



Benfleet
Primary Care Network

WHY, WHAT, WHO, HOW – The Must-Read Bumper PCN PPG Edition!

All you need to know about your Benfleet Primary Care Network and Patient Participation Group (PPG).

INTRODUCTION

The Benfleet Primary Care Network (PCN) has been working alongside your surgeries for the last six years. However, we are aware that many of you are not clear on who they are or what they do. Often if our patients receive a phone call from one of the Benfleet PCN team, they worry it is a scam and hang up. By focusing on the PCN and PCN PPG in this edition, we want to build awareness and avoid this happening in future.

In this edition, our articles include:

- All About the PCN and PCN PPG
- Meet the PCN Manager and Chair of PCN PPG
- T.I.M.E - The men's support group for mental health concerns
- Surgery News - Did Not Attends, Home Visits, NHS App

CONTACT DETAILS

Let us know your thoughts by emailing benfleetpcn@nhs.net

Rachel and Joanna - Editors.

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INTRODUCTION

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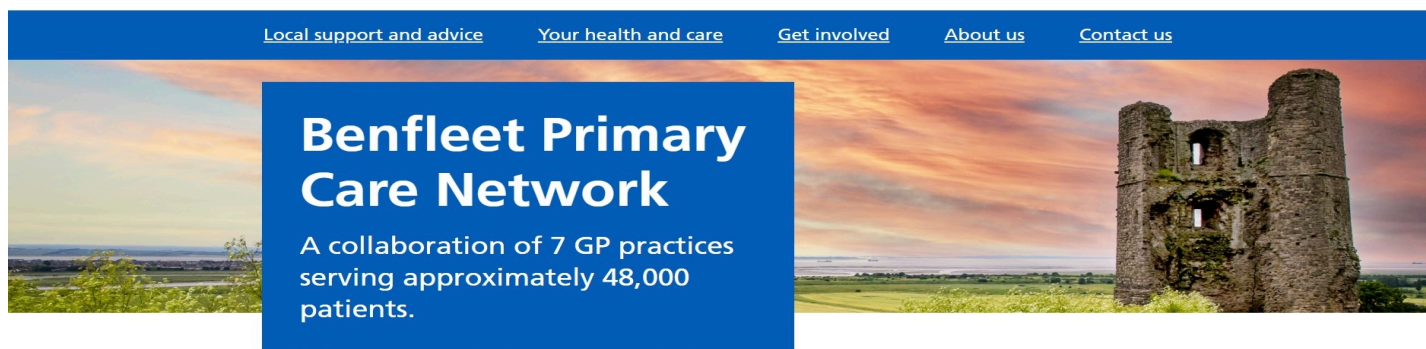
PCN & PCN PPG

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T.I.M.E

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SURGERY NEWS



*****News Flash*****

Benfleet PCN Website

The Benfleet PCN Website has been relaunched and contains everything you need to know about what we provide and how to access local PCN services. These include out of hours

Access our services
www.benfleetpcn.nhs

appointments, GP and pharmacy services, prescriptions, self-referrals, caring for somebody else's health as well as all support services. There is too much to list here, so please visit www.benfleetpcn.nhs.uk. to find the information you need, it could mean you save precious time. **Click before you dial!**

*****End of News Flash!*****

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR PCN

What is a PCN?

'Primary Care Networks (PCNs) form a key part of the future of primary care. First developed within the NHS Five Year Forward View published in 2014, they are part of a model of care in which commissioners and providers work together in different ways to achieve closer integration of services locally.' NHS England 16 February 2023.

The majority of PCNs, including Benfleet, were created as a new way of delivering health and care services in a local area to deliver a more joined up approach. There are currently **1250 primary care networks** in NHS England.

Who are Benfleet PCN?

Our Benfleet PCN team consists of 43 healthcare professionals such as First Contact Practitioners, Advanced Clinical Practitioners, Emergency Care Practitioners, Clinical Pharmacists and Mental Health Nurses alongside administrative and management teams.

What do they do?

The team works with all 7 Benfleet GP surgeries, which equates to just over 47,000 patients (900 of which are housebound) and are responsible for all 8 Benfleet care homes (c500 patients).

Not only does our PCN support all of the above, they are also actively involved with our local pharmacies, community health services, mental health services, adult and children social care, police, and voluntary organisations.

- 7 GP surgeries
- 47,000 Patients
- 900 housebound
- 8 care homes

How does our PCN support me?

All 7 surgeries have access to Benfleet PCN staff, and they collaborate directly to provide patient and community care. The team will support and provide healthcare for you as part of your registered GP surgery. You may receive a call or already have an appointment booked with one of the PCN team. Please be assured that whenever they contact you, they will identify themselves formally, so you know that it is a genuine health call.

Meet our Benfleet PCN team by visiting www.benfleetspcn.nhs.uk

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR PPG

What is a PPG?

A Patient Participation Group (PPG) is a group of patients and GP practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experience. They work together to improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients, discuss service issues and new innovations. Their aim is always to make each patients experience a good one.

What do they do?

