

Voluntary and Community Sector

**Your ref:**

**My ref:**

**Date:** 23 December 2011

Dear Colleagues

### **A Local HealthWatch for Cornwall**

As you are aware the Department of Health is passing legislation which will result in the creation of a Local HealthWatch. Local HealthWatch will be established, subject to the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill, in October 2012 and local authorities will be required to commission this service locally. Cornwall Council has been considering how it will meet this need and has recently consulted with stakeholders to better understand its approach.

On Monday 19 December 2011 the HealthWatch Strategy Group met and as a result (subject to comments from the Health and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee who will meet on 3 January 2012) it is the intention of the Council to procure this service by means of direct negotiation with the Voluntary and Community Sector in Cornwall. I am, therefore, inviting you as a Voluntary and Community Sector provider to these negotiations with Cornwall Council to discuss the opportunity to set up a Local HealthWatch organisation to deliver the following:-

- Gather views and understand the experiences of patients and the public on health and social care services (including children and young people)
- Make people's views known to support commissioning processes
- Promote and support the involvement of people in the commissioning and provision of local care services and how they are scrutinised
- Recommend investigation or special reviews of services via HealthWatch England or directly to the Care Quality Commission
- Provide advice and information about access to services and support for making informed choices
- Make views and experiences of people known to HealthWatch England and provide a steer to carry out its role as national champion
- Consideration to providing NHS Complaints Advocacy services
- Overcome cross boundary issues to support patients and the public in neighbouring authorities, such as the Isles of Scilly, Devon and Plymouth.



In addition, HealthWatch will be a body corporate which means that it will have legal authority to carry out its functions. It must be open to all, using the voices and experiences of the people it serves to encourage high standards of health and care provision and to challenge poor services.


The reason for taking this route rather than a competitive tender process is to maximise the benefits of our local infrastructure and to build on the experience of patient and public involvement already gained in Cornwall.

Cornwall Council considers that these services fall within Part B of the current European Procurement Regulations. Under Section 6.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, negotiations can be undertaken with one or more suppliers.

To enable the Council to meet Government timelines it will be necessary to create a model by April 2012 in order for it to be tested by stakeholders during the Spring and to create a contract by June 2012 for commencement in October 2012.

I would be grateful if you could, via a nominated spokesperson, confirm if the local Voluntary and Community Sector wish to enter into such negotiations and, for future reference, to also nominate a representative, in the short term, to support and instigate the process.

Yours sincerely



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