**Patient Participation Group (PPG) - Terms of Reference**

**Group Purpose**

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of volunteer patients, carers and GP practice staff who meet regularly to discuss and support the running of their GP practice.

PPGs look at the services the practice offers, patient experience and how improvements can be made for the benefit of patients and the practice. An effective PPG can save the practice time and money by reducing complaints. Each PPG is different, but they all have the aim of making sure that the GP practice puts the patient, and improving health, at the heart of everything it does.

**Aim Of PPG**

* To work collaboratively and positively with the practice to improve services and facilities for patients and to act as a sounding board for practice staff on issues affecting patients.
* To build two-way communication and co-operation between the practice and patients, other individuals and organisations in healthcare and the wider community to the mutual benefit of all.
* To work with the practice to actively gather patient experiences and feedback through various formats and means, including patient survey. To review this information collaboratively and agree on outcomes as a collective.
* To work with the practice and other organisations on projects to improve health outcomes for patients.

**Membership and Structure**

* PPG membership process should be open to all registered patients including their carers even if a carer is not a patient in the practice. The practice and the PPG can jointly agree on the membership process.
* The PPG can agree a structure that fulfils the needs of the patients and PPG locally, however it is important the group is led or chaired by a patient.
* The PPG can elect a committee/core group to coordinate its business and communication with the practice and other partners.
* Practice membership must at a minimum include the Practice Manager and a GP, but practices may also decide to include other key staff such as Administration Manager, Social Prescriber or Nurse Practitioner.
* It is important to communicate with all patients across the practice to advise them of the PPG and its membership, so the PPG can have a wider range of members to represent various patients across the group, however it is recognised this might be challenging. Therefore, it is recommended to encourage members to join and champion those committed to the group.
* The committee will decide terms of office for the members.

Where a practice has a high volume of interest in participating in the PPG, a smaller committee should be selected. The selection process should be agreed by the PPG and practice. All other members who do not form part of the core PPG should be kept informed and communicated with in relation to PPG activities which will support inclusivity. It will be the role of the committee to convene with the practice and be part of final decision-making processes. It is for the committee to decide collectively what the maximum number of committee members are and how the selection criteria will be determined. The recommendation is to not exceed 20 members to be able to deliver committee business.

**Meeting Format and Structure**

* The PPG, or committee if it has one, must agree a meeting frequency e.g: quarterly, and schedule future meetings according to this in an annual cycle. This will ensure members are given dates in advance and can plan accordingly to enable participation and invite topics to be included in the meetings.
* Meetings must be accessible to all members. Technology permitting, the PPG can consider holding hybrid meetings comprising both face to face and virtual.
* A mutually agreeable time must be considered (e.g., in the evenings, or during the day) and where it is not possible to accommodate all members, then meeting times should alternate each time (e.g: Quarter 1 – meeting in evening, Quarter 2 - meeting at lunch time, Quarter 3 – meeting in evening etc.)
* It is the responsibility of the practice to arrange the venue for the meeting.
* Suggested topics for agenda and discussion: patient surveys and feedback, patient access, new services, new systems in the practice, practice updates, communication, new health and social care initiatives.
* PPG can consider different mechanisms for discussion and communications between meetings, this can be in the form of a WhatsApp group or emailing list. It is important to set clear guidance on how communications and documents should be shared. All members should give consent to join the group.

**Confidentiality**

* All members of the PPG (including the face-to-face and virtual participants) must be made aware of the need to always maintain absolute patient confidentiality. Any member whose work on behalf of the PPG includes work in the practice or consulting with other patients or members of the public should sign and return a copy of the practice's confidentiality agreement before undertaking any such activity.

**PPG Code of Conduct**

The PPG membership is not based on opinions or characteristics of individuals and shall be non-political and non-sectarian, at all times respecting diversity and exemplifying its commitment to the principles contained within the Equality Act.

All members of the PPG (including the virtual PPG participants) make this commitment:

* To respect practice and patient confidentiality at all times.
* To treat each other with mutual respect and act and contribute in a manner that is in the best interests of all patients.
* To be open and flexible and to listen and support each other.
* To abide by the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
* Not to use the PPG as a forum for personal agendas or complaints. These should be taken forward through other appropriate channels.
* To accept the ruling of the chair or other presiding officer is final on matters relating to orderly conduct.
* Otherwise to abide by principles of good meeting practice, for example:
1. Reading papers in advance
2. Arriving on time
3. Switching mobile phones to silent
4. Allowing others to speak and be heard/respected