

healthwatch Sunderland



Patient Participation Groups

“Run by patients, supported by practice”

Wednesday 16th March 2016

Healthwatch Sunderland, Unit 30 Stanfield Business Centre, Addison Street.
Sunderland. SR2 8SZ

1 Introduction

About Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG)

SCCG is the statutory health body responsible for the planning and buying of local NHS care and services to meet the needs of the local community. It is made up from a partnership of 51 GP practices, split into five localities: Coalfields, Sunderland East, Sunderland West, Sunderland North and Washington.

SCCG delivers high quality care, using the most appropriate methods and cost effective resources, to improve healthcare provision for the people of Sunderland and reduce disparities in health and social care; using effective clinical decision-making can make a real impact on the health, wellbeing and life expectancy of patients.

About Healthwatch Sunderland (HWS)

Local Healthwatch has been set up across England to create a strong, independent consumer champion whose aim is to:

- Strengthen the collective voice of citizens and communities in influencing local health and social care services to better meet their needs
- Support people to find the right health and social care services for them by providing appropriate information, advice and signposting
- To encourage and support people and groups to share their views about services; listen to people's needs and experiences of services.
Healthwatch Sunderland will work with local people, patients, service users, carers, community groups, organisations, service providers and commissioners to get the best out of local health and social care services. This doesn't just mean improving services today but also influencing and shaping services to meet the needs of the local communities tomorrow.

About Patient Participation Groups (PPG)

From April 2016, SCCG began to contract General Practitioner (GP) services for Sunderland. It is now a contractual requirement for all practices to form a PPG and to make reasonable efforts for this to be representative of the practice population.

The purpose of the PPG is to ensure that patients and carers are involved in decisions about the range, shape and quality of services provided by their practice. The contract requirement aims to promote the proactive and innovative engagement of patients and carers through the use of effective PPGs and to act on a range of sources of patient and carer feedback.

2. The Event

All Practice Managers and patient group members from across Sunderland were invited to attend a workshop on 16th March 2016 at the Stadium of Light to discuss what help and support is required to have an effective PPG. The event was promoted in GP practices for those who might have an interest but do not currently attend or have a patient group at their practice.

There are 51 GP practices in Sunderland, and in March 2016, 42 practices had existing PPGs (actual or virtual group) and 9 had neither. Please note that this information is the result of an initial assessment of GP practice PPGs in Sunderland. This may be subject to amendment following a more in depth review which is currently taking place to ensure accuracy.

There are currently only two LPGs (Locality Patient Groups) in Sunderland.

The event was attended by 20 practice staff and 30 patients representing practices across Sunderland.

The attendees were separated into patients and practice staff for workshop one and then mixed for workshop two. Healthwatch Volunteers acted as facilitators and scribes on each of the tables. The afternoon was split into two sessions covering the following topics:

Workshop One - What makes a good group?

- What features will an active and effective group have?
- What would you like your group to achieve?
- What help and support do you need to have a successful group?
- Any other comments received

Workshop Two - Comparing Notes (patients and staff share views)

- What are the key things practice staff identified?
- What are the key things patients identified?
- Discuss and agree what are the most important?

3. Main Findings

- A consistent theme raised by both practice staff and patients was that a successful PPG should be patient led. However, this could only be achieved by working together with the practice manager and staff.

- The group's membership should be inclusive and reflect the views of all patients of the practice. Young people, Black and Ethnic Minority, and other seldom heard members of the community should be represented by the group. A means of giving all patients of the practice the opportunity to contribute to the group and not just the members should be explored.
- Support for groups around issues of structure and sustainability was also cited. Training should be given to enable chairs of groups to be more effective and further support should be provided to maintain membership and recruit new members.
- Both groups and practices need to have effective means of communication to members and practice patients. The group should highlight the work they do and make all patients aware that they are there for them. A means of enabling patients who cannot attend the groups to have their say should be developed.

4. **Next steps**

Over the course of the next year Healthwatch Sunderland will liaise with practice staff and patients to create and develop vibrant, proactive and effective PPGs. This will involve the following:

- Implementation workshops providing tools to create a PPG
- A Best Practice Guide for staff and patients, taking into account feedback received at the March Event
- Support visits to each GP practice to assist with the development and delivery of individual action plans
- Support with marketing and promotion with practices
- A volunteer strategy / development programme supporting effective engagement, participation and development
- Facilitation of Volunteer training sessions
- Supporting the establishment of LPGs
- Supporting PPGs to understand the importance of linking with both statutory and community organisations to enhance the service offer at the local practice
- Ensuring that practices have taken into account Equality and Diversity and have a broad spectrum of representation including young people
- Identify hard to reach groups at each practice

4. Appendix - comments from participants at the workshops

What features will an effective group have?

