Together we are *stronger*

PGPA Newsletter

April 2025

Pennine GP Alliance

Introducing Coproduction to PGPA: A New Patient Voice Strategy

We're pleased to announce that the PGPA Board has approved a new Patient Voice Strategy, embedding coproduction into how we work across the organisation.



Until now, patients have had limited involvement in shaping our services. This strategy changes that—putting patient voice at the heart of our work.

Why This Matters:

- Improves quality and ensures services meet real needs
- Strengthens bids for new contracts
- Aligns with PGPA values and CQC expectations

We've begun working with partners like Calderdale Cares to better support Patient Participation Groups and explore new ways to involve expert patients. Our new 2025/26 Patient Voice Strategy outlines clear actions, including quick wins and long-term goals. This is a shift for all of us. Whether in projects, practices or support roles, everyone at PGPA has a part to play in bringing patient voices into our planning and delivery.

Changes to this edition

You'll notice the titled sections of the newsletter have changed as we look to further refresh our company values and branding in the coming months.



Stronger Together

Spotlight on PGPA's Board Members

Pennine GP Alliance is made up of 10 voting board members, who all play a critical role in representing the alliance externally, championing the interests of GP practices, and ensuring the voice of Primary Care is heard across the local, regional and national health system. They also ultimately make the big decisions for the organisation.

John Somers, PGPA's Chair of the Board



John Somers is an experienced leader with over 22 years of board-level experience in both the public and private sectors, and a deep passion for the NHS. With a varied and distinguished career, John's leadership has spanned across commissioning, community services, acute hospital care, and strategic development, making him a highly respected figure in the healthcare landscape.

Before joining PGPA, John served as the Chief Executive Officer of Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust from 2014 until his retirement in July 2022. Read more here.



Dr Asif, Yaseen, PGPA's Medical Director

Asif has been involved with PGPA since its inception 10 years ago, first serving as Chairman. In January 2025, he transitioned to Medical Director, a position that better reflects his focus on clinical expertise and strategic development. He leads clinical strategy and ensures services adhere to best practices in primary care. He focuses on delivering high-quality, patient-centered care across Calderdale, while advancing PGPA's services to adapt to the evolving healthcare landscape.
Read more here.

Dr Geetha Chandrasekaran, Clinical Director, North Halifax Primary Care Network (PCN)



As one of PGPA's original steering group members, Geetha has been involved since our inception, driven by a deep commitment to sustaining general practice and supporting local practices through times of transformation.
With over 20 years of experience as a GP Partner in Calderdale, Geetha brings extensive clinical expertise and a grounded, practice-focused perspective to the Board.
Read more here.

Stronger Together

Spotlight on PGPA's Board Members



Will Menzies, PGPA Chief Executive

In his role on PGPA Board, Will focuses on strategic leadership, developing and fostering strong internal and external relationships to ensure PGPA can work as a great partner within a complex healthcare system. With strong expertise in Primary Care finance, Will also contributes to aligning financial strategies that benefit PGPA, Primary Care Networks, and Practices. He finds it rewarding to shape the direction of general practice in Calderdale. Read more here.

Dr Jon Malone, Clinical Director, Lower Valley Primary Care Network (PCN)

Jon brings clinical insight and strategic leadership from his roles as Clinical Director, Chair of the Calderdale Cares Community Programme Board (3CPB), and GP Partner at Northolme Practice. He joined the PGPA Board in 2021 with a focus on ensuring PGPA remains a key player in the delivery of at-scale healthcare across Calderdale. Jon has worked as a GP in Calderdale since qualifying in 2011. Read more here.





Dr Nadeem Akhtar, Clinical Director, Central Halifax Primary Care Network (PCN)

In his role, Nadeem helps shape the organisation's strategic direction, working to develop services that improve healthcare delivery across Calderdale. He is also the Clinical Lead for NHS Health Checks and a member of the PGPA Strategy Group.

A founding member of PGPA, Nadeem has been involved with the organisation since its inception. Read more here.

