

The Patient Participation Group renamed Why and what it does



*Dave Arnold,
Chair, Granta
Patient Group*

GRANTA MEDICAL Practices Patient Participation group (PPG) has been in operation for several years, but to communicate better what we are about, we have decided to change our name and logo. We shall now be known as Granta Patient Group (GPG) with the logo you see at the head of the newsletter.

We remain a Patient Participation Group as constituted by the NHS and work closely with Granta Medical Practices as a critical friend.

The Granta Patient Group Committee comprises representatives from the various sites that operate as Granta Medical Practices to act on your behalf, promoting effective patient services and to improve the patient experience.

One of the areas that the Patient Group is currently working on is appointments and access. We are reviewing patient satisfaction

regarding making appointments and subsequent follow up. In this context, by the time of publication of this newsletter we should be working with the new NHS App which is designed to simplify the GP appointments system.

GPG meetings

We hold quarterly meetings (face to face and online) for all Granta Patient Group members.

If you would like to become a member of the Granta Patient Group and to be kept informed, please email Vicki Collier at Granta Medical Practices at victoria.collier1@nhs.net.

The next meeting will be our AGM on 15 April at Sawston Medical Centre at 5pm.

At the AGM we shall be electing members to the Granta Patient Group Committee.

We may only communicate with patients who have given their consent. We do not have access to the Patient Group members' email list and we cannot deal with any clinical issues.

By Dave Arnold. Chair GPG

We would like to welcome new members to the committee. If you are interested or would like to nominate someone new, please contact me at davidjsarnold@gmail.com.

The year ahead

How Primary Care is changing at Granta Medical Practices

YOU MAY have noticed some changes in how care is provided at Granta Medical Practices. These changes are happening across the NHS and are designed to help us offer safe, timely, and effective care for our growing patient population.

One of the biggest changes is how our practice team works together.

We work as a **team-based approach**. This means that alongside GPs and nurses, you might now be supported by a wider range of healthcare professionals, including our

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pharmacists, physiotherapists, care coordinators or social prescribing link workers.

This approach has several advantages:

- You can be seen more quickly by the right person.
- GPs can focus on more complex medical care.
- This way of working allows us to achieve more appointments per 1,000 patients than any other practice across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

At Granta Medical Practices we are focusing on prevention, long-term condition support, and reducing health inequalities.

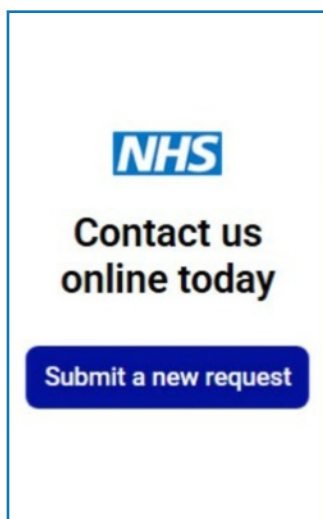
While how you access care may look different, by continuing to adapt whilst keeping patients at the heart of everything we do, our commitment remains the same: to provide high-quality, compassionate care centred around our patients.

By Vicki Collier. Head of Communications & Commercial Business Development

Trouble getting an appointment?

DIFFICULTY GETTING appointments is the comment we hear most from fellow patients.

While satisfaction with clinical care is high, satisfaction with ease of access to appointments is low. Granta is well aware of this.



There is a national imbalance between supply and demand. Granta has 60,000 patients and the equivalent of 32.6 full time GPs. (The actual number of GPs is more. Some work part time, but often

more than 37.5 hours a week.)

Post Covid there has been a huge rise in demand for health care across all ages and the whole health system.

As an ageing population, 22,000 Granta patients have long-term conditions, with extra needs for monitoring and care.

Faced with this pressure on the NHS, patients and GP practices have to adjust to new ways of working.

As patients we may feel that it's not a 'real' appointment unless we see a doctor. But in fact, of the 270 professionals in Granta many would provide similar or better care. This is a big change from the old Family Doctor model; we are having to adapt to new ways of being patients.

How to make the best use of the appointment system

The best method for getting routine appointments is via the AccuRx online booking system. The information you give is seen and triage-assessed on the same day by reception.

To access AccuRx go to the Granta website grantamedicalpractices.co.uk.

Click on 'Submit a new request' using the link on the left of the screen (pictured left).

You will then see a screen of options. To contact a GP, select '**I have a health problem**'.

Fill in the information requested and submit the form.

Please note:

- AccuRx is only available during working hours.
- Give clear information, including the duration of symptoms.
- You will get a response from reception on the same or next working day.
- AccuRx is not for urgent requests (for example, chest pain.) Call 999 or reception instead. Call 111/2 for mental health emergencies at any time.

