

Good Practice amongst Patient Participation Groups in S E Oxfordshire

There are 10 PPGs in SE Oxon 8 of which send representatives to the SE Locality Patient Forum (SELF). SELF meets quarterly and each PPG submits an account of its activities. This report is the result of a review of these accounts since 2015.

It is clear from the review that PPGs engage in a huge range of activities and these are grouped under the following headings:

1. Organisation and development of PPG

Appointment of members of the PPG vary from recommendation by a GP or other PPG member, or appointment as a representative of a community organisation e.g. Goring/Woodcote's committee includes Carers Group member and Mobility Issues Group member. Benson is currently trying out election by the whole practice population.

PPGs also differ how they **organise themselves**. Henley Bell, Goring/Woodcote and Benson have **sub-groups** working on specific issues. Chalgrove/Watlington, and Henley have **core groups** of active members and a wider group to whom they report occasionally. Goring/Woodcote, Benson and Rycote (Thame) have **virtual groups** (email lists) that they consult with occasionally. One problem with these is that PPGs do not have access to patients' emails so they have to collect emails opportunistically (with the patient's permission). Otherwise they have to ask the practice manager to initiate an email and this obviously takes up more of his/her time as well as the PPG's. Goring/Woodcote Practice sends messages to all patients using the MJOG system to highlight PPG events and to encourage membership.

All groups have a **constitution** or terms of reference.

There is some **joint working** between groups. Goring/Woodcote, shared their experience of working with carers with Benson, while Chalgrove/Watlington and Benson jointly organised a successful event focussing on End of Life Issues.

2. Engaging with the local community

Rycote, Sonning Common, Henley and Goring/Woodcote have **regular newsletters** or a page in the practice's newsletter. Chalgrove/Watlington and Benson submit a regular item to their local community's monthly newsletter that is delivered to all households. Henley have developed a good relationship with the Henley Standard newspaper and have achieved regular coverage for their activities.

Nearly all PPGs hold **open meetings** on NHS development issues or specific medical topics. Henley has been particularly successful in organising a regular series of very well attended bi-monthly meetings where a consultant from the Royal Berks Hospital gives a presentation on topics such as stroke, urology, respiratory problems, and many more.

Many of the groups **work jointly** with other non-NHS organisations. Chalgrove/Watlington and Henley worked with SODC to promote walking football and health walks respectively. Wallingford organised a meeting on diabetes with SODC's Go Active coordinator. Benson and Wallingford have

both worked with MIND on talks about mental health. Benson worked with the local Nature Group to encourage the use of green spaces in the village.

Several PPGs have engaged with local schools and youth organisations to try and ensure that the young person's perspective is taken into account, with varying degrees of success due mainly to other pressures on school staff. Chalgrove/Watlington worked with Health Watch Oxfordshire on a successful **survey of the views of primary school children**.

3. Supporting GP practices and development

All the PPGs have the Practice Manager attend their meetings where members can comment on developments in the practice. Some have a lead GP attend. Benson also has a senior nurse attend. Goring/Woodcote have joint working groups with clinicians. These relationships have enabled us to comment on **ethical and non-clinical issues** affecting patients.

Goring/Woodcote was very involved in the development of the **practice website**. Rycote has been instrumental in encouraging patients to use **electronic communication** with the surgery. Goring/Woodcote provide help desk support to patients unable to access online system.

Goring/Woodcote carried out a **survey of Practice Staff** and were subsequently involved in implementing its recommendations

Benson Panel is involved in **interviewing candidates** for senior posts in the practice, such as Practice Manager, GP partners and salaried GPs.

Benson practice has nominated a member of the PPG to oversee the **spending of funds** donated to the practice by patients and Rycote PPG is always involved in such decisions.

A number of PPGs have been involved in planning and participating with their surgeries in **CQC inspections**.

PPGs regularly conduct **surveys** on a range of topics, the results contributing to practice development

Chalgrove/Watlington PPG have been involved in **fundraising** for specialised equipment for their surgery.

Goring/Woodcote, Rycote and Chalgrove/Watlington take an active part in **managing the flu vaccination day** in their surgeries.

The Chair of SELF attends the monthly **meetings of the locality's 10 practices** (GPs and Practice Managers) and submits regular reports from and to SELF. This has been valuable in building trust between the GPs and PPGs.

There have been attempts at **co-production** with the CCG but PPGs felt that they have been very much the junior partner and would like to see much more meaningful involvement.

4. Health Education/Promotion work

Most of the PPGs hold health promotion events such as **Health Fairs or information days** eg. Sonning Common held a series of talks about End of Life issues and also a Dementia Awareness day. Henley used the Sonning Common EoL model to organise a series of talks, and Wallingford invited Sue Ryder staff to give a public presentation on end of life matters. Benson mark national awareness days with displays in the surgery and/or talks. Wallingford ran a 'sold-out' information evening on men's health.

Most PPGs have a Carers Champion. Henley arranges annual talks for carers. Benson supports their local library's Carers Coffee Mornings. Goring/Woodcote have an active Carers' Champion who supports the carers' group that meets regularly in the village hall.

A number of PPGs organise **First Aid courses** in their communities

5. Responding to local issues

Rycote has worked over several years with other NHS and community organisations to ensure public involvement in plans for a **health 'hub' in Thame**.

Henley was heavily involved in discussions for the **development of Townlands Hospital**.

Chalgrove/Watlington and Benson have been involved in **planning enquiries** about local housing developments and their impact on their practices.

SELF's Chair attends regular **meetings with chairs from other Oxfordshire localities** and with the CCG. This, in principle, is an excellent initiative but sadly the CCG has failed to capitalise on this opportunity to listen to informed patient opinion.

A representative from SELF attends the meetings of the **SE and SW Oxon Locality Community Services Group**. Made up of GPs, nurses, therapists, social workers and voluntary sector personnel this group offers us a valuable opportunity to keep in touch with what is happening on the ground in terms of joint working and innovative practice.

SELF has commented on **major developments within the CCG** area such as changes in the organisation of primary care, privatisation of services such as the CT-PET scan service at the Churchill Hospital, failures in provision by Healthshare (MSK service), proposals to restrict vasectomy services and more.

SELF meets occasionally with the **local MP** to brief him on their activities and raise issues of concern.

The Future

With the introduction of Primary Care Networks SELF PPGs have agreed to continue to meet together on a locality wide basis, as well as collaborate within their respective networks.

Maggie Winters

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