

## **NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Garvagh Community Building on Wednesday 8 January 2003.

### **PRESENT:**

In the Chair: Mr J McFadden

### **Members:**

Mrs B Adger  
Mrs M Anderson  
Mrs M Baker  
Mr P Boyle  
Mr T Creighton  
Mrs D Hamill  
Mrs L Johnston  
Mr R Montgomery  
Mr S Nicholl  
Mr I Stevenson

### **In Attendance:**

Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Miss S Ashton (Agenda Item 6)  
Representatives from Garvagh Community Development Trust  
Representatives from Breathe Easy Causeway

Mr McFadden introduced Mr Arbuthnot, Secretary and Ms Clyde Treasurer of Garvagh Development Trust. Mr Arbuthnot provided members with an interesting history of the building, erected in 1861, and outlined the development of the Trust since 1994 when a public meeting had been called in the town.

Ms Clyde had spoken to several local people to find out their views on local health and social service provision. No problems had been identified with the GP, ambulance or mental health services; however, the availability of childminding and crèche facilities was rated as poor, as was the support provided to carers, the provision of community care and the availability of various PAMs services such as podiatry due to the lengthy waiting lists. Also mentioned were the upstairs location

of the dental surgery and the lack of a delivery and weekend service at the local Pharmacy. In relation to transport Ms Clyde pointed out that the local bus service was poor, there was no rural service and that the town had only one taxi firm. As Director of Coleraine Rural Transport Scheme, Mr Arbuthnot said full use was currently made of the community buses and establishment of a Social Car Scheme was being considered.

Mr McFadden welcomed Mr McIntyre, Chairman of Breathe Easy Causeway and several Committee members to the meeting. Mr McIntyre thanked members for the opportunity to share details of the aims and objectives of the recently established Group. A Support Group for people living with any lung disease, their carers and families, the Causeway Group is part of the British Lung Foundation and is the only one in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland 82,000 adults suffer from chronic lung disease, it accounts for 1 in 4 deaths, it is the most common reason for a visit to the GP and for admission to hospital and it equals heart disease as the most common cause of death. Over 150 people will die from lung disease this year in the Northern Board's area, twice the mortality rate from colon or breast cancer and seven times that due to high blood pressure.

Mr McIntyre called for the appointment of more respiratory nurse specialists, both hospital and community based, the recognition of a patient's right to a high standard of care and information about their condition, the provision of ambulatory oxygen for oxygen dependent patients and greater access to pulmonary rehabilitation courses.

Members were supportive of the work being undertaken by the Group both in fundraising and in raising the profile of lung disease.

### **1/03 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Armstrong, Mrs Beattie, Mrs Crawford, Mrs Drummond, Mrs I Johnston, Mrs McCambridge and Mr Nolan.

### **2/03 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr McFadden welcomed everyone to the meeting. He commented on his and the Chief Officer's attendance at a reception hosted by Des Browne, Minister with responsibility for Health, Social Services and

Public Safety, when proposals for modernising and improving services in Northern Ireland had been outlined. Other events attended included the launches of the Annual reports of the NHSSB's Director of Public Health and the Director of Social Services, meetings of the NHSSB and Homefirst Community Trust and the official opening of the craft shop at the Pavestone Centre, Brookgreen Resource Centre.

Members would suggest to NHSSB that the joint meeting be held on a suitable Thursday afternoon in February.

Members were invited to attend a meeting on the NHSSB Winter Pressures Plan to be held on Tuesday 14 January 2003.

### **3/03 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2003**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

### **4/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 4 DECEMBER 2003**

#### **(i) 108/02 Homefirst Community Trust Domiciliary Meals**

Mr Montgomery said he had been informed by several recipients of meals that a chilled meal would only be provided if a main course, dessert and tea were requested. Clarification would be sought.

Mrs Adger drew attention to a recent Homefirst Community Trust presentation at a Committee of Ballymena Borough Council. It had been admitted that MLAs had been issued with the initial consultation document but that the local District and Borough Councils had not.

Mr Graham said he understood that the intention of the Trust was that the chilled service would be introduced from April 2003 but that as yet no tender had been awarded.

#### **(ii) 103/02 Coroner's Inquest**

No further information from the Board had been received to date. Mr Graham highlighted reference to this inquest in the minutes of a recent Royal Group of Hospitals Board meeting.

#### **(iii) 111/02 Development of an Estate Strategy for Antrim Hospital**

Members noted that the planned meeting with members of the Estates Strategy Project Team had been put on hold. The Team would be in contact again in due course.

