



# POTTERELLS

## Patients Participation Group

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### Potterells New Web Site

**Visit the new site – [www.potterells.net](http://www.potterells.net)**

It is the way in to making appointments on-line and ordering repeat prescriptions.

In addition to information about the practice, there are further links to helpful contacts for health and social care.

The PPG are helping to “populate” the site with health and well-being contacts.

**Please let us know what you would find useful on the site.**

**[www.potterells.net](http://www.potterells.net)**

### Why Your Voice Is Important

When the “new” NHS came into being in April 2013, it set out to be *patient centred*. This concept led to the appointment of lay (not clinically trained) Patient Representatives to the committees of NHS organisations including the patients, who form the Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) at GP’s practices around the country. They learn about the GP practices and the other NHS organisations to which they are attached. An important part of their activities is to liaise with other patients in their locality to gather views on the delivery of NHS services. Not being clinicians they refer complaints on professional medical matters directly to the relevant NHS body, which all have proper procedures in place to handle complaints and compliments.

In a GP practice the PPG collects and collates local patient experiences which are passed on to the Practice to assist in the implementation of health and well-being schemes to best suit the patients in their community. These experiences have further value as they are fed back, via patient’s representation, in our case to the E&N Herts CCG (*see overleaf*), who take them into consideration when commissioning services from healthcare providers. CCG contracts stipulate in considerable detail how services are to be provided and the standards to be achieved.

The other main area where members of PPGs can help is in providing information to local patients on health education and related medical matters. These include following a healthy lifestyle, stopping smoking, eating a balanced diet, taking the right exercise and information on the integration of social care with health care in the community. This last matter is currently a high priority and pilot schemes are already in place in Hertfordshire.

Current Potterells PPG (P-PPG) projects include; helping the Practice Carer’s Champion to reach all the carers in the practice to offer them support and encouraging well-being through healthy walking (*expect something soon*). Another excellent example is P-PPG member Gordon Stringer has written a patient-story about how he has been encouraged to maintain a balanced diet, which helps him to manage incipient diabetes.

In the first P-PPG Newsletter Martin Connolly, the committee Chairman, appealed for patients to become involved with the P-PPG’s activities, to provide a patient’s voice and to share their ideas and experience for the benefit of patients.

**Please join us as a Virtual (on-line) Member and make your voice heard.**



### QEII It's Open

The QEII opened to treat the first patient on Sunday morning 17 May.

The QEII has been designed and built to be more effective in serving communities with the best medical care.

**For more information go to**

**[www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/our-hospitals/qeii/hospital-facilities/](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk/our-hospitals/qeii/hospital-facilities/)**

**NHS Acronyms – understanding the medics**

Every organisation, hobby and sport has its own jargon but acronyms, especially those standing for a jargon expression make understanding difficult.

Here are some NHS acronyms.

**E&NH CCG** East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group. *includes Potterells Medical Centre; (in Welwyn Hatfield Locality)*

**E&NH NHST** East & North Herts NHS Trust - Lister, QE2 and Hertford hospitals group.

**HCT** – Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust – *provider of community services - Community (District) Nurses, community hospitals.*

**HVCCG** – Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group - *Hertsmere; Watford & Three Rivers; St Albans, Harpenden and Dacorum.*

**F A S T** Check procedure for suspected Stroke and TIA

**TIA** Transient Ischaemic Attack *See Below*

**UCC** Urgent Care Centre, *as at the new QEII Hospital.*

**From the Editor**

*Dear Reader,*

*We aim to make the P-PPG Newsletter informative and a forum for your thoughts and ideas on the new NHS.*

*To do this we need your help.*

*Please write or email us with suggestions and comments; may be a suggestion for a new project, or you may be looking for information or help with a medical problem.*

*We may not know the answers, but we will know where to find them.*

*We look forward to hearing from you.*

**Editor.**

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**Transient Ischaemic Attack**

A transient ischaemic attack (TIA) causes symptoms similar to a stroke. Some people call a TIA a mini-stroke. With a TIA, the symptoms go completely within 24 hours (whilst with a stroke, the symptoms are usually more permanent). The most common cause is a tiny blood clot in a blood vessel in the brain.

Call 999 if you have symptoms of a stroke or TIA - act **F-A-S-T**.

Unless the symptoms get better within a few minutes you need emergency treatment, as the cause might be a stroke rather than a TIA.

It is important that you don't wait too long to see if the symptoms get better on their own. If your symptoms have got better quickly and completely, you need to arrange to see your GP urgently, for further investigations and treatment.

**What is a T I A ?**

A Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) is a set of symptoms that lasts a short time and occurs because of a temporary lack of blood to part of the brain. It is sometimes called a mini-stroke. However, unlike a stroke, the symptoms are short-lived and soon go.

This means that you recover fully, back to normal. (The word ischaemic means a reduced supply of blood and oxygen to a part of the body.) It is estimated that about 8 or 9 in 10 people with a stroke or TIA will have one or more FAST symptoms.

**If you have symptoms of a stroke, you need to be seen in a hospital immediately .**

Even if you later turn out to have a different problem, or a TIA.

Occasionally, there are exceptions to this rule - but generally only in people who are already extremely unwell, who are perhaps terminally ill - where transfer to a hospital would not be in their best interests.

**F A S T**

Both a stroke and a TIA are medical emergencies and need immediate medical attention. As a way of helping the general public become more aware of the symptoms of a stroke or TIA, a simple symptom checklist has been devised .:

This is to think of the word **FAST**.

**F - Facial weakness.** Has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?

**A - Arm weakness.** Can the person raise both arms and keep them there?

**S - Speech disturbance.** Is their speech slurred?

**T - Time.** Time to call 999 if you see any single one of these signs.

The aim is to get people to think of stroke and TIA as emergencies. So, rather like a heart attack, they are thought of as brain attacks.

The FAST checklist does not cover every possible symptom of stroke or TIA. However, it is easy to remember and it is estimated that about 8 or 9 in 10 people with a stroke or TIA will have one or more FAST symptoms