

Mr Andrew Howlett
Public Petitions Committee
T3 40 Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

24 January 2014

Dear Mr Howlett

CONSIDERATION OF PETITION PE1494

Thank you for your letter dated 18th December regarding Petition PE1494 asking

- **What are your views on what the petition seeks and the discussions that took place at the meeting on 10 December?**

I note from the record of discussion that you have invited us to comment as “The Scottish health council, which is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland, is there to be the voice of patients.”

The Scottish Health Council was established as a committee of NHS Quality Improvement Scotland in 2005 to ‘support, ensure and monitor’ the discharge by NHS Boards of their duties of public involvement and patient focus (equal opportunities) and in 2011 the Scottish Health Council was included as a committee of Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the successor body to Quality Improvement Scotland.

Our role has been to support and monitor the involvement activities of the NHS in Scotland. At the time of our establishment it was not felt that there was a need for the Scottish Health Council to have a formal role in speaking directly on behalf of patients and the public, but rather that the Scottish Health Council should encourage and support mechanisms for that voice to be heard. We have pursued this role in a variety of ways, but as we have no formal mechanism or remit for speaking collectively on behalf of patients in Scotland, we are unable to offer a view on their behalf on the substance of the issues you are currently considering under petition PE1494.

We do note that you have consulted with a variety of organisations for their views on this matter, but you might also want to consider consulting with some of the organisations based in Scotland whose members comprise users of mental health services, organisations such as VoX (Voices of eXperience) who are a national ‘user voice organisation’ based in Glasgow, and also local organisations of mental health service users across Scotland, who might have an interest in expressing a view on this issue. If you would like more information about these groups I would suggest you contact VOX in the first instance, and if you wish I can provide you with contact details.

Yours sincerely

Richard Norris
Director

www.scottishhealthcouncil.org

The Scottish Health Council is part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland