



Your voice in our health

Everyone has something to say about health and health services. But is anyone listening?

The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health has been set up to make sure that patients and the public have a strong voice in all matters that affect their health and health services.

This pack explains how you can join the new Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums now being established all over England. It also provides details about the 'Our Health' network that will provide a two-way channel of communication between the PPI Forums and the communities they serve.

These are both major opportunities for you to play a real part in making a difference to your local health services and in matters related to health.

I hope you will join us and become part of this exciting new future for improved health and health services.

Sharon Grant

Chair

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health



Why get involved?

Make a difference locally

I want to ... so how?

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in Health Forums

- Encourage others to get involved
- Find out what people really think about health locally and take action
- Independently watch over the quality of local healthcare
- Shape decisions which impact on our health
- Influence local and national decisions as part of a growing network for public involvement
- Be a force for fairness and change

Complete the application at the back of this pack or online at www.maketimeforhealth.org



'Our Health' Network

- Give as much or as little time as you want
- Take part when you want
- Anyone can take part
- Use your knowledge and experience
- Tell us what you think about health and health services
- Share your experience with others
- Take part in surveys and projects
- Opportunity to join PPI Forums in the future

Apply online at www.cppih.org or complete the card enclosed



If you feel strongly about health and you want to make a difference, we want to hear from you.

Please do not worry if you find some of the information or the application form that follows too complicated. If you would like help with your application or need more information, please call your Regional Centre (see list of telephone numbers on the back cover).

I want to be a Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forum member. What does this involve?

What will PPI Forums do?

PPI Forums will play a vital role in making sure patients' and the public's views are heard and acted on by all those involved in making decisions about health.

The functions of PPI Forums have been laid down by law; this means they will have real power to make a difference. They will not just be 'talking shops'.

PPI Forums will:

- Encourage others to get involved
- Find out what people really think about health locally and take action
- Independently watch over the quality of local healthcare
- Shape decisions which impact on our health
- Influence local and national decisions as part of a growing network for public involvement
- Be a force for fairness and change

How will PPI Forums go about their work?

Although PPI Forums will have some formal meetings, the emphasis will be on new and effective ways of getting people involved.

PPI Forums will develop working relationships with local people by going out into the community. In particular, they will work hard to involve people who for various reasons have not, up until now, been involved in these types of activities.

PPI Forums will take action to address health issues in their communities. Health and health services involve much more than the NHS. Neighbourhood Renewal Schemes, Local Strategic Partnerships, local councils and many other organisations all have a part to play in improving the health and well-being of people within their communities. PPI Forums will communicate with and influence the thinking and decisions of all the people who are responsible for health and health services.

They will also monitor and inspect health services. This will involve talking to health professionals, visiting facilities where healthcare is delivered and assessing this from the patient's viewpoint.

How much time will it take?

We would like members to make a regular commitment. As a guideline we expect the time commitment to be 2-3 hours a week. Forum members will be appointed initially for two years.



What experience or skills do PPI Forum members need?

PPI Forums will be a team of people working together.

The most important things that you can bring to a PPI Forum are your experience of using health services and/or your enthusiasm to make health and health services better in future for you, your family and the community in general.

It will also be helpful if you have local contacts with groups within your community that you can use to bring information about health and health services back to the PPI Forum.

What will PPI Forums look like?

Regulations laid down by Parliament state that PPI Forums must:

- Have at least 7 members
- Contain a majority of patients/users - this means people who are using or have used NHS services (for example, consulted your GP or dentist, or used your local hospital)
- Involve voluntary organisations, community groups and other bodies that represent patients, carers and the public in matters related to health

In addition, Forums will involve other members of the public with an interest in health and health services. We will actively encourage applicants to ensure the Forums reflect the broad range of people in their communities.



How will members of PPI Forums be selected?

Members of PPI Forums will be selected in two phases.

By 1 December 2003 we want to get Forums started with 8 members and our recruitment and selection process throughout the autumn will be targeted at achieving this.

Please send in your application by 6 October 2003 if you wish to be considered for this first phase of recruitment.

From December 2003, the size of Forums will increase to around 20 or more members, as decided by each Forum. So do not worry if you are not selected to be one of the first 8 members. There will be other opportunities to join later and we will keep you informed.

