

## Barnabas Patient Voices

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From: Barnabas Patient Voices <[keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk](mailto:keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk)>  
Sent: 04 April 2024 14:44  
To: Barnabas Patient Voices  
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, April  
Attachments: BPV\_Minutes\_20240403.pdf; PA\_Newsletters.pdf; PPG Newsletter - 2024 - March.pdf; In\_Touch\_149.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 April update for **Barnabas Patient Voices** members.

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**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](mailto:keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk), or leave me a note at reception at the medical centre.

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### **Coronavirus etc.**

The latest data is suggesting that Covid infections are now low, and almost as low as last summer. There are currently no new variants on the horizon. Hopefully this may mean we get a break. However Covid is not (yet) at the level of being just a seasonal cold – it may become that but it isn't there yet – so precautions such as masks remain a good idea especially in high risk places like healthcare settings and public transport. See, for example, <https://independentsage.substack.com/p/when-will-the-covid-race-be-run>.

In the words of Professor Steven Riley, Director General for Data and Surveillance at UKHSA:

*When we have symptoms of a respiratory illness like COVID-19, we should do our best to limit our contact with other people, especially those who are more at risk. This will help to keep rates low and protect ourselves and those around us.*

A reminder, too, that those over 75 and the immunosuppressed are eligible for their Covid Spring Booster jab.

Others can get a booster jab, but will have to pay for it. There are reports (for example <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/02/cheaper-private-covid-jabs-may-prove-to-be-as-expensive-say-experts>) that Boots are providing private jabs at almost £100 a time (ouch!), which is considerably more than other providers are thought to be charging.

Seasonal 'flu infections are also now declining, although there are still other respiratory viruses around.

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## March Open Meeting – Minutes

Our March Open meeting was postponed to Wednesday 3 April. The meeting included an excellent discussion about the provision of same day clinical (GP, nurse etc.) appointments and the NWL NHS desire to provide this through local hubs. The meeting minutes are attached; please read them!



## AGM – May Open Meeting

Our next Open Meeting, which will also be our **AGM**, is an in-person meeting on **Saturday 18 May, 11:00 at the Medical Centre**.

The full agenda will be in the next monthly update. We do not have to elect officers this year as both Harsha (Vice-Chair) and I were re-elected last year for two years. However the agenda will include consideration of my annual report, which will be circulated in the May monthly update.

## QR Codes

There are now permanent links and QR codes available for both *Barnabas Bulletin* and *What's Where near Barnabas* – and I've been asked to include them here! Both codes and links will always take you to the latest issue of the respective publication. Reception also have copies of the QR codes and they are also being put on the waiting area noticeboards. In future I will try to remember to attach these codes at the foot of each monthly update.

	Link	QR Code
<b><i>Barnabas Bulletin</i></b>	<a href="https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Barnabas_Bulletin.pdf">https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Barnabas_Bulletin.pdf</a>	
<b><i>What's Where near Barnabas</i></b>	<a href="https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf">https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf</a>	

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## Barnabas Practice News

### Staff Updates

You will see from the meeting minutes that there is good and bad news on Practice staff:

- Dr Carey is leaving us to pursue a long-term career prospect
- We have one, and hopefully soon a second, new salaried GP
- The Practice has recruited two new receptionists in the last few months, and still wishes to recruit another.

### Medical Centre Refurbishment

The Practice is being given funding for replacement of sinks etc. in the clinical rooms, and for refurbishment of the patient's toilets. However funding has been refused for the refurbishment of the waiting area, so if this is to happen the Practice have to find the money. Watch this space.

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## Local Healthcare News

### Hospital Waiting Lists

The BBC recently revealed the hospitals in England with the shortest and longest waiting lists – as measured by the percentage of patients waiting over the target 18 weeks to start treatment. Unfortunately our local London North West University Healthcare Trust (which includes Ealing, Central Middlesex and Northwick Park Hospitals) came in with the tenth longest waiting lists in the country. BBC report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-68479414>.

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## General NHS & Healthcare News

### Cancer Screening

A reminder that if you are invited for an NHS screening appointment it is important you take up the invitation. Screening is important and permits early detection of concerns, including cancers, which makes the conditions much more treatable. Screening take-up is low across the country, which means too many people are presenting for treatment when their cancer (or other condition) is well advanced, more difficult and more costly to treat. Screening take-up rates across London (NHS England data for July-September 2023) are some of the worst in the country:

- Bowel Cancer Screening take-up: 57.6%
- Breast Cancer Screening take-up: 59.3%
- Cervical Screening take-up: 59.7%
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening: 39.8%
- Diabetic Eye Screening take-up: 78.8%

Over the years these tests, especially bowel cancer screening, have been refined to make them simpler, more acceptable and more accurate, so there is no reason to fear being screened. You can find out more about the various screening programmes at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening/>.

### Public Satisfaction with the NHS

The latest British Social Attitudes research shows that public satisfaction with the NHS is at an all-time low of 24%; that's a fall from 53% in 2020.

Overall satisfaction with GP services is down to just 34%, from 68% in 2019. The major reasons seem to be long waits for appointments and treatment. There's a report from the King's Fund at <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/press-releases/public-satisfaction-nhs-new-record-low>.

### NHS App

The Patients Association have two recent news items looking at the NHS App. The first, an infographic at <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/News/public-and-patient-experience-of-the-nhs-app>, looks at the public's experience of the app. The second, at <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/News/report-from-the-digital-coalition-march-2024>, highlights that not everyone is able to access the NHS App and find the information they need.

### More GP Appointments

NHS data shows there were 30.5 million appointments (excluding Covid vaccinations) delivered by GPs and their teams in February 2024, compared with 24.7 million in February 2020. That's an increase of 5.8 million, or 23.4%.

In addition, the NHS promised 50 million more GP appointments a year by March 2024 compared with 2018/19. The data shows that GPs and their teams delivered an extra 57.5 million appointments (excluding Covid vaccinations) in the last year compared with 2018/19; that's significantly ahead of the target.

### General Practice in Crisis

A recent article in *The Conversation* highlights what I think we all know: that General Practice is in crisis and it is failing those who most need it. Research shows that the most deprived and those on the lowest incomes have greatest difficulty getting GP appointments, and are likely to have a much worse experience. The article, at <https://theconversation.com/general-practice-is-in-crisis-in-the-uk-and-its-failing-the-people-who-need-it-most-224427>, is worth a read and is a good summary of many of the current issues.

### Physician Associates

Anent our discussions about the NHS NWL postponed plans for same-day hubs (see above and the meeting minutes), there's an interesting article in *BMJ* from Prof. Martin McKee and Prof. Carol Brayne, on some of the fundamental questions which still need resolving about Physician Associates. Find the article at <https://www.bmj.com/content/384/bmj.q699>.

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### Newsletters

Now for the usual round-up of potentially interesting newsletters received since the last update.

- **Patients Association Weekly News** for 08/03, 15/03 & 22/03 – copy attached, but as usual no printed copies due to the size
- **NIHR Be Part of Research**, Spring Newsletter – online at <https://us14.campaign-archive.com/?u=299dc02111e8a68172029095f&id=b2026e9049>
- **NHS In Touch** #149 – copy attached
- Mike Lally's **PPG Newsletter** for March – copy attached

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### Regular QR Codes & Links

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More next month. Stay safe!

Keith

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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)  
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