

STANDARDS FOR BETTER HEALTH FINAL DECLARATION 2006 – 2007

COMMENTARY FROM THE PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORUM WITH REGARD TO COVENTRY TEACHING PRIMARY CARE TRUST

The Forum has again enjoyed an excellent relationship with the trust and its officers and believes itself to be seen as a critical friend rather than an adversary. As well as attendance at board Meetings the Forum has been involved in direct discussions concerning patient activities with the joint Chief Executives and other senior members of the Trust staff. The meetings with the Chief Executives have been particularly beneficial as prior to their inception our only source of information had been the local media and so it has been enlightening to obtain information direct from the source. Papers for Board meetings and those on other major topics are regularly received either to the support office or direct to member's home addresses.

The Forum has always believed in effective communications to ensure information is readily available and are very gratified to be invited to sit on the Editorial panel for the Trust's public newsletter to give the patients' perspective.

Trust staffs regularly ask to attend forum meetings to showcase proposed plans before their inception in order to gauge potential reactions from people outside of the Trust and these have been very well received by Forum members.

The greater part of the Forum's work this year has been concerned with Core standards 17 and 18 and we are happy to say progress has been made but two areas of concern still exist

The trust consulted the public in the Autumn of 2005 concerning the provision of a central location for services to replace the now closed Coventry and Warwickshire hospital. Nearly a thousand citizens of Coventry completed the questionnaire. Whilst we understand that progress on the outline business plan needed to be delayed because of several new initiatives nevertheless it appears the timetable is receding with regular monotony. As our concern is for patients we would not like to see this project severely diluted or abandoned altogether and with it much needed facilities for the citizens of the area. Many elderly, infirm or disabled people are finding it difficult to get to the extremities of the city for treatment and this is against the principles of treatment closer to home.

Our Community engagement work throughout the year suggests that there are still some members of the public who are having difficulties obtaining appointments with their general practitioners in spite of official data to suggest otherwise. We intended to investigate this with a project but acquiesced to overtures from the Trust not to proceed so as not to conflict with the Department of Health survey that was being conducted during the year. If our contacts with the public suggest that the situation has not improved we intend to bring it the forefront of our thinking in the coming year in order to ascertain the definitive position.