

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 February 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.

Infectious Disease Update

Covid

Currently the amount of Covid around seems to be quite low, certainly lower than at any time in the last 2 years. However it is still above the background summer rate for both flu and RSV. Can we keep it this way? Let's hope so, although I wouldn't put too much money on there not being a Spring/Summer wave.

More at <https://bhawkins3.substack.com/p/covid-situation-report-jan-30-2025>.

Flu

The NHS had a bad month in December due to a combination of flu, Rhinovirus, RSV and Norovirus, but thankfully not Covid as well. Flu seems to have peaked in early January and is now on the way down (although still high); RSV has also dropped significantly – both are still higher than Covid. One of the things that will have helped is that the NHS has administered tens of thousands more flu jabs this winter compared with last (2023-24).

Background data/reporting at <https://christinapagel.substack.com/p/december-was-bad-for-nhs-but-the> and <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/01/nhs-jabs-tens-of-thousands-more-against-flu-than-last-winter/>.

HMPV

There's been a flurry of concern about human metapneumovirus (HMPV), following reportedly high number of cases in China. HMPV is an upper respiratory tract virus which produces a mild illness in most people. It is not new and has been around for many years, although not identified until 2001. All that has been seen recently is the usual winter wave of HMPV. BBC background report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c23vjg7v7k0o>.

Barnabas Patient Voices News

Open Meeting 22 January – Minutes

The minutes of our Open Meeting on 22 January are attached.

March Open Meeting

Our next Open Meeting is on Saturday 15 March, 11:00 at the Medical Centre.

I'll issue the agenda in my March Update, but I hope it will include a discussion of our plan for 2025-27.

Plan 2025-27

Many thanks to those who completed the survey for input to the next two-year plan. I still have to analyse the results, but once I have done the analysis and updated my draft plan I will circulate it – my target is to do this by the end of the month and to bring a plan proposal to the March Open Meeting.

Book Exchange

The Practice have now agreed that we may re-establish the Book Exchange in the Waiting Area – and asked that we major in children's books. There are already some books available and we will be providing more over the coming weeks. As before patients are welcome to read the books while waiting; take books away and bring them back when read; or take books and replace them with others. If anyone has books they no longer want, we would welcome contributions – but nothing medical, religious, political or which may otherwise be considered unsuitable.

Waiting Area

We continue to highlight the issues with the seating in the waiting area; also the lighting and the check-in screen.

What's Where near Barnabas

An updated version of our useful resource for those new to the area is now available on our website at https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf. A copy is also attached.

Barnabas Practice News

Staff Updates

Unfortunately one of our receptionists has had to leave due to unexpected family circumstances. This means the Practice are still needing to recruit two additional receptionists; meanwhile the current staff are under increasing pressure. Please be patient!

Palvi, our nurse assistant, is now on maternity leave, which is putting extra pressure on the nurses, especially as our phlebotomist is also on long-term leave.

Appointment System

The Practice is currently in the process of agreeing and implementing updates to the appointments system. They are also working to improve the phone messages. More when we have it.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Making the most of PPGs

A group of PPGS from around the country have submitted a proposal to the NHS 10-Year Plan for better use of patient groups at <https://change.nhs.uk/en-GB/ideas/making-the-most-of-ppgs>. It's nothing out of the way, but it would be helpful if you can give it a boost – the more it's boosted, the more notice is likely to be taken.

Continuity of Care

Recent research has demonstrated that regularly seeing the same GP could actually free up NHS appointments. Report at <https://news.exeter.ac.uk/faculty-of-health-and-life-sciences/regularly-seeing-the-same-gp-could-free-up-nhs-appointments-research-shows/>.

Faster Access to NHS

The government are reducing the number of NHS targets from 32 this year (2024-25) to 18 next year (2025-26). And there is a new national ambition for 65% of patients to receive elective treatment within 18 weeks by March 2026. NHS news item at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/01/hundreds-of-thousands-of-patients-to-get-faster-access-to-nhs-care-as-targets-halved-under-new-guidance/>. Added this is an intention to use more private hospital capacity to tackle the backlogs. BBC report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgxqnr8yw4o> and an NHS news item at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/patients-guide-to-the-elective-care-reform-plan/>.

GPs Using AI to Help with Workload

Here's just one example of how GPs are starting to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to sensibly reduce their workload – in this case admin tasks. BBC item at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cdd026lgmdmo>.

Vaccinations

The NHS is reporting that in 2024 the uptake of routine childhood immunisations declined, with some programmes not yet fully recovered following the pandemic.

This was especially worrying for measles: in 2024 there were over 2,918 laboratory confirmed cases of measles reported in England, of which 1304 cases (45%) were London. NHS data at <https://rb.gy/qew66w>.

While on vaccinations, Bob Hawkins has taken a deep dive into the data on declining vaccine confidence at <https://bhawkins3.substack.com/p/what-is-happening-to-vaccine-confidence>.

Newsletters

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

- Patients Association weekly newsletters for 10/01, 17/01, 24/01, 31/01 – combined PDF attached (but as always no printed copies)
- Mike Lally's PPG Newsletter for January – 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. The crocuses are out, so Spring is on the way!

Take care ...

Keith



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