



n e w s r e l e a s e

BED CLOSURES RUSHED

9 November 2005

The Eastern Health and Social Services Council is concerned that plans to close over 100 beds in hospitals in the Eastern part of Northern Ireland are being rushed through.

Richard Dixon, Chief Officer of the Council said:

“The Eastern Board must guarantee that beds will not close before the community services that replace them are up and running.

The Board must guarantee that there will be no loss of service to patients and that the new services will be at least as good as those they replace.

These proposals are about taking people out of hospitals who don't need to be there and providing them with services at home and in their communities.

We support this.

No one should be in hospital who doesn't need to be there. New and better community services will – we believe – be good news for patients.

But a change like this needs to be managed well.

We are concerned that the timetable in which all this will happen is too tight to give patients the assurances they need.

We are concerned that there has been no public consultation and that there is – apparently – no time for consultation.

We believe, therefore, that patients and the general public must be given – now - a guarantee that the services they need – whether in hospital or in the community – will be sustained throughout this time of change and that the new services they receive will be as good – or better - than those they have today.”

Notes to Editor

“The Eastern Health and Social Services Council was set up in 1991 to represent the interests of the public in health and social services in the Eastern Board area.”

For further information contact:

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