



Patient Participation Groups' experience of Healthwatch

Introduction

The National Association for Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.) is the national voice for patient participation in primary care. N.A.P.P. supports the network of local Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) formed in GP practices throughout the UK, particularly the 1,500 PPGs that are its members. N.A.P.P. also works to influence national organisations and decision-makers in health and care services.

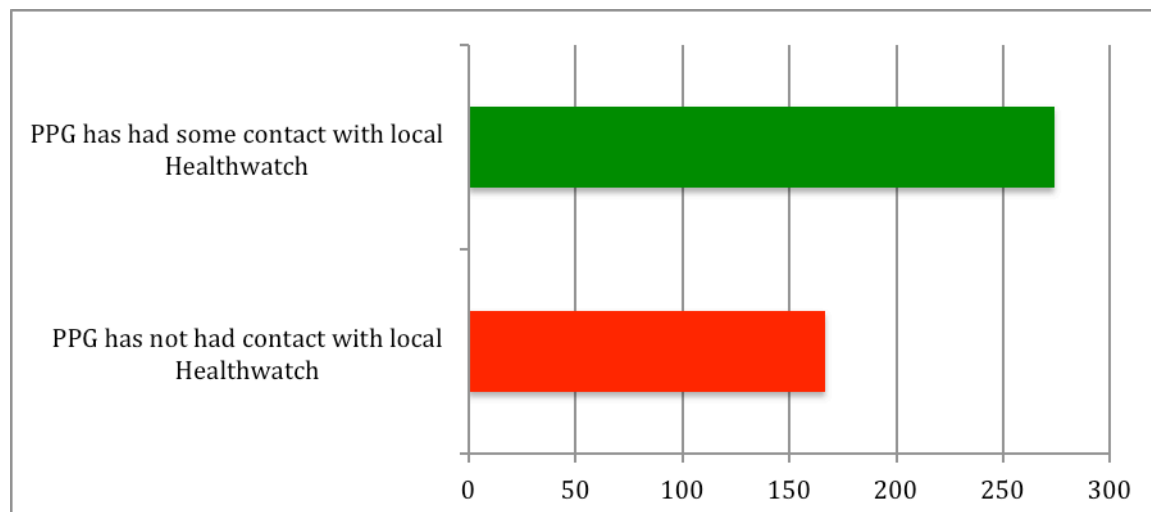
Healthwatch England is the independent national champion for people who use health and care services. It exists to ensure that those running services, and the government, put people at the heart of care. Healthwatch England supports local Healthwatch to find out what people want and to advocate for services that meet local communities' needs. Healthwatch around the country act as eyes and ears on the ground, letting Healthwatch England know how people's care could be improved.

Following discussions between the national organisations, N.A.P.P. carried out a members' survey to better understand the strength of current local relationships. Healthwatch England is carrying out a similar exercise with local Healthwatch.

This summary of responses from PPGs indicates that whilst positive relationships exist in some areas, there is more work to be done to build understanding and strengthen relationships at a local level.

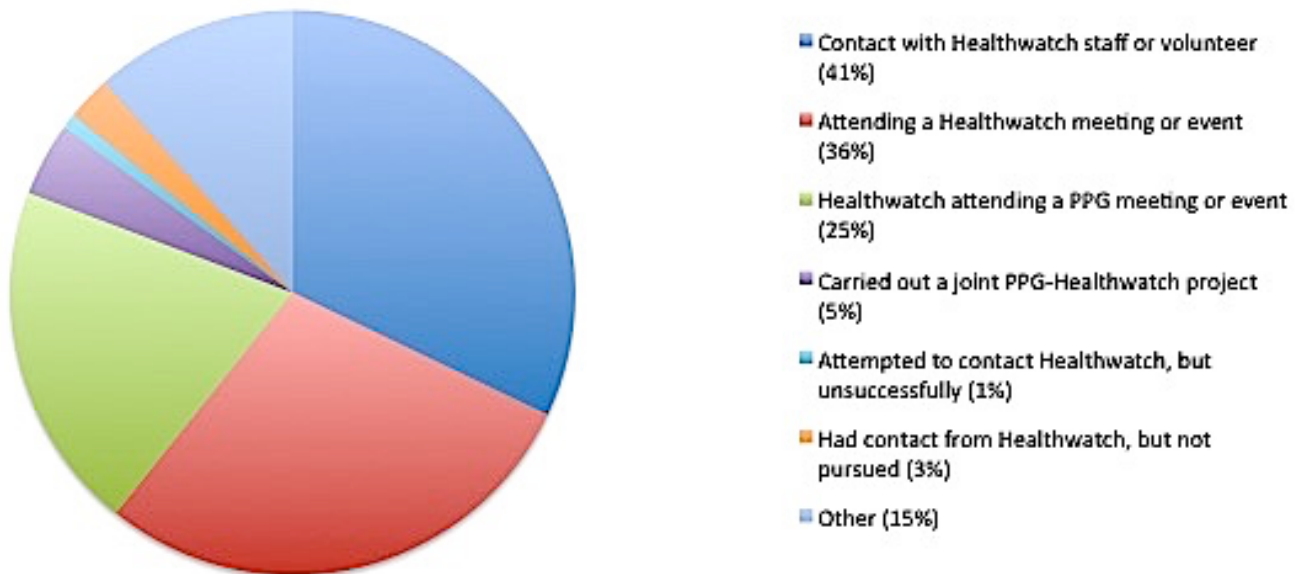
1. Has your PPG had contact with your local Healthwatch?

