

# Patient and Client Council

## Your voice in health and social care

### The People's Priorities – Summary

#### Background

The purpose of this report is to help ensure that the process of setting future targets for health and social care reflects the opinions of people who use the services. A total of **3,461** people took part in this process.

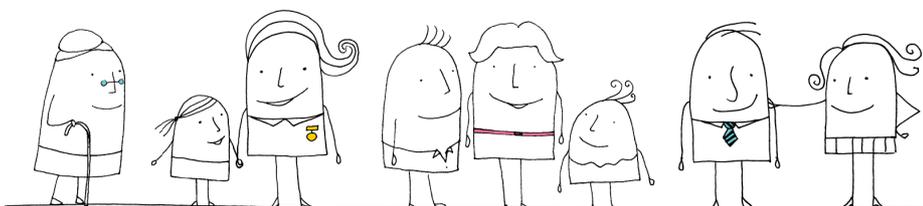
The opinions and needs of patients, service users, carers, communities, and the general public are wide and varied. Despite the broad range of opinion which exists there are many common themes in relation to issues affecting health and social care in Northern Ireland.

People really value their health and social care services and appreciate improvements that have come about as a result of target setting in recent years. Participants expressed a desire for the public to be better informed about the Department's "Priorities for Action" targets, and, the performance of the Health and Social Care Trusts in achieving those targets. Each individual was asked to suggest up to three priorities for decision makers to address. This question generated 8,534 responses. Of these responses 5,965 (70%) of the issues identified were represented in the top ten priorities.

#### Priorities

The top ten priorities identified were as follows:

- Priority 1      Access to and Quality of Hospital Care**
- Priority 2      Care of the Elderly (Including Care in the Community)**
- Priority 3      Waiting Times for Hospital Care and Treatment**
- Priority 4      Cancer Services**
- Priority 5      Mental Health and Learning Disability Services**
- Priority 6      Health and Social Care Staffing Levels**
- Priority 7      Access to GPs and Primary Care**
- Priority 8      Children's Services**
- Priority 9      Reducing the costs of administration and management**
- Priority 10     Quality Assurance of Health and Social Care Services**



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### Recommendations

The Patient and Client Council urges the Minister of Health, the Department, the Health and Social Review Team, commissioners and key decision makers to address the key messages coming from patients, service users, carers and communities. The following recommendations are based on major themes that surfaced repeatedly throughout the survey responses:

- A joined up systems approach to the future development of hospital care, Out of Hours services to include GP Out of Hours services, minor injuries units and accident and emergency services.
- A greater focus on care in the community for the most vulnerable groups in society such as the elderly, children, learning disabled and those with mental health problems. This will also require improved inter-departmental working by the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as better internal co-ordination and communication across health and social care organisations.
- That there is a renewed commitment by the commissioners to the full achievement of the Department's Quality Strategy, including the five experience standards as outlined in the Department's document entitled "Improving the Patient and Client Experience". The five experience standards cover the following areas: respect; attitude; behaviour; communication; privacy and dignity.
- The Department should report on an ongoing basis to the general public about targets, how they are monitored and the performance achieved by health and social care organisations.
- Any decision to remove or change the targets implemented as a result of the Department's documents entitled "Priorities for Action" should be openly communicated to patients, service users and their carers; and that they should be involved in the setting of future targets and standards against which the performance of health and social care organisations are measured.
- The Department and the Health and Social Care Board should address the need for an information and advice service for people in Northern Ireland that will provide accredited information on health and social care, the services available and the standards they should expect.
- The Department and the Commissioners should communicate with the public regarding the level of investment in administration and management required to deliver health and social care services and consider how to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

