

E-Bulletin from the National Association for Patient Participation: Issue 34: October 2009

234. Support for PPGs from Primary Care Organisations

An increasing number of Primary Care Organisations are now actively promoting and supporting Patient Participation Groups (PPGs). NAPP has invited each of them to submit a piece for a special one-off newsletter that we are producing to showcase their work (please send any articles to graham@napp.org.uk). In advance of that, here are newsletters from [Norfolk](#) and [Milton Keynes](#) that provide an excellent summary of the benefits of networking PPGs across an area and supporting their activities.

235. Premium rate phone numbers to be banned in England

The Government has [announced](#) that premium rate phone numbers are to be banned in GP surgeries in England. Their assurance is that patients will have to pay no more than the cost of dialling a normal landline number. The timescales of this change are not clear. It is important to note that implementation will not be straightforward, given that there is no longer a "normal" rate for making a phone call with so many different providers and packages available.

236. Growing Patient Participation Campaign update

The second [update](#) for the Growing Patient Participation campaign has now been produced. This leads with a speech from Dr Michael Dixon, chairman of the [NHS Alliance](#), who argues that PPGs have a vital role to play in ensuring that local services meet local needs and that patients are more involved in their own health. The update also includes a couple of case studies and a link to the *Making a Difference* fund.

237. The value of patient and public involvement

Don Redding from the Picker Institute has written a highly readable (and admirably brief) [article](#) on the need for public engagement. In a climate of financial austerity, he argues that recent increases in spending on patient and public involvement must be preserved since the process is an essential component in legitimating tough spending decisions in future. The article also highlights several ways in which greater engagement can directly reduce expenditure.

238. Community Partnership Awards

The [community partnership awards](#) have been brought to our attention. Those of you who are involved in partnership working may wish to put in a submission. You'll need to be quick, however, as the deadline for entries is 23rd October.

239. New research into the validity of the general practice patient survey

The [GP patient survey](#), introduced this year in England, has generated considerable controversy. This is largely because the access questions (on 48-hour access to a GP and on advanced booking of appointments) have a significant impact on practice income through the quality markers in the practice contracts. Critics have complained that the response rates are too low and the results are therefore unreliable. New [research](#) argues, however, that the findings are generally valid and reliable, except in 3% of practices where more responses need to be gathered.

240. Department of Health sets out its engagement support programme

The Department of Health has set out its [support programme](#) for public and patient engagement for 2009-2010. It describes a vision where "patients and the public drive the design and delivery of high quality services. To achieve this, every day, everyone working in the NHS needs to engage patients and the public in making decisions."

241. New GMC guidance on confidentiality

Confidentiality issues are among the most challenging faced by doctors. The General Medical Council has therefore issued new guidance, [Confidentiality](#), covering issues such as reporting concerns about patients to the vehicle licensing authorities, reporting gunshot and knife wounds and disclosing information for insurance and employment purposes.

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National Association for Patient Participation

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