

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Dobbs Room, Carrickfergus Town Hall on Wednesday 5 March 2003.

### **PRESENT**

In the Chair: Mr J McFadden

### **Members:**

Mrs B Adger  
Mrs M Anderson  
Mrs M Baker  
Mrs M Beattie  
Mr P Boyle  
Mrs A Crawford  
Mr T Creighton  
Mrs J Drummond  
Mr R Montgomery  
Mrs C McCambridge  
Mr M Nolan  
Mr I Stevenson

### **In Attendance:**

Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Mr R Lee, Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development Group  
Mrs E Brisbane, Disability Action

Mr McFadden introduced Mr Robert Lee, a project worker with Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development Group. Based in Oakfield Community Development Centre, his work is very much community driven and involves developing training opportunities, youth activities and after school clubs.

Various problems cited in relation to health and social services included the expense of drugs required by a transplant patient upon return to work, delays in housing adaptations and in getting an appointment with the GP, in getting through on the telephone system if cancelling a GP appointment and in accessing hospital services within an hour from locations such as Islandmagee and Whitehead. Whilst welcoming the development of an ambulance response team in the

town Mr Lee criticised the positioning of traffic lights nearby and called for greater adherence to integrated strategies. Mr Lee also welcomed the training provided for local Health Centre Staff.

Mr Lee referred to the need to integrate health into every part of our lives and for all plans and strategies to have a positive impact upon the most vulnerable in our communities. He highlighted the valuable work and forward thinking of voluntary and community groups and felt that statutory services had room for improvement.

Mr McFadden offered Mrs Brisbane the opportunity to speak. She too referred to lengthy waits for services such as occupational therapy and cited an instance where an elderly lady requiring podiatry services had been refused a home visit. She also highlighted reluctance by some of the medical profession to complete details on benefit forms. Full details would be forwarded in writing to Council Staff.

Mr McFadden thanked Mr Lee and Mrs Brisbane and assured them that the concerns mentioned would be raised with those who plan and manage the relevant services.

## **26/03 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Armstrong, Mrs I Johnston, Mrs Hamill, Mr Hamilton, and Mrs L Johnston.

## **27/03 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

On the Mayor's behalf, Mrs Beattie welcomed members to Carrickfergus and wished everyone a fruitful meeting.

Mr McFadden commented on his attendance at a meeting of the NHSSB, the United Hospitals Trust Charter Mark Reception and the Minister's announcement on Developing Better Services. He also thanked those members who represented the Council at various other events.

Commenting on the Minister's announcement, Mrs Baker and Mr Montgomery referred to the disappointment in the Mid-Ulster area and to the likelihood of legal advice being sought on how to challenge the Minister's decision. Mrs Adger and Mrs Drummond spoke of their delight that Northern Board had been asked to bring forward proposals for the development of local hospital services in Ballymena and Larne respectively. Mr Boyle highlighted the absence of any mention of

Robinson Hospital in Ballymoney and Dalriada Hospital in Ballycastle and Mrs Baker drew attention to the fact that there would only be one enhanced local hospital instead of the proposed two. Mrs Beattie said that with the Mater expected to develop clinical networks with other hospitals, in particular Whiteabbey, ambulance provision in the East Antrim area needed to be improved. Mr McFadden confirmed that a meeting had been requested with NIAS to discuss a range of issues. Mr Stevenson asked that we do not lose sight of current problems such as lengthy trolley waits and provision of gynaecological procedures at Causeway Hospital.

Mr Graham offered to copy the Minister's speech and/or a summary version to interested members.

Members noted that a joint meeting with United Hospitals Trust Board members would be held on Thursday 10 April 2003 at 11.00am in the Lecture Theatre, Fern House, Antrim.

### **28/03 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 FEBRUARY 2003**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

### **29/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 5 FEBRUARY 2003**

#### **(i) 17/03 Heroin Addition**

Mrs Gill Burns, Acting Head of Service, Community Addictions Services, NHSSB, would give a presentation at the April Council meeting.

#### **(ii) 20/03 Meeting with NHSSB Members**

Members described the meeting to discuss commissioning priorities for 2003/04 as useful and informative.

#### **(iii) 23/03 Retail Pharmacy Services in the UK**

Mr Graham drew attention to a recent report from the Office of Fair Trading which recommended that the control of entry regulations for community pharmacies in the UK should be ended. This would mean that all registered pharmacies with qualified staff would be entitled to dispense NHS prescriptions.