Dr Fawad Azam, Clinical Director Calder and Ryburn Primary Care Netowrk (PCN)

Spotlight profile coming soon. Please visit our website.



Stronger Together

Spotlight on PGPA's Board Members

Dr David Burley, Clinical Director, Upper Calder Valley Primary Care Network (PCN)



Having spent his entire GP career at the same Calderdale practice, David brings a deep understanding of the local healthcare landscape and the pressures faced by both clinicians and patients. David joined the PGPA Board in June 2024 following his appointment as Clinical Director, with the motivation stemming from a longstanding commitment to improving services—not just within his own practice, but across the system. Read more here.



Rosie Duke, Practice Manager, Non-executive Director

Spotlight profile coming soon. Please visit our website.

Heather Simpson, Senior Information Risk Owner, Non-Executive Director



Joining PGPA shortly after its inception in 2014, Heather's role on the Board leads PGPA's approach to risk management and governance, ensuring robust systems are in place to safeguard information and support operational resilience. Heather chairs the monthly Risk Management Subgroup (RGSG), reporting to the Board and aligning risk processes with PGPA's strategic priorities. Read more here.



Marcus Beacham, PGPA Board Observer, Calderdale Local Medical Committee (LMC)

Spotlight profile coming soon. Please visit our website.

Stronger Together

PGPA Staff Case Studies

We continue to build our staff case studies to showcase the inspiring and dedicated team we have at PGPA.

You can read our staff case studies on the PGPA website here. Or, click on the staff images shown.

This month you can read about ARRS roles working in PCNs, the support given to a staff member who embarked on a business apprentiship, and the career progression of a member of staff at PGPA who moved on to a new role.



Michelle Agus, Occupational Therapist, Lower Valley PCN



Faye Batley, Ageing Well Practitioner, UCV PCN



Nadia Sethi, Social Prescribing Link Worker, UCV PCN



Luke Dalby, PGPA leaver who has progressed to the role of Data Quality Specialist at the ICB



Bethany Worrall, HQ Team Administrator, who has just completed her Business Apprentiship

PENNINE GP ALLIANCE

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

PGPA is a private organisation working in the public sector to deliver and support primary care health and wellbeing services in Calderdale.

Health & wellbeing

- 24-hour health & wellbeing support across a range of subjects including trauma, grief, anxiety, stress, health concerns and more.
- Access to the 'Spectrum Life App' providing on-demand tools and resources to manage day-to-day wellbeing.
- Care Concierge services to find and fund later life care, including family members.

Flexible working

We strongly believe in a healthy work-life balance & strive to offer all staff flexible working to suit personal needs.

Annual Leave

We offer 27-33 days plus bank holidays.

Qualifications

Support with suitable post-graduate and professional qualifications, including reimbursement of professional subscriptions.

Annual staff survey

Staff have an opportunity to voice their opinions to PGPA's Senior Leadership. In 2024 "I enjoy my role" was the highest scoring statement.

Supportive Policies

We have our own PGPA policies to care for and support our staff. Including:

Generous enhanced maternity and paternity policies. Pregnant women are entitled to 3 months full pay from their first day of employment.

We simplified and enhanced our sick pay in 2024 following staff feedback.

Finance

Pension Benefits: We contribute 10% for as little as 1% employee contribution.

All employees benefit from 2x salary life Insurance from their first day of employment.

For the last two years we have been able to offer a % pay increase to support with inflation and living costs.

PGPA staff are entitled to discounts off major brands with a Blue Light Card and also specific NHS discounts with their ID card.

PCN Impact



Calder and Ryburn PCN - Anna Duggan

From Loneliness to Belonging: Local Activity Groups Awareness Day

Our Business and Project Support Officer Caitlyn Varley and Social Prescribing Link Worker Millie Fletcher ran an event at Foundry Street Community Centre on 31st March 2025 to allow people to find out about the activity groups in Sowerby Bridge and Ripponden.



The event aimed to provide people with knowledge on what groups are in the local area, as well as how they can get involved if they felt they would like to.

