

## Barnabas Patient Voices

---

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>  
Sent: 04 March 2023 14:15  
To: Barnabas Patient Voices  
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, March  
Attachments: BPV\_Minutes\_20230117.pdf; Plan\_2023-2025.pdf; Local\_Facilities\_202301.pdf; CQC\_202302.pdf; In\_Touch\_137.pdf; BB34.pdf

To All [Barnabas Patient Voices](#) Members ...

[Printed copies to those members without email]

[A copy will also be posted on our Facebook group and website]

[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 March update for [Barnabas Patient Voices](#) members.

---

### Coronavirus

Well what is there to say? Infections are coming down from the small wave we had a few weeks ago. There seems to be nothings particularly concerning on the horizon by way of new variants: the CH.1.1 and XBB.1.5 variants are together currently dominant, but increasing only slowly. Although the ONS survey of infections is still running, there is now relatively little reporting and pretty much no testing being done. Also you can now not get a booster vaccination, although you can still have your first or second vaccination if you've never had them – so almost no vaccination is now happening. But against that, immunity is also waning and many have not had a vaccination for a year.

What else to say? There is scientific evidence that having had a vaccination does protect against infection, and against Long Covid. And there is no evidence that Covid vaccination causes death. Hospital admissions due to flu are around 15 times lower than those for Covid: Covid is not flu. And recently we had the first week in a long time with no excess deaths.

What has become clear over the pandemic is that Covid-19 is not (as first thought) a respiratory infection (except perhaps in its very early stages). It is an infection of the vascular system (circulation); there is now significant research that there are major effects primarily to the blood vessels and also causing (mostly tiny) blood clots – and this is being seen by those treating patients with Long Covid.

If you want to know more, watch the first 15-20 minutes of the Independent SAGE briefing from 3 March, which is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhobxeX4noA>.

---

### Barnabas Patient Voices News

#### March Open Meeting – Agenda

Our next Open Meeting is on Wednesday 15 March, 13:00 on Zoom. (Apologies, the date was wrong in my February Update.) As before the Zoom details for the call are:

Zoom

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7279594414?pwd=VmYwODdoWGg2eTFvTlVjVlZyRmhSQ09>

Meeting ID: 727 959 4414

Passcode: 149417

The agenda for the meeting is likely to be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes of January Meeting [attached]
3. Consider Draft 2023-2025 Plan [attached]
4. Members Feedback
5. Practice Updates
6. Other PPG Updates
7. Matters Arising, AOB

Please try to attend if you can as this meeting will be setting our path for the next couple of years.

#### March Informal Call

Our next Informal Call is on Monday 27 March, 17:00 on Zoom – same details as above.

#### 2023-25 Plan

The draft plan for the group for the next two years is attached and will be discussed at the Open Meeting on 15/03. I've built the plan based on (a) your input through the earlier survey, (b) discussions with Vice-Chair Harsha Mortemore, and with Practice Manager Matt Edwards, and (c) our 2021-2023 Plan. You'll notice that the draft Plan is in three sections: "Support the Practice", "Patients' Needs and Expectations", and "Group Activity and Governance". If you are unable to attend the Open Meeting and wish to comment on the draft Plan, then please drop me a note and I will ensure your thoughts are added to the discussions.

#### Local Facilities List

I finally managed to publish the January update to the Local Facilities List in early February. Although it is getting quite large, I've attached a copy. You can also find it on our website at

[https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Local\\_Facilities\\_202301.pdf](https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Local_Facilities_202301.pdf).

---

#### Practice News

##### *Barnabas Bulletin*, Issue 34, March 2023

The March issue of the Practice's newsletter, *Barnabas Bulletin*, is now available. A copy is attached. Copies have been uploaded to our website at <https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/BB34.pdf> and our Facebook page; and they should be available from the Practice in the next few days.

---

#### Local Healthcare News

##### Ealing Befriending Service

Age UK Ealing offers a free telephone support and befriending service to older people in the borough who are lonely and isolated. They can provide a friendly phone call up to three times per week, and a monthly visit by one of their team. The volunteers provide companionship and support, and can offer information about local services and resources. To access the service yourself, or refer a friend or relative, contact Age UK Ealing on 020 8578 2712 and select option 2, or visit their website at <https://bit.ly/3IRvN2U>. The service is part-funded by Ealing Council.

