

**PATIENTS' COUNCIL  
ROYAL EDINBURGH  
HOSPITAL**

**ANNUAL REVIEW  
2005 - 2006**

- **Independent**
- **Collective advocacy**
- **Service-user led**
- **representation**

**'Acting together to promote change'**

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## **Convenor's Report**

I have enjoyed being Convenor although there have been difficult times. I have found myself out of my depth but the support from my colleagues round the table really boosted my confidence. It is hard to keep in mind that during meetings the other committee members are not there to be your friends – being on a committee, we are all a team and we should not shy away from conflicting debates and issues.

We have had an excellent management team this year, well supported by our staff, Ruth and Maggie. A huge amount of work has been done by the Patients' Council this year, ably led by the Management Committee. Being Convenor of this wonderful bunch of people has raised my self-esteem tremendously – a couple of years ago, I had no confidence in my own abilities but now I realise anything is possible.

I see the Patients' Council going from strength to strength and would be honoured to continue to be part of this collective advocacy service for some time to come.

**Mo Connolly**

## **Our Management Committee**

Tom Carey	Mo Connolly
Elaine Dobbie	Janet Ewing
Martin McAlpine	Bruce McNally
Albert Nicolson	Lesley Smith
Jocky Robertson	Robert Taylor

**NHS Link Officer: Lesley Boyd**  
**Co-opted Member: Rev. Murray Chalmers**

# ‘SAFETY, PRIVACY & DIGNITY’ IN ACUTE WARDS

The Patients’ Council has co-facilitated an initiative to improve safety, privacy & dignity on the Royal Edinburgh Hospital Acute Wards. Our members have been working for two years in partnership with hospital staff to bring about changes and a substantial budget has been provided to fund those changes.

## Two major developments have been:

- ❖ A project on Self-Harm, working with patients and acute ward staff to change ways in which support and training are delivered. Patients’ Council members have advised the project and helped run awareness raising sessions on self-harm.
- ❖ A new groupwork post has been set up to develop group therapy sessions for in-patients of acute wards.

## Other New Developments funded by the above are:

- Healthy eating groups. SAMH have run 8 ‘Beanfeast’ days at the Church Centre, taken up by 60 – 80 patients, providing healthy food and company.
- North Wing: Healthy Eating Group and Swimming Group.
- A football team, organised by one of the Recreation Assistants in the acute services, was sponsored for travel costs.
- A women’s group has been set up in the IPCU.
- Attractive courtesy packs of toiletries for people being admitted to hospital without these items will soon be available.
- Contributing funding for Smoking Cessation worker and information programmes.
- New water coolers for rehabilitation wards and additional washing machines for acute wards.

## Support Worker's 'Take on the Year'

This has been one of the busiest years on record for the Patients' Council with several large initiatives highlighted in this Annual Report. It has also kept its feet on the ground, continuing to listen to patients' concerns about their treatment and care.

A great achievement this year has been the strength and commitment of the Management Committee (10 people who use mental health services). The members have encouraged and supported each other in ways which have ensured a confident and effective management group.

The Patients' Council as a whole has extended its work to listen and represent the views of a larger number of patients. It has had more contact this year with the rehabilitation services and has offered a weekly afternoon session for in-patients only. Greatly improved links with Community mental health teams and mental health fora in the City have also developed.

At a recent workshop, Patients' Council members spoke about the mutual respect and support which make being an activist a rewarding experience; helping others to have a voice and sharing difficulties brings satisfaction and challenge.

As Support Worker, I share the highs and lows which accompany the Patients' Council's work. There are always difficult issues to be tackled and, hopefully, resolved. So, in addition to providing support to the group I am in constant admiration of its tenacity and creative approaches.

The impact which the Patients' Council has made on improvements to acute wards in the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, through partnership working with a range of hospital staff, was recently acknowledged by the Mental Welfare Commission and NHS Lothian. The hard work put in over two years by up to 20 Patients' Council members has yielded many significant changes.

Over the five years that I have been in post, advocacy has increased its presence and influence enormously and the Patients' Council can be proud of the important part it has played.

**Ruth Rooney**

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

A WELCOME NEW PROJECT ON SELF-HARM BEGAN IN ACUTE WARDS FROM NOVEMBER. PATIENTS' COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE GIVEN FEEDBACK TO THE PROJECT AND HELPED DEVELOP AND DELIVER AWARENESS RAISING SESSIONS FOR IN-PATIENTS AND RELATIVES.

WE ENJOYED VISITS TO OTHER PATIENTS' COUNCILS AND GROUPS. THESE INCLUDED STRATHEDEN HOSPITAL IN CUPAR, QUEEN MARGARET HOSPITAL IN DUNFERMLINE AND LEVERNDALE IN GLASGOW.

THE NEW NHS LOTHIAN TOBACCO POLICY INVOLVED LOTS OF OUR TIME AND INTEREST. WE RECOMMENDED CHANGES DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY IN THE INTERESTS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN-PATIENTS AND ARE PART OF AN ON-GOING HOSPITAL GROUP ON THIS MATTER.

WE WERE PART OF THE SHARED PARTNERSHIP GROUP OF NAPIER UNIVERSITY, DEVELOPING WAYS FOR SERVICE USERS AND CARERS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSING TRAINING

OUR MEMBERS TOOK PART IN 3 INTERESTING ARTLINK PROJECTS, ENTITLED

- MAYDAY PAVILION: A DOME BUILT IN THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS, OFFERING YOGA, TAI CHI, KNITTING AND DANCING
- THE IDEAL WARD
- 'A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION' ART AND SELF-HARM

WE STRENGTHENED OUR LINKS WITH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS, THROUGH ATTENDING THEIR COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND FACILITATING INPUT FROM PEOPLE USING DAY SERVICES.

## Funding Report

The Patients' Council has £54,941 of annual funding. Accounts are audited through Circles Network, registered address: Potford's Dam Farm, Coventry Road, Rugby CV23 9JP

### Many thanks to the following:

Allison Alexander  
Wendy Buchanan  
Gwen Carmichael  
Murray Chalmers  
Merrick Pope  
Chris White

for their assistance and support during the year.

The Patients' Council showed me understanding and real help when I was very ill and afraid.

Patients taking power for themselves.

Collective Advocacy is about patients using their own power on their own behalf.

Supported by Circles Network



The Patients' Council is a registered charity  
Scottish Charity No. SC021800