One of our PCN priorities is reducing loneliness. Joining local activity groups is therefore a powerful way to create a sense of community, offering both social connection and emotional support.

Here's how local groups can help:

- **Social Connection:** Shared activities—like sports, arts, volunteering, or book clubs—naturally bring people together, creating opportunities for meaningful interaction and reducing isolation.
- **Friendship Building:** Regular participation helps people form deeper, lasting friendships through repeated interaction and shared experiences.
- **Emotional Support:** Many groups provide more than just activities—they offer a supportive network of like-minded individuals, helping people feel understood and less alone.
- **Mental Health Benefits:** Positive, low-pressure social environments can lift mood, boost self-esteem, and improve overall mental well-being.
- **Confidence Boost:** Engaging with others helps build social confidence, making it easier to connect with new people and form meaningful relationships.

Over 14 stakeholders atteneded the event and highlights included:

- **New Local Link:** Plans are underway to offer the seated exercise class at Foundry Street, thanks to connections made during the event.
- **Increased Awareness:** SPLWs connected with new patients, helping them learn about support services available through their GP practice.
- **Well-Received Taster Sessions:** The sessions were a key attraction, encouraging attendees to stay and engage fully with services and support options.
- **Strong Community Response:** Attendees shared positive feedback, praising the PCN for organising such a valuable and supportive event.

PCN Impact



Central Halifax PCN - Sudheer Shabir

Joseph Aplin – GP Assistant at PGPA on his development with King Cross Surgery



I started at King Cross Surgery as a helping hand during a time of need when the practice was understaffed. This was a temporary position as a receptionist supporting the Service Advisor Team.

I worked at King Cross for five months before being put forward for the GP Assistant role with PGPA and the opportunity to complete the GP Assistant training programme. This allowed me to expand my role and continue progressing in primary care.

The GP Assistant training programme covered five key competency frameworks: Providing Administrative Support, Providing Person-Centred Care, Providing Clinical Support, Communicating with Patients, and Managing Health Records. I developed my skills across each of these areas with support from my GP mentor, Practice Manager, and the Service Advisor Team Leader at King Cross.

Alongside the core programme, I also completed six introductory training courses in: Phlebotomy, Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF), Learning Disabilities, Long-Term Condition Reviews, Blood Pressure & Pulse Measurement (including Hypertension Management), and Introduction to Asthma.

I now support the GPs with a range of clinical tasks including medication monitoring, taking patient observations, and running my own phlebotomy and clinical procedures clinic. I also support the Reception, Admin, Summarising, Secretarial, and Nursing Teams, and I'm often on hand to help with staff queries, patient record management, and stepping into reception when situations escalate.

In addition, I assist with IT issues, system setups, building maintenance, and keeping the practice website and information boards up to date with relevant content. I provide extra support to the Practice Manager too—looking at QOF targets, running audits, coordinating COVID invites and clinic support, auditing DNAs, chairing the Patient Participation Group (PPG), and supporting clinical meetings.

Completing the GP Assistant programme has helped me broaden my knowledge of general practice, develop new skills, and take on a varied and rewarding role that I really enjoy.

PCN Impact

Lower Valley PCN - Anna Lunn

Our Integrated Neighbourhood Team

In the Lower Valley we are meeting weekly as a multi-disiplinary team of professionals to bring to the discussion a complex patient case that everyone can contribute to. This includes:



- Social Services
- Social Prescribers
- Care Coordinators
- PCN Pharmacists
- Other PCN Roles
- Community Mental Health
- Housing
- Childrens Services (coming soon)
- Our Community Anchor (Staying Well)
- District Nurses
- Focus 4 Hope charity
- Communty Matrons
- The Fire Service
- Other voluntary

An example of how the INT is directly supporting patients

A complex patient with low mood, social isolation, bereavement and a house in disrepair was discussed, and with imput from Focus 4 Hope, the Community Matron, PCN Pharmacist and a safeguarding referral, the patient is now taking their medication and out walking their dog everyday, with appropriate mental health support in place. - A huge impact with no GP involvement.

Feedback on the meetings from Louise Reed, Founder & CEO for Focus 4 Hope.

