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Patient Participation Groups' experiences of operating remotely during the pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic has triggered profound and rapid changes in general practice. Within weeks of the outbreak in England, the proportion of face-to-face GP consultations shifted from 70% to 23%.

Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) play a crucial role in primary care as a key link between patients and general practice. During this period, they too, have experienced a shift in how, when and where they have been able to meet.

The National Association for Patient Participation (N.A.P.P.) wished to learn more about its members' experience of operating digitally during the pandemic, including what worked, and what other PPGs and practices could learn from this. N.A.P.P. asked its members for their feedback in October 2020, and between 9th October and 9th November 2020 received 24 replies from PPGs across England. [Read the full report here](#)

Zoom Guides

There are a number of tools that N.A.P.P. member PPGs have been using to support them in holding meetings online.

Several PPGs have found these approaches to be effective, in some cases more so than face-to-face meetings.

Zoom is a popular platform, due to its easy-to-use interface. It is being used by both N.A.P.P.'s trustees and many of its member PPGs. But we appreciate that many people are not familiar with such software, so we are sharing a '[Quick start Zoom user's guide](#)' [here](#).

Phone Chat guidance

Giving a lonely person a ring, or volunteering to answer calls from isolated patients can feel rewarding and chats can often be a pleasure.

One of our members, North Leeds Medical Practice has produced a document with a few suggestions for how these chats should be conducted. Including advice for when things get a little difficult. When people are already more stressed or upset after months of the pandemic restrictions, you may come across someone who is a bit down or becomes distressed during the conversation.

We thank North Leeds Medical Practice for allowing us to share this document with you. [Click here](#)