

Keith Marshall

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From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>  
Sent: 05 May 2025 09:39  
To: Barnabas Patient Voices  
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, May  
Attachments: CQC\_News.pdf; PPG Newsletter - 2025 -April.pdf; PA\_News.pdf; BPV\_Minutes\_20250315.pdf; Annual\_Report\_2025.pdf; Plan\_2025-2027.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.

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Welcome to the May update for **Barnabas Patient Voices** members.

There's not a lot of news from either Barnabas or the local area this month, although there are quite a few national items.

**Please note the earlier time of 10:30 for the Open Meeting & AGM on 17 May.**

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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 with reception at the medical centre.

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## **Infectious Disease Update**

### **Covid**

Covid is still here, but thankfully still at a fairly low level, although the incidence has been rising slowly over the last few weeks. Hopefully we won't get a summer spike in cases, but this is possible especially as there are a couple of new variants around. A couple of weeks ago Prof. Christina Pagel highlighted the new variants: *"UKHSA data on variants does show a recent increase in MC\* variants (MC.1.4 and MC.21.1), but data is sparse so don't read too much into it at the moment"*, however her graphics suggest that these variants are now dominant in England. Full article at <https://christinapagel.substack.com/p/quick-update-on-covid-and-state-of>.

If you are eligible, don't forget to get your Covid Spring booster.

### **Other Infections**

All the other winter respiratory viruses are now heading into their summer recess, with the rates of flu now dropping quickly. There is though still quite some concern over the level of measles with 213 cases in the first three months of this year, although that is lower than the same period last year [data from UKHSA]. The WHO is reporting that the number of measles cases in the European region doubled last year [2024] to reach the highest level in 25 years.

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### Open Meeting & AGM, 17/05

This month's Open Meeting is on **Saturday 17 May, 10:30 at the Medical Centre**. **Please note the earlier time of 10:30.**

This meeting is also our AGM so the agenda should be:

1. Introductions & Apologies
2. Approve Minutes of 15 March Open Meeting [attached]
3. Chairman's Annual Report [attached]
4. Election of Officers
  - a. Chair
  - b. Vice-Chair
5. BPV 2025-27 Plan, further opportunity to comment [attached]
6. Members' Feedback
7. Practice Updates
8. Group Updates
9. Matters Arising, AOB

### Chairman's Annual Report

As you'll see from the AGM agenda, my annual report is attached.

Overall, I think we've had a good year: many Covid-imposed restrictions have been lifted; we restarted our "Meet the Patients" sessions; resurrected the book exchange; resumed management of the noticeboards; and, of course, continued to discuss patient concerns at our regular meetings with our Practice Manager. Hopefully this last point is beginning to bear fruit. Looking forward: we are embarking on our next two-year plan; we need to increase our active membership (especially younger patients, and new mothers); and we must continue to champion patients' concerns and push the boundaries to improve healthcare for us all.

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## Barnabas Practice News

### ***Barnabas Bulletin***

Oh dear! Delete all and amend. The Practice has decided that regular issues of *Barnabas Bulletin* require too much resource, especially in view of the fact that distribution is constrained by the funding available to send text messages to patients.\*\* Henceforth the plan is for occasional (hopefully quarterly) 1-2 page newssheets highlighting the hot topic of the moment (eg. flu jabs, Covid boosters). While I find this decision disappointing, especially given the effort we've put into this project, it is entirely understandable from the Practice's point of view and significantly less work for me to do.

\*\* The funding the Practice receives for texting patients has been cut by 50% in the last two years. There's a complex formula used to calculate the cost of a text which is charged to the Practice. Two years ago texts were funded at a rate of 60p per patient per year. Last year (2024-25) this reduced to 45p per patient. This year (2025-26) it has reduced again to 30p per patient. This has to cover every text sent by the Practice including those from the NHS App, confirming your eConsult, inviting you for (for example) your flu jab or annual diabetes check-up. Having seen some of the data, based on the 2024-25 level of activity the Practice is going to struggle to stay within budget this year. So there is no slack for texting patients about newsletters or the like; they're going to struggle to do the essentials.

