



# **Prime Minister's Challenge Fund (PMCF): Improving Access to General Practice**

**Innovation Showcase Series**  
Successful patient engagement

March 2015: Showcase Three

## About PMCF

In October 2013, the Prime Minister announced a **£50 million Challenge Fund** to help improve access to general practice. The Challenge Fund is designed to test innovative ways of providing primary care services. Of the 254 expressions of interest received for the Challenge Fund, 20 pilot sites were selected across the country; covering **1,100 general practices** and **7.5 million patients**.

This paper is the third in a series of 'innovation showcases' designed to highlight the successes of the **20 pilots**.

This paper focuses on pilots which have been effective in **engaging their patient population**. The pilots featured are Brighton and Hove, Slough, West Wakefield and Workington.



## Key messages

### How have pilots managed to engage patients?

#### Patient-led engagement groups

Establishing or utilising an existing patient participation group (PPG) facilitates a direct channel of communication between patients and pilot development; it generates a better understanding of patient population needs, as well as providing accountability.

#### Early patient involvement

Involving patients in the early stages of the project helps to ensure that delivery meets patient needs.

#### Creative communication channels

It is important to consider a diverse range of media to raise the profile of pilot activities amongst local populations to maximise awareness and provide real-time mechanisms for patient feedback.

#### Regular contact

Maintaining a frequency of updates on the pilot's activities maintains awareness of service changes.

### Key issues to consider:

#### Fast pace of change

Engaging with patients takes time; it is important to factor engagement into pilot delivery timetables.

#### Acting on feedback

Delivery plans need to be flexible enough to take on board what is learnt from engagement activities.

#### Engaging a mix of patients

Patient engagement needs to be as inclusive as possible to ensure that patients views are representative of the whole patient population of each pilot.

## Evidence of success

*"A project that invites us [to] have a better relationship with our doctors I think is really going to be to our advantage."*

**Chair – Brighton Citizens Board**

*"Working tonight- feeling satisfied seeing patients coming through our Extended Hours Service @ westwakefield, rather than being sent to A&E"*

**A tweet from a clinical staff member, West Wakefield**

*"I felt like I mattered"*

**Slough patient**

## Extending Primary Integrated Care (EPiC), Brighton and Hove

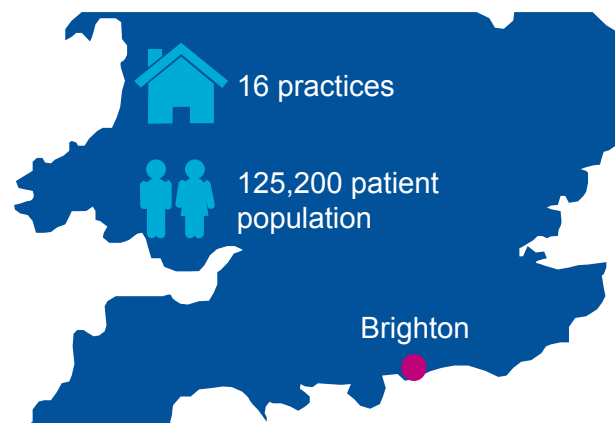
### Key elements of patient engagement

Brighton and Hove has:

- Established a **Citizen's Board** as part of the governance structure.
- Designed and implemented a **public-facing engagement strategy** including multi-method communications.
- Employed a **social media officer** to work with practices.

### How is the pilot engaging with patients?

- EPiC established a Citizen's Board at the inception of the pilot; members were recruited via adverts in Healthwatch, the local press, PPGs, CCG networks and in GP waiting rooms.
- The Citizen's Board was set up to provide legitimacy, patient co-design of services, a channel for feedback and to understand any patient concerns.
- Members of the Citizen's Board were involved in initial developmental workshops and meet regularly with the pilot's Project Board.
- EPiC used NHS Improving Quality to provide developmental support to its Citizen's Board in order to maximise the value the Board can add.
- EPiC has a diverse range of communication channels including: newsletters, videos, an active social media presence (Facebook and Twitter), leaflets and posters, flyers in pharmacists and waiting rooms, articles in the Pensioner and radio advertisements.
- A dedicated social media officer is in post to enhance practices' online presence and profile.
- EPiC held a public launch event on the 26th September to further engage the public as part of its engagement strategy.



