

Press Release

Your Voice Within Health and Social Care

The past year has seen the beginning of a debate about how people who use health and social care services should be represented in any new public administration structures within Northern Ireland, says Lynne Cairns, Chairman of the Southern Health & Social Services Council. Mrs Cairns was speaking at the recent launch of the Council's annual report for 2004.

The Council's report provides an overview of activities undertaken throughout the year to promote the interests of patients and the public in the planning and provision of health and social care services. This has included support to people wishing to complain about unsatisfactory health and social care services and research into service users' views of intermediate care services in the Southern Health & Social Services Board area.

An important part of the year's work has involved consultation about what the Council's future 'watchdog' role should be when the Review of Public Administration is completed. According to Mrs Cairns, "The voice of patients and the public is more important than ever in the planning and delivery of services. Health and social care providers are now much better at involving their service users but much remains to be done. The Southern Council will continue to consult about what the key priorities for user involvement should be. This will help us to define our future role and ensure that the impact of the lay person's voice is felt to maximum effect."

If you would like a copy of the Council's Annual Report, this can be downloaded from the Council's website [www...](#) or can be obtained from

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