

THE 
Menopause
SUPPORT
GUIDE TO

Joining the Patient Participation Group (PPG) at your GP practice

Request to join your PPG, there should be an option to do this on the practice website, if not, ask at reception.

Most PPGs are looking for people to volunteer to join.

Expect to wait a few weeks, but do not be afraid to ask how long you should expect to wait before hearing something from the practice.

When you do get to speak to somebody from the PPG they may ask if you have a particular reason or special interest in joining. This is your opportunity to say that you are interested in women's health and, specifically, raising awareness around the menopause.

Offer to provide them with some of the most useful resources from Menopause Support and then print a copy of each and send them the links as well.

These include

1. The Menopause Support symptom checkers
2. How to prepare for your GP appointment
3. 10 things your GP should know about menopause
4. Understanding Menopause for partners
5. The Psychological impact of menopause

You may choose to donate books to the surgery for the GPs and practice nurses to read, you might like to choose one or more of the following examples.

The British Menopause Society Handbook

Me and My Menopausal Vagina Jane Lewis

Oestrogen Matters Avrum Bluming,

The Complete Guide to Menopause Dr Annice Mukherjee

It can be a good idea to offer to donate some of the Menopause Support symptom posters to be displayed in the waiting area and treatment rooms. These are available by emailing our office. Suggest they go up in both the ladies and gents' toilets as its important for everybody to have information about menopause to allow them to recognise symptoms in themselves and others. The surgery can add their own contact details to the poster if they wish to.

It can take a few months to set up a meeting with any senior staff/decision makers, especially during busy times. Our advice is to be patient but do keep in touch regularly.

The PPG chairperson will usually be the one to take the lead on arranging meetings.

When the opportunity arises, and you have a date for a meeting, make a list of the things you would like to cover and suggestions you have.

You may be asked what you would like to see happen.

Please signpost to Menopause Support menopausesupport.co.uk and explain how we are trying to raise awareness and the success of the **#MakeMenopauseMatter** campaign.

Below is a list of points that could be raised

The huge waste of NHS time and money on incorrect diagnoses and referrals.

The FOI (Freedom of Information) report that Menopause Support published in 2021 about menopause training at medical schools. Our survey showed that 41% of medical schools do not teach menopause as a mandatory subject. It's important to stress that this is not the fault of the GPs and that many are at a disadvantage because of this.

It's important to raise awareness of the genitourinary symptoms of menopause and explain that many women live with these symptoms with no idea that they could be related to the lack of oestrogen or that there are topical treatments available. This can be reinforced with the example of the number of elderly women admitted to care homes due to dementia or incontinence or both. Early diagnoses and treatment of GSM symptoms could have a significant impact on patient wellbeing and independence.

Take a copy of current NICE guidance and the Menopause Support symptom checkers for each GP and a copy of the HRT advice and troubleshooting guide for GPs in primary care (links below) these are both especially useful reference documents.

Suggest that the Menopause Support symptom checkers could be added to the surgery website for patients to download, complete, and bring with them to their appointments.

The Menopause Support Guide to Understanding Menopause for Partners is also a useful resource.

We have a short article available which could be used for a newsletter, if your surgery has one, or it could be added to their website. A longer more in-depth version is also available. Please email our office for further details.

If the waiting room has a TV screen showing health information you could suggest that a short PowerPoint slide show be added to share information about menopause symptoms and advising patients to book an appointment with the GP or practice nurse with a special interest in menopause, if there is one, or any of the doctors/nurses they prefer to see. We have a PowerPoint slideshow already prepared if required. Please email our office for further details.

You could offer to set up a 'menopause meet up' at the surgery, every couple of months, for patients to come along and have a chat. This would provide an opportunity to share resources with them and of course you can signpost them to the Menopause Support website and our Facebook community too.

The key aim of joining your PPG is to bring focus to women's health and menopause to ensure all GPs and health care professionals are up to date with current guidance and aware of the wide range of menopause symptoms. This will allow them to treat their patients more efficiently and successfully and reduce the stress and frustration that many people feel when visiting their Dr with symptoms related to menopause.

Try to ensure that your passion to see things improve is not viewed as GP bashing, most GPs do want to help their patients but sadly many have not been given the right education, tools, and guidance to allow them to do that when faced with a patient experiencing menopause symptoms.

This is an opportunity to be a patient voice for menopausal women in your local community and to share with the practice what you, as a patient, would have found helpful during your menopause transition.

<https://menopausesupport.co.uk/> email hello@menopausesupport.co.uk

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng23/resources/menopause-diagnosis-and-management-pdf-1837330217413>

<https://www.chelwest.nhs.uk/professionals/gp-advice-and-troubleshooting-guide-for-hrt-in-primary-care>