

020 3196 1900

info@healthwatchharingey.org.uk

www.healthwatchharingey.org.uk

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By email

From: Sharon Grant, Chair Healthwatch Haringey

To: Owen Sloman, Assistant Director, NCL CCG

Dear Owen

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of Healthwatch Haringey - and also in fact as a member of the Haringey Patient Participation Group (PPG) Network.

You will recall no doubt that NCL CCG funded our PPG development project last year and, as part of that project, we set up a Haringey PPG Network, bringing together PPG Chairs and members from practices across Haringey. It became such a valuable forum we have managed, without resource, to carry on running it, even after the funding ended. The Haringey PPG Network meets quarterly and attracts between 30 and 40 people to its meetings on Monday evenings, although the attendees of course represent a far larger number of people who are now, encouragingly, playing a part in how practices are run.

The last meeting was on Monday 7 February 2022 and one of the substantive agenda items was "How is your PPG working?". Under that item, PPG members at the meeting raised a concern that whilst each practice is required by law to have a PPG, many PPGs had not met over the last 2 years during the pandemic (not even virtually).*

This is at a time of course, when there are significant changes in the way GP services are being delivered, with co-production being regarded as a guiding principle of those changes. Listening to patient feedback on how those changes are working, and impacting on them, is critically important. It was clear from our very successful Haringey PPG Conference (held in June 2021 with 55 people attending) that patients are very willing to play their part and to work with practice staff to organise and facilitate PPG meetings, and ensure the patient voice is heard and prioritised. They plainly see themselves as constructive and critical friends of practices, with many examples of positive results to their credit.

The PPG network itself has become an important means by which individual PPG's can share knowledge, ideas and good practice too in a period of change

Given this background, the Haringey PPG Network has asked me to write to you formally and raise the issue of practices where PPGs are not meeting regularly, have not met in a long time, have stopped meeting, or where they have not yet been set-up. This means that some practices are missing out on the advantages that involvement in

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Registered office: Tottenham Town Hall, Town Hall Approach Road, London N15 4RX.



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the PPG network can bring. They are particularly concerned about the absence of support for patients who want to set up a PPG where there is currently none in existence, or where a PPG has become inactive, and ask what support can be given in these circumstances?

It is also suggested too that the practices which have no active PPG may well be those that need one most, as they have not ensured a route for patient voice.

PPG Members would like you to raise this issue with Haringey GP practices through your meetings and communications with them (GP Collaborative, Practice Managers Forum, individual visits etc) so they understand the importance of having an active PPG which meets regularly. PPGs make a valuable contribution to improving services and access, and narrowing health inequalities.

I would also welcome your response on this, or a meeting, so that I can take back your thinking to the PPG Network. They would very much welcome hearing back from you on this, and I am sure would be more than happy to help shape those plans and contribute to them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Grant,

Chair, Healthwatch Haringey

* In a survey of PPGs we carried out in November 2020 we found that most PPGs had stopped meeting during the pandemic - 19 out of the 25 practices who responded to our survey said their PPG had not met during lockdown.

