

Barnabas Patient Voices

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>
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To: Barnabas Patient Voices
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, December
Attachments: BPV_Minutes_20231118.pdf; In_Touch_146.pdf

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 December 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

Good news! Although Covid is still around, it is currently much more in the background than previously. Deaths and hospital admissions involving Covid have decreased significantly over recent weeks. These suggest that, despite the lack of direct data from testing, infections have fallen sharply from October's small peak. Working age adults are most infected, with women 25% more likely to have Covid than men. The newer Omicron variants are still the most dominant.

Over 70% of eligible over-65s have received their autumn Covid booster vaccination.

Nonetheless Covid is still dangerous and the vulnerable would be wise to continue taking precautions, especially over the holiday period.

Barnabas Patient Voices News

November Open Meeting – Minutes

The minutes of our Open Meeting on 18 November are attached. Please read them as they contain useful information, discussions of how we should move forward, and meeting dates for 2024.

January Open Meeting

As you'll see from the minutes (and below) our next Open Meeting is on Wednesday 17 January, 13:00. If we can succeed in booking the church hall we'll meet in person; otherwise the meeting will be on Zoom. Hopefully I'll have details in time for the January Update, and if necessary I'll email everyone specially – but do email me in early January to check.

2024 Open Meeting Dates

The proposed Open Meeting dates for next year are:

- Wednesday 17 January; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)
- Wednesday 20 March; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)

- Saturday 18 May; 11:00; Medical Centre (AGM)
- Wednesday 17 July; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)
- Saturday 14 September; 11:00; Medical Centre
- Wednesday 20 November; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)

Dates/times may change depending on the availability of venues (especially the Church facilities); watch these updates for confirmation.

Barnabas Practice News

Barnabas Bulletin

The Practice's quarterly newsletter, *Barnabas Bulletin*, is due out in the next week or two – we're in the final stages of putting it together. I'll ensure everyone receives a copy when it's available; copies will also be posted on our website and in the Facebook group.

Dr Carey

We're delighted that Dr Carey is now back with us following her maternity leave. Currently she is working just two days a week (Thursday & Friday), but we hope in time she may feel able to do more.

Reception

The reception team continue to be critically short staffed. The Practice are trying to recruit the extra staff needed, but they're reporting a real absence of appropriate applicants. If anyone knows potential candidates, then please put them in touch with the Practice (although do note that, if recruited, they will not be permitted to be patients of the Practice).

Building Improvements

As you'll see from the meeting minutes, the Practice have submitted a bid for money to make some improvements: replacing the waiting area seating (and hopefully the floor, and redecoration), refurbishing the patient toilets, replacing the (life expired) sinks in all the consulting rooms, and installing aircon in some of the upstairs offices. Knowing how slowly government departments work, we're not holding our breath!

Local Healthcare News

Hillingdon Hospital

The plan to redevelop Hillingdon Hospital received full planning permission on 13 October. The new hospital will be built on the same site (next to the existing hospital), and services will remain open throughout. Construction is due to be completed by 2030 with the new hospital having the same mix of services as now. Find out more at https://t.ly/Sr_Nb.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Norovirus: Winter Vomiting Virus

The number of cases of winter vomiting virus (Norovirus) is rising quickly. Norovirus is very contagious and can be caught from infected people as well as contaminated surfaces. Symptoms include: sudden vomiting and diarrhoea, high temperature and stomach pains. Most people recover in a few days. Washing your hands thoroughly and often is the best way to stop it spreading. Norovirus is not killed by alcohol hand gels. Bleach in water does work to clean contaminated surfaces. More at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-67576301>.



Measles Risk

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is saying that unless vaccination rates improve London could see a measles outbreak with tens of thousands of cases. In the first 6 months of this year, there were 128 cases of measles, compared to 54 cases in the whole of 2022; two-thirds of these cases were in London. With the currently low levels of vaccination, especially in London, a measles outbreak of up to 160,000 cases could occur in the capital. Those who have never received a measles vaccine are at risk. MMR is part of the NHS routine childhood immunisation programme. Parents whose infants missed out, or anyone of any age who is unvaccinated, are urged to come forward. BBC report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-67485037>.

Prostate Diagnosis and Treatment

Two good news stories for men on the diagnosis and treatment of enlarged prostate. First the NHS is starting a [large trial](#) to see if scanning provides more accurate diagnosis of prostate cancer than the current blood tests. Secondly an NHS trust in Somerset is pioneering a new way of [relieving the symptoms](#) caused by an obstruction.

Human Case of Swine Flu

The first case of a new swine flu has been found in a patient in Yorkshire. Although it's unclear how the patient got infected, there is currently no sign of it spreading between people. *Guardian* report at <https://t.ly/N9STf> and a Q&A at <https://t.ly/Zh9fl>.

Chickenpox Vaccination

Chickenpox is a very infectious, but usually mild, disease with characteristic red spots. It mostly affects children, who generally recover within a week or two. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended all children in the UK should be given a chickenpox vaccine at 12 and 18 months of age and that this is combined with the MMR jab. The government now has to decide

whether to add this to the routine immunisations children are offered. BBC report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-67414983>.

Pharmacy First

NHS England (NHSE) has announced details of the major expansion of primary care services to be delivered through pharmacies. From December almost half a million more women will be able to access the contraceptive pill at their local pharmacy without needing to contact their GP first. This includes pharmacies being able to initiate oral contraception supply, as well as repeat supply for those who are already taking the pill.

From early next year, Pharmacy First will also see patients able to get treatment for seven common conditions directly from a pharmacy without the need for a GP appointment or prescription. These include: sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bite, impetigo, shingles and uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women. Pharmacy blood pressure checks will also be expanded.

Guardian report at <https://t.ly/uecPH>.

NHS Federated Data Platform

The NHS has announced a new tool, the Federated Data Platform (FDP), to join up key information currently held in many separate NHS systems. The aim is to tackle some of the big challenges the health service faces coming out of the pandemic.

The FDP does not collect data but connects different sets of data to give staff access to them and thus enable more effective care planning. It will bring together real time data, such as the number of beds in a hospital, the size of waiting lists, staff rosters, the availability of medical supplies and social care data. All the data in the platform will remain under the control of the NHS and will only be used for direct care planning, but not for research purposes. GP data will not be part of the FDP, but other patient data will be.

The new platform will be created, and managed, by a group led by Palantir Technologies UK. However concerns have been raised about Palantir's US company which has historically been involved in military and security projects.

Report at <https://t.ly/rfM6D>.

Newsletters

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

- NHS *In Touch* #146 – attached
- Patients Association magazine *Patient Voice* – available at <https://cutt.ly/XwPrFFXe> (it's big so sorry no printed copy for non-email members)

That's all for this month. So it just remains for me to wish everyone a happy and healthy Christmas, and a good New Year – however you chose to celebrate them. The Fates willing I'll see you again in early January!

Keith

Keith Marshall, Chairman, [Barnabas Patient Voices](http://barnabasvoices.org.uk/)

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