

News release



8 December 2008

BUGWATCH

Public interest in healthcare associated infections and hospital cleanliness remains at a high level, says Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer of the Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC), reporting on the findings of the Council's latest Bugwatch survey.

The Bugwatch survey involved SHSSC members and staff observing the ward environment at Craigavon Area Hospital and Daisy Hill Hospital from the perspective of a member of the general public. Areas reported on include ward cleanliness, waste disposal, storage of soiled linen, hand washing and disposal of sharps. The visit was made on an unannounced basis to ensure that the hospital was seen on an 'average day'.

Mrs Cunningham comments, "This is our third Bugwatch survey and we are pleased to report that standards at both hospitals continue to be high. Cleanliness at ward level was generally impressive and a new arrangement for the disposal of 'sharps' appeared to be working well. However, we found that notices reminding visitors to wards to use hand gel were inadequate and have not improved since the last survey. As some of our observations took place during hospital visiting hours and

we noted that a large percentage of visitors did not use hand gel, we feel that this is an important area for improvement. Our report has been shared with the Southern Trust to support their ongoing work in this area and we would like to thank them for their co-operation with this exercise.”

Copies of the full report can be obtained from the Council’s website:
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 :
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The Council's website address is: www.shsscouncil.net