

Chairman's Annual Report 2024

(1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024)

I am pleased to present the 2024 Chairman's Annual Report of **Barnabas Patient Voices**, the Patient Group for Barnabas Medical Centre.

Summary

1. This has been another frustrating year due to the lingering Covid-19 pandemic. Activity has continued, but despite things gradually opening up Covid-19 has still not gone away despite everyone's wishes.
2. We started on our 2023-25 Plan and are executing it as well as possible under the prevailing circumstances, and with the available volunteers. Plans still need to be flexible.
3. Meanwhile regular meetings, the website and Facebook activity have continued.

Activities & Achievements

1. Again this year activity has been somewhat curtailed due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions the Practice see as necessary. Things are, however, gradually opening up, albeit not as much or as fast as we would like.
2. Current group membership stands at 85 patients – 48 directly joined plus 44 members of the Facebook group; including an overlap of seven members who belong to both.
3. Use of the Facebook group remains relatively light, although the group is an important communication channel for information to members and for members to feed back their concerns. We continue to add relevant group documents and healthcare articles to the group. Thanks to Ewa Siwiec for her contributions to this group.
4. The two-monthly Open Meetings continued, although we managed only five during the year, as the March 2024 meeting was rescheduled to April (after the end of this reporting year). Fourteen patients attended the five meetings at least once. As always attendance is affected by the timing of meetings during the working day. All meetings remain open to all Barnabas patients, carers and staff.
Of the five meetings held, two (including the May AGM) were in person on a Saturday morning and the remaining three on Zoom on a Wednesday lunchtime. Our thanks to Practice Manager, Matt Edwards, for giving up two Saturday mornings to enable the two in person meetings.
It had been hoped to have more in person meetings, however it has been impossible to make contact with St Barnabas Church to book their space, and it is unreasonable to expect Practice staff to regularly give up weekend and evening time

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Email: contact@barnabasvoices.org.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/barnabas.ppg/

Chairman: Keith Marshall; 020 8864 7993

to open the Medical Centre specially; no other suitable meeting venue has been found close by the Medical Centre.

5. Every Open Meeting was supported by our Practice Manager; our AGM was attended by Dr Bhatoa; and another by Practice Nurse Karen Collett who spoke about asthma – our hanks to both. We continue to try to find meeting times and days to better suit the Practice as well as members.
6. We continued with informal, 30 minute, Zoom calls every month up to December 2023. These calls were not well attended and have now been discontinued.
7. During the year we have also had a handful of update meetings with the Practice Manager. These included the first meeting of the small group to start looking at priority areas where the group and the Practice working together can improve patient engagement, access and understanding – as was suggested at our November 2023 meeting.
8. The BPV's website contains all the group's documentation and leaflets, useful information items, and links to key (local) resources. It is also a weblog of items of topical interest, group announcements and events. Where appropriate website material is copied to the Facebook group. Suggestions and contributions of content are always welcome.
9. *What's Where near Barnabas* (previously the *Local Facilities List*), aimed essentially at anyone new to the area but also useful to longer term residents, has been updated twice during the year. A copy is available on our website at https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf and on our Facebook group; reception have been provided with a QR code which is scannable by patients. This guide continues to be seen as a valuable resource, for which contributions and updates are always welcome.
10. Our series of articles on patient *Treatment Experiences* provides hints, tips and reassurance for others awaiting or considering such treatments. Articles (which are always anonymous) are slowly being added to this series as members volunteer them. Again, contributions are always welcome.
11. During the year we have edited and published four issues of *Barnabas Bulletin*, the Practice's quarterly newsletter. These are available on our website, with the latest issue always being at https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Barnabas_Bulletin.pdf; again reception have a QR code. This newsletter would be of greater value if the Practice could promote it more, and text message the link to more of our patients. *Barnabas Bulletin* would also benefit from a permanent Editor. Once more, contributions of articles (or just ideas for topics to include) are always welcome.
12. The *Members' Monthly Update* has also continued. This contains summaries of recent, potentially interesting, healthcare news etc. One part of the content continues to be my attempt to provide balanced scientific and patient-orientated information on the current Covid-19 situation, although with now little official testing and reporting this is becoming ever more difficult.
13. Again I express my thanks to Harsha Mortemore for volunteering as Vice-Chairman despite ongoing significant health challenges. Two brains are always better than one!

Looking Forward

1. Activity over this coming year will continue to be constrained (lightly we hope) by both the Covid-19 situation and the available volunteers.

2. As always, to continue to be an effective patient voice to the Practice, we need to keep growing our membership (especially active members) and extending our diversity— particularly amongst our younger patients. Hopefully this can be assisted by our clinicians identifying and encouraging potential members, and by the Practice sending text invitations to all patients a couple of times a year.
3. Our two-monthly Open Meetings will continue. Two meetings (our May AGM and in September) are planned for Saturday mornings in person at the Medical Centre. Failing a suitable close-by venue the other meetings will continue to be held over Zoom. Unfortunately the reliance on Zoom means a small number of members will continue to be left out, something which is far from ideal. We should continue to look for ways out of this dilemma.
4. The Practice continues to value the in-person patient surveys (which have not been possible for the last several years). We stand ready to manage the surveys and assist with data analysis, if required.
5. The small group working with the Practice must continue to focus on joint collaboration to make a difference; we look forward to working with the Practice on new initiatives and to greater patient engagement, access and understanding.
6. We should remain open to running and/or attending relevant (virtual or face-to-face) events as the need arises. Our plan includes providing training for patients on the use of the various online services. Best approaches to this are being considered.
7. As well as championing patient concerns and needs, as a critical friend of the Practice we must continue to push the boundaries on behalf of patients in order to make a difference to overall healthcare, and supporting the Practice with large projects and smaller pieces of work.
8. **Ultimately our overall goal must be to continue working with the Practice to achieve OUTSTANDING ratings at future CQC inspections.**

Concluding Remarks

1. Although many believe Covid-19 has gone away, it hasn't, and some restrictions seem likely to continue during the coming year especially if further more virulent variants evolve. This will inevitably continue to impact some activity, although this will be kept under regular review. Nevertheless we remain committed to working with the Practice to continue to identify and address patient needs and concerns.
2. As always I must express thanks to all our members, and others, who have given time to the group during the year and to all our doctors, nurses and practice staff for continuing to look after us so well despite increasing patient demand and interference from above. Both my experience, and the feedback I receive, continue to indicate that we really do have one of the best, most helpful and friendliest teams in the area – although we know they continue to struggle due to the increasing level of demand.

Keith Marshall

Chairman, *Barnabas Patient Voices*

30 April 2024