

# News release



**3 April 2007**

## **YOUR VOICE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

Concern was expressed about the future of public representation within the reformed health and social care structures at the recent meeting of the Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC). Following on from the Review of Public Administration, changes will be made to health and care bodies in Northern Ireland, including changes as to how the public's interests are represented within decision making and service delivery.

In particular, the meeting looked at the arrangements for patient, client and carer representation within the Patient Client Council (PCC), the body that will replace the HSSCs after April 2008.

Mrs Lynne Cairns, Chairman of the SHSSC commented after the meeting, "Currently, over 100 people are involved in the HSS Councils. This includes community activists, people with an interest in health & social care as well as District Councillors. This makes a lot of local knowledge as well as time and expertise available to the HSSCs. We are concerned that a smaller regional management body for the PCC will mean a loss of focus on the public representation role that members currently have."

The draft legislation to establish the PCC as well as the new Health & Social Care Authority and Local Commissioning Groups is currently out for consultation. In its response, the SHSSC will seek to represent the perspective of users of health and social care services. Copies of the SHSSC's response will be available from 11 April 1007 on [www.shsscouncil.net](http://www.shsscouncil.net)

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 :  
Mrs Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer. Tel: 028 3834 9900**

**The Council's website address is: [www.shsscouncil.net](http://www.shsscouncil.net)**