

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 March 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

The good news is that Covid infections now appear to be relatively stable at a very low level, although not (yet?) at the background level of flu during the summer; and there seem to be no worrying new variants on the horizon. However the latest data suggests that there may be a slight upturn in cases.

Flu

Although there has been a big fall in the incidence of flu in recent weeks, it is still running at high levels. Remember too that the incidence of flu has a very long tail (often into May) before reaching the summer background level.

Norovirus

This winter sickness & vomiting bug is highly infectious, and infections remain at a high level. I've also seen reports that there are two different variants around; and each does not provide protection from the other – so you could get infected twice! Care and frequent hand-washing is critical for prevention as the virus can survive on surfaces for several days – making it very hard to eradicate. Also, sanitising hand gels do not work against this virus. If you do get infected the advice is to stay off work/school for 2 days after your symptoms have passed.

Latest information on respiratory illnesses at <https://rb.gy/nv4eqi>.

Other Infectious Diseases

H5N1 Bird Flu. Rampant amongst dairy herds in USA, with sporadic crossover to humans. Not (yet?) a concern in UK.

Measles. Between 1 January and mid-February this year there were 91 confirmed cases of measles in England – with over 50% in two clusters in Bristol and Leeds. There have been just 11 cases in

London. The majority of cases are in the under-10 age group. Do not underestimate measles; it is the most contagious disease of humans, and can be very serious – it's recently caused the death of an (unvaccinated) child in Texas, USA where there is currently a big outbreak. More details at <https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/outbreaks/measles>. If you or your child are not fully up to date with two shots of MMR vaccine, it's never too late – talk to the Practice.

Barnabas Patient Voices News

Open Meeting – Agenda

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

The agenda for the meeting will be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes of January Meeting [attached]
3. Talk: Prostate Cancer, including psychological impact (Sennen Chiu)
4. Discuss/Approve 2025-27 Group Plan [draft attached]
4. Member Feedback
5. Practice Updates
6. Other Group Updates
7. Matters Arising, AOB

This is your opportunity to influence where we focus over the next 2 years, so please join us if you can.

Plan for 2025-27

As you'll see from the above on this month's Open Meeting, we've done a lot of work on our focus areas for the next two years. Thank you to those who completed my January survey: your feedback has been incorporated in the Plan** to make sure all helpful ideas are included and to adjust the priorities.

The Plan is split into three sections: Patients, Practice and Other Activity (ie. mostly admin etc.); each section is then divided into smaller groups of related tasks.

[** I'm using the term plan loosely, it is really a prioritised list of Suggested Activities.]

Patient Engagement

Having cancelled a couple of our regular "Meet the Patients" sessions across December and January (mainly due to the high level of flu around at the time) we're now back in our stride with sessions on the morning of the second Tuesday and afternoon of the last Wednesday each month. Talking to patients in the waiting area during these sessions we've had some useful chats which have enabled us to explain not just what BPV are about, but the pressures on the Practice and the NHS in general. Of course we've also listened to quite a few grumbles (or worse) about the phones, the ability to get an appointment, and the lack of face-to-face appointments – and we continue to feed this back to the Practice. But we also hear a lot of praise and appreciation for the doctors.

At the same time, and thanks to the Practice, Noreen has been able to restore the Book Exchange in the waiting area. We feel this is an important facility: it makes the Practice more friendly and welcoming; helps patients engage with the Practice; and is an asset to children learning to read, anyone learning English, housebound patients who can get someone to bring them a book or few, and really anyone who reads. We've been asked to major on children's books and Noreen will be building up the collection over the next few weeks – and also we hope adding some more variety of adult books: for instance we know cookery books are always popular. If anyone wishes to contribute

books (nothing medical, religious, political, or of an “undesirable nature” please] then please bring them in and leave them with reception; we’ll collect them when we’re next in the Medical Centre.

What else can we do to engage with patients and make the Practice a more welcoming place to visit? Let me know, please.

Barnabas Practice News

Barnabas Bulletin

We’re running late, but we are working on the March issue of the Practice’s newsletter *Barnabas Bulletin*. Hopefully it will be out before the end of the month, and as always I’ll distribute copies as soon as possible. Meanwhile if there is anything you would like to see covered, please let me know.

Local Healthcare News

Improving Planned Care

NHS NW London is talking to residents, health and care professionals, and community groups on how to make improvements to NHS planned care, and how to reduce waiting times. Planned care refers to a non-emergency health care, such as hospital outpatient appointments or planned surgery. Consideration is being given to people’s changing needs, the increasing number of people seeking care, and how to tackle inequalities in waiting times and experiences for different communities. How you can get involved:

1. Read a [short information paper](#) on the challenges and aims of improved planned care
2. Complete a [short survey](#)
3. Send written views to FREEPOST, Healthier North West London
4. Join an online Residents’ Forum on 5 March 2025, 18:00-19:30. [Register here](#).

Physician Associates

NWL NHS have issued some detailed guidance to GPs on the use of PAs. While the guidance is really aimed at clinicians, anyone wishing to read it can find the PDF at <https://rebrand.ly/gch5swe>.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Change NHS

Change NHS is the project to build a health service fit for the future. To date there have been over 100,000 contributions so far from people across the country, providing input to the NHS 10-year plan. In order to finalise the Plan, the NHS now needs your views on the emerging ideas from the engagement so far; you are asked to complete the [Priorities for Change](#) survey, which is open until 14 April.

Flu Vaccination, Winter 2025-26

The NHS have recently released the first information on next winter’s flu vaccinations – and it looks very much the same as this winter. The eligibility criteria haven’t changed, and the start date (to be confirmed) will be in early October. Details at <https://rb.gy/7u3hmt>.

Inhaler Disposal Campaign

Inhalers account for 3% of the NHS carbon footprint due to the potent greenhouse gases in pressurised metered dose inhalers. If disposed of in domestic waste, they may end up in landfill,

releasing any remaining greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. However the plastics from inhalers cannot be recycled through domestic recycling systems. Returning inhalers to community pharmacies for safe disposal ensures they are incinerated with other medical waste, reducing their environmental impact compared to landfill disposal. So please return your used or unwanted



inhalers to your pharmacy.



Newsletters

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

- **Patients Association Weekly News** for 07/02, 14/02, 21/02, 28/02 – single PDF attached, but as usual sorry no printed copies
- **Mike Lally's PPG Newsletter** for (end) February, as usual contains links to lots of good articles – 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 a fairly thin on news offering this month, but then February is a short month – and we're already 20% of the way to next Christmas! Eeek!

Meanwhile enjoy the Spring sunshine.

Keith



Keith Marshall, Chairman, **Barnabas Patient Voices**

Phone: 020 8864 7993 – Mobile: 07847 149 417

Email: keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk

Web: <https://barnabasvoices.org.uk>

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