

**People, Communities and PCN  
Partnership Project: Brighton  
and Hove workshop  
25<sup>th</sup> May: Key Themes and Q&A**



Healthwatch Brighton and Hove thank everyone who attended and contributed to the discussions during the event.

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## Context

The People, Communities and PCN (Primary Care Network) partnership project is commissioned by NHS Sussex and delivered by Healthwatch in Sussex (a collaboration between Healthwatch Brighton and Hove, Healthwatch East Sussex, and Healthwatch West Sussex). The project is part of a wider aim to enable people to help shape the health and care system as part of the NHS Sussex "[Working with People and Communities Strategy](#)". More specifically, GP practices are required (since April 2015) to have a Patient Participation Group made up of registered patients. However, PCNs do not currently have a similar set up but want to engage with patients.

A PCN is where a group of GP practices work together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital, and voluntary services in their local area to meet the needs of local people. A PPG (Patient Participation Group) consists of patients who wish to be involved in their local practice whilst taking an active role in developing local health services.

This project aims to support PCNs to engage people within their population through innovative ways, and to ensure engagement is representative of the wider community including minority groups of ethnicity and gender.

Three workshops were organised across Sussex (one in each of the following: East Sussex, West Sussex, and Brighton & Hove). Findings from these workshops are to be used to create a resource pack for GP Practices and PCNs about effective patient engagement. This may include advice on developing, and/or effective working relationship with, the PPGs, case studies from PCNs who have already carried out effective patient engagement and examples of patient engagement projects. The timeframe for the resource pack is Autumn 2023. Below is a write-up of the Brighton and Hove workshop, including discussion questions. However, it does not include findings, as these are being directly incorporated into the resource pack, as explained above.

## Brighton and Hove workshop

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove organised their local workshop on 25<sup>th</sup> May, between 10am – 1pm at the Brighthelm Centre. The event was attended by approx. 40 people, with an even spread of representation from PCNs (Primary Care Networks), PPGs (Patient Participation Groups), VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) and the general public. There were also four representatives from NHS Sussex, including the Deputy Director of Primary and Community Care, in Brighton and Hove.

Participants were welcomed in person by Healthwatch Brighton and Hove who chaired the workshop, and virtually via a video recording by the Chief Primary Care Officer, NHS Sussex. To see these presentations, visit the webpage – link is in the blue box towards the end. The Public Involvement Lead for Brighton and Hove and East Sussex also gave a verbal presentation on the purpose of the day being to discuss how PCNs can engage better with the residents in their geographical area, either via individual GP Practices or through other innovative ways.

Presentations were also given by two local PCN Managers, from Goldstone Primary Care Network and from East and Central Brighton Primary Care Network. Both presenters talked about the successful work they have already done to engage with their respective PCN populations. The East and Central Brighton PCN Manager also invited one of the local partner groups they have worked with to talk about the community perspective. East Brighton Food Cooperative talked about working in co-production with their pioneering citywide community daily meals on wheels service across Brighton & Hove helping to prevent malnutrition and social isolation.

Food parcels are already being given to schools and community food banks across Brighton and Hove by a huge network of 50 different organisations. The project co-produced between EBFC and Central Brighton PCN takes meals on wheels a step further. EBFC cook the meals according to dietary requirements as well as deliver to people in their homes providing much needed social contact spending time talking and helping their meal recipients as well as carrying out safety checks.

Presentations from all three can be viewed via the webpage – link in the blue box below.

## **Table discussions**

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove invited participants to discuss in smaller groups, questions that had been provided by NHS Sussex. Discussion groups were facilitated by Healthwatch and NHS Sussex. Questions discussed were as follows with additional explanation provided by Healthwatch (*italicised*):

**1. What does diversity look like in Primary Care ensuring we are inclusive, and all local people have a voice?**

*What types of people are important to hear from so a wide variety of people can share their views about GP services?*

**2. How can diverse patient, public and voluntary sector voices to be heard in Primary Care Networks**

*What can we do to make sure all types of people's views can be shared with Primary Care Networks (groups of GP practices working together)?*

After a short break, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove invited participants to join their table discussions again to discuss the following questions (additional explanation was also provided by Healthwatch, and shown in italics here):

**3. How can we tailor patient involvement to allow for the unique environment and geography of GP practice communities.**

*What are the challenges of the local geography/environment and how can we overcome these to allow patients to become involved in the workings of GP practices?*

**4. What does effective communication with patients and communities look like to allow for a two-way conversation.**

***What can we do to allow for a two-way conversation between patients/communities and GP practices?***

## Participant feedback

*“For Goldstone Primary Care Network, the event was helpful for our new Goldstone PPG chair to make local connections and to start to understand the local health system. For myself it was a chance to see what other PPGs are doing and to learn from them as well as meet and make new contacts.”*

Gemma Clayton, Goldstone PCN Manager

*“It was good to be able to share details of the community work that ECB PCN is starting to trial, and I made some very useful contacts, talking to other participants.”*

Peter Sutcliffe, East and Central PCN Manager

*“I really appreciated the opportunity to hear about the incredible opportunities afforded by working collaboratively through PCNs. The work currently being done in Brighton and Hove is inspiring and will bring real change to the city.”*

Dawn Bamforth, NHS Sussex

*“It was good to meet up with people from a variety of different health and social inclusion groups. It would be good to know that the actions proposed will be carried forward by the PCNs. Table discussions highlighted that those in the know and who have the necessary resources are able to get the most from systems (old and new). Those who need help most are probably missing out on information and access. It is important that PCNs try to engage these groups as best as possible in the future and I hope this project enables them to do so.”*

Lynne Shields, General public participant

To see the following presentations, please visit the [Healthwatch Brighton and Hove webpage](#):

Healthwatch Brighton and Hove welcome

Welcome by Chief Primary Care Officer, NHS Sussex

Presentation by Goldstone Primary Care Network

Presentation by East and Central Brighton Primary Care Network

## Next Steps

Following table discussions, Healthwatch Brighton and Hove and NHS Sussex responded to some of the additional questions that had been posed by participants. These included the next steps following this workshop and how participants could be involved further. Healthwatch explained that facilitator notes made during today's table discussions and those of the events in East and West Sussex respectively would be collated. These will be shared with NHS Sussex with the purpose of creating a resource pack for GP Practices and PCNs about patient engagement.

Healthwatch in Sussex would support NHS Sussex in putting the resource pack together, with its main purpose of guiding PCNs to engage with their respective PCN populations, including diverse groups and those with health inequalities. Case studies would be included from PCNs which are already successfully engaging, for example, Goldstone Primary Care Network and East and Central Brighton Primary Care Network. PCN Managers would be encouraged to network amongst themselves and learn from each other. PCN Managers would also be encouraged to start small. The resource pack would include a step-by-step description of a variety of engagement projects, from those that involved little resource to other projects that were more complicated. It was also agreed that an evaluation of the resource pack and how it was being used and how effective it was, would be useful to provide an overall assessment of the success of The People, Communities and PCN partnership project.

To view more information about this project, see [People communities and PCN Partnership Project](#)

To read about similar workshops in Sussex:

[Healthwatch West Sussex PCN workshop](#)