

Commentary provided by Healthwatch Devon for Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust's Quality Account 2012/13

Healthwatch Devon welcomes the opportunity to comment on RD&E's Quality Account for 2012/13 and is particularly encouraged by the Trust's dedication to ensuring that the experiences of patients and carers are at the centre of any work undertaken to improve the quality of care that it delivers.

Healthwatch Devon is particularly encouraged by the initiatives taken by the RD&E to improve the discharge process and the experience for patients and their carers when they are ready to leave hospital. In particular this includes improving the quality of information that is collected around discharge, addressing concerns that relate to patients with complex needs, and redesigning processes for pharmacy discharge. Healthwatch Devon is also pleased to learn of the progress in relation to the pilot project involving Red Cross volunteers to provide advocacy and support to patients with more complex needs on their return home. Healthwatch Devon commends the work that RD&E has undertaken through the Frail Older People Project and its commitment to working with key partners to ensure that care for those who are frail and elderly, is joined up and coordinated appropriately.

Healthwatch Devon commends all work that RD&E is embarking on around the patient journey and the pathway through the system. A key function for Healthwatch Devon, as the independent consumer champion for health and social care, will be to collect patient experiences and case studies that tell the story of a patient's journey through the health and /or social care system with a view to influencing how services can be improved based on these real experiences. Healthwatch Devon will communicate directly with the RD&E's Patient Experience Team to report feedback it receives about its services. Feedback will be used to inform the Patient Engagement and Experience Committee, with a view to informing service improvement for patients now and in the future. Healthwatch Devon will also be directly involved in the Patient Experience Group that meets on a regular basis and is keen to work with RD&E over the coming months where opportunities for joint working arise around particular themes or service areas.

Overall, this Account highlights RD&E's continued efforts to improve the quality of the care it provides to its patients, their families and carers. The use of case studies and real comments throughout, bring this Account to life.