

News release



10 March 2008

NHS DENTAL REGISTRATION

Only 1 in 10 dental practices in the Southern Area are registering fee paying adult NHS patients, according to a survey undertaken by the 'watchdog' body, the Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC). They are so concerned about the difficulty of getting an NHS dentist that they are urging the public to make sure their dental registration is up to date.

The survey, which was undertaken in December 2007, reveals the ongoing decline in the availability of NHS dental services, says Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer with the SHSSC. The responses to the survey indicated that some practices will only register certain categories of patients eg children, non-fee paying adults. A number of practices had waiting lists of up to 3 months for an appointment and nearly one-fifth of practices were only registering private patients.

Mrs Cunningham says, "Our evidence confirms that it is getting harder to find a dentist. Many people don't realise that their registration with a dentist will end after 15 months if they have not attended during that period. It is very important to maintain registration by having a regular

check up. Children and young people under 18 also need to be registered and can get free treatment."

The Health & Social Services Councils are meeting with senior DHSSPS shortly to raise their concerns about access to dental services.

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