Your request will be directed to the appropriate service. This might be a GP, the Clinical Pharmacy team or another department as appropriate. This contact should occur within two weeks, but may take longer if you have requested a particular person. This contact could be by phone call, text or a face to face appointment. The doctor may order tests before you are seen. If it is assessed as

urgent the duty doctor will be notified on the same or next working day, for a quicker medical response.

Other on-line booking: you can use SystemOnline or the NHS App (which is currently being updated). But these do not provide space for you to give clinical information, and only offer a GP slot, which might not be the most suitable first step.

Telephone booking on 0300 234 5555 is best for urgent appointments in working hours. 75% of phone calls are answered in under two minutes.

Receptionists are triage-trained to aid clinical decision-making (that's why they ask you confidential clinical questions). Before you call be clear about the problem and its duration and what you want.

The best time to phone is in the afternoons

(although Mondays are busy all day). The busiest time on any day is 8am to 10am.

Going in to reception. You are always welcome to go to reception to make a booking. Everything, above, regarding phone booking also applies.

New appointment slots are released twice a day, every working day.

The Granta Patient Group will keep the focus on ease of access to GP appointments, both in this newsletter and in general with Granta Medical Practices.

We want to hear your feedback. Please be in touch so that we can raise your issues.

By Carol Lindsay with many thanks to Natasha Withers, Reception Manager and Vicki Collier, Head of Communication and Business Development for their help with this article.

Did you know...?

... that Granta Medical Practice is rated as Outstanding by the CQC? Assessed in 2019, reviewed in 2023.

Getting to know the team

IN FORTHCOMING issues of the Newsletter, we will be featuring members of the Granta Practices team.

KELLY DARBY, Dispenser Team Lead at Barley and Market Hill surgeries, kindly agreed to be interviewed about her role for our newsletter.

Kelly (inset) has an excellent reputation in the surgery for her kindness and for following up with patients' prescription problems, especially those issued by Addenbrooke's Hospital.

Kelly had planned to be a teacher, but became fascinated with the life of a chemist, during a vacation job in a pharmacy. She undertook a two year course in pharmaceutical science at Cambridge Regional College, to earn her National Certificate in dispensing.



25 years ago, after working in Tesco's dispensing department, she was asked if she would like to join the Barley practice. She leapt at the opportunity. She married shortly thereafter and had three children, now in their late teens and early 20s.

What do you enjoy most about your job? Kelly answered "patient contact", with a big smile. She enjoys following with up patients, getting to know them and making sure that they have received the correct medication. And that they understand how to take the many and varied drugs.

Over 25 years she has followed patients after discharge from hospital, for example, right through to the end of their lives. She offers important support for us and our families.

What is the most difficult thing about your job? “Obtaining the medication from the suppliers can be difficult, even for aspirin. It is possible to find an alternative source but that is time-consuming. Dispensing drugs is an important part of the practice business and also involves costs.”

Patients’ expectations are high. Requests for prescriptions may come in online, on paper and via phone or messages. Many of the medications involve digital communication with several local chemists. Kelly understands that many patients aren’t well, are stressed and worried about missing a day’s drugs.

How can we best help Kelly and our pharmacists? Online ordering is efficient,

accurate and saves time. Patients need to wait 48 hours before they can expect their prescriptions to be dispensed. Ordering from suppliers, checking and then shelving all take time. Dispensing is not merely lifting medications off the shelf.

Kelly is always ready to help if you have mistakenly run out of your drugs.

We can help by ordering medications in good time, leaving 48 hours, and waiting for a text to tell us that the prescription is ready. This all leaves more time for patients and practice work, fewer phone calls and less stress!

And a smile always helps!

By Julie Draper

Open Granta Patient Group meetings

Come and meet senior Granta Practices staff

Dr Tim Harrison (CEO), Vicki Collier (Head of Communications & Commercial Business Development), Dr Reem Al-Shaikh (GP) and Patient Group committee members.

Venue: Sawston Medical Centre. Video link also available, upon request.

Time: 5pm to 6.30pm

Dates: Wednesdays

- 15 April AGM plus appointment of Patient Group committee members
- 15 July
- 14 October

This is your chance to have your say.

To attend: email Victoria Collier: victoria.collier1@nhs.net or ask reception to notify Vicky.

Patient Group surgery representatives

Linton Surgery

Dave Arnold (Chair of the Patient Group) davidjsarnold@gmail.com

Royston Health Centre

Steve Fisher stevers@talktalk.net

Barley Surgery

Carol Lindsay (Newsletter) carolppg@fastmail.com

Julie Draper juliet.draper@icloud.com

We would welcome patient representatives for Sawston, Market Hill and Shelford surgeries.

The Granta Patient Group Newsletter is created, edited and produced by the Granta Patient Group for Granta Medical Practices’ patients