

## **Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) – Questions and Answers**

### **1). What are PPGs?**

PPGs are generally made up of a group of volunteer patients and practice staff who meet on a regular basis to discuss the services on offer, and how improvements can be made for the benefit of the patients and the practice. PPGs act as representatives of the practice population, and therefore act as a channel of communication between the practice and its patients.

### **2). What do PPGs do?**

PPGs can play a number of roles in the practice, such as carrying out research to understand the views of the wider patient population and offering feedback, working with the practice to promote health education initiatives, improving communication through newsletters, running services to meet local need (such as befriending and carer support), or discussing ways in which the practice could be developed further.

### **3). What are the benefits of joining a PPG?**

Being involved in a PPG gives you the opportunity to have a say in the way in which health services are delivered, and enables you to gain a better understanding of the practice and its staff. Patients will benefit from improved communication with team, and have a forum to suggest positive ideas.

It's a great way to give something back and help make positive changes to the practice. It's also a great way to meet new people and learn new skills, including diplomacy and team work.

### **4). How often do you meet?**

The frequency of the meetings depends on the individual practice; usually it's advisable to meet at least every quarter to ensure that momentum doesn't wane.

### **5). Isn't the Group just an opportunity for people to grumble about the practice?**

No – it's made clear at the outset that a PPG is not a forum for complaints. The Group is reliant on people who are focussed on making positive change, rather than becoming a talking shop. All members should have an equal input, and any individual complaints will be dealt with outside of the PPG forum.

### **6). How much time does it take up being involved in a PPG?**

The time commitment for a patient involved in a PPG tends to include attendance at regular meetings. Some PPG members will choose to take on additional roles that are more time consuming, such as contributing to the PPG newsletter or organising health promotion events. This additional contribution allows the Group to have more of a positive impact on the practice.

**7). Is there a financial commitment for anyone joining?**

None other than the cost of transport if required.

**8). I don't have a background in healthcare, does this matter?**

Not at all! No formal training is required to be a member of a PPG. Members often have their own skills, but most importantly they just need to be keen and enthusiastic.