

Your Health, Your Voice: Terms of Reference

“We must put citizen and patient voice absolutely at the heart of every decision we take in purchasing, commissioning and providing services.”

Tim Kelsey, Former Director of Patients and Information at NHS England

Purpose and Remit

1. *Your Health, Your Voice* is the mechanism by which the values, views and wishes of our local communities can influence the healthcare services commissioned, or ‘bought’ for the Bath and North East Somerset area. We want to make sure that communities have a direct line to decision-makers and can help develop policy.
2. When patients, service users and carers are involved in the commissioning process and their needs are taken into account, evidence shows that the service is better designed to suit those needs. Enabling public participation also provides other specific benefits for those who contribute including:
 - a. shared responsibilities for health care between NHS services and the public
 - b. better understanding by the public of how the NHS operates
 - c. more appropriate use of health services
 - d. improved self-confidence
3. The role of *Your Health, Your Voice* is that of a ‘critical friend’, providing challenging and constructive criticism. The views and feedback from the group will be taken into consideration by the CCG in all areas of activity where patient and public participation is vital. It will not replace the CCG’s duty to go out to full public consultation when appropriate.
4. It is important to recognise that *Your Health, Your Voice* can never be expected to be fully representative of the entire B&NES population. As such, it represents only one part of the wider public and patient engagement carried out by the CCG and does not replace our responsibility to reach out to seldom heard groups such as young people, mental health and disability groups, parents of young children, residents from the most deprived wards, gypsies and travellers, the homeless, ethnic minority groups and those for whom English is not their first language.

Mechanism

5. There are two ways that people can become involved in Your Health, Your Voice.
 - a. The ‘**core member**’ group meets every two months in the CCG Board Room at St Martins’ Hospital in Bath. They are given advance notice of the date and time of meetings along with briefing papers where appropriate.

- b. The '**associate member**' group is for those people who cannot commit to attending regular meetings but still want to be involved and have a valued contribution to make to the design of local health care services. Associate members will be contacted via email or post to gain their views and may be asked to contribute to focus group meetings around a specific service change, topic or area of interest.

Structure and Governance

6. The quorum for the Core Group shall be 5 members. The Core Group will be made up of no more than 25 members of the public, including patients and carers and people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to engage with the CCG through already established channels.
7. Meetings will be held every two months in the CCG Board Room at St Martins' Hospital in Bath. The meeting agendas will be based on a mix of subjects requested by the Core Group and the CCG's current consultation and commissioning plans.
8. Agenda items and relevant papers will be published on the CCG website seven days before the meeting date and will be circulated to members by email or post as appropriate.
9. Meetings will be chaired by the CCG's Lay Member for Patient and Public Involvement who will provide a written and verbal report at CCG Board meetings to ensure that feedback from the group is reported directly to the CCG's key decision makers.
10. The group will also elect a Vice Chair from the membership who will fill in for the Chair in case of absence and will help to ensure that the interests of members are reflected in the agendas for meetings.
11. Where appropriate, commissioning managers, GPs and subject experts will be asked to attend meetings to provide more detail for group members on specific topics.
12. Members of the group can apply for reimbursement of any travel or parking expenses incurred in order to attend meetings. They will need to complete an expenses form and return this to the CCG for payment within 5 days of the meeting.
13. All members will be asked to engage with their peers in order to help the CCG further understand the healthcare commissioning needs of the community.

Monitoring and Evaluation

14. A survey of core and associate members will be carried out on an annual basis to evaluate the impact of the meetings and how they could be improved. The results will be discussed at the December meeting.