We win double Gold at the 2013 Northern Ireland CIPR PRide Awards

The Patient and Client Council were named gold winners in the Healthcare Campaign and the Public Affairs Campaign Categories at the 2013 Northern Ireland Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) PRide Awards ceremony held in Belfast recently.

The CIPR PRide Awards received entries from across 12 UK regions.

The judging process for the PRide Awards is rigorous with a national panel of industry experts assessing the shortlisted entries and choosing the winners.

Minister of Health Edwin Poots said: “Communicating and listening to patients’ views and questions is a key part of the Patient Client Council’s role and I would like to extend my congratulations to them on achieving these awards.

People across Northern Ireland must feel that they have a voice and a place to go for information. The Patient and Client Council provides that platform and an excellent service to the public.”

The Patient and Client Council’s Head of Operations Louise Skelly commented: “We are delighted to win these prestigious awards. We want to ensure that people have their voices heard in health and social care issues in Northern Ireland. These two projects gave people a great opportunity to not only share their views but also to influence decision makers and leaders in deciding future policy.”

Are you going to the 2013 User Carer Celebration in Derry~Londonderry?

Last month we told you about the Patient and Client Council User Carer Celebration event; a day to celebrate the involvement of people like you who contribute your views, time and effort into improving health and social care services for everyone.

This year we are holding the event in Derry~Londonderry at the recently refurbished Guildhall on the 28th November. There are still places available and we have arranged a coach to take attendees to and from Belfast.

If you would like to attend, or want to find out more information, please contact Sarah McCandless on 0800 917 0222 or email: sarah.mccandless@hscni.net
The Painful Truth – 2,500 Chronic pain sufferers tell their story

In October we took the results of a survey of chronic pain sufferers to our Board for approval. The response to this project has been remarkable; more than 2,500 people with long-term pain took the time to describe how pain affects their lives, to offer their views on the treatment and care they receive, and to suggest how pain services might improve in the future.

People described the challenges and frustrations of dealing with chronic pain on a daily basis and gave personal accounts of the effect of pain on their life. The results of the questionnaire show that long-term pain affects key areas of living at home (80%), work (70%), and leisure (83%). The mental and emotional impact of pain is very evident; 88% of people said that pain had a negative impact on their mood.

As well as providing a detailed reflection of what it is like to live with pain on a daily basis, this report addresses a number of key findings in the following areas: diagnosis, waiting for pain services, long-term support, treatment, and future services. For example just over half of all questionnaire respondents waited more than a year for a diagnosis, 29% waited in excess of 3 years.

It is clear from the findings of this report that many people with chronic pain feel that they are left to wait, frustrated and in pain, for too long. Waiting for a diagnosis is just the beginning; people also experience lengthy waits for other services such as; referral appointments, tests and scans, pain relief treatments, access to a pain clinic, self-management programmes and physiotherapy.

The report will now go to print and be issued widely to decision makers including MLAs, the commissioners, the Trusts and professional bodies. We are already in discussions with decision makers about their need to respond to this survey.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. We promise that we will endeavour to ensure that your voice matters and that services change to meet the needs of people who live with pain on a daily basis.

Help us design future services

The Public Health Agency (PHA) have recently launched the ‘10,000 Voices’ project.

Pat Cullen, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professions at the PHA, said: “10,000 Voices is a unique project that offers people an opportunity to tell us about their experiences as a patient or as someone who has experienced the health service, and to highlight the things that were important to them”.

“We want patients, families and carers to share their experiences of healthcare and how it has impacted on their lives by completing a short survey. The 10,000 stories we collect will be used to help plan future healthcare, enabling the delivery of better outcomes and better value for money in how services are delivered. This will begin with the services people use when they become suddenly or unexpectedly unwell or injured.”

For more information and to see how you can get involved, please see the PHA website: www.publichealth.hscni.net or telephone: 028 90 321313 ext 2497. The survey is also available to complete online at www.10000voices.info

Have you a good experience to share?

Choose Well is a campaign run by the Health and Social Care Board, which aims to create a better understanding among the general public of what healthcare services are available to them; how and when to access urgent care services the right way. If people pick the service most appropriate to their symptoms, it means they get the right treatment and this also helps to manage our health service resources.

We would like to hear about any positive experiences you have had with visiting a GP/GP out of hours, a Pharmacy, a Minor Injuries Unit, an Emergency Department or 999. We want to hear about your experience and may use your story for the Choose Well awareness weeks. This will be used for our launch on 7th November and in the media.

If you have an interesting or positive story to tell, please contact Debbie McGrory on: 028 9032 1313 ext. 2056 or email: debbie.mcgrory@hscni.net

You are also invited to attend the campaign launch event which is happening on 7th November at 11:45 in the Grove Wellbeing Centre, Belfast. For more info, or to confirm a place, please contact Anne Ward on 028 90 321313 ext 2221.

From coughs to colds – ask your community pharmacist!

“Ask Your Pharmacist” Week occurs on 4-11 November.

This year, the focus is on advice and treatment for common ailments to help people stay well during the winter months. To find out more pop into your local community pharmacist.