

Report to Saltash Town Council

NHS Patient Participation Groups - Port View Surgery & Saltash Health Centre

The NHS requires all GP Practices to ensure the involvement of patients in its work. The nature and pattern of patient participation varies greatly across the country. In Saltash, Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) are well established, and good cooperation exists with the staff of the Practices. Both PPGs meet regularly with Practice Managers and other staff. Membership of the groups has grown well in the last year.

We see the role of PPGs as “to support and to challenge” the Practices. Feedback from patients about their experiences, good and bad, is a key part of the process. We have undertaken regular surveys to get the views of a wider group of patients, and we analyse the results and report back. We get a positive response to this process from the Practices.

The pandemic disrupted the way care is made available, and it would be fair to say that a normal service has not yet returned. Staff sickness and difficulties in recruiting professional staff have been at the heart of the problems, which has been made worse by the wider national crisis in the NHS. Nevertheless, PPGs have contributed to discussions about how to deal with such problems.

In the last twelve months the two PPGs have established a joint “partnership group”, with three PPG members from each Practice meeting regularly. Our main objective has been to encourage the Practices to work together more to establish coherent services across the town, which should make better use of the resources available.

We have also put much effort into resurrecting the process of finding a new role for St Barnabas Hospital, closed to in-patients and for Minor Injuries more than six years ago. We have linked up with the League of Friends of the hospital in this endeavour. All of us have been very disappointed with the lack of urgency among local NHS managers over this, and we have represented citizen views strongly. Just recently, we have seen signs of our advocacy beginning to kick-start some action. We hope the town will be able to see the results of this in our report to the Council next year!

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