"These are really informative. We have made excellent links with health professionals that previously didn't know what we offer and how we can help. This has increased our referrals and we are now helping more people in our community."



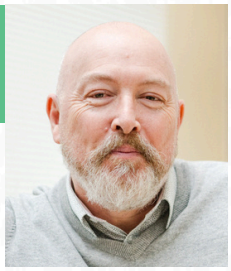
Occupational Therapy for Chronic Pain Management - PGPA's Occupational Therapist, Michelle Agus

Anne, 89, had been suffering from chronic pain for decades. Over the years, she had tried everything from medications, injections, acupuncture, and other medical treatments—but nothing seemed to provide lasting relief. The persistent pain had significantly impacted her daily life, leaving her feeling hopeless and defeated. Despite seeking various treatments, her quality of life remained poor, and she continued to search for a solution. Anne's case is a beautiful example of how occupational therapy can help individuals with chronic pain find their own path to healing. By introducing a simple yet effective intervention—guided meditation— I was able to support Anne in finding a way to manage her pain in a deeply meaningful and personal manner.

Read the case study in full here.

You can also listen to the 'Michelle's Meditation' clip here.

PCN Impact



Upper Calder Valley PCN - Tony Martin

Next steps for our Integrated Neighbourhood Team

Building on the success of the November 'Community Connections' gathering at Todmorden Health Centre, We're excited to be hosting a collaborative workshop event next month.

The November event brought together 30 different organisations, who made nearly 400 engagements throughout the day involving 122 people from across the Upper Calder Valley. You can watch the event video here.



Thanks to the valuable insights gained from the event, alongside surveys and existing data, we are taking the next step in establishing integrated neighbourhood working for the Upper Calder Valley.

The upcoming workshop will bring together providers, partners, and key stakeholders to help shape the Upper Calder Valley Integrated Neighbourhood Team. Our goal is to ensure that services work together effectively to meet the needs of local people - for seamless, people-centred support.

Personalised Care Team Update: Hebden Bridge Group Practice Cervical Screening Drop-in



Following last year's successful cervical screening drop-in, we ran another event in April at Grange Dene Medical Centre. Care coordinators targeted patients on the DNA and overdue lists, sending bulk text invites, and a promotional post on the UCV PCN Facebook page reached over 5,400 people, receiving 15 shares and 33 likes.

On the day, we created a welcoming atmosphere with tea, coffee, and biscuits. Three nurses were on hand, and printed information leaflets helped streamline patient flow. To ease early congestion, we trialled staggered attendance times by age group. 28 patients attended—9 aged 50–64 and 19 aged 25–49. Among them, 3 to 5 were first-timers, including one particularly nervous attendee who was supported throughout by her partner and our compassionate nursing team. Feedback was extreamly positive and so a huge thank you to everyone involved.

PGPA Services in Primary Care

PGPA offers a comprehensive range of services and projects designed to support Primary Care. You can find out more about them on our website: www.penninegpa.co.uk/our-services

SMI Health checks



Hebden Bridge Group Practice Achieves 65% Uptake of SMI Health Checks, Surpassing National and Local Targets

Alongside the practice team, this achievement has been made possible thanks to the continued efforts of Pennine GP Alliance's (PGPA's) SMI Health Checks Champion, who's been leading a 12-month project across Calderdale aimed at increasing the uptake of annual physical health checks for people living with SMI. Read more here.

Stop Smoking Service



Click to view the outcomes of the initial pilot project

Exciting Expansion of Stop Smoking Service to Boost Health and Support More Patients.

We're excited to announce the successful launch and extension of our innovative Stop Smoking Service, developed in partnership with Calderdale Council and Yorkshire Smokefree Calderdale. Read more here.

Workplace Health Checks

PGPA Workplace Healthchecks have been extended until May 2025.



This is a free service available to businesses in Calderdale as part of a vital initiative aimed at improving the health and well-being of the local workforce. So far, our PGPA Healthchecks Care Coordinator Uttara Krishna has delivered over 1,000 healthchecks to employees in Calderdale - an amazing acheivement!

