



Patient Panels are made up of people and carers of people, who have a particular illness or condition. These individuals have therefore developed an insight or expertise in the way that their local NHS provides a particular service. They will have views on the ways that the service could be offered differently which would suit their circumstances or needs. They work in partnership with nurses, doctors and specialists and together often explore ideas for improvement. They act as sounding boards which the professionals can readily access and add another dimension to discussions when they put forward a user's perspective.

Sometimes the **Patients Panel** will want to contribute to debates that are, strictly speaking, outside their specialist area of interest, but where their general knowledge of the NHS could make a useful contribution. An example of this would be the review that is currently taking place about the way in which services will be offered across North Cumbria in the future. Public Consultation on this began in early November. By now you can probably guess where this is leading! The **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COLITIS AND CROHN'S (NACC)** are keen to establish **IBD Patient Panels** These panels will include carers as well as people with IBD. **NACC** have set aside some resources to help pilot three or four such initiatives across the country. We are fortunate locally in that NACC have approached IBD patients in North Cumbria to see if there is any interest in this area.

What would be involved? The last thing **NACC** would wish to do is to frighten people away by insisting on a committee structure with a cycle of regular meetings and an onerous schedule of activity! **NACC** will be looking at working flexibly to accommodate peoples' needs.

An initial meeting of interested people will be held and this would include NHS professionals. Anyone can attend this first meeting without any commitment as to future involvement.

This meeting would decide:-

- what the group wanted to achieve.
- how it would go about achieving this.
- what group members need to help them work in this new role - for example their training or information needs.

So to express an interest, or even to just find out more, ring

- Peter Canham: 016973 52689

Go on; now's your chance - get your voice heard!