

Draft Statement from Torbay Council's Health Scrutiny Board on South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust's Quality Account 2011/2012

South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust's Quality Accounts for 2011/2012 has been considered by Torbay Council's Health Scrutiny Board. The Board welcomes the clarity with which the Trust has explained how it has met its priorities for 2011/2012 and what its priorities are for the forthcoming year.

The Board is pleased to note the range work which is ongoing to reduce the impact on acute services; not only those offered by the Ambulance Service but by other agencies as well. The Board would encourage both health and non-health partner agencies to continue to work together given the reducing resources available within the public sector.

The Health Scrutiny Board considered the establishment of regional networks of trauma care at its meeting in September 2011 when councillors were able to hear from representatives of the Trust as well of those from NHS Devon and South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Councillors questioned the rationale for the threshold of forty-five minute travel time to a Major Trauma Centre, especially given the rurality of the region. The Board welcomes Trust's the aim of increasing the availability of major trauma specialist care in the South West by ensuring that patients are transported to the most clinically appropriate centre for their needs.

During the course of the year, members of the Health Scrutiny Board raised concerns about the level of ambulance cover within Torbay. A representative of the Trust accepted the Board's invitation to brief them on the issue and, as a result of a very insightful presentation, the members of the Board were reassured that appropriate levels of ambulance cover are in place in Torbay and South Devon. At the same time, the Board gained an appreciation of the rationale behind the changes to ambulance provision in the area and a greater understanding of the operation of the Trust in South Devon. The Board were assured of the Trust's continuing commitment to delivering high quality, patient-centred, innovative and timely care in South Devon.

The Board commends South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust for its openness and transparency of its operations and hopes that the Trust will continue to work closely with the Board and Torbay Council as a whole.

May 2012