

## **Chairman's Annual Report 2026** **(1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026)**

I am pleased to present the 2026 Chairman's Annual Report for **Barnabas Patient Voices**, the Patient Group for Barnabas Medical Centre.

### **Summary**

1. Although Covid has not fully gone away, infection levels have reduced markedly leading to further progress towards the new model of normality and thus the group's activity. Nonetheless this has been a fairly low key year.
2. This was the first year of our 2025-2027 Plan, which has been executed as well as possible particularly given the available volunteers.
3. Regular meetings, the website and Facebook activity have continued.

### **Activities & Achievements**

1. Activity this year has been less thwarted by Covid restrictions, however we have struggled for sufficient willing and available volunteers.
2. Current group membership stands at 85 patients – 44 directly joined plus 48 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.

During the year we lost three long-time and active members: two needed to move practice and sadly the third died.

3. While use of the Facebook group continues to be 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 this year my thanks to Ewa Siwiec for her contributions to the group.

4. Our two-monthly Open Meetings continued although we held just five meetings, as after several attempts to reschedule it we lost the planned September meeting.

Three of the meetings were held in person at the Medical Centre on a Saturday morning – many thanks to Practice Manager, Matt Edwards, for giving up his Saturday mornings for us! The other two meetings (November and January) were held over Zoom on a Wednesday lunchtime. These Zoom meetings proved to be less popular with members, especially as some are working and a number either cannot or dislike using Zoom.

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

Thirteen patients attended at least one meeting during the year. All meetings remain open to all Barnabas patients, carers and staff.

5. Every Open Meeting was supported by the Practice Manager, whose contributions were, as always, highly valued. We were also pleased to welcome Dr Srikantha to the January meeting to talk about AI-assisted note taking.
6. During the year, as Chairman, I had just five 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 face-to-face appointments.

7. The BPV website contains all our documentation, leaflets and useful information items. 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. It was decided during the year that we should rest *What's Where near Barnabas*, our guide to local services and facilities. This has taken a not insignificant amount of work and volunteer time. However resurrection may yet be possible if the information is thought to be of value and there is volunteer time available.
9. We have a backlog of articles for our patient *Treatment Experiences* stream of hints, tips and reassurance for others awaiting or considering treatments. Articles are always anonymous, and further contributions are welcome.
10. The *Members' Monthly Update* has also continued. This contains summaries of recent, potentially interesting, healthcare news etc. As well as (where possible) being emailed to members copies are always put in the Facebook group and on the website.
11. During the year we ran 16 "Meet the Patients" sessions despite a much reduced schedule from December due to a lack of available volunteers. 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.

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 during the year to help with this initiative. More volunteers are always welcome and will allow us to re-expand the schedule.

12. The Book Exchange continued and the signs are that it continues to be well used, especially by children. Thank you to those who have donated books during the year; more are always welcome (but please nothing political, religious or medical).

Thanks to Noreen Marshall for continuing with this although ongoing health issues have meant the Book Exchange has been given too little attention. Thanks also to those members who step in (unasked) to keep things tidy.

13. We have also continued our oversight of the waiting area noticeboards (and keep the leaflet displays tidy). This too helps make the waiting area more friendly, as well as providing information for patients, and relieving reception of a tiny amount of work.
14. Analysing the 2025 National Patient Survey results, we were dismayed at the Practice's poor performance when we used to be the best in the area. This resulted in a number of discussions with the Practice, some searching questions by members, and the generation of a number of new ideas. We hope the next survey shows a turnaround.
15. We were delighted during the year when the Practice received the donation of a blood pressure machine for the waiting area, and we have helped a number of patients to use it.
16. Again, my thanks to Harsha Mortemore for volunteering as Vice-Chair despite her ongoing health challenges. Thanks also to Purminder Ghandu for her involvement during the year. Three heads are definitely better than one!

### Looking Forward

1. We hope that activity over this coming year will continue to be more or less free of Covid restrictions and less constrained by a shortage of 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 (although we recognise this is hampered by very limited funding).
3. Our two-monthly Open Meetings will continue. This coming year we're planning four meetings – May (our AGM), July, September and March on Saturday mornings in person at the Medical Centre, with Zoom meetings in the less hospitable months (November and January).
4. There is a lot of activity contained in our current 2025-27 plan. How much we can achieve depends 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. **As I have said before, ultimately our overall goal must be to continue working with the Practice to achieve OUTSTANDING ratings at future CQC inspections.**

## Concluding Remarks

1. Although this has been another low key year, we remain committed to working with the Practice to identify and address patient needs and concerns, and improve healthcare for all.
2. As always, I must say thank you to all our members, and others, who have given time to the group during the year. We must also thank all our doctors, nurses and practice staff for continuing to look after us so well despite increasing patient demand, increasing admin, 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 (and last year's survey).

*Keith Marshall*

Chairman, **Barnabas Patient Voices**

*2 May 2026*