A Save Your Community Pharmacy pack had subsequently been received by the Council and a local Community Pharmacist had been in contact seeking the Council's support in opposing the recommendations of the Office of Fair Trading.

There was some discussion on the likely impact of the recommendations and some views put forward that customers might ultimately benefit if more firms entered the market over time and offered a wider range of services and opening times with potential for discount pricing of some over the counter medicines.

### **30/03 VISITING PROGRAMME**

#### March Visits

Arrangements were made for visits to Carrickfergus Day Centre and the Day Procedure Unit at Causeway Hospital.

#### Visiting Reports

##### Audiology Department, Braid Valley Hospital, Ballymena

Mr Creighton reported that four consultants cover clinics in Antrim, Causeway, Mid-Ulster, Moyle and Whiteabbey. From April 2001 to March 2002 28,457 patients were seen. The Minister announced in December 2002 that digital hearing aids would be available in Northern Ireland, however, not everyone is suitable for such a fitting and there is a cost involved. Staff in the department expressed concern that the funding they were to receive would fall short of that required.

The visiting team welcomed the opportunity to tour the facility and to meet staff.

##### Wilson House Resource Centre, Broughshane

Re-opened as a Resource Centre in 1993, the Centre provides day care for a maximum of sixty persons each day with wide ranging needs. Initially respite one day per week is offered but after assessment or change of home circumstances this may be increased. A range of activities are provided to stimulate and/or increase coping skills. These may be individual or group and include cookery, craftwork, horticulture, art, music and personal care. Mr McFadden reported that the layout of the building interior reflects its history as a purpose built

residential unit. The team had been particularly impressed with the area used for people with dementia, however, would recommend that rooms and corridors be redecorated.

### **31/03 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

Administration Committee – 26 February 2003

Mr Graham referred to the recent 24hr casualty watch conducted at Antrim Hospital. United Hospitals Trust would be invited to comment on the report and the response included in the final report which would be sent to the NHSSB.

Mr Graham reported that figures for trolley waits on the afternoon of 4 March 2003 had shown Antrim Hospital with 27.

Members were invited to forward ideas to staff for research topics to be included in the 2003/04 Business Programme.

Members asked staff to proceed with arrangements for a discussion with NHSSB on the Northern Investing for Health Partnership's Health Improvement Plan for 2003-2008.

### **32/03 MEETIN WITH HOMEFIRST COMMUNITY TRUST BOARD MEMBERS – 27 MARCH 2003**

It was suggested that the agenda include progress on changes to the domiciliary meals service in the Trust area, an update on the Home from Hospital Scheme in the Mid-Ulster area and the continuing lengthy waits for occupational therapy services. Those absent would have an opportunity to add to the agenda.

### **33/03 CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING A REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE HEALTH AND PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES 2002-2022**

This document sets out the need for a twenty year strategy for health and social services. Its purpose is to begin the consultation process with members of the public, staff involved in delivering services, voluntary and community groups and experts necessary for the Strategy's development. It was agreed that members respond to the questions asked in the consultation reply form and return to office staff by Monday 24 March 2003 to allow a response to be forwarded to The Regional Strategy Team by 28 March 2003.

### **34/03 CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mr Graham referred to some addition items of correspondence:

- Papers for Royal Group of Hospitals Trust Board meeting, Thursday 6 March 2003, Mrs McCambridge agreed to attend.
- Letter from RNIB requesting meeting to inform the Council on the current profile of RNIB NI and in particular the community development initiative. The Director, Susan Reid would be invited to the May meeting.
- Invitation from the General Consumer Council NI to an event to mark the occasion of World Consumer Rights Day, Consumer Skills for All and the announcement of a major consumer education programme, Mr Nolan agreed to attend.
- The Children Order Advisory Committee Third Report.
- Working together in financing our Future, Policy Framework for Public Private Partnerships in Northern Ireland.
- Minutes of Homefirst Community Trust Board, 23 January 2003
- EHSSC Minutes of 16 January 2003
- Commissioner for Public Appointment for Northern Ireland Seventh Report 2001 – 2002
- Developing Better Services Ministerial Announcement.

### **35/03 OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business had been tabled.

### **36/03 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 April 2003 in the Larne Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.07pm

Chairman  
Secretary  
Date 2/4/2003