

# **Patients' Council**

## **Royal Edinburgh Hospital**

### **ANNUAL REVIEW 2003-4**

**The Patients' Council offers a voice for patients, support and information over common concerns and opportunities to campaign on issues affecting people with mental health problems.**

The Patients' Council has enjoyed a hardworking and productive year as increasing numbers of our members are involved in both local and national initiatives. The agendas for advocacy and public involvement have grown considerably and the new Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 has led to many opportunities for consultation and involvement of service users.

#### **In the Royal Edinburgh Hospital**

The Patients' Council holds weekly drop-in afternoons and open sessions in the New Church Centre. These activities continue to enable in-patients to bring issues or concerns which may require collective advocacy. They also have the benefit of raising the profile of the Patients' Council and bringing in new members.

The support worker and activists have met with groups of service users at Cambridge Street and Ballenden House and have attended a limited number of community meetings on hospital wards.

#### **Mental Health Review**

Three Patients' Council activists gave a presentation in September at a stakeholder event for the Lothian Primary Care NHS Trust mental health review. In March, service users from Edinburgh Users Forum and the Patients' Council had an information-gathering meeting with David Bolger, Head of the Scottish Executive Health Department's Mental Health Division.

#### **Visits and Events**

In August the Patients' Council held an Awayday for members, looking at advocacy provision across Scotland. In October, members attended a Conference held by the Advocacy Safeguards Agency. In November, a visit to Dykebar Hospital in Paisley led to links with the Patients' Council there. Further visits are planned to make similar links in Fife, Borders and Durham.

## **New Initiatives**

Patients' Council activists have been fully involved in the following areas of change:

- Re-focussing nursing on acute wards
- Protocols for patients' safety, privacy and dignity within the hospital
- Input on planning the re-built Royal Edinburgh Hospital
- Reviewing the Occupational Therapy Rehabilitation Unit projects and contributing to recommendations for future ways of working in these services
- New ways of monitoring standards of Domestic Services

## **Patients' Council Meetings**

There have been three full Patients' Council meetings since April 2003.

The Management Committee met 7 times and has considered and made recommendations on the following issues:

1. New nomination procedure for election to Management Committee.
2. Recruitment arrangements for the new management agency.
3. Change to the Constitution – proposal to have up to 12 user members.

## **Host Agency**

An independent agency to provide a management service for the Patients' Council is expected to be in place by June 2004.

Agencies bidding to do the job put in their applications on 5<sup>th</sup> April.

## **The Team**

The user members of our Management Committee this year were Fred Dray (Chair until 7 October), Jimmy Grant (acting Chair since 7 October), Albert Nicolson (Convenor of Management Committee), Mo Connolly, David Hollings, Martin McAlpine, Jocky Robertson, Josephine Waugh and Robert McEwan. Sadly, Robert died in February. His contribution to the work of the Patients' Council has been very much appreciated and he will be greatly missed. Our staff were Ruth Rooney (Support Worker) and Maggie McIvor (Admin Worker).

