

News release



4 April 2006

INVOLVING USERS TO IMPROVE SERVICES

There is evidence that health and social care services are being improved by involving the people who use them in their planning and delivery, according to a report released by the Southern Health & Social Services Council.

The report, *"Assessing the Impact of Service User Participation in the Southern Area"*, showcases a number of examples of good practice where there has been service improvement because of the active involvement of service users.

The report features the 'A Team' from The Laurels Day Centre, Newry, which is operated by Newry & Mourne HSST. The 'A Team' is a group of adults with a learning disability who have been involved in programme planning along with staff at the day centre. The 'A Team' has also had a role in staff recruitment at the centre.

"The SHSSC was pleased to see that so much is being done to move towards patient/client led services," says Stella Cunningham, Chief Officer with the SHSSC, "but much more could be done. We believe that

the report shows that involving service users would help deliver more effective and cost efficient health and social care services."

The report sets out 12 principles for a 'User Centred' model, which it hopes will support organisations wanting to engage more closely with their service users.

Mrs Cunningham adds, "With the changes that are being brought about to structures through the Review of Public Administration, there is a unique opportunity to move user participation up the 'to do' list. The impact of initiatives such as 'Person Centred Planning' for people with a disability, an approach that fits services around the person's individual needs rather than the person having to fit in with what the service offers, shows what can be done."

The report suggests that the ultimate goal of user participation is a change of organisational culture that will ensure that the voice of the user is at the heart of planning and delivering health and social care services.

Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting the Council on:

Tel 028 3834 9900. It can also be downloaded from the 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