific responsibilities and choose one person to be the event manager. Keep in touch, share planning information so that everyone is informed and meet regularly, especially on the run-up to the event.
- **Health and Safety** - as with all events Health & Safety needs to be considered, but if you need help with any aspect of your event please contact:



Sarah Taylor at Ashfield Voluntary Action ☎ 01623 555 551

Lesley Watkins at Mansfield CVS ☎ 01623 392 444

Louise Casey-Simpson at Newark & Sherwood CVS ☎ 01636 679 539



- **Have a back-up plan just in case of emergencies!**

# PPG Recruitment

## helpful tips



## Getting more PPG members

Encouraging people to join a PPG can be a real struggle; they may feel that they don't have time, or think it's simply not for them. How can your GP Surgery and Patient Participation Group work together to encourage patients to get involved?

These are some of the things you can try which may encourage more people to take part:

**Make a poster and recruitment literature for your PPG** - give this some real thought. It is your best opportunity to recruit patients into your PPG, so it's important that you get it right. The poster should briefly but clearly explain what your PPG does and why. Does it pass the '*does what it says on the tin*' test? Show your draft promotional material to someone who doesn't know anything about PPGs and ask them to explain what it's for. If they have got the message, then you're half way there.

It is just as important that your promotional material does not make people feel excluded. Is the language used clear? If you have used images do they reflect your patient community? Is it obvious what you are asking of people and does the promotional material give the potential PPG member an idea of the time commitment of the role and what is being asked of them?

**Advertise** – once you are happy with your promotional material get it out there - the waiting room of your GP Surgery, community notice boards, local libraries and schools, community centres, council offices and local businesses. Use your electronic message board in your GP surgery if they have one.

**Local Press** - write a short article for your local paper and your local parish magazine. Don't forget your GP Surgery, or local community may have a newsletter.

**Word of Mouth** - ask GP Surgery staff and patients to spread the word.

**Freebies** - use incentives to get people to meetings such as free refreshments, fruit bags, or maybe a fruit basket. Supermarkets



and convenience stores are often willing to provide items for a good cause.

You can also use this as an opportunity to 'practice' something you may want to trial later at a health event; a demonstration on making healthy smoothies, a talk on first aid, blood pressure checks, a session on healthy eating, the dementia awareness session, or even a tour of the surgery.

**Meeting Times** - consider holding PPG meetings at different times of the day so that they are accessible for everyone.

**Get the Word Out There** - visit local community group meetings to talk about your PPG, the work it does and how people can get involved.

**Piggyback Practice Events** - use your practice clinics to hold a 'recruitment roadshow' i.e. 'flu' clinics, well woman or man clinics and carers groups.

**On The Web** - ask your practice if you can have a PPG page on the practice website, but make sure that the information is easy to find and kept up-to-date.

**Patient Registration** - ask your GP Surgery if they can add a section on the PPG on their patient registration form, or give out information about the PPG at the same time as they give out the forms.

**Taking Notice** - ask your practice for a PPG noticeboard area, but change the display regularly to maintain interest.

**Being Representative** - making sure that membership is representative of the local population is a challenge, but even if the PPG members do not reflect their local community it doesn't mean that they can't try to get the views of all patients. A good PPG will:

- Be proactive about getting out into the community to canvass opinions.
- If you are not getting the views of a certain group within your local population then make a special effort to find ways to reach them. Mansfield CVS, Ashfield Voluntary Action, and Newark & Sherwood CVS should be able to advise on ways of accessing different groups within your local community.
- Think about setting up a virtual PPG.



## Why does it matter whether my views are represented?

Patient Participation Groups would like to make sure that as many patients as possible within their practice can have their say.

They understand that meetings are not for everyone and that the time of day the meeting is held can exclude some people. So, they are looking at other ways to ensure as

## Have your say your way...

many patients as possible can get involved.

PPGs try to bridge this gap, you can get involved as much or as little as you want with many Surgeries offering in-person and virtual PPGs. So if you want to fill in a quick online survey on the way appointments are managed at your surgery at a time that suits you, you still get the chance to have your say.

Virtual Patient Participation Groups and PPGs use email, hard copies and social media to ask patients about their views on

## Ask at your GP Surgery Reception if they have a virtual PPG

Interested in having a say on patient services at your GP surgery?



