

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Torrens Hall, Doagh on Wednesday 4 June 2003.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr T Creighton

**Members:** Mrs B Adger Mr N Hamilton  
Mrs M Anderson Mrs I Johnston  
Ms R Armstrong Mr R Montgomery  
Mrs M Beattie Mr S Nicholl  
Mr P Boyle Mr M Nolan  
Mrs D Hamill

**In Attendance:** Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Mrs J Montgomery (Agenda Item 8)

Mr Creighton introduced local retired Minister Rev Fenton and invited him to speak about the local area and any health and social care issues. Doagh is an expanding village and local people are registered with a GP in either Ballyclare, some 2 miles away or in Templepatrick, 3 miles away. Patients in the Templepatrick Surgery often experience difficulty in getting through on the telephone and normally face a 1 week wait to see their own doctor. Rev Fenton stated that even with several local residential facilities for the elderly there would still appear to be a shortage of places and childcare facilities in the area could also be improved upon. There are no dental surgeries in Doagh although there are 2 in Templepatrick and 3 in Ballyclare. However, public transport services were rated as poor between Doagh and Templepatrick, but better between Doagh and Ballyclare. No problems were cited with pharmacy services, GP out-of-hour services or ambulance services.

Rev Fenton highlighted the plight of a local person who had been waiting for a considerable time for an assessment by the Occupational Therapy department of Homefirst Community Trust. Full details would be passed to Council staff.

Mr Creighton thanked Rev Fenton for taking the time to meet with members.

### **62/03 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Baker, Mrs Drummond, Mrs L Johnston and Mrs McCambridge.

63/03 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton, Acting Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He referred to the departure of out-going Chairman Joe McFadden and invited the Chief Officer to read a message received from him.

Mr Creighton referred to his attendance at a meeting of United Hospitals Trust.

64/03 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2003**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

65/03 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 7 MAY 2003**

**(i) 51/03 Council Membership**

Mr Graham pointed out that there were now 7 vacancies within Council membership. Interviews to fill the vacancies, would, however, be held later in the month.

**(ii) 53/03 Private Nursing Home Tariffs**

Mr Graham reported on the findings of a recent survey undertaken by Council staff into nursing home tariffs within the Northern area which had a 38% response rate. Of those Homes that responded 17 had the same current weekly charge for privately funded and Trust funded residents, 4 had no privately funded residents and 4 charged privately funded residents more than Trust funded residents, the amount ranging from £9.50 - £73. 10 Homes charged £400, the Trust funded amount, and others had an additional 'top-up fee' or 'third party agreement' averaging another £20 - £25.

**(iii) 59/03 Making it Better – A Strategy for Pharmacy in the Community**

Dr Morrison, Director of Pharmaceutical Services, NHSSB would be invited to give a presentation on the Strategy before the consultation closed.

**(iv) 55/03 United Hospitals Trust Business Plan 2003/04**

Members and staff had welcomed the opportunity to meet, the previous day, with Mr Mitchell, Chief Executive and Mrs Findlater, Director Commissioning and Information Services, United Hospitals Trust, to discuss the Trust's Business Plan.

## 66/03 **VISITING PROGRAMME**

### **June Visits**

Arrangements were made for a visit to Dhu Varren Children's Home, Portrush.

### **Visiting Reports**

Members were reminded of their responsibility to advise Council staff in advance of a visit if unable to attend.

### **Day Procedures Unit, Causeway Hospital**

This report would be considered at the September Council Meeting.

### **Regional Respiratory Centre, Belfast City Hospital**

Opened in late 2002 this new Centre is viewed as a significant landmark in the development of specialist care for patients with diseases of the lungs.

Respiratory illness is one of the top three causes of disease and most patients with lung disease have chronic illness, often with life-threatening flare-ups.

Mrs Erwin reported that the Centre has multi-disciplinary teams of doctors, nurses, physiological technicians, physiotherapists, dieticians, social workers and others. Teams work closely with colleagues at the Royal, in other hospitals and in the primary care setting to ensure the best possible treatment and support for patients. Teams also network with the South of Ireland and with the Transplant Co-ordinator in Freemans Hospital.