Anyone over 18 years of age can apply to join a PPI Forum. This does not mean that children and young people will be excluded from becoming involved in decisions affecting their health. We will be consulting with a number of agencies to develop appropriate ways of involving children and young people while also ensuring suitable protection systems are in place.

We will be using the following criteria to assess your suitability to be a Forum member. We are looking for people who:

- Have the time to devote to the task
- Have a keen interest in health and health care
- Have some understanding of the health needs of their local community
- Are enthusiastic about making a difference to improve the health and well-being in their local community
- Appreciate that people come from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and that all have a right to be involved in decisions affecting their health and well-being
- Will be able to work as part of a team
- Will conduct themselves responsibly and sensitively



As a team, PPI Forums will need some people who have particular experience or skills. This is both to ensure that the Forums reflect the communities they serve and that, collectively, the Forum has the range of experience and skills needed for it to fulfil its functions. In particular, Forums will need **some** people who:

- Have experience, or a detailed understanding, of at least one of the key communities identified for the Forum concerned
- Understand health information
- Are able to produce information and communicate effectively orally and/or in writing to a variety of audiences
- Are able to question those who make decisions about health and health services

Forum members will be chosen without discrimination on the grounds of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant factors.

The main circumstances in which an individual will not be able to be appointed as a Forum Member are:

- Employees, members or officers of the NHS or any organisation providing health services for the NHS in the Forum's area
- Executive members of local authorities (leading Councillors) or local authority members of the health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Forum's area
- Employees, officers or members of the CPPIH or any organisation providing support to the PPI Forum under contract to the CPPIH
- Those engaged in providing Independent Complaints Advocacy Services as an employee, officer or member
- Those who have been dismissed from employment or office in the NHS due to misconduct

Will there be any learning or training for PPI Forum members?

It doesn't matter if you do not have all the skills to be a PPI Forum member. As the Forum will be working as a team, it will not be necessary for everyone to have the same skills.

If you are appointed you will be invited to 'Welcome Days' to get you started. These will be scheduled to take place from October 2003.

Later, a range of learning opportunities will be available to help you develop the skills you need to be an effective Forum member.

Will there be other support for PPI Forum members?

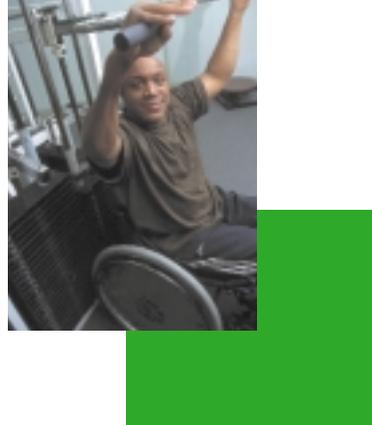
Each PPI Forum will have a local organisation (local network provider) that has been funded to provide support both to individual members and the Forum. Administrative support and guidance for the work of the PPI Forums will be provided by this organisation. Access to information and computers will also be provided.

Support will be available on practical issues such as childcare, interpreting, carers' support and any special needs.

Will PPI Forum members be paid?

Members will not be paid, but out of pocket expenses and training costs will be met. This includes your travel, childcare and carers' costs, in accordance with CPPIH policy.





What PPI Forums could I join?

There will be several types of PPI Forums attached to the many different organisations that provide or arrange health services.

These range from:

- Primary Care Trusts - these oversee and provide a range of community health services, for example, GPs, dentists and community nurses, and arrange for hospital services.
- NHS Acute Trusts - these provide health services such as those in your local large hospital.
- Specialist NHS Trusts - such as those that provide Mental Health and Learning Disabilities services, Ambulance services, or specialist children's services.

If you apply to become a PPI Forum member we will discuss which one you might want to join to suit your interests.

How do I apply to become a member of a PPI Forum?

Complete the application enclosed and send it to the Regional Centre in the area where you live.

If you need help completing this or need the form in a different format, please contact your local Regional Centre. If you use the hard copy form, it can be hand written or typed. The form is also available on-line in electronic form at www.maketimeforhealth.org.

The map at the end of this pack shows the regions and contact details for the Regional Centres. If you are not sure which region you fit into - please ring us for help.

What will happen next?

Your application will be used to assess your suitability to become a PPI Forum member against the criteria that are listed on pages 7-8. We may then want to talk to you further about your application.

