

From the GPG Chair



*Dave Arnold,
Chair, Granta
Patient Group*

IN APRIL we held our first AGM under our new Constitution and our new name: Granta Patient Group (GPG). I was delighted that five participants came forward to join the committee which exists to coordinate activities on your behalf that, working with Granta Medical Practices (GMP), aim to improve patient services. Of approximately

58,000 patients in GMP around 780 are currently registered members of the Granta Patient Group. Through the newsletter, our

aim is to keep you informed of what is going on in the Practice and Primary care services that impact on you the patient. We hope that our spotlight on individuals working in GMP brings insight into the breadth of skills and expertise that benefit us all. One key patient health issue is the annual assessment of Long Term Conditions that affect more and more of us. Do search the Long Term Conditions page on the Services & Clinics drop down menu of the GMP website for a highly informative presentation on this issue given by Dr Ian Head. Working with GMP we hope to develop improvements to the patient experience regarding assessment and communication of outcomes. **Dave Arnold, Chair of the Granta Patient Group**

Practice Update

Improving Quality, Safety and Patient Experience

OVER RECENT months, the practice has been undertaking a significant transformation programme designed to strengthen how we manage the growing volume of clinical correspondence arriving from secondary care. The number of letters we receive has increased by 40% over the past five years, and this rise has required us to rethink how we organise, process and act on this information. Our administrative and clinical teams have shown exceptional leadership, adaptability and commitment throughout this period, working hard to ensure that correspondence continues to be handled safely, efficiently and in a way that supports timely, high-quality patient care.

Alongside this operational work, we have invested considerable effort in developing more meaningful and reliable data insights to guide the future shape of our clinical services. By improving the quality, consistency and

usefulness of the data we rely on, we can build a clearer picture of patient needs, identify gaps or pressures within the system, and plan services that are responsive, sustainable and aligned with the priorities of our community. Better data enables better decisions, and this remains a core focus of our development work.

Our commitment to Continuity of Care also remains central to our approach. We know how important it is for patients to see clinicians who know them well, understand their history and can provide personalised, consistent care. We continue to refine our systems and processes to support continuity wherever possible, even as demand and complexity increase.

Finally, the practice continues to prioritise Audit and Quality Improvement. These activities allow us to monitor performance, learn from outcomes, and ensure we are

consistently delivering safe, effective and high-quality care.

Together, these initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to improving patient

experience, supporting our staff and strengthening the resilience of the practice for the years ahead. **Vicki Collier, Head of Communications & Business Development**

Getting an appointment at Granta

PATIENTS HAVE several different ways to contact us and arrange care, whether they prefer using an app, speaking to someone directly, or submitting an online request. We have expanded appointment access in recent years to offer more flexibility and reduce pressure on busy morning phone lines.

Online consultation forms

One of the quickest ways for patients to contact the practice is through the online consultation service on the Granta Medical Practices website.

Patients can submit both medical and administrative queries online without needing to download an app or create an account. Requests are reviewed by a trained triage team, typically within 24 hours during working days.

This option is particularly useful for non-urgent medical concerns, sick notes, medication or prescription queries, administrative questions or medical advice requests that may not require a face-to-face appointment.

The service is available Monday to Friday between 8am and 6.30pm.

Booking by telephone

Patients who prefer speaking to a receptionist can book appointments by phone.

We operate a central appointments line on 0300 234 5555, with different options for each surgery site. Reception staff may ask questions about symptoms or concerns so they can direct patients to the most appropriate clinician or service.

Appointments may initially begin with a telephone consultation, after which the clinician can decide whether a face-to-face appointment, tests, or further investigations are needed.

The surgeries also encourage patients to call directly for urgent same-day problems.

Using the NHS App

Many patients are now choosing to manage healthcare through the NHS App.

The app allows users to book and view certain appointments online as well as ordering repeat prescriptions and viewing things like test results or your medical record.

Not every appointment type is visible to book online and at the moment, some appointments with non-doctor health care professionals, e.g. nurses and phlebotomists, remain bookable only through reception.

SystmOnline access

Patients can also use the SystmOnline platform on a computer or laptop to manage appointments and healthcare needs digitally.

This service offers everything that the NHS app does but can be a better option for patients who are less comfortable using smartphone apps as SystmOnline provides a more traditional web-based alternative.