- Patient led - some patients stated that people can be put off by a manager or other members running the group.
- A set of ground rules
- Objectives and aims - keep the focus and purpose
- Diversity - more inclusive with young people, young mums etc. - patient group where possible should where possible reflect the whole community
- A group that represents patients who don't attend the surgery regularly
- An enthusiastic membership - keep patient members interested
- Appropriate information sharing and communication from both patients and practice staff
- Regular meetings - minimum of bi monthly
- Meetings to be held during suitable hours so accessible for everyone
- Proactive practice
- PPG to have representative from practice staff
- A means of communication that is accessible for all - paper based and computer generated
- Patients that are unable to attend patient groups should still be able to give their input
- Up to date notice board advertising correct information on PPG
- Driver from practice and patients - would require a Chair person to liaise with Practice Manager or designated GP
- Sense of purpose - Mission statement
- The use of a Vice chair
- Training for PPGs - basic support - how to make decisions, chairing etc.
- Support from practice in preparation of minutes, agendas etc. - group to define objectives and report back
- Encourage members to discuss issues with wider family to increase percentage of population covered

What would you like your group to achieve?

- Identify problems and solving
- Work with the practice where improvement is needed
- Share health needs
- Word of mouth from GP - to make all patients aware of a PPG
- To keep patients informed of changes and why
- Increase the trust between staff and patients
- Reducing any barriers
- To make the group sustainable
- To make a difference even if to one patient
- Use PPG to cascade information about changes in practice

- To have the confidence and be transparent and open when feeding back information
- Ensuring the group/meetings stay on the right track to achieve goals
- PPG could act as a drop in or support group
- Group to be clear about the roles of staff
- Patients to have realistic expectations about what the PPG and practice can do
- Sharing best practice with other PPGs
- Useful dialogue
- To achieve the items which we have on our work plan
- Admin - to help patient group
- Connect to other voluntary sector organisations (to obtain funding etc.)
- To have a say in how the practice develops

What help and support do you need to have a successful group?

- Secretarial support may encourage patient to take ownership
- Support from practice staff
- Healthwatch - to promote patient groups
- Patients to recruit
- Clean perspective of what patients can and cannot do - data protection
- Open minded and non-judgemental - no cliques
- Guidance from CCG - someone to offer support, guidance and structure on initial meeting
- Funding streams for admin costs
- Meetings with other PPGs
- A review meeting in 6 months' time to see what impact the support has given to all PPGs

Any other comments received?

- How do you get non-members to attend?
- Could surgeries stay open late to accommodate different people?
- Are virtual groups the way forward to get young people involved?
- To use PPG members to act as Volunteers in practice to help fill in family and friends forms etc.
- Important to speak out to those who wouldn't normally speak out i.e. Anxiety sufferer
- How do we learn from what works?
- Networking opportunities facilitated by an external organisation such as Healthwatch or similar
- What practical support will groups be able to access to develop e.g. Travelling expenses, training and development, peer support?

What are the key things practice staff identified?

- Some needed GP involvement but not for the whole of the meeting

- Objectives of the group
- Occasionally staff can be seen as unapproachable
- Communication issues in patients and staff
- Adversity - people don't often come in to practice
- A whole practice approach - two way approach
- There is a need for meetings on a regular basis
- Patients voice speak louder
- There are things patients need to know and having a group helps convey the messages
- Patients were confused about the opt out services, discussing this information helped
- It creates a greater understanding
- It helps to explain the structure
- Information should be written in 'patient language'
- 'Run by patients - supported by practice' motto
- Help to set up but then let it run
- An identified person at the practice to offer any support
- A PPG benefits the community
- GP should be encouraging patients

What are the key things patients identified?

- To have a voice - explain what they want from different people
- To feedback to their patients
- Appropriate person to contact for information - developing communication channels
- To be able to have an open discussion and speak in confidence in their groups
- Practice staff should play their part and listen to patients
- GPs should have some involvement

What are the most important?

- Ways of interconnecting the five locality areas to provide information and inspiration to other PPGs
- Locality groups seem to have been shelved - could these areas be brought together?
- Good structure management, communication and willingness to cooperate and mutual support
- Need to be able to rely on group members to maintain communication and progress
- Ongoing projects between meetings
- Health improvement
- Greater understanding from both patients and practice staff
- Practice should be aware of what their patients want
- General terms of reference needed

- Diversity - fully inclusive
- Patient led with practice support
- Some practices can't actively invite when no space for meetings - can Community centres/Schools help