

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>  
Sent: 04 September 2023 14:03  
To: Barnabas Patient Voices  
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, September  
Attachments: BPV\_Minutes\_20230718.pdf; In\_Touch\_142+143.pdf; Patients\_Association\_Weekly\_News.pdf; NIHR\_PERC\_Newsletter.pdf; PPG Newsletter - September 2023.pdf; SpamAssassinReport.txt

Email to All [Barnabas Patient Voices](#) Members ...  
Printed copies to members without email

A copy will also be posted on our Facebook group, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/barnabas.ppg>, and website, <https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/>.

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

---

### Coronavirus

A lot can change in a month. Unfortunately Covid cases are rising again worldwide. This appears to be because of two new variants BA.2.86 (*aka*. Pirola) and EG.5.1 (*aka*. Eris). Both are causing concern as both have a large number of new mutations, and look to have appeared from nowhere. An increasing number of cases of these variants are being identified in countries across the world (including UK), however there remains a lot of uncertainty as few countries are doing any testing or sequencing of samples. But it is highly likely these variants have already spread widely, and unseen, as many of the geographically scattered cases are unrelated.

This is why the Covid autumn booster programme has been brought forward from October to September. It would also seem wise for at least those eligible for boosters to return to wearing masks especially in indoor settings with large numbers of people or poor ventilation, and in healthcare settings – some countries are already going this route.

Covid boosters will be available from mid-September. The following groups are eligible for a booster:

- residents in care homes for older adults
- everyone aged 65 years and over
- those aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group
- frontline health and social care workers
- people aged 12 to 64 years who are household contacts of people with immunosuppression
- people aged 16 to 64 years who are carers
- staff working in care homes for older adults.

Vaccinations are expected to begin on 11 September for those most at risk, including adult care home residents and people who are immunosuppressed. From 18 September, the NHS will start to invite people in priority order of risk. Those eligible should wait for an invite; they will then be able to book an appointment on the National Booking Service.

It is expected that patients will be able to have their Covid and 'flu jabs at the same time, although they can be done at different times. Vaccination sites have yet to be confirmed but are likely to include some

local pharmacies. The expectation is that the vast majority of vaccinations will be complete by the end of October.

Having said all of that the UK is effectively flying blind due to the lack of testing. However as I write there are reports that the government are planning to increase testing; there are no details of what or how; and it needs to happen now and not in several months time after the government have wasted time thinking.

Here are a few links for those who want to look a bit deeper ...

- Covid autumn 2023 booster vaccination. <https://healthmedia.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/08/covid-autumn-booster-vaccine-2023-everything-you-need-to-know/>
- UK almost 'flying blind' on Covid this autumn, experts say. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/05/uk-almost-flying-blind-on-covid-this-autumn-experts-say>
- WHO declares 'Eris' Covid strain a variant of interest as cases rise globally. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/09/who-declares-eris-covid-strain-a-variant-of-interest-as-uk-cases-rise>
- As a new variant emerges, is Covid coming back to the UK? <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/03/as-a-new-variant-emerges-is-covid-coming-back>

One interesting thing I picked up is a video about the Salisbury Mouthcare Initiative. In it a consultant is reporting (at a conference) on the way Covid infection can enter the body through the mouth as a result of poor oral hygiene – and that this seems to be one of the primary routes of infection. Improving oral hygiene appears to make a big difference. The video on YouTube is 23 minutes and slightly technical but well worth watching. Find the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As4bOxloC9c>.

---

## Barnabas Patient Voices News

### September Open Meeting – Agenda

Our September Open Meeting is on **Wednesday 20 September; 13:00 on Zoom**.

