

Patient Participation: summary of Dept of Health requirements

Purpose

- Ensures that patients are involved in decisions about the range and quality of services provided and commissioned by their practice
- Rewards practices that routinely ask for and act on the views of their patients, including involvement of patients in decisions that lead to changes to services
- Promotes proactive engagement through a Patient Reference Group and through local surveys
- Requires outcomes of patient engagement to be published on practice website

Key focus is excellent access:

- lists open to all
- ability to be seen urgently and to book ahead
- continuity of care
- range of skills available
- choice of modes of contact
- geographical access as close to home as possible

Process

There are six steps, which must be repeated annually

1. Develop a Patient Reference Group (PRG)

- May be face to face, virtual or a mixture
- Practice must strive to make it fully representative of patient population, and must be able to demonstrate efforts to engage hard to reach and vulnerable groups
- Representation should cover range of ages, both genders, levels of surgery use, social factors such as employed/unemployed, carers, ethnic minority groups, and specific care groups such as nursing home residents, drug users, people with learning disabilities – where these are relevant to the practice population
- Must consist only of registered patients
- Recruitment may be through advertising, but it is perfectly acceptable to ask patients personally

2. Agree areas of priority with PRG

- This is to determine the questions for a local survey. Should include:
 - patients' priorities and issues
 - practice priorities and issues, including themes from complaints
 - planned practice changes
 - Care Quality Commission related issues (registration of GP practices)
 - national patient survey issues
- Might involve wider patient consultation on which issues to prioritise for inclusion

3. Collate patient views through a survey

- The practice must undertake a local survey at least once a year
- Questions must be based on themes agreed with PRG
- May be operated and analysed through a specialist company or the practice can do it itself, but must be able to demonstrate to PRG that the methodology is credible

4. PRG to discuss findings and agree resulting changes

- PRG must have an opportunity to discuss the survey findings and other relevant information
- If survey points to desire for significant change, the practice must seek PRG agreement to any changes it proposes to make

5. Agree action plan with PRG

May take place at the same meeting as 4 above.

6. Publicise actions taken and subsequent achievement

- Must publish an annual Local Patient Participation Report on practice website, and supply copy to PCT
- Report must contain details of all work undertaken under Steps 1 – 5 above
- Must also contain details of any disagreement between the PRG and the practice
- Must be published by 31 March in order to qualify for payment under DES

Kate Davenport
September 2011