

Barnabas Patient Voices

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>
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Attachments: BPV_Minutes_20241102.pdf; PA_News.pdf; CQC_News.pdf; PPG Newsletter - 2024 - October.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 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.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Zero Tolerance

Following a recent serious incident, the Practice reminds everyone that, like the rest of the NHS, there is a Zero Tolerance policy towards abuse or threats to staff.

We understand that anxieties around your, or a loved one's, health and wellbeing can lead to heightened emotions. In these instances we, of course, understand patients can get frustrated or upset. However, please remember receptionists are here to help you the best they can. There is no excuse for abusing any member of the team: there are no circumstances in which our staff should face shouting, swearing or feeling threatened. Being made to cry at work is not acceptable. Sadly this happens all too often. By shouting, being abusive, or threatening, you will not achieve anything, and will only make the situation worse. Please always remember to "Treat people as you would like them to treat you", and that calmness and politeness go a long way.

GP Access Survey

NWL NHS is running a set of surveys asking for our input on access to GP practices. While this is across the whole of NW London it is being run at a local network (PCN) level and there are some PCN-provided questions included.

You can find the survey for our NGP PCN at <https://rebrand.ly/NHSNWLNGP>. The survey is open until about 10 November.

Although the survey is relatively short, each question does have a free-form response area asking why you gave the rating you did; so if you take the time to complete these it does feel quite long.

Nonetheless we, and the Practice, would encourage everyone to complete the survey – this is your chance to actually influence the future direction of primary care, not just locally but also nationally.

BPV Futures

I am considering standing down as Chairman at the AGM next May, after 12 years in this seat! If I do, then the group needs someone to step forward and take over or it will die. Running the group isn't difficult; it is as much, or as little, as you make it. If you can volunteer, please get in touch with me.

Infectious Disease Update

Covid

Covid infection rates appear to have come down somewhat after a blip over the last few weeks; however they are still higher than 6 months ago. Flu is still at very low levels, but RSV has definitely started its annual winter increase. At the moment, if you have cold or flu symptoms, it is very unlikely to be flu! Instead it's likely to be either Covid, a common cold (rhinovirus), or RSV. Judging by last winter, there is plenty of potential for another significant Covid wave before winter is out.

Vaccine coverage has fallen with each successive seasonal Covid booster campaign and this year's Autumn 2024 campaign ends on Friday 20 December. While there has been progress, nationally well under half the over-65s have taken up their Autumn booster and just 1 in 5 of the immunosuppressed. Worryingly booster coverage in London is, yet again, worse than other regions, with only 28% of the over-65s having received their booster. If you are eligible, please top up your protection with a booster – and don't forget your flu vaccine too!

There is increasing evidence that an annual Covid booster reduces chance of developing severe disease, boosts your antibody levels for up to a year, reduces your chance of infection, and protects against Long Covid. Other countries like the US, Australia and Canada, offer a free annual booster to all adults; so why is the UK shrinking its vaccine offer every year?

The phrase "Just the 'flu'" is clearly aimed at normalising pandemic harms, and effectively benchmarks flu, which causes 1000s of deaths annually, as "normal". This hampers our response to Covid (which is still with us!) and future pandemics.

More details and academic comment at:

- <https://bhawkins3.substack.com/p/covid-situation-report-oct-31-2024>
 - <https://christinapagel.substack.com/p/update-on-covid-in-england-current>
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2024/oct/30/britain-long-covid-lives-us-boosters>
 - <https://independentsage.substack.com/p/just-the-flu-hampers-our-response>
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Barnabas Patient Voices News

November Open Meeting

Attached are the minutes of our Open Meeting on 2 November.

Please read them as they contain a lot of useful updates, as well as requests for feedback and volunteers.

2025 Provisional Open Meeting Dates

The provisional dates for 2025 Open Meetings are:

- Wednesday 22 January; 13:00; Zoom
- Saturday 15 March; 11:00; Practice
- Saturday 17 May; 11:00; Practice (AGM)

- Saturday 19 July; 11:00; Practice
- Saturday 20 September; 11:00; Practice
- Wednesday 19 November; 13:00; Zoom

Note that the Saturday meeting dates may change when the Practice knows which Saturdays they're scheduled to open. Please watch this space for confirmation of dates and venues.

Please put the 2025 dates in your new diary!

“Meet the Patients”

Having reinstated the “Meet the Patients”, we've already held four sessions and helped a number of patients.