Join your PPG now

Help your GP surgery to meet the needs of all its patients


# What do PPGs do?

Each GP surgery has a Patient Participation Group or PPG and these help to make sure that the views of patients are included when developing services. GP surgeries work with patients to improve services and promote health and wellbeing and ensure patients visiting the surgery have a good all-round experience.


Whilst PPG's are a really good way of giving patients a say in directing services within the surgery, not everyone is in a position to get involved. Maybe you are at college; you have a young family; your working hours mean you have little free time; or maybe you have mobility or mental health difficulties which mean that getting out and about can be a challenge. To combat this, many GP surgeries are setting up virtual PPGs to run alongside face-to-face meetings to give you the chance to have your say and get involved.

So if you want to have a say in the planning and delivery of healthcare services in your GP surgery and want to raise awareness of local health priorities ask about your PPG at


**Do you want to work with your GP surgery to make sure that services meet the needs of all patients?**



I work full time so there's no way I could go to meetings.



I'd really like a say in the services at my GP surgery, but with a young family and a busy life I just don't have the time.



I would really like to get involved in having a say at my GP surgery. It might be possible if meetings were on whilst my son was at nursery...



# Setting up an online PPG



Every GP Surgery has a Patient Participation Group (or PPG) and these give patients the opportunity to give their views when, for example, changes are proposed in GP Surgeries. Not everyone is able to attend meetings; perhaps because of family or work commitments, but this doesn't mean you can't get involved.

Some GP Surgeries also have an online or virtual PPG and this allows them to gain the views of a wider group of patients and gives you the chance to have your say. You can become involved as little or as much as you want and give your views at a time that suits you.

**Who runs the Online PPG?** Usually it is the Patient Participation Group with the support of the GP Surgery.

**How does it work?** Once you have given your email address the PPG will send you information about the different ways you can get involved - they may also send you surveys if they are planning on making any changes in the Practice, newsletters and information about events or what's happening in the Surgery.

**So if your GP Surgery is interested in setting up an online or virtual PPG, what next?** It's not difficult, but you do need to be methodical and organised. Here are some helpful tips to get you started.

- **Set up a free email account with a suitable address** - the obvious choice is to choose something like [nameofpracticePPG@mail.com](mailto:nameofpracticePPG@mail.com). There are plenty of free email providers to choose from.
- **Give the practice manager at the Surgery the passwords and logon and username details** - this will allow for the online PPG to run smoothly in the event of the PPG Chair stepping down and illustrates why it is so important not to use personal email addresses.

- **Decide on how to collect patient email addresses** - there are different ways you can do this, you can use a survey, or request form. You need to use a system which also records the patient's agreement to be contacted, along with a way of allowing them to be removed if they request it. In the policy it is wise to explain that there is NO connection with any patient records held at the surgery. When collecting email addresses make sure they are accurate and legible.

Have your say  
your way...



- **Communicate with on-line members** - send new members a welcome pack, invitations to meetings, events, newsletters, and information on changes at the surgery, surveys and reminders. Include information on what the online member can expect to receive. Make sure you add a removal clause so that someone can easily opt out of receiving emails (software packages like Mail Chimp will enable you to do this and the basic package is free). Don't contact online members too often as people may start to feel pestered if you contact them too much.
- **Use the right browser** - some web browsers have built-in features which help you to keep people's email addresses private. Contact MCVS or AVA to find out more.
- **Blind copy ALL emails.** This will ensure online members are not able to see who else is a member.
- **Tips on sending emails to large groups** - the simplest way of sending a group email to lots of different people is to prepare a list of email addresses with each email address separated by a semi-colon. This list can then be cut and pasted into the BCC box which means that each person will only see their email address.
- **Need help? Contact:**  
  
Sarah Taylor at Ashfield Voluntary Action ☎ 01623 555 551  
Lesley Watkins at Mansfield CVS ☎ 01623 392 444  
Louise Casey-Simpson at Newark & Sherwood CVS ☎ 01636 679 539

**What if my GP Surgery doesn't have an online or virtual PPG?** If enough people express an interest your Surgery may consider setting up an online PPG.

# Setting up a Facebook page for your Patient Group



Setting up a Facebook page for your Patient Group is one of the ways you can easily create an online presence, keep patients informed and create a forum for lively debate and discussion. Whilst it is one of the most simple and flexible ways of setting up an online group, it is not without potential pitfalls and your Patient Group need to decide whether it is the best option for them.