Our PCN PPG has been set up since 2022 and has developed an effective partnership with our Benfleet PCN. There are 10 PPG members who represent 6 of the 7 Benfleet surgeries* and work on building honest and accurate communication with patients and the wider community about key health matters. They also work together with their surgeries to ensure that they represent the PCN in their own PPG meetings. This ensures that factual and up to date information is passed on to all relevant parties, as well as highlighting any problem areas.

Our seven surgeries

1. Essex Way
2. Hart Road
3. High Road
4. Dr Khan & Partners
5. St George's Medical Practice
6. The Benfleet Surgery
7. The Hollies, Hadleigh

***Benfleet Surgery, Constitution Hill do not currently have a PPG. If you are a patient here and would like to be a PPG member, please email the surgery direct to register your interest.**

Who are the Benfleet PCN and PPG?

We invited the Manager of Benfleet PCN and the Chair of the PCN PPG to explain their roles and responsibilities.



Sofia Goodchild, PCN MANAGER - I have worked in the PCN for four years and as a Manager for the last two. In the years prior to becoming the Manager, I worked my way up as an administrator, management assistant, deputy manager to the PCN manager so I like to say that I have 'from the ground up' experience. I enjoy my role very much even with all the many daily challenges!

What are your roles and responsibilities? My role has so many elements, the core ones are managing 43 staff, supporting the 7 member practices and implementing the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INT) model which brings together all local partners in our community. The INT teams collaborate with your local doctor's surgery to provide more local opportunities for our patients and community to receive care. I also oversee all contracting work for our PCN, as well as a whole raft of administrative, contractual, policy and negotiation responsibilities. It is an incredibly busy role with as many rewards as challenges. I am very fortunate in having an excellent and committed team alongside me, ensuring we all deliver high quality care to every one of our patients and cohorts.

What are your main challenges? Estates and funding! Benfleet PCN currently has a very small hub at Benfleet Clinic (6 desks), and this is insufficient for our growing team. This is an ongoing conversation with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to facilitate a larger space for us. Funding is always limited from NHS England and a constant battle. Lack of funding creates several barriers to us being able to do more for our community in Benfleet.

"...it is an incredibly busy role...an excellent and committed team ensuring we all deliver high quality care to all patients."

"...My desire for the PCN PPG was to collectively bring together voices from all member practices within Benfleet."

Why do you have a PPG when all the GP surgeries have their own? My desire for the PCN PPG was to collectively bring together voices from all member practices within Benfleet in order to share our positive stories, as well as identify and actively achieve improvements. It was also important to have a unified voice to support our community. Our PPG has worked hard to fulfil these requirements and are now building this awareness in our local population. I am in regular attendance at the monthly PPG meetings, and this ensures that everyone is up to date with factual accuracy on PCN activity in our surgeries and local community.



Susan Baillie, PCN PPG CHAIR - I have been a resident of Benfleet for the past 21 years and I proudly celebrated my 53rd wedding anniversary with my husband. Together, we have raised four wonderful children and are blessed with nine grandchildren. I believe that those of us with life experience have invaluable insights to share, and I consider it a privilege to be actively involved in my grandchildren's lives. Through the years, I have seen both the commendable and challenging aspects of the NHS, and I believe we all should help protect this vital NHS service.

What interested you in joining our PPG? In 2015, I was approached by the Practice Manager of High Road surgery to join their PPG. Accepting the role of Secretary, I embraced the opportunity to represent the collective voice of our patient population. Subsequently, our Practice Manager invited me to join the newly formed Primary Care Network (PCN) PPG, and I was then voted in as the Chair. Our PPG works collaboratively with our GP surgeries in the area to create a stronger, more integrated approach to health and care, all from the patient's perspective. All PPGs are essential in giving patients a platform to provide constructive feedback, both positive and negative. While we must avoid using the PPG for personal grievances, they are critical spaces for gathering insights that can lead to significant improvements in patient care.

“Together we are making a positive impact on our local community's healthcare experience”

What is your role as PCN PPG Chair? I set the agenda each month and ensure that the meeting runs smoothly, enabling each member to have an opportunity to speak freely. There are meeting guidelines, and it is my responsibility to ensure that these are met. The objective of every meeting is to ensure we share information to the wider community about the work of the PCN and new healthcare initiatives. Together, we are making a positive impact on our local community's healthcare experience.

What are our PCN goals? We have our own mission statement which sets out our goals:

- Make patients aware of the role of the Primary Care Network and individual surgery PPG's.
- Understand where the shortfalls for patient needs are across Benfleet.
- Aid each Benfleet PPG with shared best practises.
- Monitor and help Benfleet PCN achieve its goals.

Sofia and Susan both have teams to support them in their roles, and in our future editions, we will introduce you to more of our team and all of our PPG members.

JANUARY PCN PPG ACTIVITY

We invited James Taylor who is the founder of T.I.M.E (Together in Mental-Health Empowerment) to our January meeting to find out more about his excellent organisation.