The agenda for the meeting should be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes of July Meeting [attached]
3. Patient Experiences: Sleep Apnoea. Talk & Discussion led by Keith Marshall
4. Member Feedback
5. Practice Updates
6. PPG Updates
7. Matters Arising, AOB

The Zoom details are:

- Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7279594414?pwd=VmYwODdoWGg2eTFvTlVjVlZyRmhSQT09>
- Meeting ID: 727 959 4414
- Passcode: 149417

### November Open Meeting – New Date & Venue

The date for the November Open Meeting is changed. The meeting will now be on **Saturday 18 November; 11:00 at the Medical Centre**.

We have wanted to book the church hall (as we used to) but none of us have so far been able to make contact with the church administrators despite many attempts. So the Practice have volunteered to open up for us on a Saturday morning – many thanks, Matt!  
Full details to follow in the November Update.

---

## Barnabas Practice News

### *Barnabas Bulletin*, September Issue

We expect to publish the autumn issue of the Practice's newsletter, *Barnabas Bulletin*, in the coming week or so (final copy is with the Practice for approval). I will send everyone a copy when it is available; it will also be posted on our website.

### Flu Vaccination

The Practice are planning to start this year's Flu clinics from 20 September (assuming supplies of vaccine arrive as scheduled). If you are eligible you will receive either a text message or a phone call inviting you to book into one of our clinics.

The groups eligible for vaccination this year are:

- children aged 2 and 3 years on 31 August 2023
- school age children (Reception to Year 11)
- those aged 6 months to 65 years in a clinical risk group
- pregnant women
- everyone aged 65 years and over
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers, those in receipt of carer's allowance or the main carer of an older or disabled person
- household contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- frontline health and social care workers.

**Vaccination is an important way to protect yourself and others so please book your jab when you receive an invitation.**

---

## Local Healthcare News

### Healthwatch Ealing Q4 Patient Experience Report

Our local Healthwatch have released their report on patient experiences for the early months of this year. It covers not just GPs but hospitals and dentists too. As usual patients are not impressed, and access to appointments (everywhere) remains a major complaint. Find the report at

<https://www.healthwatchealing.org.uk/report/2023-08-22/healthwatch-ealing-patient-experience-report-q4-2022-23>

### Community Diagnostic Centre

Work has started on a new Community Diagnostic Centre at Ealing Hospital. The idea behind these centres is to allow GPs to directly refer patients for diagnostic tests including CT, MRI and ultrasound scans, bypassing the need for an initial specialist consultation, and thus freeing up NHS resources. The centre is due to open early next year. There's a brief news item at <https://www.lnwh.nhs.uk/news/work-starts-on-new-diagnostic-centre-in-ealing-8740/>.

---

## General NHS & Healthcare News

There seems to be a never-ending stream of NHS and general healthcare announcements, so just a couple of highlights which you might have missed.

#### NHS to speed up diagnosis and treatment of respiratory and heart conditions

The NHS has announced a plan for GPs to be able to directly order diagnostic checks to identify a wide range of conditions, including COPD, asthma, cardiovascular disease and heart failure. This should mean patients will benefit from a quicker diagnosis through fast-tracked tests and checks. (It isn't clear if this is the same initiative as the Community Diagnostic Centres mentioned above.) NHS announcement at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2023/08/nhs-to-speed-up-diagnosis-and-treatment-of-respiratory-and-heart-conditions/>

#### Improving the experiences of people with ME/CFS

There's a plan (and consultation) on how to improve the treatment of patients with ME/CFS. More details at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-the-experiences-of-people-with-mecfs-interim-delivery-plan>

---

#### Newsletters

A round-up of potentially interesting newsletters received since the last update.

- NHS In Touch #142 & #143 – attached
- Patients Association Weekly News, 5 weeks – attached; sorry it's big so no copy for non-email members
- NIHR Patient Experience Research Centre Newsletter, August – attached
- Vaccine Update #341 (mostly about measles) – online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vaccine-update-issue-341-august-2023>
- PPG UK News, September – attached

---

That's all for this month. Enjoy what remains of the summer and I hope to see you all at the meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>.

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".]

---