If so, you will be invited to a meeting at either your Regional Centre or another local venue. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- find out more about you
- assess further how well you fit the selection criteria
- give you an opportunity to ask us questions.

You are welcome to bring a helper or advocate with you to this meeting or we can help to arrange this. We can also arrange for interpreters. Please telephone your Regional Centre if you need this sort of help. We will reimburse your travel expenses.

During the meeting we will discuss with you how well you fit the criteria listed on pages 7-8. This means assessing you both as an individual and the contribution you could make to the Forum as a team. We will also talk about which Forum you would be best to join. We anticipate that this meeting will take approximately 45 minutes.



What happens after this meeting?

After the meeting we will get in touch with you as soon as possible to let you know if you have been successful and for which Forum. We will ask you to sign and return a form which shows that you agree to be a PPI Forum member. We will also ask you to commit yourself to attend 'Welcome Days' on selected dates.

What happens if I am not appointed?

We hope that all those who apply will keep in touch with their Forum through the 'Our Health' network.

There will be a further opportunity to apply after 1 December 2003, and all those who have taken the time to apply will be entitled to information about their application if they are unsuccessful. If applicants are interested in applying again in the future, the CPPIH can advise them of the experience or skills they might seek to develop which may help a future application.



The 'Our Health' Network

What is the 'Our Health' Network?

We want to encourage as many people as possible to have a say about how health services can be improved. For this reason, in the coming months the CPPIH will be setting up the 'Our Health' network, which will be open to everyone to join.

'Our Health' will provide a two-way channel of communication between the wider public and the new Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums. It will allow the Forums to consult with local communities on the one hand whilst also allowing communities to influence the activities of the Forums.

If you join the 'Our Health' network, the CPPIH will keep you informed of developments in health and health services. At the same time you and your family will be encouraged to give us your views and ideas.

We will be particularly keen to hear what you have to say if you or your family have personal experiences or views on specific issues or health conditions. You may also, from time to time, be invited to take part in projects, events or surveys.

You will be a vital source of information for the PPI Forums and will help them stay focused on the real needs and demands of the communities that they serve.

'Our Health' is an exciting new approach that will work for local people, responding to issues that are relevant to them. This will mean that more people will be able to influence the decisions that affect their health and health services...it's coming soon...so sign up now!

How do I apply to become a member of 'Our Health' network?

You can join 'Our Health' by completing the enclosed card or if you have access to a computer you can join on line at www.cppih.org.

Some background information on the new system for Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in Health

What is Patient and Public Involvement in Health about?

Patient and public involvement (PPI) in health is about putting patients and the public at the centre of all decisions which affect our health. In future they will be key partners in working for better health locally and nationally, and sit alongside existing decision makers in the NHS, in local authorities, in the medical profession, and elsewhere.

Giving a strong voice to patients and the public will bring about real change, especially for those sections of the population whose voice has not been heard in the past. It will mean that the public will have real influence wherever health and health services are discussed.

How will patients' and the public's voice be heard?

There will be several new organisations that will, together, ensure the views of patients and the public are heard and acted on by all those making decisions concerning health and health services. These are:

Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) - based in Birmingham with 9 Regional Centres, the CPPIH has overall responsibility for ensuring that patients and the public are involved in decisions related to health and health services.

The CPPIH will set up and support the PPI Forums, and will work with others to ensure that their overall views are heard by Government at a national level.

Patient and Public Involvement Forums (PPI Forums) - there will be a PPI Forum attached to, but independent of, every NHS Trust and Primary Care Trust in England. PPI Forums will be made up of patients and members of the public who will have powers to influence local health issues. They will be free to adapt the way they operate best to meet the health needs of the community in their area.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) - provided by every Primary Care Trust and NHS Trust, they give on the spot help and information about health services. They also tell people about the Independent Complaints Advocacy Service.

PPI Forums will have responsibility for monitoring how well PALS is working in their local NHS.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS) - a new statutory service to provide help and support for people who wish to make a complaint about their NHS care or treatment.

In time, PCT Forums will have responsibility for making sure this is provided in their area.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) - made up of local authority councillors and invited others, they have the power to scrutinise and review health services, and to identify ways of reducing health inequalities. They must be consulted on any major change to health care and they have the power to refer contested service changes to the Secretary of State for Health.

PPI Forums will work closely with OSCs, especially to ensure better joint working between local authority and NHS services.

