

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**North Somerset Community Services Plan Moves Ahead**

Plans for North Somerset Community Services to become a Social Enterprise – a Community Interest Company trading as North Somerset Community Partnership – have been assured by the Board of the South West Strategic Health Authority. The proposal, recommended by NHS North Somerset, will allow the Community Interest Company to work for the benefit of the local community, with representatives and partners having a say in how the company is run, and any surpluses being reinvested into local care. This final assurance process means the new organisation will aim to be up and running by 1 October 2011.

“We are very excited about developing this new way of providing NHS services which will give us the flexibility to be able to respond to the health needs of the people of North Somerset” said Chief Executive designate, Penny Brown, “Being a Community Interest Company means that we really will be working for the good of our community, who will, in turn, work in partnership with us to shape the company and the services it will provide.”

Community Services provide 26 different services in North Somerset including District Nursing, Children’s Community Nursing, Therapy services and Specialist services supporting people in their own homes. “We are already improving our services to allow people to be treated closer to home and wherever possible stay at home during a period of illness by treating them on a “Community ward” rather than going into hospital.

Three Community wards are already open and the remainder will be open by September “ These wards build on existing partnerships with Social Care, GP’s and Charities and provide a blue print for developing services in future as the Social Enterprise is established.

The Community Interest Company will be one of the largest employers in North Somerset and will be owned by its staff. Penny Brown adds “We know that it is front line staff who can see how best to improve things for our service users and patients – we want to make North Somerset Community Partnership a great place to work and to give staff the freedom to make improvements and deliver even better quality care”

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