

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

Report from Paul Maubach, Chief Officer

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) in Dudley

1.0 Purpose of Report

To update members on progress made by the CCG on developing a network of Patient Participation Groups.

2.0 Background

PPGs are made up of patients from a particular GP Practice, along with the practice manager and one or more of the practice GPs.

The National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP) traces the origins of PPGs back to the early 1970's. There is no set way for a PPG to work, but their general aim is to help the practice to make sure that it can put the patient, and improving health, at the heart of everything it does.

In Dudley, as in other parts of the country, PPGs are playing an active role in delivering real improvements to primary care services.

At Dudley CCG, PPGs are a vital part of our plans to get more people more actively involved in how their health care services are planned, developed and delivered.

We are investing a significant amount of resource in developing PPGs at an individual practice level and we are also supporting them to work together across a wider area so that they can help to strengthen the patient voice in all aspects of the CCGs role as local leaders of the NHS.

PPG members also have a forum which enables them to meet with each other and the CCG management team on a regular basis – our Patient Opportunities Panel or POPs.

3.0 Report

Of the 49 GP practices in Dudley, 39 currently have an active PPG, eight of which have been established in the last six months. 5 practices are just in the process of setting up PPGs and discussions continue with the remaining 5 practices about what support they might need to establish a PPG.

To reflect the importance the CCG attaches to PPGs, and further encourage those practices that do not have a group yet, practices have to demonstrate that they have an active PPG before they can benefit from an incentive scheme which provides financial rewards for improving access to primary care.

We also provide ongoing support for PPGs, although this is very much with the aim of encouraging them to be as self-sufficient as possible.

PPG members have worked with GPs and practice staff to shape real improvements in primary care at practices across Dudley, on projects including the introduction of online booking for

appointments or repeat prescriptions, revised opening hours and text reminder services to reduce the number of patients who do not attend for their appointments.

PPGs have also planned and managed events at their practices including health days and screening events and we are working with them to co-ordinate involvement in national initiatives such as Self-Care Week (which takes place in November).

At a wider level, PPGs have been closely involved in wider pieces of consultation and engagement activity – including input to the CCG's recent high-profile consultation on Urgent Care.

As well as feeding back on the consultation itself, three PPG members are now part of the Urgent Care Centre Reference Group which has been set up to allow stakeholder input into the design of the proposed new centre.

Next Steps

Building networks: As well as working with practices which do not yet have an active PPG, we are also responding to feedback from existing PPGs that members would welcome opportunities to work together, network and share best practice.

To that end we are discussing with them the development of a network support structure which reflects the locality structure groups of our GP membership (see attached diagram) The first tier of this model would be an active PPG for each GP Practice.

The second tier would see each of those PPGs represented at their respective locality forum. Each locality would then be represented at a borough-wide PPG forum (which would in all probability be developed from our current POPs).

This model of patient engagement will only work effectively if it has the support and active participation of PPG members. We also need to ensure that the CCG and the PPGs have the capacity and capability to make the model deliver the best results.

Training and development - Building capacity and capability

The CCG is fortunate to have a number of enthusiastic PPG representatives but their needs and abilities vary from practice to practice.

To make sure that PPGs have the capacity and capability to continue driving improvements to healthcare, and to support the development of the networks described above, we plan to invest in two critical areas over the next year:

Development of improved communications systems: Early discussions suggest that areas of potential greatest benefit include: Website developments; online communications system using social media; electronic or hard copy newsletters; publicity and recruitment materials; advanced video editing and production software plus training for key members of staff.

Training and development: Again we have had early discussions to identify areas of greatest potential benefit and these include: Training in how to plan and manage/chair effective meetings; good governance for committees, personal resilience and impact, influencing and planning skills.

We are working in partnership with Dudley Council of Voluntary Services (DCVS) to progress this work over the coming months. Two workshop development sessions have been planned. The first session was held on 25 February with 26 participants and a further one is planned (at the time of writing this report) for 19 March.

Participants at the first session agreed with a locality representative model and were keen to discuss further in terms of how representation could be achieved. There were further discussions around support needs to enable PPGs to function effectively. These included

funding from the CCG, support for social media training, effective chairing, how to influence and how to write newsletters.

Feedback will be collected from the March development session and will be discussed at our POPs meeting on the 27 March.

Conclusion

PPGs are an important part of the CCGs plans to give patients and the public a strong voice in the way their health services are delivered. Although they are by no means our only channel for communicating with the public, they do have a key role to play in helping us to have open and productive conversations with the communities we serve.

Our aim is to develop a framework for a systematic and sustainable focus on

- Maintaining a thriving network of PPGs and supporting locality and borough wide forums.
- Sharing best practice on setting up and maintaining effective, self-sufficient PPGs.
- Identifying and meeting the training and development needs of PPG chairs and other committee members
- Encouraging all public members of the CCG (ie all registered patients with member practices) to embrace the concept of good 'health citizenship' – making positive health choices and making appropriate choices on use of health care services and contributing towards wellbeing.