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## Local Healthcare News

### Northwick Park Virtual Ward

Two years ago Northwick Park was first trust in the country to implement a “virtual ward” specifically for patients requiring diabetes care. The ward monitors patients remotely for up to two weeks following discharge, offering advice and support to help manage their condition. As a result North-West London had the lowest hospital readmission rates for hypoglycaemic patients in the UK, with LNWH ranked as the best performing trust. Local media report at

<https://harrowonline.org/2025/04/08/northwick-parks-virtual-ward-success-diabetes-readmissions-drop-to-uks-lowest/>

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## General NHS & Healthcare News

### Mounjaro

Mounjaro is a diabetes and weight-loss drug similar to Ozempic/Wegovy. A study has found that those using Mounjaro maintain their weight loss over three years (something which doesn't always happen). Press report at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/11/people-using-drug-mounjaro-sustain-weight-loss-over-three-years-trial-finds>.

### Heart Attack Prediction

Research has found that checking levels of troponin in patients could enable doctors to more accurately predict their risk of cardiovascular events. This can be done with a simple blood test costing £5. *Guardian* report at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2025/apr/07/simple-blood-test-help-prevent-thousands-heart-attacks-study>.

### Dementia & Hearing Loss

American researchers have estimated that almost one-third of dementia cases (much higher than previously thought) could be the result of hearing loss. So treating hearing loss in older adults might delay dementia for many. Report at <https://hearingpractitionernews.com.au/a-third-of-dementia-cases-could-be-due-to-hearing-loss-study-suggests/>.

### Satisfaction with GP Services

According to the latest British Attitudes Survey, only 31% of people in Britain are satisfied with GP services, and just 23% with GP waiting times. This decline has happened as GPs are now providing far fewer face-to-face appointments; the proportion of patients seeing a GP in person has dropped from 80.7% in 2019 to just 66.2% in 2024. Covid aside, this also coincides with a roughly 4% drop in the number of GPs since 2016, compared with a 12% increase in the number of patients. *Guardian* report at <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/apr/22/patient-satisfaction-gp-services-england-research>.

### Technology to the Rescue?

GPs are providing millions more appointments and many are doing so through upgraded technology. There were 31.4 million GP appointments in March; that's up 6% on March 2024 and almost 20% higher than before Covid. Patients with digital access can use online consultation forms, freeing up phones for those patients unable to go online. Some practices are using voice recognition technology as part of their telephone contact system, with voice messages automatically and immediately transcribed, so patients are quickly triaged and directed to the right healthcare professional. NHS press release at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/04/gp-practices-embrace-technology-to-improve-patient-access-and-provide-choice/>.

## Physician Associates

The BMA has published some alarming evidence from doctors of patient safety concerns caused by the NHS's use of PAs. Press release at <https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-publishes-shocking-testimony-from-doctors-of-patient-safety-concerns-caused-by-the-nhs-s-use-of-pas-and-aas>.

Also on PAs, Independent SAGE is questioning whether the UK's use of PAs is a failed experiment. Article at <https://independentsage.substack.com/p/physician-associates-in-the-uk-a>.

## Protections for NHS Letter Delivery

With Royal Mail trying to reduce second-class mail delivery to alternate days, there's a risk of NHS letters not arriving in time. As a consequence Royal Mail, NHS and patient bodies like the Patients Association, have got together and written to Ofcom proposing a method of protecting NHS letter deliveries. Article from Patients Association at <https://www.patients-association.org.uk/News/joint-letter-ofcom-royal-mail-nhs-leaders-patient-bodies-protections-nhs-letter-delivery>.

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## Newsletters

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

- **Patients Association** Weekly News for 11/04, 18/04, 25/04, 02/05 – merged copy attached but as usual no printed copies.
- **CQC** News for April – attached
- **Patient Experience Research Centre** News for May – attached with the PA news
- **PPGukNews** for April – attached

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## Links / QR Codes for the Latest Publications

This will always take you to the latest version ...

### *What's Where near Barnabas*

[https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats\\_Where\\_near\\_Barnabas.pdf](https://barnabasvoices.org.uk/docs/Whats_Where_near_Barnabas.pdf)



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That's all for this month. Enjoy the Spring sunshine!

Keith



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