

Barnabas Patient Voices

From: Barnabas Patient Voices <keith@barnabasvoices.org.uk>
Sent: 05 April 2026 10:31
To: Barnabas Patient Voices
Subject: Barnabas Patient Voices Monthly Update, April
Attachments: BPV_Minutes_20260321.pdf; PA_News.pdf; PPGukNews - 31 March 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 April update for **Barnabas Patient Voices** members.

Infectious Disease Update

Covid

The good news continues this month, with Covid infection rates remaining at historically low levels. However there is a new-ish variant of Omicron around: BA.3.2 (which I've seen called *Cicada*). It seems to have been around for a while, and even be dominant some places, although it appears not to cause increased infection rates except amongst very young children. More background data at <https://bhawkins3.substack.com/p/covid-situation-report-april-2-2026>.

Meanwhile booking for the **Covid Spring Booster** job opens on Tuesday 7 April. Eligibility remains as it was for last Autumn's booster. As before, if you are eligible, you will be able to book at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-covid-19-vaccination/>.

Other Infections

Most of the winter respiratory infections have now pretty much returned to their low summer baseline levels. After being extremely high earlier in the year, Norovirus rates now also seem to be coming down.

However measles is still a worry. So far this year there have been 336 reported cases (57% of them in London); that's over a third as many as in the whole of 2025. Cases are mostly in the under-10s, with an epicentre in London Borough of Enfield and spillover into other boroughs.

Barnabas Patient Voices News

March Open Meeting – Minutes

The minutes of our Open Meeting on 21 March are attached. Please read them as they document extremely interesting and useful discussion on *Innovative things we'd like the Practice to do*. We intend to follow this up with the Practice to see if any of the ideas are doable.

The minutes also contain a summary of some key points from the 2026-27 GP Contract.

May Open Meeting

Our next Open Meeting is scheduled for **Saturday 16 May**, again **10:30 in person at the Medical Centre**. The agenda will follow in next month's Update. Please put the date in your diary.

Meet the Patients

We are currently managing to hold "Meet the Patients" sessions on the first Wednesday afternoon each month. Although the Waiting Area is not as busy as it used to be, we usually have useful conversations with a few patients

– as well as keeping the Book Exchange and noticeboards in order. If nothing else the occasional informal chat helps make the Medical Centre more friendly, and less scary especially for the younger patients. As always, we could do more with more volunteers, so if you can help with either “Meet the Patients” or the Book Exchange, please get in touch.

Barnabas Practice News

Most of the Practice’s news is in the meeting minutes.

eConsult

It finally looks as if eConsult is going to be replaced. The replacement is not yet confirmed, but the current plan is for it to go live in July – but this being the NHS we’re not holding our breath.

Phone System

The Practice are having problems with the phone system supplier being elusive, which is why a number of updates and changes have not yet happened. The saga continues; more news when available.

Local Healthcare News

NHS West and North London

NHS West & North London ICB (a merger of North West London and North Central London ICBs) was formally launched on 1 April, and is the largest ICB in England serving a population of around 4.5 million (that’s around half of all Londoners!). Find their website at <https://www.westandnorthlondon.icb.nhs.uk/> and a media report at <https://neighbournet.com/server/common/ldrshfnhs044.htm>.

Northwick Park Hospital

London North West University Healthcare (LNWH), the NHS trust responsible for Northwick Park Hospital has been ranked the most improved in London and the seventh most improved nationally since April 2025. This also places the Trust 16th out of over 130 acute trusts in England. Local media report at <https://harrowonline.org/2026/03/18/northwick-park-hospital-trust-ranked-most-improved-in-london/>.

Neighbourhood Health Centres

Government is rolling out the initial 27 (of a planned 250 by 2035) Neighbourhood Health Centres, with the aim of providing more care for patients closer to home. Two of these centres are in our area: Jubilee Gardens Primary Care Centre (in Dormers Wells) and Alexandra Avenue Health and Social Care Centre (in Harrow). Both currently host a variety of clinics and services, so it will be interesting to see what changes. Government announcement at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-to-benefit-from-health-centres-on-their-doorstep>.

General NHS & Healthcare News

Possible Medicine Shortages

Recent reports are suggesting that if the current Iran War continues the UK will be facing medicine shortages within a matter of weeks, due to the lack of chemical feedstock. More in a *Guardian* news report at <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2026/mar/28/uk-weeks-away-medicine-shortages-iran-war-impacts-experts-warn>>

Wegovy

[Although this was released on 1 April, it is so widely reported that one has to assume it is true, because otherwise it is a brilliant piece of widespread media deception.]

It is being reported that a million people in England could be offered the diabetes and weight-loss drug Wegovy (semaglutide) in the expectation this will reduce the number of heart attacks and strokes. NHS England news item at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2026/04/million-people-offered-wegovy-cut-heart-attack-stroke-risk/>.

Alzheimer’s Blood Test

This is a rather old report (from January) on research into developing a finger-prick blood test for Alzheimer's. Apparently it works but there is a long way to go to get it in the clinic. NHS news item at <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/breakthrough-alzheimers-test-uses-finger-prick-blood-samples>.

Newsletters

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

- **Patients Association News** for 07/03, 13/03, 20/03, 27/03, 02/04 – attached as a single PDF but as always no printed copies.
 - **PPGukNews** for 31/03 – attached
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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, or leave me a note with reception at the medical centre.

Spring is here, all the apple trees are breaking into flower, so now to enjoy some sunshine (I hope!) ...

Keith



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