

News release



18 October 2006

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL AMBULANCE

Ambulance response times are being improved through additional investment but still cause concern in some rural areas such as South Armagh and the Clogher Valley, according to the Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC), the body tasked with representing public opinion on health and social care matters.

Mrs Lynne Cairns, Chairman of the SHSSC, says, "Investment and service improvements are gradually increasing the number of calls that are answered within 8 minutes but the standard of 50% of calls answered within 8 minutes is still not being met in most areas. We will continue to raise this matter with the Southern Health & Social Services Board, the body responsible for commissioning our ambulance services."

However, adds Mrs Cairns, the public have a part to play in assisting the NI Ambulance Service in meeting its target. "The SHSSC urges householders to ensure that their house number is clearly visible and that hedges are clipped so that they do not obscure street names. We all have to work together to ensure that the emergency services are enabled to do their job."

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- **The Southern Health and Social Services Council is one of 4 Health and Social Services Councils set up in 1991 to represent the views of patients and users of the health and social services. The Council has a total of 24 members, 40% of whom are nominated by District Councils in the Southern Area. The remainder are appointed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety – 30% voluntary/community representatives and 30% are nominees with an interest in health and social care.**
- **Health and Social Services Councils have a right to be consulted by Health and Social Services Boards about and plans for development of services, or where significant changes are being considered. Councils play an important part in representing the views of consumers of services to the decision makers, and provide advice and support to patients and service users in relation to complaints procedures.**

If you require any further information please contact :

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The Council's website address is: www.shsscouncil.net