

Hollies Patient Forum

NEWSLETTER

No. 5 October 2024



The Hollies Patient Forum (HPF) is the patient voice of the Hollies Medical Centre (HMC)

HPF is a 'Patient Participation Group' that allows patients to offer their views, experiences, suggestions and ideas to the Centre through a strong and close working partnership between patients and the practice.

HPF Steering Group

Information on the Group, its work, and the Notes of its meetings are available at <https://www.theholliesmc.co.uk/the-hollies-patient-forum>

Steering Group Mtg, 7 Oct 2024

The main items discussed were improvements in communication and the management of patient pathways. Patients and practice staff are frustrated by bottlenecks created by the current time limits on the availability of AccuRx and for appointments by telephone. Our discussion revealed that AccuRx currently needs to be used more. The webpage introduces it with a link to 'Request an Appointment.' In fact, it is designed for and should be used for all types of communication. All submissions are assessed on the same day by a GP, who prioritises and allocates requests for action to the appropriate member of the Practice team.

The Practice will soon produce its own Newsletter, providing information on changes in staffing, communications, and procedures.

HPF is a member of the National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP) and is supporting the development of patient groups at other GP practices in the Porter Valley Primary Care Network (PCN).

Feedback from the HPF e-group is a regular item. Members can pass on to the Steering Group details of any issues of general importance they would like raised with the Practice staff at HPF meetings. Anyone can join and there is no limit on numbers. **To join the e-group, email hpfgroup3@gmail.com**

Amplifying the patient's voice

Patient participation, an important component of patient empowerment, is now a formal component of GP contracts with the NHS and has three key benefits:

- Better appreciation by staff of the lived experience of patients in primary care.
- As an additional resource for sharing information to the wider patient population.
- As partners in certain areas of decision-making in medical centres, especially how services impact patients.

We aim to work in partnership with the practice to improve the experience of patients accessing and using its services. For 2024-2025, our goals include:

- Develop an induction package for new steering group members to familiarise themselves with the practice, the locality, and key health issues in the area.
- Diversify the steering group to represent better the area's demographic, especially around age and ethnicity.
- Improve communication with patients to ensure maximum awareness of current mechanisms for accessing the practice and general developments in primary care.
- Maintain and enhance our positive working relationship with staff.

We encourage Hollies patients to join us! This can be either as a steering group member, or part of the e-group. Please send us an email if you want more information or have any queries:

hpfgroup3@gmail.com

Ian Hodgson, HPF Chair

Hollies Hero of Health Walks

We meet at the Hollies every Friday at 1 p.m., walk unhurriedly for an hour or so, taking in a few very gentle exercises in Chelsea Park on the way, and then go to Nether Edge Café, where there is a lot of conversation and laughter.

How many are we?

Most weeks, there are around 6 of us—the largest group was 13. Over the past six months, 25 Hollies' patients have joined Hero of Health walks, most on Fridays and several on our Tuesday and Thursday walks (from Nethergreen and Rustlings Rd Medical Centres, both at 1 p.m.).

Who can join in, and what do we do?

Anyone can join and all abilities are catered for. We walk as a group in the open air, sometimes talking in twos and threes, sometimes just quietly taking in the scenery. Our exercises focus on breathing, stretching, improving strength and balance – and each person does only what they want to!

What's the point of it?

The whole purpose is to enhance our health and well-being – physical, psychological, emotional, and social – through gentle exercise, mutual support and sharing experiences and ideas – and lots of recipes too. One person commented that the walk “is an excellent opportunity for chatting and discussing about so many things.”

What do we do in terrible weather?

On wet days some often stay in the café while others walk. On particularly bad days, we often spend a couple of hours in the café, chatting and supporting each other.

What is Hero of Health anyway?

Hero of Health is an independent organisation that builds Healing Neighbourhoods around GP practices. Patients transform their health by connecting with their neighbours, and outcomes show this addresses loneliness and reduces chronic diseases (such as type two diabetes, high blood pressure, and low mental health) whilst reducing the burden on GP practices.

What do group members say?

"I would never go for walks on my own because I found it boring! Not only do I enjoy the company of my fellow walkers (we do have some laughs!), but also the support they have given me. Joining Hero of Health was one of the best decisions I've taken and has made a big difference to my well-being".

"I think it's lovely!"

"[I like it because] I need something that's fun and a commitment to come out and leave my flat and my armchair."

"It improves my physical and mental well-being. I'm in good company – and I enjoy the conversations."

"Thank you, Heroes, for a great chat. As always, it lifted my spirits."

And from the walk leader

"These walks have completely changed my life and my attitude towards exercise and diet and how this impacts my life and allows me to give back.... This is the way forward for the NHS."

One Hollies Hero's story

"I joined Hero of Health walks on the recommendation from a very helpful clinician at Hollies Medical Centre. I was advised it would be a good idea as I was about to have a knee replacement and would need to exercise afterwards. Joining has helped me realise I am not alone. The groups are very supportive of each other. I have made new friends and even met an old friend from over 50 years ago. During the walks and exercise I have regained some strength both physically and mentally and recommended others to think about joining. Hero of Health is a great idea and well implemented."

If you want to join the walkers, then download the Hero of Health App and register for Hollies with vj4738

For further information on Hero of Health, see: <https://www.heroofhealth.com>

NHS GP Survey 2024

Every Spring, Ipsos run a survey on behalf of the NHS on how people feel about their GP practice. The results are published every July.

This year's overall results can be seen at <https://www.gp-patient.co.uk> and those for the Hollies at <https://www.gp-patient.co.uk/patientexperiences?practicecode=C88052>

78% of respondents from the Hollies rated their overall experience as 'Good'. This result was slightly above the local and national averages.

Get in touch

We want to encourage participation in the Newsletter. If you have comments or contributions, please email to newsletterhpf@gmail.com