If you know of a local business who could be interested, please contact Uttara by emailing: uttara.krishna@nhs.net

More information about Workplace Healthchecks can be found on our website here.

PGPA Services in Primary Care

Physical Activity Champion



Hannah Davies is our new General Practice Physical Activity Champion, bringing energy, experience, and a passion for movement and lifestyle medicine to her role. She's on a mission to encourage both patients and staff across the five PCNs in Calderdale, as well as PGPA staff, to move more and feel better.

Partnering with practices and Active Calderdale, Hannah is promoting physical activity as a key part of everyday health. Whether it's a lunchtime walk, stretching at your desk, or discussing activity with patients, small steps can make a big difference.

Hannah's work will help bring the positive impact of physical activity to our communities, focusing on collaboration and making movement accessible and enjoyable. We're excited to see how this focus on movement can improve wellbeing across Calderdale and will share updates and opportunities to get involved.

Digital Transformation Strategy

Our Digital Transformation Team at have published their 2025-2026 Digital Transformation Strategy. This details what has already been achieved and the vision for the next year. An infographic capturing this will be on our website soon.

Cancer Care



West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance in partnership with our PGPA Cancer Programme hosted an event aimed to bridge a gap by: 1️⃣ Enhancing understanding of each other's roles to improve signposting for patients. 2️⃣ Fostering collaboration between different services to provide seamless support for those living with cancer in our community.

It brought together an inspiring group of colleagues from across primary care, secondary care, community partnerships, and Macmillan Cancer Support.

Diabetes Care



PGPA's Diabetes Care Coordinator Angela Forsey, is both a healthcare professional and a patient participating in the NHS Type 2 Diabetes Pathway to Remission Programme(T2DR). Angela's journey into the program began due to her own diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. Read her case study here.

