

Purpose and Protocols

Sedlescombe and Westfield - Patient Involvement Group

Ratified – 3rd April 2018 (updated 18-9-18)

It is intended that this policy will be reviewed from time to time by the group.

A. PIG Key Purpose (Remit): to

1. support the Surgery staff and doctors in aiming to continually enhance the quality of service to patients
2. bring to the decision-making and discussions of doctors and surgery staff an “outside” perspective based on the experience and perceptions received from patients and the group’s knowledge of the needs and expectations of our community
3. help the surgeries to promote information on health and well-being to patients
4. facilitate improved communication and understanding between patients, surgery staff and doctors
5. seek to support the ongoing development and improvement of the environment of the surgery, encouraging a friendly, welcoming and safe experience for patients by providing feedback from patients and ideas for enhancement
6. seek to support the Practice Manager using our expertise, knowledge and local information that may help management in the identification of staff training or development needs where appropriate.

B. In order to do this, the PIG will:

1. aim to broadly reflect, within its membership, the diversity of people living in the area
2. be prepared to regard all opinions and views as valid and be prepared to listen to them and respond constructively
3. not respond to any patient complaint other than to advise on the correct procedures as laid out in the Practice Complaints Policy or by informing the Practice Manager and Chair of the issue raised
4. gather intelligence from patients by any appropriate means, analyse data and share with the Practice and agree actions and support
5. seek to form links to communicate with social organisations and forums in the villages and patient catchment area
6. seek to form links to communicate with the Area Patient Forum, the Federation PPGs and Locality based organisations to enhance knowledge, skills and practical activities and projects of benefit to our patients
7. aim to meet with the GPs formally 4 times during the year. Two members of the PIG, (usually the Chair plus another member who would like to attend), will meet on 2 occasions with all the GPs, and on a further 2 occasions with a GP selected from among themselves. Key items for discussion should be agreed in advance.
8. evaluate progress and impact of activity and report to the Practice and community

C. Background and Skills for members:

1. Members of the PIG are all volunteers.
2. No payment or reimbursement of expenses is made for the activities undertaken other than by agreement in advance in specific circumstances.
3. Life experience and ideas about how to help the continual improvement of the Practice are the most important qualities and skills required.
4. People who wish to apply must have good listening skills and be prepared to contribute to discussions with other members and with staff before arriving at their point of view.
5. People must be prepared to undertake some activities outside of meetings subject to their skills and availability.
6. Representation from patients who are: young parents, parents with school age children, individuals and families including a person with a high physical need or mental disability, older people, Deaf community, Unsighted community are particularly welcomed.
7. The PIG welcomes people with a wide range of specific skills, those with management, communication, training and IT experience can make a particular contribution but these skills are not a requirement. Common sense and an ability to share the views of patients is crucial.
8. People with Health or Social Care sector expertise are welcome but this is also not a requirement.

D. Protocols underpinning the management of the group:

1. Any registered patient of the Sedlescombe and Westfield Practice over the age of 18 may put themselves forward to be a member of PIG meeting group or virtual group
2. This group is not a route for complaint about GPs, Surgery, Nursing or Pharmacy staff, or members of the PIG group or matters outlined in the notes of meetings. It is intended as a means of contributing to and enhancing discussion and outcomes.
3. All possible attempts will be made to reflect the diversity of our patients in the membership of the PIG
4. At any given time the meeting group may require a particular skill set, area of expertise or someone who can be broadly representative of a particular group of patients for example. Applicants who have been interviewed but do not match the requirements of the group at the time can be offered a place later when one becomes available. They will usually be invited to join the Virtual group. (See below).
5. Members who join the meeting group are entitled to vote on decisions providing that the meeting is quorate.
6. It is expected that under "normal circumstances" members will attend a minimum of 6 meetings in a year. Should attendance not match this expectation the member will be asked to transfer to the virtual group.
7. It is further expected that all meeting group members shall, during the year, take on some additional responsibilities to fulfill the purpose of the group. What is appropriate will be subject to individual circumstances and the needs of the group.
8. As the group develops it is anticipated that some training and development activity may be desirable for members. It is expected that members will take advantage of any opportunities when possible.

9. Should any member of the meeting or virtual group exhibit any behaviors that do not fit within the expectations or purposes of the group as outlined in this document or otherwise engage in repeatedly vexatious behaviour whether within or outside formal PIG meetings, the Chair and a colleague will endeavor to raise the issue with them and discuss if it is appropriate for them to continue their membership. The outcome of the discussion will be reported back to the group at the following meeting. In the exceptional circumstance that this proves not to be a viable approach then group will arrange an agenda item to discuss the issues and agree a way forward at a meeting. The member may/may not be invited to contribute their perspective, either in person or in writing depending on the circumstances at the discretion of the group.
10. The maximum number of PIG members is not more than 12 plus Practice Manager.

