



n e w s r e l e a s e

WAITING LISTS

July 5th 2005

The Eastern Health and Social Services Council welcomes Shaun Woodward's recent announcement on tackling the unacceptably long waiting times faced by some patients in Northern Ireland.

The Council has consistently highlighted the effect of these waiting times on individual patients. The Minister's commitment to action is not before time.

The Council wishes to see sustained action and a guarantee that the needs of patients are placed very clearly at the heart of all health and social service priorities and at all levels of decision making. The urgency given by the Minister to address particular aspects of the service needs to be given to many aspects of health and social care in Northern Ireland.

Patients expect a level of service that is not being delivered every time in Northern Ireland. When patients wait for an unacceptably long period of time they deserve an explanation. Trusts must live up to the public's expectations for a quality service in a reasonable time and accept responsibility when they do not. The Council welcomes therefore the Minister's initiative in improving accountability for delivery of services.

Richard Dixon, the recently appointed Chief Officer of the Council said;

"Whilst the Council welcomes Shaun Woodward's statement we feel more needs to be done not only in the areas of care which the Minister highlighted but across many services and with the same challenging sense of urgency. We look forward therefore to further announcements by the Minister in coming months."

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:

**Mr Richard Dixon, Chief Officer, Eastern H&SSCouncil
Tel office: (028) 90321230**