### Key outcomes resulting from this engagement strategy

- EPiC believes that its service has been **designed to meet the needs of patients** as a result of mainstreaming patient engagement from the outset.
- EPiC's **weekday extended access appointments are at full capacity** and some practices have extended their hours to 9pm. The pilot feels their strong patient engagement has helped secure this.
- An unexpected benefit of Citizen's Board participation is that some of the **members have also volunteered to be community navigators**; a voluntary sign-posting role to support patients' non-clinical needs.

*"In EPiC we have put a Citizen's Board in place. They are there to advise the project and have been involved in the service redesign to make sure that we get things right for people who use the service."*

**GP Partner, EPiC**

*"It's really important that citizens and patients across the city have a say in the services that are provided for us; so a project that invites us to look at how the services are delivered and how they can be improved so that we can have a better relationship with our doctors, I think is really going to be to our advantage."*

**Chair – Citizens Board**

## Steps to the future, Slough

### Key elements of patient engagement

Slough has implemented:

- A **Patient Representative Group** (PRG) as part of pilot governance.
- Frontline staff and **focussed patient co-design** work.
- Two waves of **patient surveys**.

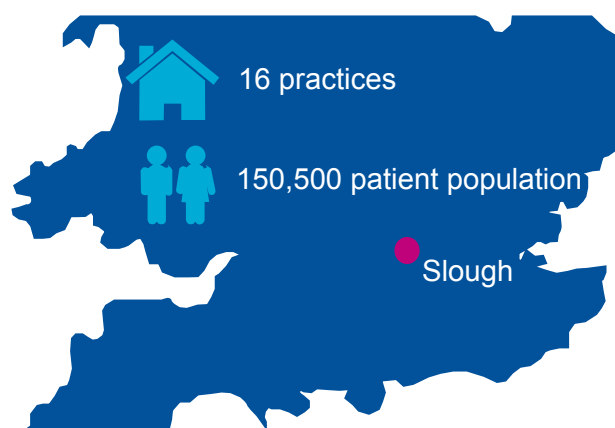
### How is the pilot engaging with patients?

- The PRG comprises patient representatives from across Slough's practices and is the primary channel to engage and communicate with patients.
- Two waves of patient surveys have been undertaken to capture real-time patient feedback (October and December 2014).
- Slough approached the local authority and voluntary sector to help reach wider groups of people. This enabled views of wider age groups of people and those with specific needs who are less likely to attend face-to-face meetings, to be captured.
- The pilot has a number of patient-led projects such as:
  - The 'Simple Words' project, which sets out to improve communications between GPs and patients.
  - Self-help groups focused on peer support and self-management.
  - Action learning groups which focus on patient representative experience and in developing personal leadership skills.
  - A wellbeing programme involving voluntary patient navigators, supporting an online sign-posting portal to local sources of information and support.

*Both PPG members and practice teams agree that being 'supportive'; 'community enhancing' and 'working together' best describe everyone's best contribution to this work."*

*"I felt like I mattered"*

**Slough patient**



### Key outcomes resulting from this engagement strategy

- Successful patient engagement has **helped to secure a high take up of the extended access appointments** by raising awareness of the pilot across Slough.
- The pilot believes that **clinicians have benefitted** from learning about patient experiences of primary care and that this is leading to service improvements at practices.
- The umbrella organisation Slough Council for Voluntary Services reported that communications with, and willingness to engage, voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in delivery, of the **PMCF programme has been the strongest example of VCS engagement** with the health sector in Slough to date.

*Slough conducted a two wave patient survey provided to capture feedback. Responses on extended access to primary care in Slough have been overwhelmingly positive:*  
*"98% (1st survey) and 98% (2nd survey) said appointment times were convenient"*  
*and*  
*"98% (1st survey) and 97% (2nd survey) reported satisfaction with the extended services"*



# Working together towards a wellbeing approach, West Wakefield

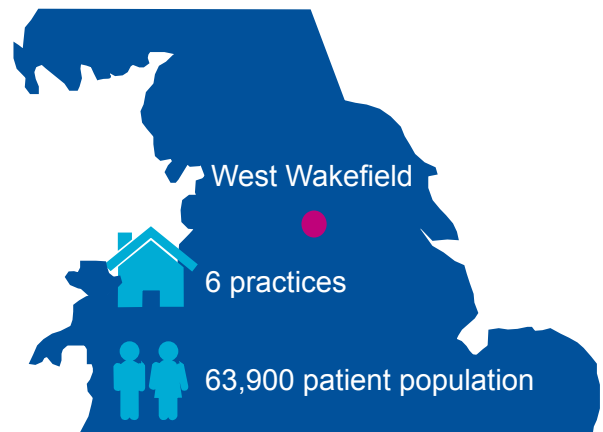
## Key elements of patient engagement

West Wakefield has implemented:

- A **Patient Panel** as part of the pilot governance.
- Patient **involvement in recruitment, procurement and assurance** processes.

