

PARTNERSHIP AT ITS BEST

On the 23rd January 07 members of the Panel of Reference met a range of staff from Stevenston Health Centre. The Panel represents users of the mental health service and their carers. This was such a successful meeting that Panel members are hoping to extend their contact with other Health Centres and GP provisions to discuss common concerns and look for solutions. The Panel would welcome contact from any interested group and they should contact Helen Clark on 0776 555 0009 to arrange a meeting.

A range of issues were discussed such as how emergency appointments could be accessed and how could continuity be provided for service users, an issue which is crucial for vulnerable people. In times of crisis people often need to meet with a known Doctor and ways of trying to provide this sensitivity in the medical service were explored.

The Panel were able to share their knowledge of Crisis Care Plans and posed the question "Can the promises made be kept by the team?" There was some concern about this being feasible and Doctors from the Centre flagged up a series of review meetings called "Mind your Health", being held by NHS Ayrshire and Arran. Members of the Panel will attend a range of these meetings to contribute to the discussions.

Other concerns covered were how the GP service makes contact with patients after receiving discharge letters and protocols for supporting people who had been placed into the community as part of the Care in the Community initiative. There continues to be fairly negative views about follow up services and quality of provision for this development.

As a result of these discussions Stevenston Health Centre is identifying a health worker to be first line contact for carers and the Panel hopes to create a carers group and use the Centre's accommodation in order to meet. Surely this is partnership at its best!