For these sessions we (in pairs) are in the waiting area to listen to, talk to, and engage with patients; make the Practice more approachable; tell people about the group; where possible help them with the NHS App; and if appropriate feedback (to Keith or Matt) any concerns which are picked up.

We want to continue this next year, but need more volunteers to help spread the load.

I intend that we continue with the current schedule of the first Wednesday afternoon (mother & baby clinic time) and the third Tuesday morning each month.

If you can volunteer – even for different times/days (Monday morning and Friday afternoon excepted) – please get in touch.

Barnabas Practice News

Staff Updates

The Practice now has a full complement of five salaried GPs in addition to the two partners. This doesn't just get us back up to a full schedule of clinic sessions, but adds two sessions (30 or so appointments) a week.

The Practice is also still looking to recruit a further receptionist for 25-30 hours a week.

Staffing and Access Issues

Please read the meeting minutes for a significant update on the issues the Practice has faced and the actions which are being put in place. We wholeheartedly support this work, and where possible we are continuing to provide a patient perspective and offer our skills.

Local Healthcare News

Ealing Hospital's Endoscopy Unit

Ealing Hospital's Endoscopy Unit has gained accreditation for clinical excellence and is ranked among the best in the UK. Local press report at <https://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/info/eanhs092.htm>.

Integrated Neighbourhood Teams

There's an initiative afoot, which appears to be countrywide but is certainly being touted around by NWL NHS, for Integrated Neighbourhood Teams. From what I've seen so far, it is very unclear what these entail or are supposed to do, although I divine they're another attempt to get all the health & social care organisations to talk to each other and work together. [The idea seems to have been around for some years, so if it's that good why hasn't it happened yet? Cynically it looks to me like another layer to absorb money, duplicate effort and add nothing new.] There's more at <https://www.nwlondonicb.nhs.uk/about-us/integrated-neighbourhood-teams>.

London's Air Ambulance

London's Air Ambulance now have their two new Airbus H135 helicopters, replacing the previous aging McDonnell Douglas MD902s. In addition to large sponsors, it is people like us who have made donations to enable LAA (who are a charity!) to raise the £15m required to acquire the new helicopters. LAA news item at <https://www.londonsairambulance.org.uk/news-and-stories/charity-news/weve-welcomed-our-two-new-airbus-h135-helicopters-service>.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Patients to get full access to records on NHS App

Full medical records, tests results and letters from doctors will be available in the NHS App, according to the new government's plans for a digital revolution in health services. [I've lost count of the number of times we've heard this over the last 25+ years.] BBC report at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz7j73vx9v3o>.

GP Shortages

According to a BBC analysis, on average GPs have to care for 17% more patients than nine years ago. The analysis has also highlighted the areas which have the biggest shortage of GPs. Report at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjd51y9vn9do>.

GP Appointments

According to an Ipsos poll, 40% of patients think there's not enough time to raise all concerns in 10-minute slot, and many leave without discussing all their worries. Guardian report at

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/sep/02/many-patients-leave-gp-appointment-without-discussing-all-worries-survey-shows>; and more on the survey at <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/britons-want-easier-access-appointments-and-shorter-waiting-times-improve-gp-experience>.

Menstrual Problems

Prof. Christina Pagel has written a powerful piece in response to the news that some schools are requiring evidence of period pain before allowing girls to miss school. As Prof. Pagel says, we need to stop ignoring & minimising period pain & heavy bleeding – and indeed many other female gynaecological issues. Full article at <https://christinapagel.substack.com/p/we-need-to-stop-ignoring-and-minimising>.

Fake Medicines

Analyses have found a worrying level of deadly new drugs in medicines (many of them fake) bought on the internet without a prescription, and often from overseas. Basically please don't buy any medicine unless you have a prescription which you can get dispensed by a registered NHS pharmacy. BBC report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2520kvl1wo>.



Newsletters

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

- **Patients Association** Weekly News for 04/10, 11/10, 18/10, 25/10, 02/11 – PDF attached, but due to size (50+ pages!) no printed copies.
- **CQC** – 2 newsletters – PDF attached
- **Mike Lally's PPG Newsletter** for October – PDF attached

Links / QR Codes for the Latest Publications

These will always take you to the latest versions ...

Barnabas Bulletin https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Barnabas_Bulletin.pdf	
What's Where near Barnabas https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf	

That's all for this month, folks. Stay safe, stay well, and take care.

Keith



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