



Health & Social Services Councils

Work Programme

April 2004 – March 2007

SAFEGUARDING

YOUR

RIGHTS

Introduction

The Health and Social Services Councils were established to represent the interests of users of health and social services in Northern Ireland. Four Councils were set up in 1991 on a regional format with Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western offices.

Purpose

The Councils aim is to make public services more responsive to users' and carers' needs and to give the public an opportunity to influence decisions that are made on their behalf. Health and Social Services Councils have the following legal rights:

To be consulted by the Health and Social Services Board on any major developments or changes in services.

To have formal meetings with Health and Social Services Boards.

To enter and inspect health and social services facilities.

To receive any information which it needs to do its job.

Council members are all local people who have an interest in health and social services issues. Members are drawn from city, district and borough councils, voluntary and community organisations and other interested groups. The Health and Social Services Councils have 102 members in total (24 Northern/ 24 Southern/ 30 Eastern / 24 Western). Health & Social Service Council members are all appointed with the approval of the Minister responsible for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Health and Social Service Council members are not paid and the four councils are supported by a small number of staff.

Principles

The Councils believe that users of health and social services have the right to the following principles:

- Dignity People have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Accountability People have the right to expect accountable health and social services
- Access People have the right to get the services they need
- Choice People should be able to choose from a range of services.
- Information People have a right to accurate information presented in an understandable and acceptable way that allows for informed choice
- Safety People have a right to expect safe services.
- Redress If something goes wrong a person has the right to have it acknowledged and expect a prompt resolution
- Equity People should be fairly treated and must have equality of opportunity in the provision of health and social services
- Quality People have the right to expect a quality of service to meet or exceed agreed standards
- Value for money People have a right to expect public money to be wisely spent.
- Representation People have a right to have their voice heard and be consulted.
- Openness People should know how decisions are made, who makes the decision, why particular decisions are made and what information was used in the decision-making process

Annual Work Programme

As public bodies, receiving public funds, the Councils must be open to public scrutiny in their activities and their use of funds. To develop public accountability the Councils must set clear objectives within an Annual Work Programme. The progress towards set objectives are reviewed and monitored to determine if targets are being achieved.

Part IV Performance of Functions of the Health and Social Services Councils' Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991 states that each Council must draw up a programme of work for the succeeding year. In previous years each of the four councils developed an individual work programme. Each programme addressed the prioritisation of local council activities and ensured those activities remained relevant to health and social service user interests.

In light of recent developments in the health and social care agenda and possible impacts on the future working of the Councils as a whole the four Councils, Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western, have developed a joint three-year work programme. Whilst this programme is intended to demonstrate the co-ordinated approach of the four councils in their activities it also looks to address initiatives specific to each council's user needs. The objectives have been set to address key themes for Council activities.

Each quarter the individual Councils produce updates on achievement against objectives in both a local and regional context. In addition, on an annual basis each Council produces a report on progress made against the Work Programme

Statutory Duties

As public bodies the Councils have specific statutory duties to fulfil and these are reflected in ongoing activities.

These include:

New Targeting Social Need (New TSN). As public bodies the Councils can contribute to the New TSN initiative by ensuring that the health and social needs of disadvantaged people are assessed, targeted for improvement and progress monitored.

Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998. Under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 the Councils must have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity as defined in the Act. In addition, the Councils must have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force on 2nd October 2000 and incorporated into domestic law the European Convention on Human Rights. The Act makes it unlawful for any public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a Convention right.

Freedom of Information Act 2000. Under Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is a legal duty of every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme, to publish information in accordance with its scheme and periodically review the scheme. The act places an obligation on the Councils to provide a general right of access to the public on recorded information held by the Councils subject to exemptions under the act.

Key Objectives

The three-year work plan for the Councils has a number of key objectives. These objectives will be assessed annually with due regard to developments in the health and social care environment and changing demands placed on the Councils operation.

To increase Visibility and Accessibility to Members of the Public

To Monitor the Health and Personal Social Services Provided to the Public.

Advise on Health and Personal Social Services Policies, Strategies and Operation

To Provide Complaints Assistance

To Develop a Medium/Long Term Strategy/Plan for the Councils

To Fulfil Organisational Requirements

To Respond to Local Issues in the Provision of Health and Personal Social Services to the Public.

Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Councils Work Programme 2004-2006

Ref	Objective To Increase Visibility and Accessibility to Members of the Public		
1.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
1.1	Engage Public in Councils Role and Activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Develop Policy on public/community engagement □ Develop and deliver Public Awareness Campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Public awareness Road Shows</i> ○ <i>Information materials</i> ○ <i>PR expertise</i> ○ <i>Seek funding for project worker</i> □ Develop joint Councils Website □ Establish single contact number for Councils □ Review Council Public Meetings 	2004 2004 2004 2004 2004 2004
1.2	Develop Media Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Agree strategy for media communication/engagement □ Maintain and extend media contacts □ Respond to media requests for input □ Become acknowledged point of contact for user rights 	2004 2004 2004 2004
1.3	Increase Accessibility of Councils to Members of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Provide accessible Council presence to public □ Signpost sources of information for public □ Update and maintain Website □ Review Councils' information leaflets 	2004 2004 2004 2004

Ref	Objective: To Monitor the Health and Personal Social Services Provided to the Public.		
2.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
2.1	To Enter and Inspect Health and Social Services Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Visit/Inspection guidelines to be devised ❑ All Council members to receive awareness training (pack/session) ❑ Appropriate visits completed with formal background information and feedback supplied ❑ Visits initiated on current Health & Social Care issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>MRSA</i> ○ <i>Mental Health Admission Wards</i> ○ <i>Child/Adolescent Mental Health Services</i> ❑ Visit/Inspect in response to future Health & Social Care issues. 	<p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004</p>
2.2	Carry Out Project Investigation into Key Aspects of Health and Personal Social Services Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Allocate resource ❑ Initiate work-plan and protocols ❑ Monitor and analyse Board/Trust data ❑ Assess implementation of new GMS contract 	<p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2005</p>
2.3	Monitor Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Maintain ongoing role of Councils in complaints process ❑ Audit current complaints monitoring activity ❑ Agree best practice model for monitoring Complaints Process 	<p>2004</p> <p>2004</p> <p>2004</p>

2.4	Monitor Implementation of Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="922 242 1653 279">❑ Regional Prosthetic Service for Northern Ireland <li data-bbox="922 300 1424 336">❑ Human Organ Retention Inquiry <li data-bbox="922 357 1339 394">❑ Children as Complainants <li data-bbox="922 414 1877 451">❑ Cancer Services Investing for the Future (The Campbell Report) 	<p data-bbox="1960 242 2033 279">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1960 300 2033 336">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1960 357 2033 394">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1960 414 2033 451">2004</p>
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Ref	Objective Advise on Health and Personal Social Services Policies, Strategies and Operation		
3.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
3.1	Act as Advocate for User Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Monitor and promote service/user involvement in organisations with Health and Social Care agenda 	2004
3.2	Represent Public's Interests in Response to Health and Personal Social Service Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Establish criteria for prioritising consultation responses ❑ Agree methods of appropriate consultation responses 	2004 2004
3.3	Maintain Appropriate Representation on Committees with Health & Social Care Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Evaluate current representation on committees ❑ Audit activity and evaluate influence on public well being at Strategic and Delivery level 	2004 2004

Ref	Objective To Provide Complaints Assistance		
4.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
4.1	Advice to Patients and Clients on Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="875 416 1921 504">❑ Maintain current service provision in assisting and advising complainants on the complaints process <li data-bbox="875 523 1921 560">❑ Audit current complaints service provided by Councils <li data-bbox="875 579 1921 616">❑ Revisit Council Complaints protocols <li data-bbox="875 635 1921 671">❑ Implement Best Practice on Complaints Assistance <li data-bbox="875 691 1921 727">❑ Support and influence Regional Complaints Steering Group <li data-bbox="875 746 1921 783">❑ Respond to Complaints Consultation Document 	<p data-bbox="1953 416 2049 453">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1953 523 2049 560">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1953 579 2049 616">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1953 635 2049 671">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1953 691 2049 727">2004</p> <p data-bbox="1953 914 2049 951">2005</p>

Ref	Objective To Develop a medium/long term Strategy/Plan for the Councils		
5.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
5.1	Develop Joint 3 year Strategic Plan for Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Establish working group across 4 Councils ❑ Develop “Plan for Change” for Councils ❑ Present Plan to DHSSPS 	2004 2004 2005
5.2	Develop Joint Council Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Annual joint members meeting/Conference ❑ Produce Report on the Role of Health and Social Services Councils in Patient and Public Involvement based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>2004 conference</i> ○ <i>Evaluation report</i> ❑ Deliver report to key stakeholders ❑ Develop and maintain Joint Annual work programme 	2005 2004 2004 2004

Ref	Objective To Fulfil Organisational Requirements of the Councils.		
6.0	Deliverable	Activity	Start
6.1	To Deliver all Organisational Requirements of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Management of Council □ Administration of Council activities □ Statutory obligations including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>New Targeting Social Need</i> ○ <i>Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998</i> ○ <i>The Human Rights Act 1998</i> ○ <i>Freedom of information Act 2000</i> 	2004 2004 2004

