

## **PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUPS ARE NOW STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GP PRACTICES. WHAT ARE THEY? AND HOW DO THEY WORK?**

From April 2015 it has been a statutory requirement for all General Practices to have a Patient Participation Group. At the Garway Medical Practice we have had an active PPG for the past five years and it has proved to be a big success.

The Garway Medical Practice is now situated at Pickering House on the Hallfield Estate where it aspires to emulate the ambition of its illustrious founder in providing a local health service for the whole community.

The practice was founded in the late 1940s by the celebrated medical reformer and author, A.J.Cronin. As a young doctor in South Wales, Cronin worked alongside Aneurin Bevan and many of his ideas contributed to the foundation of the National Health Service.

As members of the Garway Patients' Participation Group we like to think that both A.J. Cronin and Aneurin Bevan would approve of the principle of patient participation as a way of promoting co-operation between medical staff and patients in order to achieve the best possible provision of health services for the whole community.

Membership of any PPG is open to any patient of the practice. Currently, at Garway, we have about 40 patient members of the group out of a practice list of approximately 4,500. The aim of the group is to be as representative of the whole patient list as possible.

We meet regularly on the last Wednesday evening of every other month. We do have an ad hoc committee of approximately 15 more active members but any patient willing to give a little of their time would be most welcome and enthusiastically co-opted.

When the practice moved from its original location in Garway Road to Hallfield Estate it went through a turbulent period during which staff turnover was high and the service to patients inevitably suffered. It was during that period that the Patient Participation Group was formed and, by working with the practice management and by supporting hard-pressed staff we have seen the practice recover stability and an enviable reputation for quality care for all its patients.

Most obviously participation offers us the opportunity to form constructive working relationships with the people most closely concerned with our own health care. But it can also be a two way street.

At a time when our National Health Service is under pressure as never before, patient participation enables you to take greater responsibility for your own health and offers you a positive way of helping to ensure quality health care for those less able to help themselves. So why not take a moment to give your local GP practice a call to find out when the next meeting of their PPG will take place. Go along and give it a try; it'll make you feel better!

Christopher Penfold

(co-chair Garway Patients' Participation Group)