

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Toome House, Tomebridge on Wednesday 5 February 2003.

PRESENT

In the Chair: Mr J McFadden

Members:

Mrs B Adger
Ms R Armstrong
Mrs M Beattie
Mrs A Crawford
Mr T Creighton
Mrs D Hamill
Mr N Hamilton
Mrs I Johnston
Mrs L Johnston
Mr R Montgomery
Mrs C McCambridge
Mr I Stevenson

In Attendance:

Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin
Miss S Ashton (Agenda Item 7)

Mr McFadden introduced Ms Ruth Stewart, who took up appointment in mid-October 2002 as Community Development Officer with South Antrim Rural Network (SARN). Based in Randalstown, the Network which is one of 12 in Northern Ireland, provides support to rural community groups in the rural regions of Antrim, Newtownabbey, Carrickfergus and Lisburn. Ms Stewart outlined the vision for the South Antrim area and shared details of SARN's mission statement. Examples of services provided to member groups include training opportunities, capacity building programmes, assistance with funding applications, project planning and management and facilitation of community audits and action plans. Ms Stewart distributed copies of the Network's newsletter and offered to include future NHSSC articles.

12/03 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Anderson, Mrs Baker, Mrs Drummond, Mr Nicholl and Mr Nolan.

13/03 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Mr McFadden welcomed everyone to the meeting and sympathised with Mrs McCambridge on the recent death of her father. He commented on his and other member's attendance at a meeting on the NHSSB Winter Pressures Plan. Other events attended included meetings of the NHSSB, Homefirst Community Trust and the NI Association of Health and Social Services Council Executive Committee and the launch of two NHSSB Strategies to Promote the Independence and Well-being of People with a Physical Disability and/or Sensory Impairment and Ringing the Changes: A Strategy for Older People.

Mr Laurence O'Kane, community representative on the Mid-Ulster Local Health and Social Care Group would be congratulated on being named Northern Ireland Pharmacist of the Year at the prestigious Pharmacy Awards 2002.

14/03 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2003

The minutes were agreed and signed.

15/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 8 JANUARY 2003

(i) 4/03 Homefirst Community Trust Domiciliary Meals
Homefirst Community Trust had confirmed that a client could be assessed as requiring lunch and/or tea. Concern was expressed that clients were under the impression that they had to order a full package. Once introduced, further consideration would be given to the chilled meals service.

(ii) 9/03 Family Planning Doctors in the Magherafelt and Cookstown areas

Mr McFadden reported that clinics were now operational and the backlog was being dealt with.

(iii) 10/03 Central Sterilisation Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt

Mr Creighton referred to his attendance at a recent meeting of United Hospitals Trust Board when an outline business case on the provision of sterile services had been presented.

It had been explained that the preferred option was to centralise services in the HSDU unit at Antrim Hospital and that this change would have no implications whatsoever for clinical services on the Mid-Ulster site and would not involve any compulsory redundancies.

16/03 VISITING PROGRAMME

February Visits

Arrangements were made for visits to the Audiology Department at Braid Valley Hospital and Wilson House Resource Centre, Broughshane.

Visiting Reports

Larne Audit Centre

Mrs Crawford reported that Larne Adult Centre provides a day care service for people with learning disabilities within the greater Larne area. Opened in April 1987 the Centre currently caters for 83 clients. By 2004/05 the expected number is 100. An extension is being considered due to the number of school leavers who will require day care.

Visiting team members were impressed by the various programmes of care available, some individual and some group. Shopping trips, holidays and visits to the leisure centre are organised and the more able clients are involved in contract work for various firms and organisations.

Child Development Centre, Robinson Memorial Hospital, Ballymoney

The Centre focuses on the needs of children and is a resource centre for all children with chronic health disorders, disability or special needs. It brings together health, social and educational services in the provision of care and information for parents and children. It also provides a vital link between hospital and community.

Mr Hamilton praised the professionalism of staff and commended the work being undertaken.

17/03 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING Administration Committee 27 January 2003

Committee members had agreed a draft response to the consultation on the siting of the new centralised maternity hospital in Belfast.