T.I.M.E is a men's mental health support group which meets at Benfleet Methodist Church Hall every Tuesday 7 - 9pm. It was set up by James to provide a safe space for men to connect, share experiences, and access vital resources. Through community events, support groups, and educational workshops, T.I.M.E empowers men to take charge of their mental health and break the stigma. The organisation is driven by a commitment to fostering a community where men can feel understood, supported, and encouraged to seek help when they need it. It was a very enlightening presentation and the work that James is doing along with his team, is a real asset to our Benfleet community. **For further information or support:**

Email james.timemensgroup@yahoo.com

Facebook @ T.I.M.E.groupformen

Instagram @t.i.m.e.groupformen



SURGERY NEWS

When was the last time you checked your blood pressure?

High blood pressure affects millions of people in the UK, with an estimated 88,000 people in mid and south Essex living with the condition undiagnosed. High blood pressure often has no symptoms, which is why regular checks are so important.

That's why we're launching the **"Invincible Feeling, Invisible Danger"** campaign to encourage regular blood pressure monitoring.

Local pharmacies across the region are offering free blood pressure checks, making it easier than ever to know your numbers. The process is quick, simple, and could be lifesaving. No appointment is needed, and trained pharmacy staff are ready to help.

Pharmacists are here to help

If you've been invited for an NHS Health Check, it's important to attend as this provides a comprehensive understanding of your health risks, including blood pressure.

If you are aged 40 or over, you can get your free blood pressure check, by visiting any participating local pharmacy.

For more information about blood pressure and your health, speak to your pharmacist or GP. You can also visit [**the Mid and South Essex ICS website.**](#)

STOP! Have you ever been guilty of a DNA?

Hopefully, the answer will be “no” because a DNA is the surgery abbreviation for **DID NOT ATTEND** ie when a patient does not turn up for their appointment. Although the surgeries will contact the patient to understand why they were absent, it is frustrating to all when this happens, as a precious appointment slot will have been **wasted**.

We do recognise that this can be a last minute situation but these are the consequences and brace yourself, as here comes the math's bit.

DNA numbers for your surgeries are normally **c100 - 200 per month**. If you multiply that by 7 (Benfleet surgeries) it means that **c8,400 appointments are missed annually. That is 43% of the population of Benfleet!**

Here's the big whopper. On the last census in 2021/2022 in NHS England, it was **650,000 missed appointments per month**. Imagine how that could improve everyone's patient experience if all these appointments had become available to others?

We know that trying to get to your surgery by phone can take ages so, how else can you get in touch?

- **Email your surgery as early as possible** before your appointment, preferably 48 hours before.
- If your appointment is after 8 - 10am, **ring from 10am** to avoid the 'appointment rush hour'.
- **TEXT CANCEL** in response to the appointment text reminder you receive prior to your appointment.
- **Use your NHS App** and follow these steps:
 - Go to the **homepage** or **Your health**
 - Select **Upcoming and past appointments**
 - Select **GP surgery appointments** then **upcoming appointments**
 - Select the appointment you want to cancel
 - Select **Ask to cancel the appointment**
 - Select why you need to cancel
 - Review your request and **request cancellation**

650,000 missed appointments per month in England

8,400 missed appointments annually in Benfleet

Let us know as soon as you do AND help create more appointments.

When can a patient have a home visit?

Home visits are set aside for patients who are housebound and unable to get into the surgery. Often this is a lifetime situation, but there are occasions, when it is needed temporarily for a few weeks or months where it is impossible for the patient to get into the surgery for their appointments. In this situation, **telephone your surgery as early as possible to advise of the change in your or your family medical situation.** Your GP will need to agree to this but once confirmed, your health record will be updated, which will enable the reception staff to book a home appointment whilst needed.

NHS APP - DOWNLOAD ONTO YOUR MOBILE PHONE

If you do not already have the [NHS App](#) and would like it, you can download it on your smartphone or tablet via [Google play](#) or [App store](#). You can also access the same services in a web browser by [logging in through the NHS website](#). This also enables you to find out more about why having the NHS App gives you a simple and secure way to access a range of NHS services.



HOW TO CONTACT YOUR PPG MEMBER

If you would like to talk to your PCN PPG representative about surgery improvements or suggestions, then email BenfleetPCN@nhs.net with your name, surgery and comment and they will respond directly to you.

- Essex Way - Cllr Rob Lillis
- Hart Road - Joe Cooke and Freddy West
- High Road - Susan Baillie and Joanna Masters
- Dr Khan & Partners/St George's Medical Practice - Cheryl Kirby, John Hall and Terry Clarke
- The Hollies, Hadleigh - Rachel Clark and Tom Harrison

SPREAD THE NEWS.....LETTER

We really hope that you feel much more informed about our PCN and PPG now, as well as find our newsletter interesting. We want to ensure as many patients as possible receive this newsletter to keep up to date with local health news, so please help us achieve this and forward it on to your friends and family locally. If they email us with their name and surgery to BenfleetPCN@nhs.net we can add them to our subscribers list to receive the newsletter direct.

We hope you have enjoyed this bumper edition and thank you for reading all the way to the end! We will be back in the summer with our next edition and for now, enjoy the lighter nights.