



# **SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL**

Response to

Equality Impact Assessment

on

**Access to Mental Health Commission Services for People  
with Mental Health Needs**

By

Mental Health Commission for Northern Ireland

The Southern Health and Southern Health and Social Services Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on this document.

### **Communication**

The Council feels there is a general lack of understanding about the role of the Commission as distinct from other statutory / voluntary organisations in the field of mental health. We would be particularly interested in clarification of its remit / role in relation to the Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) Complaints Procedure and the assistance it can offer to complainants. The Commission must explain how its role in relation to complaints differs from other organisations that provide information and advocacy services.

We welcome the proposed communication strategy but feel it should encompass public bodies as well as the community / voluntary sector and service users.

### **Review of Hospital & Community Services: Training**

We welcome the emphasis on training for medical staff. In our experience training on diversity / communication has focused generally on nursing staff. This is due in part to resistance or lack of interest from the medical profession. We would view any moves to encourage / require participation from medical staff as a positive step. Given the vulnerability of the service users involved it has the potential to have a major impact on treatment and care.

### **Review of Hospital & Community Services: Support in Meeting Particular Needs**

We welcome the idea of an orientation pack.

### **Review of Untoward Events and Complaints**

The Health and Social Services Councils would welcome engagement with the Commission re support measures.

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