

Higham Ferrers Surgery
Patient Participation Group Meeting
11th March 2026
Minutes

Attendees: MG, ER, MD, AH, DW, KL, IC

Apologies: DG, SR

Agenda Items

Introduction:

MG welcomed everyone to the PPG and introduced a potential new member, IC.

Anima:

MG advised that from 4th March Anima triaging is now available via the NHS App. This is a basic triaging version but does come through the clinical Anima system the same way. More updates will come along in time to improve it, but for now it seems patients don't need to have the two separate apps anymore.

IC stated that he finds Anima frustrating as there are too many questions. MG replied that Anima is constantly updating, and a newer updated version does ask less questions. However, he needs to be mindful that it is there to triage patients so the surgery can send them to the correct service of care and what might be too many questions for him may not be enough for another patient's problem.

NHS Health Checks:

MG advised from March (w/c 16th) the surgery will start doing blood tests (POCT - Point-of-care testing) on site for NHS Health Checks. This is a finger prick test to check patients sugar levels and Cholesterol.

ER asked if these tests can be done for other problems (i.e. diabetes). MG advised that they cannot, they are a basic test just to check the levels, they do not do the full test that is needed for patients who are diabetic etc.

MG also advised that the blood tests are funded by the council and are solely for the purpose of an NHS Health Check, as it is to find out early if a patient has diabetes or high cholesterol before it progresses further.

Those that are eligible are patients aged 40-74 with no pre-existing conditions (i.e. diabetes, hypertension, heart disease etc). NHS Health Checks are only available every five years, so if a patient had one last year (2025), they won't be eligible again till the same date five years later (2030).

Social Prescribing:

MG went through who social prescribing are and what they do. The Social Prescribing service is for people aged 18-64 helping patients to explore extra services that may support them to improve their health, wellbeing and independence. Social prescribing helps enable patients to access a range of non-medical activities and support provided by locally based, voluntary and community sector organisations.

If patients would like to be referred to social prescribing they can contact the surgery reception team who can refer them on, or patients can self-refer by emailing northantsicb.ensocialprescribing@nhs.net

Appointments:

MG advised that in February alone 37% of appointments were wasted due to DNA's (did not attend) and last-minute cancellations. Based on an average of how many appointments a month the surgery runs this worked out at around 850 appointments.

ENPA:

DG emailed MG prior to the PPG meeting and advised that due to misunderstandings with dates the last ENPA meeting was cancelled.

Spring Newsletter:

MG asked if anyone has any ideas for the spring Newsletter, if so please let him know by Friday 20th March.

AOB:

- Dr Umrao is now a GP Partner and no longer a salaried GP.
- The NAPP (National Association for Patient Participation) charity has been dissolved.

- MG advised that the spring/summer covid vaccinations are due to start in April. Care Home and Housebound patients will be vaccinated first then a message will be sent out to other eligible patients.
- It was brought up by a few PPG members that getting a blood test appointment at Nene Park is proving very difficult at the moment for themselves and other patients at HFS, who are having to wait months to be seen and that Nene Park are no longer doing urgent walk in appointments.
MG advised that the information the practice has been given is they are quite short staffed, however the surgery are advising patients to check online every day as Nene Park do put up new appointments nearly daily or to call them directly to book as sometimes they have appointments available but haven't been posted online yet.
As for urgent appointments, they are still available at Nene Park (and other phlebotomy clinics) but patients need to call or book online, all they have stopped is the urgent walk-ins.
MG also advised that patients need to be mindful that even though Nene Park is the closest, it is not the only clinic that does blood tests. Patients can go to the following places: Corby Nuffield Outpatients, Corby Broadleaf Diagnostic Centre, Isebrook Outpatients Wellingborough, North Northants Council Office Kettering and Nene Park Outpatients Irthlingborough.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th June 2026 at 5pm.