

## Keith Marshall

---

**From:** Barnabas PPG <barnabas.ppg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** 20 September 2017 20:23  
**To:** Barnabas PPG  
**Subject:** Barnabas PPG Monthly Bulletin, September  
**Attachments:** PPG\_Minutes\_20170606.pdf; BB19.pdf

You are receiving this email as a member or associate of Barnabas PPG.  
If you no longer wish to remain a member of this group, please reply to this email with UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject line.  
[Please do NOT use "Reply All".]

To All Barnabas PPG Members ...  
[Printed copies to those PPG members without email]

[If you can't read any of the attached documents, or want printed copies of anything mentioned, please contact me and I'll try to send you a copy.]

Welcome to the September bulletin for Barnabas PPG members. There is a lot in this month's bulletin and that is one reason it is rather later than I would have liked. (The other reason is that I have been out of hospital only a handful of days after my second full knee replacement operation, so I am still working well below par.)

### **PPG Meeting, Tuesday 3 October, Agenda**

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 3 October, 1400 hrs at St Barnabas Church Hall.

As far as I can see at present the agenda will be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting
3. Survey Action Plans
4. PPG Action/Issues Log
5. Strengthening the PPG
6. NHS Communications [see below]
7. Practice Updates
8. Other PPG Updates, Matters Arising & AOB

The minutes of our last formal meeting (in June) are attached. Please do come along if you can.

### **NHS Communications** [Item 6 on the meeting agenda above]

In recent weeks Barnabas PPG has been invited to send a representative to a number of (mostly Ealing CCG) patient consultation events. Where meeting papers have been provided several of us have deemed them incomprehensible, for a whole variety of reasons. But the problem is wider: for instance one recent three-page, easy-read, local NHS patient leaflet contained at least one major spelling or grammatical error on each page. These documents, which are a fundamental part of NHS communications, are clearly not being read and corrected by anyone with a good grasp of English as their first language. This is a problem which is pervasive throughout the NHS.

This is important; it does matter. If we can't get to grips with it, what chance do those whose first language is not English stand? For they too have to be included as do those with learning difficulties.

What can we do about this? Well we can't boil the ocean and fix the whole NHS, but we can chip away at our corner. Currently I, and some others amongst us, are declining to attend meetings where the papers *etc.* are incomprehensible, bound in meaningless NHS management-speak jargon, or riddled with grammatical errors. But we would like to go further, so we propose that as a PPG we send a robust statement of our position to Ealing CCG, and where appropriate other health and social care organisations, along these lines:

The members of Barnabas PPG are appalled at the poor quality of documentation being circulated by the NHS, especially that which is intended as a part of patient/community consultation or for providing healthcare information to patients. We are no longer prepared to put up with trying to understand over-long documents, full of meaningless NHS management mumbo-jumbo and elementary spelling and grammatical errors, which masquerade as consultation and are provided at the last minute before a hastily announced meeting. This is at best disrespectful to the intended recipients of documents and suggests to us that the NHS doesn't really care about patient/community consultation, but is merely paying it lip-service. (If we, a group containing English teachers, editors, proof-readers and a range of well-educated professionals, cannot get to grips with the documents then there is something very wrong.)

This is a situation which is pervasive throughout the NHS. It is unprofessional, reflects badly on the organisation as a whole, and does a disservice to the great work done by NHS clinicians.

We cannot fix the whole NHS but we can, and will, chip away at improving our corner. So until such time as there is significant improvement in this situation, we will decline to engage with any health or social care meeting or event where the information provided is:

- of unreasonably excessive length (say a maximum of 30 pages for the most highly complex areas)
- written in obscure, and meaningless, NHS management-speak and jargon
- contains a multitude of (often unnecessary) acronyms which are not explained on, or before, their first use
- contains elementary spelling and grammatical errors – because no-one cares enough to have the document corrected by someone with a good grasp of English as their first language
- circulated less than 7 days prior to the meeting, or the meeting date is announced less than 4 weeks in advance.

[We also expect to see the minutes of every meeting circulated to participants within 7 days of the meeting – currently minutes are hardly ever made available, even when requested!]

To use an overworked cliché, this is not "rocket science" but common courtesy. If the NHS is to improve, as it must, then one element of that improvement is a massive step-change in the professionalism of the organisation's administrative arm. Tackling the above will be a good first step.

### **Meet the Patients**

We will be in the waiting area again on the morning of Tuesday 26 September for our monthly "meet the patients" session. Do drop by.

### **Barnabas Bulletin**

The latest issue of the Practice's newsletter, *Barnabas Bulletin*, is now available and contains the sad news that Dr David Knight is retiring at the end of the year. A copy of the newsletter is attached; further copies may be picked up from the medical centre or downloaded from the Practice website.