## How is the pilot engaging with patients?

- West Wakefield held a series of public-facing awareness raising workshops at pilot inception.
- PPGs in all six practices were consulted when putting the bid together to identify priorities for the project.
- The PPG groups have been consulted throughout the course of the pilot to feed into the delivery of services and training (e.g. video consultations, health pod development and care navigation training respectively).
- An engagement lead has been appointed within the project team. This role supports all workstreams and has led to increased community engagement, website and social media presence and promotional flyers in GP waiting rooms.
- The Patient Panel meets every four to six weeks. Responsibilities include acting as:
  - Advisor to the Health and Wellbeing pilot project.
  - A reader's panel for any relevant public information and documents.
  - A conduit for feedback on patient/carer needs, concerns and interests as they arise.
  - A channel to disseminate key messages to the practice based PPGs and PRGs.
  - An input into the development and delivery of the communication and engagement plan.
- West Wakefield conducted a patient survey with over 300 patients, facilitated by the Patient Panel, to gather views on where the extended hours service should be based.
- To improve the diversity of patient and carer involvement the pilot is collaborating with a local community anchor to set up a youth engagement group.



## Key outcomes resulting from this engagement strategy

- Feedback from patients and carers suggests they **feel valued by being involved in a variety of activities**. Many Patient Panel members have become champions for the project, spreading the word in their own practices and amongst family and friends.
- Involving patients in the testing of ideas and technology interventions **has enabled barriers to be flagged up at early stages** so that mitigating actions can be implemented. Such involvement has also led to key decisions (such as the location of the extended hours service) being influenced by the needs of patients; as such, patient feedback about the service location selected has been positive.

*Example of clinical staff Tweet boosting social media presence to patients:*

***“Working tonight- feeling satisfied seeing patients coming through our Extended Hours Service @westwakefield, rather than being sent to A&E”***

# Better together, Workington

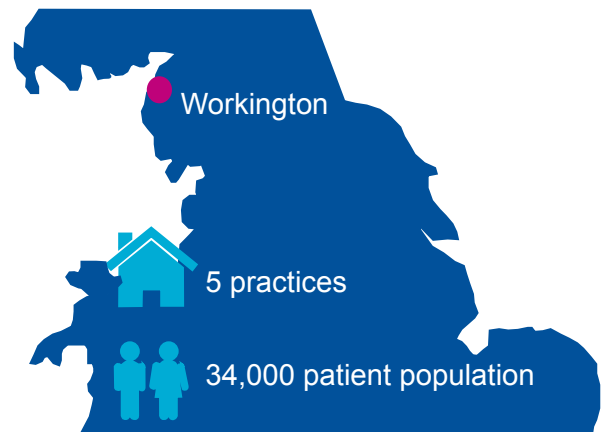
## Key elements of patient engagement

Workington has implemented:

- A public-facing **engagement event**.
- A **town-wide PPG** which supports the pilot's project team.

## How is the pilot engaging with patients?

- The pilot organised a patient engagement event relatively early on in the project. From this, a PPG specific to PMCF was set up to cover the whole of the town.
- A member of the project management team has been assigned the role of overseeing patient engagement activities.
- The PPG has met multiple times to support the communication team and provide insights to the delivery of services.
- One of the members of the PPG attended Workington's Primary Care Centre in its first week of delivery and spoke to patients using the service to capture feedback.
- The pilot has signed up to the 'I want great care' friends and family test; the PPG has access to this feedback data, to oversee how the Primary Care Centre is performing and provide an element of accountability.
- So far, the friends and family feedback data received has been very positive.



*YouTube video extracts from the key patient engagement event held in July:*

*"I came along tonight because there is room for improvement in the service."*

**Kate – Workington Patient**

*"I'm a regular user of the practice. I think we need to think about how we can be more controlled in offering primary care."*

**Michael – Workington Patient**

## Key outcomes resulting from this engagement strategy

Designing and adopting its engagement strategy from the beginning of the PMCF programme has **helped the pilot to affirm many of its patient-facing approaches**, including:

- Affirm that patients should book an on-the-day appointments at Workington Primary Care Centre through their own practice.
- Improve the definition of 'well' and 'not well' on pilot leaflets.
- Improve clarity of information given to patients about how to make an appointment and who to contact.
- Highlight which patients it may not be appropriate to be offered an on-the-day appointment at the Primary Care Centre (e.g. dementia or a mental health patients).



