

## **Chairman's Annual Report 2025** **(1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025)**

I am pleased to present the 2025 Chairman's Annual Report of **Barnabas Patient Voices**, the Patient Group for Barnabas Medical Centre.

### **Summary**

1. Although Covid is still with us, this year saw an easing of the pandemic and restrictions, enabling us to progress towards an approximation to normality – or at least the new model of normality – and restore some of our previous activity.
2. We continued with our 2023-25 Plan and executed it as well as possible under the prevailing circumstances, and with the available volunteers.
3. Regular meetings, the website and Facebook activity have continued.

### **Activities & Achievements**

1. While activity this year started off somewhat curtailed, we have seen a gradual easing of constraints, both generally and by the Practice, so we have been able to restore some of our former activities, although it is unlikely we'll ever return to life as it was before Covid.
2. Current group membership stands at 83 patients – 47 directly joined plus 43 members of the Facebook group (there's an overlap of seven members who belong to both). The membership list is verified by the Practice at least annually to identify those who are no longer Barnabas patients.
3. While use of the Facebook group remains relatively light, it is an important communication channel for information to members and for members to feed back their concerns. We continue to add relevant group documents, information and healthcare articles to the group. Once again my thanks to Ewa Siwiec for her contributions to the group.
4. Our two-monthly Open Meetings continued. After juggling some dates we held six meetings during the year. Pleasingly half of these meetings were held in person at the Medical Centre on a Saturday morning – many thanks to Practice Manager, Matt Edwards, for giving up three Saturday mornings for us! The other three meetings were held over Zoom on a Wednesday lunchtime. These proved to be less popular with members, especially as number either cannot or dislike using Zoom. Fourteen patients attended at least one meeting during the year. All meetings remain open to all Barnabas patients, carers and staff.

**Barnabas Patient Voices.** Improving healthcare together.

5. Every Open Meeting was supported by the Practice Manager, whose contributions were, as always, highly valued. Disappointingly, however, he was the only member of the Practice Team who attended our meetings.
6. During the year, as Chairman, I had eight update meetings with the Practice Manager. As these meetings were during working hours, Harsha Mortemore (Vice-Chair) and Purminder Gandhu joined the meetings when their work permitted. These meetings provide a valuable communication channel between the group and the Practice. They enable us to fulfil our role as a critical friend to the Practice, and for the Practice to keep us up to date, outside the Open Meetings. For instance we regularly highlight the ongoing issues around the phone system; and patients' desire for more, and more face-to-face, appointments.
7. The BPV website contains all our documentation, leaflets, useful information items, and links to key (local) resources. It is also a weblog of items of topical interest, group announcements and events. Where appropriate website material is copied to the Facebook group (and *vice versa*). Suggestions and contributions of content are always welcome.
8. *What's Where near Barnabas*, our guide to local services and facilities, which is aimed essentially at anyone new to the area, was updated in early 2025. As always a copy is available on our website and on the Facebook group. Reception have been provided with a QR code, which is also on the waiting area noticeboards, for patients to scan. Updates and contributions are always welcome.
9. Our articles on patient *Treatment Experiences* provide hints, tips and reassurance for others awaiting or considering treatments. Articles (which are always anonymous) continue to be added as members provide them – although there is currently a backlog awaiting uploading. Again, contributions are always welcome.
10. During the year we edited and published two issues (June and September 2024) of *Barnabas Bulletin*, the Practice's quarterly newsletter. These are available on our website; again reception and the noticeboards have a QR code. Regrettably the Practice have found that quarterly publication is too large an overhead and it has been agreed to publish twice a year in April and October. The newsletter would be of greater value if the Practice could promote it more widely by texting the link to all patients; however the Practice is being constrained by cost limits – imposed from above – on text messaging. Once more, contributions of articles (or just ideas for topics to include) are always welcome.
11. The *Members' Monthly Update* has also continued. This contains summaries of recent, potentially interesting, healthcare news etc.
12. During the year we restarted a number of suspended activities. This started with rescheduling the "Meet the Patients" sessions in September 2024. As before we plan for sessions with two team members in the waiting area to talk to people, listen to their gripes, and provide help and information. These sessions are currently on the second Tuesday morning and the last Wednesday afternoon, each month. We held 10 sessions, with a gap across Christmas and New Year. Although the waiting area is relatively quiet, compared with pre-Covid, these sessions are still valuable: we believe they make the Practice that bit more approachable, the feedback obtained is useful to the Practice, and we have opportunities to explain how the