### **Patient Experience Sharing**

The latest Barnabas Bulletin also contains a small piece about the sharing of experiences in order to help others. As patients we know it would often be helpful or reassuring to know something of what to expect before we undergo a medical procedure or treatment – after all it is human nature to be anxious at such times. As someone who has had full replacement of both knees in the last 9 months, I know how valuable I found the pre-op advice, hints and tips I received from others who had undergone the same procedure; this did make a significant difference to my recovery and rehab.

To help alleviate these concerns we want to create "helpful notes" of patients' experiences: hints and tips, dos and don'ts, and experience (including local knowledge) of various procedures and treatments (eg. hip replacement; insulin initiation, dialysis, chemotherapy). This could also include notes on what you need to take into hospital, as this can vary between hospitals. These notes will then be edited, collated, and made available through the Practice website, and hopefully elsewhere, for everyone's benefit. All contributions will be anonymous.

Can you contribute to this project? If so, please write some notes (they don't have to be neat, tidy or in polished English), address them to Keith Marshall and leave them with Reception, or email them to [barnabas.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:barnabas.ppg@gmail.com). Please include your contact details in case we need to check anything with you, but these will not be published.

### **Annual Flu Jabs**

Annual 'flu inoculations, for those who are eligible, will shortly be available from the Practice. There are more details in the latest *Barnabas Bulletin* or from Reception.

### **MenACWY Vaccination**

Talking of needles, parents are being urged to remind their 17- and 18-year-olds to get their MenACWY vaccination. If contracted meningococcal disease, strains A, C, W and Y can be extremely serious and are readily spread where young people are living and working in close proximity, such as at university. There is more information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/parents-urged-to-remind-teenagers-to-get-menacwy-vaccine>.

### **Ealing Clinical Pharmacy Team Win Award**

Ealing GP Pharmacy Team have won the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Team of the Year for 2017, for their "outstanding outcomes and innovative working within general practice" across Ealing. The team of pharmacists work within multidisciplinary teams across several general practices, care homes and community pharmacies in the borough. Well done to Graham Stretch and his team!

### **Healthwatch Ealing GP Survey**

Healthwatch Ealing are back in business with a new supplier. One of their first projects has been to conduct a survey on behalf of Ealing CCG, into access to GPs. The headline finding was that 40-45% of patients can always get a routine or an urgent appointment during GP core hours. While 80% report being able to get an urgent appointment the same or the next day, over 50% report having to wait over a week for a routine appointment. This is a 43-page report, but not hard reading, and contains much information; you can find it online at <https://healthwatchealing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/GP-Access-survey-Detailed-Analysis-FINAL.pdf>

### **Ealing GP Surgery Rated "Inadequate"**

CQC, who are the inspectors of healthcare providers, have rated Dr Nader Lewis's practice in Brunswick Road, Hanger Lane as "Inadequate" and placed it in "special measures" with six months to improve or be closed. Further report at <http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/appalling-service-ealing-doctors-surgery-13506701>.

### **Ealing Hospital is NOT Closing**

Notwithstanding the scare tactics of many local activists and politicians, Ealing CCG and London North West Hospital Trust (of which Ealing Hospital is a part) are very clear that Ealing Hospital is NOT closing! This is the key message in a recent short statement on "What you need to know about Ealing Hospital" which can be found in full at <http://www.ealingccg.nhs.uk/news,-publications-and-policies/news/2017/07/ealing-hospital-update.aspx>.

### **Healthwatch Ealing Newsletter**

Healthwatch Ealing are issuing a new bi-monthly newsletter. The first, September 2017, issue can be downloaded from <https://healthwatchealing.org.uk/newsletters-v2/>. There is a lot in it!

And now just a couple of less local items ...

### **Health Anxiety**

Researchers are saying that worrying excessively about health, and going for unnecessary appointments and tests, is a growing problem, and this is being fuelled by patients looking up symptoms on the internet; health anxiety can also be caused by previous health scares. It is estimated that it could be affecting as many as one in five hospital out-patients. BBC News report at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-41176729>.

### **The 10-Minute Consultation**

Last month we highlighted an article by London GP Dr Renee Hoenderkamp on the inappropriate use of a GP's time. In an earlier article for Pulse (October 2016) she explains what has to happen during your 10 minute appointment, and asks us to consider that our GP is doing this 10 minutes for the 18 patients they will see in a 3-hour session, without a break. Just to start with, ask when does your 10 minutes start? No, not when you sit down in the doctor's office, but when the buzzer goes summoning you! So if you take several minutes getting to the doctor's room (and some of us do need that long) it has eaten into your time. The whole article is worth reading and is online at <http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/views/blogs/dear-patient-the-whole-problem-is-the-ten-minute-consultation/20032956.blog>.

More next month ...

Keith

---

Keith Marshall, Chairman, Barnabas PPG  
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, UB6 0JW  
Phone: 020 8864 7993    Mobile: 07847 149 417  
Email: [barnabas.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:barnabas.ppg@gmail.com) or [kcm@cix.co.uk](mailto:kcm@cix.co.uk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/barnabas.ppg/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/barnabas.ppg/)

---