**(iv) 112/02 The Nexus Institute**

Mr Graham shared information from Ms McGowan, the Director of the Nexus Institute which confirmed that the NHSSB had agreed to fund NEXUS to employ a full-time counsellor for one year in its area. She indicated that pressure would be maintained in an effort to extend this limited funding to core funding on a long-term basis.

Mrs Anderson expressed her delight that funding had been awarded.

**(v) 111/02 Community Care Packages**

Members noted that the Council was now in receipt of monthly returns for Homefirst Community and Causeway Trusts on the number of people waiting on community care packages.

**5/03 VISITING PROGRAMME**

January Visits

Arrangements were made for visits to Larne Adult Centre and the Child Development Centre, Robinson Hospital, Ballymoney.

**6/03 ARRANGEMENTS FOR 24 HOUR CASUALTY WATCH**

An observational study of the A&E Department in Antrim Hospital would take place over a 24 hour period commencing 9.00am on Friday 17 January 2003. Cover would be in 4 hour shifts with 2 people in each shift and involve members and staff.

Miss Ashton, NHSSC Research Officer took members through the checklist and outlined final arrangements for the casualty watch.

Questionnaires with Freepost envelopes would be given to people as they left the department.

**7/03 PROPOSALS FOR THE NEW MATERNITY HOSPITAL TO REPLACE THE ROYAL JUBILEE MATERNITY HOSPITAL**

Members noted that the document had been issued for consultation on 7 November 2002. Although on the circulation list, the Council had received no correspondence until a request was made. Copies were received on 18 December 2002. The document contains the proposals submitted by both Belfast City Hospital and the Royal Group of Hospitals for a new centralised maternity unit together with a condition report on the existing Royal Maternity Hospital. Members supported the past Council view that a regional service on either site was of equal distance for most people from the northern area and believed the service provision to be more important than the site.

Mr Nicholl drew attention to the fact that the DHSSPS specification had also requested the Health Estates Agency to provide an estimated cost and specification to take account of possible changes in future usage of a new maternity hospital, projecting a capacity of up to 6,000 births each year. He felt this was a significant increase to the current capacity level of 4,800 with the Royal Jubilee Maternity Service. Assurances would be sought that the increased capacity would have no adverse impact upon maternity services in other hospitals such as Antrim.

The Chief Officer agreed to draft a response for consideration by the Administration Committee.

## **8/03 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

Administration Committee – 16 December 2002

Members had noted that Managers had been appointed for three of the Local Health and Social Care Groups. The East Antrim post had been re-advertised. Suitable premises were being considered. Members agreed that it would be useful to develop a working relationship with the 8 lay members of the Groups. Staff agreed to arrange a meeting.

Several members, yet to attend the On Board Training, were advised that the next training day would be held on Wednesday 22 January 2002 from 9.45am – 4.15pm in the Hilton Templepatrick Hotel.

## **9/03 CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman referred to the correspondence list circulated with the agenda.

Members noted that there had been an encouraging response to the recent advertisement for family planning doctors in the Magherafelt and Cookstown areas and that Homefirst Community Trust hoped to hold interviews in the near future. A doctor on a locum basis had been appointed, but, unfortunately, as there are problems with nursing and administrative cover due to sickness, the service is currently only addressing priority cases. Clients are advised of present arrangements by a telephone answering service. The Trust is hopeful that a full service will be able to resume early in the New Year and will keep the Council informed of developments. Mr McFadden agreed to also feedback from the Homefirst Community Trust Board meeting.

The Department is working with the GP profession and Boards to introduce a GP appraisal system here in 2002/2003 which will benefit both practitioners and service users. Mrs Hamill expressed interest in representing the Council on the Local Appraisal Group.

Mr Graham referred to some additional items of correspondence:

- WHSSC Minutes of 7/11/2002
- DHSSPS Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood: Strategy and Action Plan
- DHSSPS initial consultation paper re: Developing a 20-year regional Strategy for Health and Social Services. Further copies would be sought.

## **10/02 OTHER BUSINESS**

Central Sterilisation Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital

Mrs Baker said she had been informed that the Central Sterilisation Unit at the Mid-Ulster Hospital would close in 2004. Mr Creighton agreed to raise this at the next United Hospitals Trust Board meeting.

## **11/03 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 February 2003 in the Antrim Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm

Chairman

Secretary

Date: 11/02/2003

