



Putting Patients First

CANTERBURY AND THANET COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL

Ground Floor, Oaten Hill Court,
CANTERBURY, Kent, CT1 3HS

Tel: (01227) 766011

Fax: (01227) 780997

Press Release

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NATIONWIDE CASUALTY WATCH 2001 – LOCAL RESULTS

Health Watchdog highlights longest waits in hospital A&E units at Kent and Canterbury Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital in Margate

28 March 2001

Canterbury and Thanet Community Health Council (CHC) paid tribute to the excellent teamwork by staff in the local casualty units who were having to care for patients who should have been on wards. The CHC was participating in a spot check survey of the Accident and Emergency units in Canterbury and Margate as part of National Casualty Watch on Monday 26th March 2001.

The CHC reports all patients attending the local A&E units were being seen quickly and efficiently with low waiting times to be seen by a doctor, with no one waiting longer than one and a half-hours. However the staff were under pressure due to the number of patients they were caring for within casualty. The patients concerned had all been admitted to the hospital, had started treatments under the care of a consultant, but remained in casualty on beds, whereas they should have been on a ward elsewhere in the hospital. At the Kent and Canterbury Hospital (KCH) the CHC visit revealed that three patients had been in this situation for over 48 hours and a further five had been there over 24 hours. The picture was better at Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital in Margate (QEQM) with only one patient on a bed in A&E for over 24 hours.

Rupert Williamson, Chief Officer of the CHC said, "Despite the conditions the staff have managed to ensure that patients are being looked after in a caring environment. As we have often stated during any visit CHC Members apply the criteria 'would I want to be looked after here or would I be happy for someone I care about to be here?' Unfortunately again we found that these criteria were not being met. Many of the patients, who were waiting for a