



What are PPGs

Important changes to the GP contract - Patient Participation Groups a contractual requirement in England

From April 2016, it has been a contractual requirement for all English practices to form a patient participation group (PPG) during the year ahead and to make reasonable efforts for this to be representative of the practice population.

The first Patient Participation Group was set up by a GP in 1972 and many general practices in England now have a PPG. Generally made up of a group of volunteer patients, the practice manager and one or more of the GPs from the practice, they meet on a regular basis to discuss the services on offer, and how improvements can be made for the benefit of patients and the practice.

The beauty of PPGs is that there is no set way in which they work - the aims and work of each group entirely depends on local needs - but they all have the aim of making sure that their practice puts the patient, and improving health, at the heart of everything it does.

Why should I get involved?

If you're interested in having a say in the way your local health services are delivered, getting involved with your practice's PPG is a great place to start.

No training is required to be a member of a PPG – the most important thing is that you are keen and focused on taking positive action to help the practice and the local patient population.

All PPGs are different, but generally involvement tends to include attendance at monthly, bimonthly or quarterly meetings. Some PPG members will choose to take on additional roles that are more time consuming, such as editing/contributing to the PPG newsletter or setting up and running health education or fundraising events, but if you have less time available, this isn't a requirement.

Not only can joining help to shape the delivery of services, many members also find that volunteering is a great way to meet new people and develop your own skills, such as negotiation, dealing with people or even speaking in public.