

Swindon **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

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**In Confidence**  
Michael Wills, MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

28 April 2008

Dear Michael

**Re : Virgin Health**

I am writing following our two conversations and your office's email to me about issues raised by an ex Virgin employee – John Spencer.

Firstly, it would be helpful to confirm the position in relation to the "PCT document" referred to by Mr Spencer. This was our Annual Operating Plan Framework produced in response to the NHS Operating Plan guidance for 2008/09. Details of this document were shared in public session of the PCT Board in January and February 2008 by way of presentations as work in progress. It was also shared with Practice Based Commissioners and our main NHS Trusts through discussion forums. Whilst, therefore, **the document was not on our public website, it was not a confidential document.** The document included areas of acute services to the potential value of £7m that the PCT would expect to tender for during 2008/09.

As you are also aware, Virgin have been in discussion with a Swindon Practice about running their back office functions. The PCT will continue to contract with the practice under GMS Contract arrangements for the provision of primary medical services.

Following the Guardian article on Virgin Health Centres, I have had a discussion with the Senior Partners of the practice to ensure they are protecting themselves against any potential suggestion of inappropriate behaviour. I have checked they were aware of the

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PEC Chair : Howard Thomas  
Chief Executive : Caroline Fowles

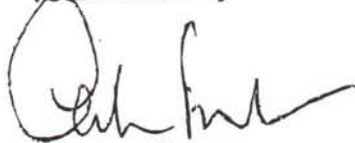
Department's recently published Code of Practice for the promotion of NHS funded services, which they were. The Senior Partner assured me that due governance has been an important part of the discussions with Virgin.

On a broader base, with the introduction now of Free Choice, we have drawn the attention of all our practices to the code.

I trust this provides a clear position statement in relation to local issues. I have kept the South West SHA advised of these issues. If Mr Spencer has shared anything else with you of a more wide ranging nature, you may feel it more appropriate to share this at national level.

Please do call me if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Caroline Fowles  
Chief Executive