



how-to

This guide provides top tips for how to work effectively with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs).

What are Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)?

The National Association for Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.) is the national voice for patient participation in primary care. It supports the work of local Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) in GP services.

PPGs are made up of volunteers from a GP practice patient list, and support the practice in providing the best services for patients, acting as a critical friend and representing the voices of those using the practice services. PPGs are often aware of patient concerns before they become formal complaints, and recognise trends over many years within the practice, its services, and its quality improvement progress.

Many PPGs have built links with their local Healthwatch as a way of getting support, finding out more about the wider local health economy, and to share information on primary care.

Top tips for local Healthwatch to work effectively with PPGs

1. Get to know who's who at your local PPGs, ideally with an initial face to face meeting - this will allow you to know who the right person to contact is and put faces to names.
2. Maintain regular contact with local PPGs and ensure a two-way flow of information - this will help foster and build your relationship, as well as encourage information sharing.
3. Help local PPGs understand what the priorities are for your Healthwatch. This will help them understand what you are focusing your efforts on and align the information they provide with what they're working on, allowing you to work more collaboratively.
4. Explain to your PPG colleagues the statutory activities of a local Healthwatch - this gives them a better understanding of the powers a local Healthwatch has and what you can and can't do.
5. Try to find innovative and combined ways of gathering information from patients and the public which supplement each other's efforts, rather than duplicating them.
6. Encourage local PPGs to let people know about your signposting duties.





Top Tips for PPGs on how to work with local Healthwatch

This guide provides top tips for how to work effectively with local Healthwatch.

What does Healthwatch do?

Healthwatch is the independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. It is here to find out what matters to people and help make sure their views shape the support they need.

There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. They speak to local people to find out what people like and what could be improved with those running services. They also provide information and advice about publicly-funded health and care services.

Healthwatch recognises that it can't do this alone and wants to work together with partners and stakeholders in health and social care to ensure that it can make the best impact. By sharing information and working together with Patient Participation Groups (PPGs), it can get a better understanding of people's experiences and what matters most to them, influence those who have the power to change services and help people access the information they need to take control of their health and care, make informed decisions and shape the services that support them.

Top tips for PPGs to work effectively with local Healthwatch

1. Share information about your PPG: what you do, your aspirations, your activities, your concerns.
2. Find out about your local Healthwatch: what they do in primary care and whether they can support you in any way (e.g. networking, resources, information etc.).
3. Make sure you understand the role and limits of Healthwatch, and share information on the role and limits of your PPG.
4. Discuss the best way for you and Healthwatch to keep in touch (regular face-to-face meetings may not always be possible, but other forms of keeping in touch can work too).
5. Consider what information about primary care you might share with Healthwatch, and the information that Healthwatch could share with you.
6. It is likely that you'll have an understanding of the trends in quality and services in your practice. This information might help your local Healthwatch when it reviews services through its "Enter & View" visits, which tend to provide only a snapshot of the issues. Share information as you will both learn from one another's experiences.
7. Consider how Healthwatch might promote you, your activity, and how people can get involved – and vice versa.
8. Remember Healthwatch shares your focus on the patient voice. Together you can keep patients at the heart of your discussions and any work you carry out together.

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