

# **NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group - Governing Body meeting – 19 November 2014**

## **Public Questions**

### **Question 1 (from Mr Chris East)**

#### **The Reason behind the Question**

It is good to see that the CCG has made a move to allow the public to ask questions at CCG meetings. Dorset CCG is thought to have been the only CCG not to allow such questions. This gives a perception of secrecy to the public who would not expect that from an organisation run by their own GPs.

Regrettably the new protocol is quite limited in its extent. A question can be asked only if it is submitted in advance of a CCG meeting, which is then read out at the beginning of the meeting, followed by the CCG's answer. Moreover, it does not appear that supplementary questions could then be asked to seek clarity of the CCG's answer. Nor is there the possibility for the public to ask questions at the end of the meeting which may or may not be in response to items discussed during the meeting.

The public would not regard this new protocol as being sufficiently transparent to provide for dynamic and timely engagement with the CCG board. Given the current extensive and expensive Clinical Review involving the whole of Dorset, which could result in significant changes to NHS facilities in the county, it is important that the public believe that the Dorset CCG is being open with them.

So it is suggested that the Dorset CCG adopts a procedure similar to that used by CCGs elsewhere, and also at our local Dorset County Hospital board meetings.

#### **Question**

To provide for better openness and dynamic and timely engagement with the public, why cannot the Dorset CCG emulate the very satisfactory public question protocol used by our near neighbour Cornwall. Their protocol is outlined in the note below which was sent to me by a contact in Cornwall:

“NHS Kernow, Cornwall's CCG, handles written questions at the start of the meeting. After they answer them, they allow brief follow-up comments and questions from the person who submitted the question. At the end of the meeting, they allow a time for questions from the public--ones that have not been submitted in advance and that may or may not be in response to topics that have come up in the meeting. For all the problems the restructuring has brought, I can't fault the CCG here for the openness of their meetings. They've done their best to make the public feel welcome.”

**Answer - from Charles Summers, Director of Engagement and Development (tel:01305 368046/email: [Charles.summers@dorsetccg.nhs.uk](mailto:Charles.summers@dorsetccg.nhs.uk))**

Mr East of West Dorset, thank you for your question. This is a new development for us as a Governing Body and one which we embrace openly in a range of ways in which we engage with our public. We sincerely hope members of the public will see this as a sincere opportunity to raise questions at the heart of the CCG and to provide some public challenge and accountability for our decisions. Written questions and responses will now form part of our record of minutes, posted to our website, so members of the public can see evidence of our openness. We would not wish to be overly bureaucratic in our approach but we will keep these new arrangements under review.

It is important to note that the Governing Body is a meeting held in public, rather than a meeting aimed specifically at the public. We welcome members of the public to attend our meetings and the opportunity to take questions and statements. Additionally, we can confirm our main public engagement is done via our network of meetings held across Dorset, aimed specifically at public engagement. Details of these are held within our 'involve' area of our website <http://www.dorsetccg.nhs.uk/involve/>.

I hope you will find GP members of the Governing Body approachable in their locality too or during today's interval. We also have well established arrangements to respond to specific enquiries or concerns through correspondence with the Chief Officer and we can advise you on this.