

Latest News from Priory Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Issue 3: Spring 2025

The Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of Priory Surgery patients who volunteer to meet every three months with Practice staff to discuss patients' experiences of the Practice and how they might be improved. The Practice sees the PPG as providing valuable input supporting its efforts to offer the best service it can to its patients.

The key topics which the PPG discussed at its April meeting were:

Improving Access Group

The Practice management team reported that the first meeting of the Improving Access Group had taken place in January. The Practice sees this Group as a means of consulting Priory patients who may have particular difficulties in accessing the Surgery's services. The patients who attended the January meeting have a physical or sensory impairment.

As a result of the experiences those patients explained, the Practice has:

- Provided a second designated parking space in the car park for disabled patients.
- Installed an automatic door opener on the inside door of the main entrance operated by press pads.
- Passed on feedback of difficulties experienced by visually impaired patients in using the NHS app.

It is intended that in the future patients with learning disabilities, dementia, mental illness/trauma will be invited to meetings to talk about their experiences in accessing the Surgery's services.

Total Triage approach to accessing appointments

The Practice management team reported that they had spoken to two other local Practices who are already operating the Total Triage approach to handling patients' appointment requests and had found their experience to be positive. Priory is therefore planning to proceed with introducing the Total Triage approach.

Under this approach Priory's patients will be encouraged to request appointments via the online form on the Surgery's website as much as possible. The aim being to significantly reduce the length of the queue of patients phoning the Surgery at 8 a.m. seeking an appointment. Patients who cannot use the online service would still be able to phone in or visit the surgery to make appointment requests. In those instances the Patient Navigation team on reception would complete the online request form for the patient.

All appointment requests whether completed by patients themselves or the Patient Navigation Team would then go into a queue for triage by the GP on duty to be allocated an appointment with the most appropriate member of the Practice.

The Practice management team made clear that they will ensure that patients who cannot request an appointment online will not be disadvantaged in obtaining an appointment when the Total Triage booking system is introduced. The PPG will ensure that this is monitored.

Patients will be contacted by the Practice in the next couple of months with further information about the Total Triage booking system.

PPG Review

The PPG has been in being since 2021 and the Group considered it appropriate to review how it operates.

The Practice management team explained the benefits they see the PPG has provided:

- Helped improve communications – via review of the website, other general communications to patients), and the Surgery newsletters.
- Governance – via review of complaints and compliments, missed appointment numbers and the GP Patient Survey results.
- A helpful sounding board – particularly for potential service development and access arrangements.

The team explained that the PPG and the more recent Improving Access Group have different but complementary roles. The PPG looks at the Surgery's services from the perspective of all patients, whereas the IAG focuses on the access needs of particular groups of patients.

The PPG agreed that it would continue with its existing format and approach.

The PPG are keen to hear from patients interested in joining the Group.

Please email bnssg.prg.priory@nhs.net or speak to the staff on Reception if you are interested.