

## Barnabas Patient Voices

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From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>  
Sent: 05 February 2026 15:37  
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, February  
Attachments: BPV\_Minutes\_20260121.pdf; PA\_Feb.pdf; PPGukNews - 31 January 2026.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 February update for **Barnabas Patient Voices** members.

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### Infectious Disease Update

#### Covid & Flu

From the data I've seen there's no big news this month. Covid infection rates remain low, although they have ticked up slightly in the last couple of weeks, possibly resulting from the return to work and school after the holidays. Flu infections continue to fall rapidly, so unless something unexpected happens we're not getting the bad flu year everyone feared. RSV rates are also falling.

More background analysis at <https://bhawkins3.substack.com/p/covid-situation-report-january-29>.

#### Measles

However, the situation with measles is not so good. In January the UK lost its "measles elimination status" following confirmed endemic transmission following around 3,000 cases in 2024 and around 1000 cases in 2025 (with over 50% of the 2025 cases in London). This resurgence is linked to MMR vaccination rates falling significantly below the 95% herd immunity target. Data for early 2026 is not yet available. *Data from UKHSA.*

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### Barnabas Patient Voices News

#### January Open Meeting – Minutes

The minutes of our Zoom meeting on 21 January are attached. These include notes on a very useful talk from Dr Srikantha on her experiences of using AI to assist with the transcription of patient consultations.

#### March Open Meeting

Our next Open Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday 21 March, 10:30 in person at the Medical Centre**. Agenda to follow in next month's update. Do please come along.

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### Barnabas Practice News

#### Practice Staff

The Practice has now appointed a new Clinical Pharmacist. Shazmeen Gulamhusein (f) started in early January. The other news is that our Nurse Assistant, Palvi Kumari, is due to return from maternity leave in the coming weeks.

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### Local Healthcare News

#### Planning Uncertainties

As a result of the imminent merger of North West London and North Central London ICBs, from April there will be no borough-level NHS team and many other structures are currently unknown. This is naturally preventing quite a lot of forward planning for the year beginning 1 April.

### **Cancer Care at Mount Vernon**

Cancer care at Mount Vernon is being redesigned and potentially moved closer to Watford General Hospital. Consequently there is a public consultation, open until late March, online at <https://mvccreview.nhs.uk/>.

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## **General NHS & Healthcare News**

### **Bowel Cancer Screening**

The bowel cancer screening test is to be made more sensitive. Although the test remains the same, the threshold for patient recall for further testing is being lowered. While this means an increase in the number of follow-ups required, it is hoped it will also result in more cancers being detected early, when most treatable. More at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2026/01/nhs-detect-prevent-thousands-more-bowel-cancers-more-sensitive-screening/>.

### **NHS Online Hospital**

The NHS is expecting to open its revolutionary online hospital in 2027. How will it work? We don't know. But it has been announced that among its priorities will be menopause and prostate conditions. NHS news item at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2026/01/menopause-and-prostate-conditions-prioritised-for-nhss-new-online-hospital/>.

### **Covid's Hidden Toll**

The Covid pandemic has resulted in a huge number of patients with chronic conditions being left undiagnosed. In England, visits to GPs, and hospital admissions for non-COVID reasons, fell by a third in the early months of the pandemic, as medical staff were redeployed, routine clinics cancelled, and diagnostic tests postponed. For some conditions the diagnosis rate has not yet caught up with the expected rate, while for others the knock on effect is that the diagnosis rate is much, much higher than expected. Article in *The Conversation* at <https://theconversation.com/the-pandemics-hidden-toll-millions-of-chronic-conditions-left-undiagnosed-273418>.

### **NHS App**

There's currently a lot of focus on the NHS App, with a national campaign. So just to pick out a few highlights:

- Record numbers of patients are using the NHS App – <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/12/record-numbers-using-nhs-app-to-manage-health/>
- Article on Downloading the NHS App – <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/setting-up/downloading/>
- Video introduction to the NHS App – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgxPiHb3OMQ>
- A collection of NHS App walkthrough videos – <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/nhs-app/toolkit/walk-through-videos>

### **AI Notetaking**

Hard on the heels of Dr Srikantha's talk at the January Open Meeting (see above), comes news that NHS organisations now able to take advantage of a national register of AI notetaking technology, to capture clinician-patient conversations and create accurate real-time transcriptions and clinical summaries. It is hoped that this will allow doctors to spend up to 25% more time with their patients. NHS News item at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2026/01/nhs-backs-ai-notetaking-free-up-more-face-to-face-care/>.

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## **Newsletters**

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

- **Patients Association** Weekly News for 09/01, 16/01, 23/01, 30/01 – attached, but no printed copies as usual
  - **PPGukNews** for 31/01
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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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More next month, meanwhile I'm looking forward to some brighter and warmer weather.

Best ...

Keith



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