Practice and the NHS function. Thank you to those members who volunteered to help with this initiative.

13. In terms of making the Practice more approachable, and the waiting area more friendly, we were delighted when the Practice allowed us to reopen the Book Exchange. We know this was previously well used, and a valuable community asset, and all the signs are this is still the case. We are still rebuilding the stocks, and as the Practice have requested, we are aiming to major on children's books. Contributions of books are always welcome (but please nothing political, religious or medical). Thanks to Noreen Marshall for picking this up again, despite ongoing health issues.
14. Towards the end of the reporting year we again took on managing the waiting area noticeboards (and keeping the leaflet displays tidy). This too helps make the waiting area more friendly, as well as providing information for patients.
15. Finally on restoring activity, we have produced several leaflets for patients: one on this group's role, two on the NHS App, one on using eConsult, and one on getting the most from your appointment. Copies should be available in the waiting area and on the BPV website.
16. The last piece of work for the year was to build a plan for 2025-27, based on the 2023-25 plan, a survey of members' views, discussions at Open Meetings and elsewhere, and input from the Practice. The plan was approved at the March 2025 Open Meeting; it is available on the website and has been circulated to all members.
17. During the year the National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP) doubled their annual membership fee to £80. As we felt that we obtained little value for the old fee, it was decided not to renew our membership in 2025 – as did many other patient groups around the country.
18. Again, my thanks to Harsha Mortemore for volunteering as Vice-Chair despite her ongoing health challenges. Two brains are always better than one!

## Looking Forward

1. We hope that activity over this coming year will continue to be less constrained by both Covid and the available volunteers.
2. As always, to continue to be an effective patient voice to the Practice, we need to keep growing our membership (especially active members) and extending our diversity – particularly amongst our younger patients. Hopefully this can be assisted by our clinicians identifying and encouraging potential members, and by the Practice texting invitations to patients a couple of times a year.
3. Our two-monthly Open Meetings will continue. Three meetings – our AGM in May, July and September are planned for Saturday mornings in person at the Medical Centre, with Zoom meetings during the less hospitable months.
4. There is a lot of activity contained in the 2025-27 plan. How much we can achieve will depend critically on both the Practice's and our priorities, and the volunteers available. There is no expectation that we will be able to achieve everything in the plan, especially as a significant part of it is "wish list items".
5. As well as championing patient concerns and needs, as a critical friend of the Practice we must continue to push the boundaries on behalf of patients in order to

make a difference to overall healthcare, and supporting the Practice with large projects and smaller pieces of work.

6. **Ultimately our overall goal must be to continue working with the Practice to achieve OUTSTANDING ratings at future CQC inspections.**

### **Concluding Remarks**

1. It is pleasing that 2024-25 has been a more normal year, and over the coming year we hope to further return to the (new) normal. As such we remain committed to working with the Practice to identify and address patient needs and concerns, and improve healthcare for all.
2. Again this year I must say thank you to all our members, and others, who have given time to the group during the year. We also must thank all our doctors, nurses and practice staff for continuing to look after us so well despite increasing patient demand and decreasing funding. Both my experience, and the feedback I receive, continue to indicate that we have one of the best, most helpful and friendliest teams in the area, despite the challenges.

*Keith Marshall*  
Chairman, **Barnabas Patient Voices**  
16 April 2025