

# News release



**23 June 2006**

## **HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES FOR ALL**

The Southern Health & Social Services Council (SHSSC), which was set up to represent the views and opinions of the public to those who plan, manage and provide services, has been reviewing the work it undertakes to promote equality of access to services.

Mrs Lynne Cairns, the SHSSC's chairperson, says, "Equality of access to services and treatment is at the heart of the SHSSC's work. Over the past year, the SHSSC has produced a report on the impact of involving user users in the planning of services. Another project examined GP services and how accessible these are for adults with a learning disability. A third piece of work enquired into access to dental services for disadvantaged groups. In addition, our day to day work sees us supporting complainants from all sections of the community who feel that they are not getting the best from health and social services.

We feel that there is an important message to get out. Health and social care services should meet everybody's need equally. The work of the SHSSC is to play a part in making sure that happens. As an

organisation ourselves, we need to ensure that we are open to, and supporting all parts of our diverse Northern Ireland community equally."

For the future, the SHSSC is currently undertaking a project to discover whether GP patients feel that they are getting a better service from primary care as a result of the new GP contract. The SHSSC will be launching the findings from this research at their September meeting. Anyone interested in finding out more about the SHSSC can contact the office Tel: 028 3834 9900 or visit the website [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)**