The first thing you need to do is decide on the structure and settings for your group and how it will be run and administrated.

## How Should I Manage My Facebook Group?

**Establish Who You Are** - make good use of the 'About' section to promote your Patient Group, tell members what they can expect from the group and explain what they will get from joining the group.

**Make Your Rules Clear** - these are the basics you will need to cover:

- I. Treat other members with respect and courtesy.
- II. This is not the forum for patient complaints; make it clear that patient concerns should be raised directly with the practice manager of the GP Surgery - the facebook group is not a vehicle for complaints.
- III. Members should be patients of your GP Surgery.

**Decide Who Should Be Able to Join** - it makes sense that only patients from your GP Surgery be allowed to join and because of this we recommend that the group be set up as a 'closed' group.



## The Best Structure for Facebook Groups for Patient Groups

	Open	Closed	Secret
Who can join?	Anyone can join or be added by a member. Therefore an open group would not be advised for a PPG as you want to restrict memberships to patients from your GP Surgery.	Anyone can ask to join or be added. Probably the best option for your PPG as it will help you to restrict access to members whilst still allowing you to promote the PPG to all patients from within your GP Surgery.	Anyone, but they have to be added. Arguably this wouldn't achieve the right balance between transparency and patient membership as a secret group would not be visible to all patients of your GP Surgery.
Who can see the group name and who's in it?	Anyone	Anyone	Only members
Who can see posts in the group?	Anyone	Only members	Only members
Who can find the group in search?	Anyone	Anyone	Only members
Who can see stories about the group on Facebook (e.g. in the News Feed and Search)?	Anyone	Anyone	Only members

Once you have decided the structure and content of your Facebook page, there are also other things you will need to take into consideration.

### Who will manage the content and administration of the Facebook page?

This is one of the most important questions to consider and you need to get it right from the outset, if you don't, a poorly managed and administered Facebook page could do more harm than good. On the plus side, a well managed and administered Facebook page can really help you to engage and involve patients and enhance the reputation of your GP Surgery as well as making it easier to promote health initiatives and activities enabling patients to get the most out of their GP Surgery.

**Email Group****Closed Facebook Group****Software through the GP Surgery**

	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Pros</b>
<b>Cons</b>	<p>No cost.</p> <p>Most people have an email account.</p> <p>Email groups can be set up alongside software packages that your GP Surgery may already be using. This can make organising and running your email group and its activities easier and will make sure that you are compliant with GDPR regulations</p> <p>People can easily subscribe and unsubscribe to an email group at any time.</p>	<p>No cost.</p> <p>Many people are familiar with Facebook.</p> <p>Measurable (easy to gauge interest and participation).</p> <p>Allows quick and easy responses to questions and surveys.</p> <p>Visual and engaging.</p> <p>Facebook can help with time management using tools to drip-feed posts (which can be scheduled to a pre-set time).</p> <p>Provides an easy to use platform and the opportunity for interesting debate.</p> <p>Interactive.</p> <p>GDPR is not an issue.</p> <p>Can be moderated easily.</p> <p>Can easily leave the group.</p>	<p>GP Surgeries have software to communicate with patients. Some of the newer software packages have features that facilitate patient engagement. Liaise with your Practice Manager to see if their software can be used to communicate with patients.</p> <p>‘Safe’ official package — provides reassurance for patients around GDPR.</p> <p>No additional cost for PPGs or the Practice as the Surgery will already be paying for this service.</p> <p>All communication needs to be done via the Surgery. The Practice Manager may not have the capacity to want to take on this additional task.</p> <p>Features used to engage patients depend on the software package chosen by the Surgery.</p>

# How does the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) support patient engagement?

Ashfield Voluntary Action, Mansfield CVS and Newark & Sherwood CVS are commissioned by NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to support their work around patient engagement.

Under the direction of NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's Engagement Team, Ashfield Voluntary Action, Mansfield CVS and Newark & Sherwood CVS can help you to get the most out of your Patient Participation Group (PPG).

So whether you need help to:

- Start up a new PPG
- Plan a health event
- Develop a newsletter
- Fundraise
- Recruit PPG members
- Develop a website
- Recruit virtual members
- Use social media to support your PPG.

**Ashfield Voluntary Action, Mansfield CVS & Newark & Sherwood CVS can help your PPG**

## Ashfield

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