

News release



10 March 2006

Dental Services

There is evidence that high street dental services are coming under increasing pressure, according to the Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC). The SHSSC was set up to represent the interests of the public and service users to the planners and providers of health and social care services and has recently researched patients' experiences of dental services.

"The publicity that our research received has led a number of people to contact us about the difficulties they are having finding an NHS dentist" says Lynne Cairns, Chairman of the SHSSC.

She adds, "Most people in the Southern Area are able to find a dentist and are happy with the service that they receive. However, we are aware that within the Kilkeel and Coalisland areas some people have been unable to get a dentist to take them on as NHS patients. This is obviously very concerning and we will bring this to the attention of the Southern Health & Social Services Board."

The SHSSC has been involved in the recent consultation on the proposed new Primary Care Dental Strategy and is hopeful that the

proposals set out in the strategy will help avoid a worsening situation where people cannot access NHS dentistry. The SHSSC can be contacted on 028 3834 9900.

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