To sign up for this service, please come into any surgery with photographic ID and ask for an online services form at reception.

Visiting reception in person

Patients can still attend their surgery reception desks in person to ask for help arranging appointments.

This remains especially important for those without internet access or who struggle with digital systems. Our online systems are intended to increase choice rather than replace telephone or in-person access.

Evening and weekend appointments

For patients unable to attend during normal working hours, Granta Medical Practices also offers enhanced access appointments during evenings and Saturdays. These appointments are pre-book only and designed to improve flexibility for working patients and families. **Vicki Collier, Julie Draper**

Permissions and consent

THIS QUARTER we are starting a new short series called Permissions and Consent. Each article looks at a different situation where the rules around UK medical records and GP care affect you, your family, or someone you are looking out for. The aim is to take a little of the mystery out of how we work, and to help you plan ahead so that, when something matters, the right person can speak for the right patient.

1. Contraception: your conversation, your choice

At Granta, we provide contraception to people of all ages, and we want our younger patients to feel safe and supported when they come to see us. We also know that many of these conversations begin at home, and parents often want to help by making the first contact with us.

But we can only discuss contraception, or arrange it, after we have spoken with the young person themselves. This is true even when the young person is under sixteen. UK law allows under-sixteens to be given contraceptive advice and care if we are satisfied they meet what are known as the Fraser guidelines. In short, this means the

young person understands what is involved and that providing care is in their best interests. Assessing this is part of our job, and we cannot make that judgement without meeting the young person.

There are good reasons for this. We need to be sure the young person understands their choices and the implications of those choices. We also have a responsibility to consider their safety more broadly. Sometimes we find that a young person may want a private moment to share something with us.

If a young person would like a parent, relative, or trusted adult to be in the room with them, that is absolutely fine, and they can ask for this when they book or at the start of the appointment. What we cannot do is have the consultation with the parent alone. We will always need to see and speak with the young person themselves, even briefly, on their own.

We know this can feel like an extra step when you are trying to help your child. Please be reassured that we are not gatekeeping. We are following good clinical practice and the law. Our doors are open. If your young person would like an appointment, please encourage them to get in touch with us directly, or come along together. **Dr Reem Al-Shaik**

Three strikes and we rethink

Have you heard of Jess's Rule?

JESS'S RULE is an initiative to encourage GP teams to reconsider a diagnosis if a patient presents three times with the same problem. Especially if there is a deterioration, symptoms unexpectedly persist or get worse.

You will most likely have heard of Martha's Rule which is for use in hospitals and has been in the news recently. The Guardian (1 May) reports Martha's Rule may have saved 500 lives since its implementation in September 2024. The BBC reports that 1,700 worried NHS staff called the helpline with concerns about hospital patients' care.

Martha was a young girl who died in hospital when sepsis was missed, despite

increasing concerns being voiced by her parents.

Jess was a 20-year-old who died of a very rare cancer which was missed despite 20 GP consultations in five months.

Jess's Rule asks GPs to:

- Reflect. Think back on previous consultations. Take particular note of a patient's concerns. Judge the patient as an expert in their own condition.
- Review. Consider asking for a second opinion and review from another doctor and look at red flags (particular warning signs). Consider whether a different diagnosis is more suited.

- Rethink. Possibly refer for more tests or specialist opinion. Challenge one's own preconceptions.

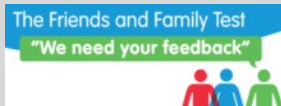
Jess' rule was made mandatory for general practice on 23 September 2025.

We do not yet know how useful this rule

will be for patients or staff; determining this would require a survey. Whilst clinical staff can textually document each instance in which Jess's rule is applied, creating a coded report of its use is not currently possible.

Carol Lindsay

Did you know...?



... that you can provide feedback via the Friends and Family test? This is to be found on the Granta Practices website and in surgeries. The Practice really does listen to this feedback.

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 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 Vicki.

Patient Group committee members

Linton Surgery

Dave Arnold (Chair of the Patient group)
Suan Rowland
Diana Pargeter

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Royston Health Centre

Steve Fisher
Katherine Dawes.

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Shelford Surgery

Sophi Berridge

Market Hill Surgery

Michael Harrison

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We would welcome a patient committee member from Sawston surgery

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