

News release



13 May 2005

COUNCIL SEEKS INCREASED PARTICIPATION

The Southern Health & Social Services Council is reaching out to voluntary and community groups with the aim of increasing their involvement in the Council's work, which is to represent the voice of the public and service user in the planning and delivery of health and social services.

Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer of the Council, says, "In order to better meet the needs of the community and voluntary sector, the Council has appointed Tracey Powell, as Community Participation Worker. It will be Tracey's role to provide a link between the Council and groups with an interest in health and social care. Her role will be to provide information, to promote a rights based approach to accessing services, and to ensure that the Council is aware of local communities concerns about health and social care issues.

The Council has set out to identify the best way to work with community groups by commissioning a piece of research currently being completed by the Community Development and Health Network. This will be launched at a workshop for voluntary and community representatives in mid-June."

Tracey Powell, the newly appointed Community Participation Worker, adds, "The Council is being very proactive in its approach to working with the community. I believe that the research will assist the Council in being much more in touch with the communities' views on services. I'm very much looking forward to the challenge of my new post."

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