

Keith Marshall

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>
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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 November update for [Barnabas Patient Voices](#) members.

Please share healthcare news! (But not anything about your personal care.) Please be brief – just a link to a news item is fine. Email to me at keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk, or leave me a note with reception at the medical centre.

Coronavirus

To mix metaphors, I feel like a very stuck wet blanket, but in my view we do need to keep thinking about Covid – which is a view shared by most of the country's leading scientists.

While the government is continuing to tell us to live with Covid this ignores two important factors. First it ignores the vulnerable – not just those who are medically vulnerable but also the socially vulnerable (the deprived, those who can't afford to take sick leave, etc.). These people are personally at high risk of serious outcomes and/or Long Covid; but also if working while infected they're putting other people at risk. Secondly it ignores that the virus is continuing to mutate and evolve new variants; and there is no guarantee that any new variant won't cause much more serious illness and/or be much more infectious – and the UK is not doing enough to keep up with this possibility (see for instance [Prof. Sheena Cruikshank in the Guardian](#)).

Listening to the *Independent SAGE* briefing on 3 November a number of points stood out. You can watch the briefing on [YouTube](#).

1. We're now nearly 4 years into the pandemic and we're still experiencing waves of infection. Covid has not stabilised into being a mild(er), low prevalence, seasonal infection; it is still a serious disease with potentially life-changing consequences.
2. We now have effectively no data on the current number of infections. All we have are some broad brush extrapolations from what, in this context, is secondary data.
3. It was noted that the level of hospitalisations with Covid is now falling from a peak a few weeks ago. But deaths are still rising – which is expected as they're the final link in the chain, so the data will lag behind. This suggests that the current level of infections is falling, again from that peak of a few weeks ago.

4. The Autumn vaccination programme (which many believe is too restricted) is now winding down, with many fewer people being vaccinated each week, following a peak 3-4 weeks ago. Overall only 45% of those eligible for the Autumn booster have received one; which is disappointing but not really too surprising given the government's messaging.
5. And there are still 27% of the population as a whole who have never received a vaccination.
6. Long Covid is an issue. There are constantly just under 2million people with symptoms lasting more than 12 weeks after initial infection. 20% of these people (that's almost 400,000) have their day-to-day activity majorly affected, meaning many of them are unable to work. This is a significant impact – for the people and the economy – which is being largely ignored.
7. On top of this, Covid has caused 228,000 deaths in the UK.
8. Finally, this years flu season has not yet kicked off. The prevalence of flu is way below the level of Covid infections – as it has been (except for one 2 week peak) for the whole of the pandemic.

Bottom line: we are not out of the woods. Sorry!

Barnabas Patient Voices News

November Open Meeting – Agenda

This month's Open Meeting is on **Saturday 18 November, 11:00 at the Medical Centre**.

At this meeting our Practice Manager, Matt Edwards, has volunteered to talk to us about his challenging role.

The meeting agenda is likely to be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes
3. The Role of the Practice Manager; Matt Edwards
4. Open Meeting Dates for 2024
4. Member Feedback
5. Practice Updates
6. PPG Updates
7. Matters Arising, AOB

Please do join us; everyone is welcome.

Barnabas Practice News

Staff Updates

The good news is that Dr Carey is due to return from maternity leave in the next week or so. She will initially be working just two days a week (Thursday and Friday).

When I last spoke with Matt, a couple of weeks ago, the Practice was still short of two receptionists; but Matt was hopefully of filling at least one of those roles over the coming weeks.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Keeping Well this Winter

A few weeks ago, *Around Ealing*, ran a useful item on [Keeping Well this Winter](#). It covered vaccinations, where to seek medical help, keeping kids safe, and looking out for each other.

Latest NHS performance in England, October 2023

Prof. Christina Pagel of UCL has taken a look at the latest data on the [performance of the NHS](#).

"The NHS has been really struggling over the last couple of years. Pre-pandemic stresses were then compounded by Covid ... Last winter it came to a head with the near collapse of emergency care in December. The latest data indicates that the NHS is likely in for another very tough winter. Hopefully it will not reach the crisis of last year, but ... without concerted investment, one winter our luck will run out."

My Voice Matters

Shaping Our Lives has issued a useful leaflet called [My Voice Matters](#), it is a guide for people who want to share their lived experience. Although primarily aimed at the disabled, and not entirely healthcare related, it provides some useful information for anyone considering getting seriously involved in sharing their experiences.

Newsletters

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

- NHS Vaccine Update. Two issues: [#342](#) (a flu special) and [#343](#)
 - NHS In Touch #145. Copy attached
 - Patients Association Weekly News. 5 issues this month (attached, but as usual it's much too large to post to non-email recipients)
 - PPGukNews Issue 7, November 2023. Copy attached
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That's all folks! The Fates willing I'll see you all on Saturday 18th and here again next month.

Keith

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