##### Hospital 5-Year Strategy

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, who manage our local hospitals, has published a new five-year strategy. The document, *Our Way Forward*, outlines how the Trust aims to put quality at the

heart of health care. The four new objectives focus on care, employment, non-clinical services, and partnerships, which are supported by its new vision: *quality at our HEART*. There's a local press report at <http://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp?section=info&page=eanhs051.htm> or find the full report at <https://www.lnwh.nhs.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n10865.pdf&ver=26658>.

---

## General NHS & Healthcare News

### Prescriptions in Pregnancy

Pregnant women are entitled to free medication if they have a maternity exemption certificate, for which their midwife should register them. Pharmacists are legally required to request the certificate when dispensing medication. Without the certificate patients must pay for their prescriptions. But too often two things appear to go wrong: midwives make errors applying for the certificates, or forget to apply at all; and pharmacists don't ask for proof of exemption. Women who aren't provided the certificate may claim free prescriptions without realising they are not eligible. They can then face backdated bills for their medication, plus fines of up to £100 per item. And, yes, the NHS does check! *Guardian* report at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/feb/04/nhs-fines-mothers-for-claiming-free-prescriptions-while-pregnant>.

### Reducing the Cost of HRT

From 1 April 2023, women prescribed HRT have access to a scheme allowing a year of menopause prescription items for the cost of two single prescription charges (currently £18.70) via a Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC). The PPC will be valid for 12 months and will be useable against a long list of HRT items, such as patches, tablets and topical preparations. There will be no limit to how many times the certificate can be used while it is valid. Details from DHSC at <https://bit.ly/3YiGxvP>.

### Improving Organ Transplants

The government has accepted recent recommendations to improve the system of organ transplants. There are currently around 7,000 patients on the active transplant list. The expectation is that patients waiting for transplants will benefit from changes to the organ transplant services designed to better match donated organs with recipients, increase the number of transplants, and improve the patient experience. DHSC press release at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/improved-system-of-organ-use-to-save-lives>.

### Bowel Cancer Screening Campaign

In a new NHS campaign, people who are sent a bowel cancer screening home testing kit are being encouraged to use it and return it. Currently just over 70% of people participate in the screening, but that means almost 30% aren't returning their test kit. The NHS aims to increase uptake of screening so more people with bowel cancer are diagnosed at the earliest stage, when they're nine times more likely to be successfully treated. Each month the NHS posts out over half a million free Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) home test kits to eligible patients (basically those aged 60 to 74; although the starting age is being reduced to 50 by 2025). The FIT kit detects small amounts of blood in stool before someone may notice anything is wrong. NHS announcement at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/02/new-nhs-campaign-urges-people-to-use-their-bowel-cancer-home-testing-kit/>.

### Surgical Capacity Boost

The NHS is creating dozens of new surgical spaces as part of the catch-up plan. An estimated 780,000 additional surgeries and outpatient appointments will be provided at 37 new surgical hubs, 10 expanded existing hubs, and 81 new operating theatres dedicated to elective care. Surgical hubs are separated from emergency services in hospitals, so that operations continue, largely unaffected by increased pressure in

other parts of the hospital. NHS announcement at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/02/hundreds-of-thousands-more-patients-to-benefit-from-major-nhs-surgical-capacity-boost/>.

---

## Newsletters

Finally, as always, a round-up of newsletters received which may be of interest.

- NHS In Touch #137 – copy attached
  - Vaccine Update #335 – PDF online at <https://www.healthpublications.gov.uk/ViewArticle.html?sp=Svaccineupdateissue335february2023>
  - CQC Newsletter 02/2023 – copy attached
  - PPGUKNews – PDF online at [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b\\_2\\_q9gPG7WcvldJmtEiB5wurVc6uLy0](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b_2_q9gPG7WcvldJmtEiB5wurVc6uLy0)
- 

That's all for this month. I'm looking forward to Spring and release from this winter depression. Stay well.

Keith

---

Keith Marshall, Chairman, [Barnabas Patient Voices](#)  
76 Ennismore Avenue, Greenford, UB6 0JW  
Phone: 020 8864 7993 – Mobile: 07847 149 417  
Email: [keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk](mailto:keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk) or [kcm@cix.co.uk](mailto:kcm@cix.co.uk)  
Web: <http://barnabasvoices.org.uk/>

---

You have received this email as a member or friend of [Barnabas Patient Voices](#).  
If you no longer wish to receive these emails, or remain a member of this group,  
please reply to this email with UNSUBSCRIBE in the Subject line.  
[Please do NOT use "Reply All".]

---