Health and Wellbeing

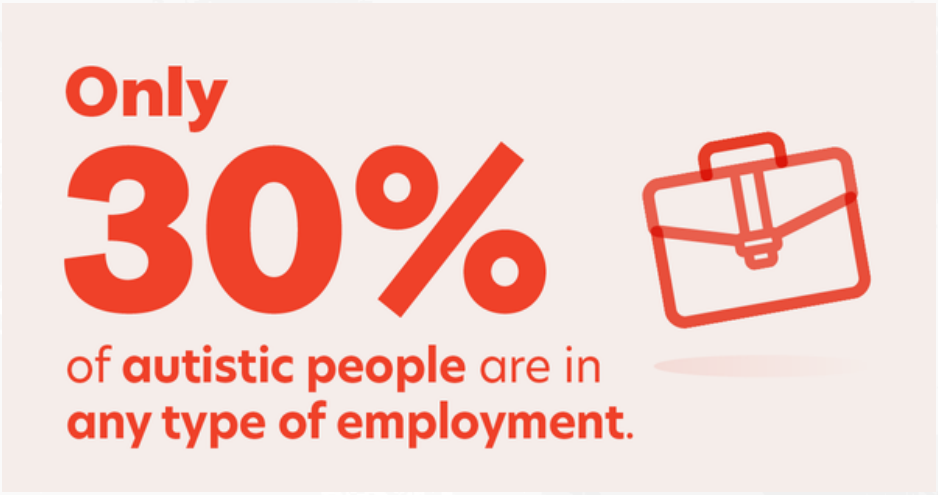
World Autism Acceptance Month



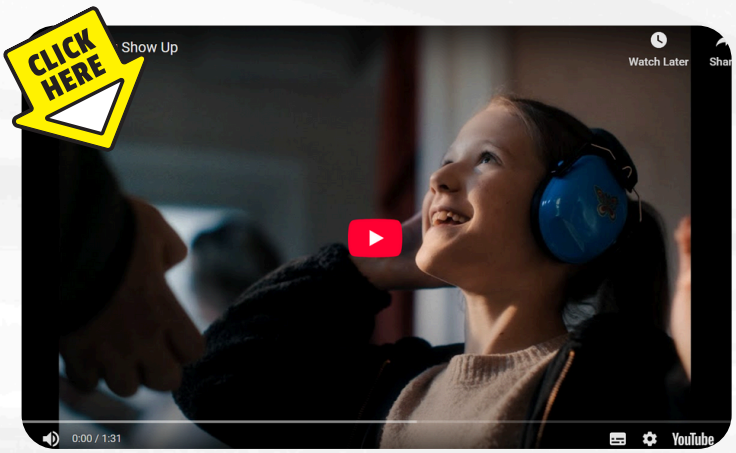
Autistic people can have unique ways of thinking, feeling, and communicating. The spectrum of autism is not a simple line, instead, each individual has a distinct combination of traits, strengths, and challenges. These differences may include:

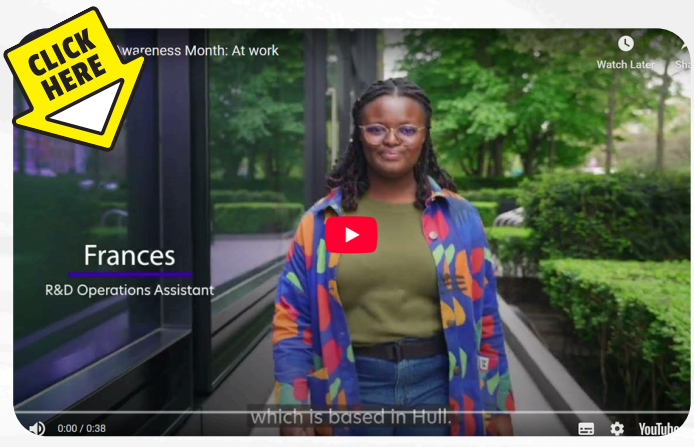
- **Socialising:** Autistic individuals may find social interactions confusing or tiring, and they may struggle to navigate social norms or conversations.
- **Sensory sensitivities:** They might feel overwhelmed in loud, busy environments due to heightened sensitivity to sounds, lights, or textures.
- **Intense interests:** Many autistic people develop deep interests or passions in specific topics.
- **Routine and order:** There may be a preference for structured routines and predictability.
- **Repetitive behaviors:** Repeated movements or actions may be used to calm themselves or express joy.

It's important to note that autism isn't a learning disability or a mental health condition, though many autistic people may also experience a learning disability or mental health challenges. Shockingly, only 30% of autistic people are in any type of employment.



You can click to watch the videos below from the National Autistic Society.





Health and Wellbeing continued

Stress Awareness Month

April is Stress Awareness Month. Please take the opportunity this month for an open conversation on the impact of stress. Talk to friends, colleagues, family, and professionals about your experiences of stress and its effects.

Small actions to make big changes:

Click here to visit our website for more info!

- Connect with someone – are they OK? Are you OK?
- Prioritise sleep – improve your bedtime routine
- Move in your own way – run, walk, do yoga, gardening or stretch
- Spend time in nature – step outside for fresh air and stimulate your senses
- Breathe deep – to help with stress reduction and relaxation
- Practice mindfulness – focus on the here and now



PGPA staff have access to the EAP scheme (mentioned in the employee benefits section) which offers support for stress management.

You can also visit The Stress Management Society for access to free resources and tests.

We always encourage you to speak to your line manager if you are feeling stressed.

Breast screening in Calderdale

Did you see Leanne, a patient at Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust on the BBC One Show talking about her care and treatment after being diagnosed with breast cancer? Find out how Leanne's doing and hear her important message about booking that appointment when you're invited to breast screening.



If you have breasts (no matter what size) - you should be checking them regulary. Any lump, bump or skin change that doesn't look or feel 'normal' for you should result in making an appointment at your GP surgery.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Anyone registered with a GP as female aged from 50 up to their 71st birthday will be invited for NHS breast screening every 3 years. You'll get a letter in the post inviting you.

The Pennine Breast Screening mobile unit is making its way around Calderdale. If you've recently been invited to a breast screening appointment, get that date in your diary. It could save your life.