## How have they done it? Common success factors

### Patient-led engagement groups

Each of the pilots featured in this innovation showcase has chosen to advertise, recruit and implement **a patient-led participation and engagement group or committee**. Often these groups are an integral part of the Project Board and the governance structure from the outset. This approach facilitates a direct channel of communication between the patient population and the development of the pilot, enhances understanding of the needs of the patient population and adds a level of accountability. Feedback for these mechanisms has been positive – indicating that patients appreciate engagement and feel valued through it. This has also **contributed to the uptake of the services** offered through the Challenge Fund, as expressed by Brighton and Slough.



### Early patient involvement

A common success factor amongst these pilots is the **early engagement of the patient population** from the inception of the project in the development of the bid through to ongoing workstream development and implementation. This is commonly done through developing an engagement strategy from the outset. Involving patients in the early stages of the project (either through targeted focus groups and workshops, feedback opportunities or patient-led participation groups) **allows clear drivers and rationale to be identified**.

### Creative communication and feedback

Pilots are using **diverse and creative methods of communication** in addition to traditional communication methods such as leaflets or posters in waiting rooms and circulating hard copy newsletters to patients. Other channels include e-newsletters, websites, the use of social media through Twitter and Facebook and advertising in local press or newspapers. There has also been a shared emphasis on involving front-line staff in the pilot to ensure that changes to services are passed through verbal and face-to-face interaction to patients.

This diverse use of media has **raised the profile of pilots' activities amongst the local population** and importantly, provides opportunities for feedback through a variety of channels in addition to patient satisfaction surveys. This allows pilot managers to understand successes and areas for improvement following implementation, and maintains patient needs at the heart of decision-making.

### Regular contact

All pilots update and circulate a regular newsletter, as well as regular updates to social networking outlets. Maintaining a **high frequency of updates on pilot activities** has contributed to the level of awareness of primary care service changes.





## Common themes to consider

### Fast pace of change

**Engaging with patients takes time**, which can often be challenging due to the fast pace and large scale of change required. These pilots have been working to ensure that patient engagement is not an afterthought, but rather a core element of delivery, through a dedicated engagement lead within the project team and including patient representative presence in the governance structure. Pilots have been able to meet the challenge of implementing change at a fast pace by establishing patient-focused activities from the start and allocating resources to this aspect of development and delivery.



### Engaging a mix of patients

**Engaging with a representative range of patients** so as to reflect the demographics of a pilot's patient population is vital. Many pilots found it was often easier to attract older patients to patient groups because they have more free time to volunteer, whilst people of working age, younger people, minority groups and patients with specific conditions can be more challenging to engage. This has been overcome by working with local authority and voluntary sector partners, who have regular contact with these groups. In order for engagement events to be as inclusive as possible a variety of methods should be employed beyond email invites.

### Acting on feedback

Once patients have been engaged and feedback is received it is important to consider these inputs. Delivery plans need to **take on board what is learnt from engagement activities**. An element of flexibility is key.





## The National Evaluation

In summer 2014, NHS England commissioned Mott MacDonald, an independent organisation, to undertake an evaluation of the programme. The evaluation team is working alongside the pilots as they deliver their projects, working with them to learn and share delivery lessons. The evaluation involves a multi-methods approach including:

- Interviews with pilot leaders and those involved in implementation during the programme.
- Interviews with pilot partners and stakeholders involved in delivery.
- Engagement with a selection of practices and patients.
- Assessment of the impacts and outcomes measured against a basket of nine national metrics.
- Identifying, examining and sharing good practice.



## About PMCF

There are three primary objectives of the challenge Fund programme and also some supplementary objectives that the programme is looking to achieve:

### Primary objectives:

- To provide additional hours of GP appointment time.
- To reduce demand elsewhere in the system (e.g. A&E, NHS 111 and existing out-of-hours services).
- To improve patient satisfaction with access.

### Supplementary objectives:

- To improve staff satisfaction with access.
- To tackle health inequalities in the local health economy.
- To facilitate learning to better enable pilots to implement change.
- To stimulate a culture change amongst staff involved in general practice with regard to future delivery of primary care.
- To deliver value for money and a return on investment.
- To establish sustainable models which go beyond the PMCF pilot lifetime.
- To identify models that can be replicated in similar health economies elsewhere.

## Coming up next.....

The next innovation showcases will look at:

- **Successful practice engagement**
- **Collaborative delivery:** working with other providers