E. Meeting Group member selection/appointment.

1. Applicants initially contact the Practice Manager and express an interest and provide contact details.
2. The Chair will then contact the applicant for an informal telephone conversation to broadly assess their interest and skills and answer any questions.
3. Should the applicant wish to proceed, a face to face discussion is to be held with the applicant and two members of the group. Discussion will centre around life experiences and reasons for their interest, potential skills and availability.
4. Should the applicant wish to continue they will then be asked to attend the next meeting of the group, for part of a meeting, where they will be invited to make a contribution tell the group a little about themselves, join in with discussions and ask some questions of their own if they wish to.
5. As soon as is possible after the meeting the Chair will contact the applicant and inform them if they have been accepted, or if not provide reasons and clarify if a place may be available in the future. (See background and skills section above).

F. Meeting Group Roles and Responsibilities

1. The group has key roles which run in a two year cycle starting on the 1st September. (eg. Sept 2018 – Sept 2020 ongoing Key roles – Chair, Vice Chair, Note Taker, Communications lead, Project leaders.
2. PIG members can self-nominate for any role and must have their nomination formally supported by at least two current PIG members from the meeting group.
3. If there is more than one candidate for a role, then a secret paper ballot will be conducted by the Practice Manager who also counts the votes and announces the result
4. The Practice Manager has an Ex officio role, is expected to attend all PIG meetings and contribute to and inform discussions, but may not vote on PIG issues.

Advisory information re Section F

- a) It is suggested that any person interested in standing for the role of the Chair should make the group aware of this well in advance to provide the opportunity for shadowing. The Vice Chair role also offers this opportunity.

- b) It is considered good practice that the Chair role is renewed every two years, other roles may stay fixed for longer if appropriate. Equally after two years, if the retiring Chair remains on the group they may re-apply for another period.

G. Arrangements for Meetings

1. The group meets at approximately 6 weekly intervals. Potentially 8 or 9 meetings a year.
2. The quorum for a meeting at which any decision or vote is required is 50% of the current membership. The chair has a casting vote. If a meeting is not quorate but a decision is required promptly to ensure the business of the group may continue smoothly, the following applies:
 - a. Members present will vote as usual and their decision recorded.
 - b. Following the meeting members not present will be asked by the Chair to vote by email. The final decision and this process will be recorded in the notes of the meeting or as an annex to the notes.
3. Agendas are drafted up to 2 weeks in advance of the meeting by the Chair with input from the Practice Manager. Any member of the group or the Virtual group may offer agenda items to the Chair.
4. The Draft Agenda is circulated to members at least a week in advance of the meeting. Members must contact the Chair with any late suggestions/changes at least 4 days before the meeting. Any major changes will be notified to members before the meeting.
5. The Note Taker will produce outline notes of the meeting focusing on agreed decisions and actions which will be checked, and amended if required, by the Chair and then distributed for signing off at the following meeting. This will usually be completed within 2 weeks of the meeting date.
6. Generally all communications will be conducted by email.
7. From time to time members of the virtual Group may be invited or request to come to meetings. Other appropriate visitors may also be invited. Only members may vote.
8. Members should make a declaration of interest at the start of each meeting.

H. Virtual PIG

1. Development of a virtual group is underway. People who want to be involved in the PIG but who cannot be involved in meetings, for any of a range of reasons are kept in touch electronically.
2. There is usually no interview process or limit to numbers for this group but the primary criteria as outlined throughout this document equally apply to Virtual membership.
3. Currently the Virtual group is an email update including agendas, notes of meetings, shared documents etc. (as also distributed to meeting members).
4. The opportunity to raise questions or issues and to comment applies to Virtual members who should share their ideas with the Chair and agree how these may be moved forward.
5. Members of the virtual group may be invited to contribute to the activities of the meeting group particularly regarding projects which they are interested in or have suggested and are adopted.
6. As the group grows the mechanisms for running this group will be developed.

I. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Whistleblowing Policies (attached separately)

1. All members of the PIG (including virtual members) will sign and adhere to agreements regarding the above.

Advisory information re Section I

- a) Members of the PIG (including virtual members), must not share other members contact details with anyone outside the group without their direct consent.
- b) Members must always be aware of the nature and importance of confidentiality and conflict of interest and understand that the consequence of any breach associated to them may mean the termination of membership status within the practice. Nor should they comment on other members or on the detail of discussions other than as published in the notes of meetings. On resignation, retirement, or leaving the Group members undertake not to disclose or share any information obtained during their service with the Group either within or outside the Practice
- c) Names of members involved in meetings are listed in notes of meetings which are published on the surgery website. Members of the Virtual group are not listed.