Members noted that Mr McFadden and Mr Graham had arranged to meet the Chairs of the Local Health and Social Care Groups to discuss the way forward and the possibility of setting up a meeting with the lay members on each group.

An updated Guide for Members was distributed.

Mr Montgomery had referred to media coverage in relation to a Ballymena mother's legal action to get her son treatment for his heroin addiction. Members agreed to request a presentation at the March Council meeting on what help is available to drug addicts in the northern area.

18/03 CASUALTY WATCH

Miss Ashton, NHSSC Research Officer, presented the preliminary findings of the observational study of the A&E department in Antrim Hospital.

Members of staff, working in 4 hourly shifts, observed and recorded activity within the three waiting areas over a 24 hour period commencing 9.00am on Friday 17 January 2003.

The patient's age, gender, time seen by Dr and, if applicable, time admitted were also recorded and a questionnaire with a Freepost envelope given to people as they left the department.

The findings of the study would be shared with United Hospitals Trust and NHSSB.

Various issues raised by members in the course of discussion would be further debated at the next Administration Committee Meeting.

Consideration would be given to repeating the exercise in another A&E Department in the northern area. The data collected and the method of service user involvement would be reviewed and the use of a staff questionnaire considered.

Mr McFadden thanked those members and staff who had participated.

19/03 THE FUTURE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

A copy of a short policy paper on the future of Ophthalmology to complement the Review and provide strategic direction for developments in Ophthalmology services had been circulated to members.

Members supported the proposal that there should be two clinical networks within Northern Ireland provided this led to a reduction in waiting lists. Mr McFadden queried if more people needed to be trained to meet the growing need for ophthalmology services and if the necessary funding was available. He expressed concern that despite the high level of outpatient activity the total number of outpatients waiting for first appointments in ophthalmology had increased over recent years. Mrs I Johnston sought a breakdown for the northern area and called for additional sites for such operations as cataract surgery to be supported by the necessary post-operative care. Ms Armstrong highlighted the benefits of cataract surgery to the elderly population and stressed that age should not be a barrier to such surgery.

Consideration would be given to raising ophthalmology services at the forthcoming meeting with NHSSB members.

20/03 MEETING WITH NHSSB MEMBERS

The joint meeting between Council and NHSSB would be held on Wednesday 26 February 2003. The main agenda item would be the Board's commissioning priorities for 2003/04. Other suggested agenda items included increased provision of community care packages, ophthalmology services and Board position in relation to the Review of Public Administration. The final agenda and meeting format would be agreed by the Chairman and staff.

21/03 DEVELOPING A 20-YEAR STRATEGY FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr Graham reported on a meeting he had attended at Northern Board with DHSSPS representatives. Copies of the document for members were awaited. Once received these would be issued to members and this item included on the agenda for the March Council Meeting.

22/03 REPORT FROM:

Clinical and Social Care Governance Workshop – 22 January 2003

Several members had attended the workshop which was one of five planned for January and February throughout Northern Ireland. The workshops were organised by the DHSSPS as a means of engaging the HPSS on how to take forward the development of clinical and social care governance including the establishment of a Clinical and Social Care Governance Support Team in Northern Ireland.

Mr Graham had given a presentation on the service user perspective and role in clinical and social care governance.

23/03 CORRESPONDENCE

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

Mr Graham referred to some additional items of correspondence:

- Invitation to Homefirst Community Trust Workshop on Promoting the Safety and Protection of Children in our Community – Wednesday 19 February 2003
- Additional information from DHSSPS re: Consultation of Developing Better Services
- DHSSPS Home Accident Prevention Strategy and Action Plan
- Northern Ireland Office State Pathologist's Department consultation document The Way Forward
- Letter from DHSSPS re: Office of Fair Trading Report on the control of Entry Regulations and Retail Pharmacy Services in the UK
- Independent Health and Care Providers (NI) Newsletter January 2003.

24/03 OTHER BUSINESS

RCGP NI Quality Committee

Ms Armstrong advised members of her appointment to this Committee. Members offered their congratulations.

25/03 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 4.36pm

Chairman

Secretary

Date 5/03/2003