274 (61%) of respondents had had some contact with their local Healthwatch:



2. What kind of contact have PPGs had with local Healthwatch?

We asked PPGs about the type of contact they had with their local Healthwatch. The types of contact varied, with some having more than one type:



Some of the factors that helped PPGs and local Healthwatch have good contact included:

Having an overlap between PPG and Healthwatch members

“One of our members is a volunteer for Healthwatch Harrow”

“The PPG Chair is a Healthwatch volunteer”

Attendance at meetings:

“They attended a PPG meeting at our request; explained what they did”

A Healthwatch member always attend PPG meetings

However some reported less helpful relationships:

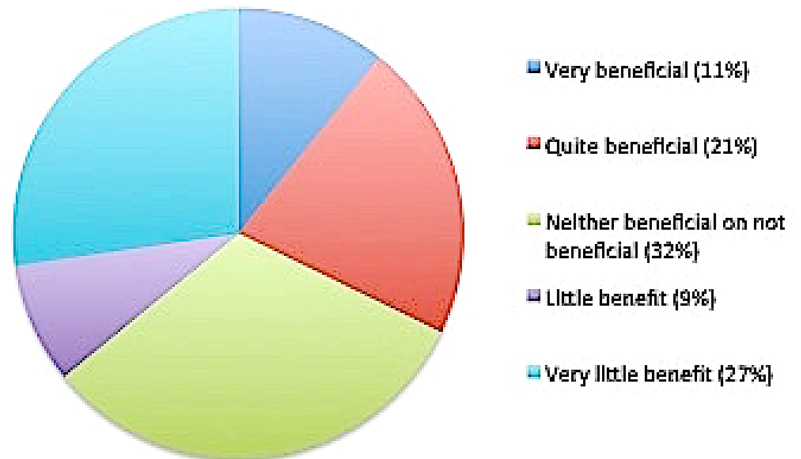
“Communication from Healthwatch is patchy”

“Had correspondence with them about an adverse report posted on their website”

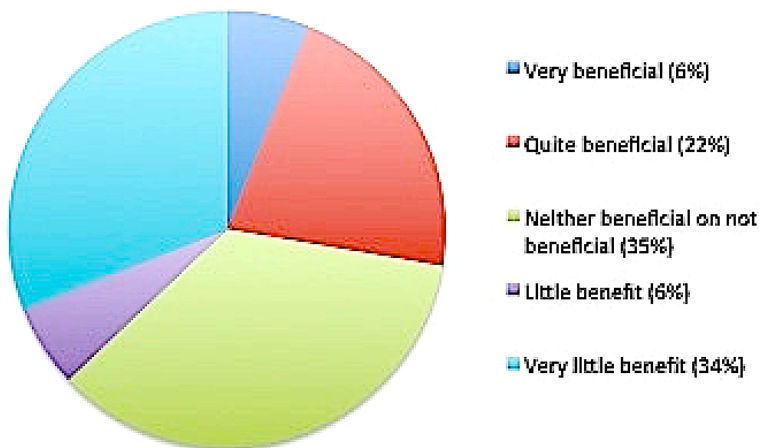
3. How beneficial has the contact with Healthwatch been?

We wanted to find out how beneficial PPGs thought their contact with Healthwatch had been – for them as a PPG, for their GP practice, and for the patients they represent. This is what they told us:

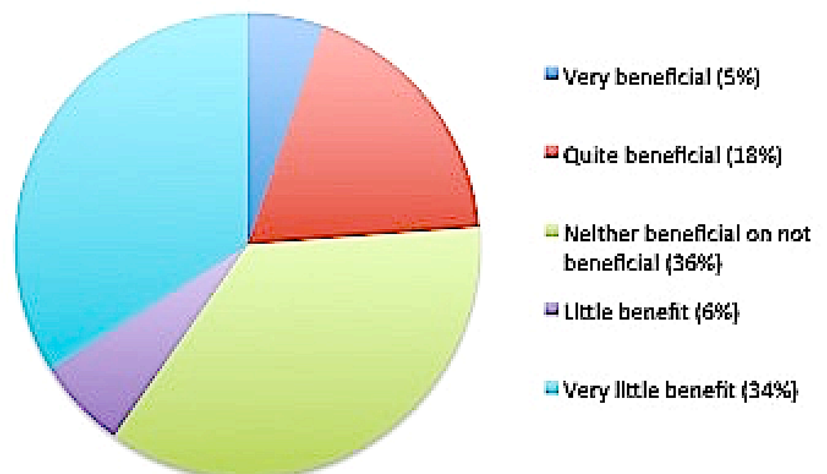
How beneficial has the contact been for the PPG?



How beneficial has the contact been for the GP Practice?



How beneficial has the contact been for patients?



4. Examples where improvement is needed

Some PPGs reported less positively about their engagement with Healthwatch:

“Healthwatch are focused on regional and strategic issues whereas the PPG want to look closely at practice delivery”

“Their prime focus seems to be as an adjunct to Public Health”

5. Examples of good practice

Lots of PPGs identified examples where work with their local Healthwatch was proving helpful:

“Healthwatch did a study of GPs in this area. We had a couple of meetings about it and distributed the report”

“PPG members attended training organised by Healthwatch”

“Healthwatch Oxfordshire was instrumental in both establishing and maintaining the PPG during its infancy”

“Healthwatch has acted as a conduit to the flow of information to and from our CCG”

“They produced a slide programme for the surgery TV display”

Healthwatch Herefordshire has a named person for each PPG in the county”

“Meeting to discuss ways to increase membership and share best practice very valuable”

6. Next steps

Once Healthwatch England has gathered feedback from local Healthwatch about their perspectives on relationships with PPGs, and shared this with N.A.P.P., the two organisations will review the findings, will each reflect on how they can make further use of the information that has been gathered, and will be considering whether there is further work they might usefully do together to enable PPGs and local Healthwatch to work better together to help improve services for patients.