During the visit Professor Elborn, Sister Gamble and Mr Brown, Director of Operational Support led a tour of the Centre, visiting various clinic areas, treatment rooms, laboratory, Exercise Room, Endoscopy Unit and Ward 8 North.

### **Ross Thomson Unit, Causeway Hospital**

This report would be considered at the September Council Meeting.

### **Visiting Response**

#### **Carrickfergus Day Centre**

Homefirst Community Trust had confirmed that during a meeting with the Centre's Client Council in September 2002 to discuss the revised policy for statutory day care it had been acknowledged that the age and design of the Centre limited the degree of structural modifications possible, but that the building would continue to be fully maintained. The Centre would be considered in future refurbishment plans, however, this would be dependent on suitable funding becoming available.

The Trust had encountered difficulty in recruiting temporary staff to cover staff absence, etc. This is a common problem for all facilities and a number of initiatives have been embarked upon such as recruitment days. Agency staff are utilised where possible. Staffing levels at the Centre are consistent with those throughout the Trust.

The possibility of a link worker is still under consideration for day centres although link workers have been in existence in Trust adult training centres for some years.

The conference room at the Centre is extensively used by the Health Centre and a number of other groups. It is also the main base for back care training in the area which is why a lot of equipment is stored there. Consideration will be given to replacing the carpet in this financial year.

The Visiting Team members indicated that they wished to consider this response in greater detail.

### **67/03 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

#### **Administration Committee – 29 May 2003**

Members were invited to attend Basic Life Support training to be undertaken by the British Red Cross.

Interest was sought in membership of groups associated with developing minimum standards for services that will be

registered or inspected under the terms of the HPSS (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (NI) Order 2003. Mr Graham voiced concern about the demand being placed on members' time in view of the 7 vacancies.

Two members accepted the invitation from Homefirst Community Trust to a tasting event associated with the new domiciliary meals service to be initially introduced in the Newtownabbey area. Mr Hamilton reported that Newtownabbey Borough Council had declined the invitation and would be raising concerns about the introduction of such a service with the Trust. He offered to keep NHSSC informed.

Ms Armstrong sought clarification on the terms of reference for the Administration Committee. She referred to the recent Administration Committee agenda item on the fee structure for private nursing homes and said she felt that this would have been more appropriate to the former Hospital and Community Services Committee.

68/03 **TRANSFER OF COMMUNITY DENTAL SERVICES FROM GLENGORMLEY COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTRE TO WHITEABBEY HEALTH CENTRE**

Homefirst Community Trust currently provides community dental services in Glengormley Community Services Centre one day per week. The Trust proposes to transfer this service to Whiteabbey Health Centre as it has two modernised dental surgeries and is accessible for those using public transport and for wheelchair users.

Members noted that all who receive services in Glengormley Community Services Centre were being consulted about the transfer and that service levels would not be affected by a proposal to move to Whiteabbey Health Centre. Provided that service users were satisfied with the suggested move, members saw no reason why this should not proceed.

69/03 **PRESENTATION ON FEE STRUCTURE FOR PRIVATE NURSING HOMES**

Mr Creighton welcomed Mrs Montgomery, Chairperson, Independent Health and Care Providers who had requested to address members on the fee structure within private nursing homes. She informed members that IHCP is a new non-profit making organisation which represents the providers of some

9000 patients/residents and hundreds more receiving care in their own homes or in housing schemes.

Mrs Montgomery reported that the general fee level for Nursing Homes had been subject to a rise of 8.7% bringing it up to £400. Whilst welcoming the continued commitment of the Department of Health and the Northern Health and Social Services Board to increase fee levels above the rate of inflation, Mrs Montgomery pointed out that the nursing home fee for Scotland last year was £397 and suggested that this provided a benchmark for consideration. A further benchmark came from work undertaken by the Department in 2001/2002 which concluded that a fair price for care then was £444. Already one of the members of the IHCP has increased fees for private payers to £450 and other providers may follow suit.

Mrs Montgomery said that the situation with regard to residential care fees was a little less generous and potentially could leave the Department and the Boards in some difficulties in the future. The difficulty being that the statutory sector continues to operate residential homes at a cost that seems to be way in excess of what is allowed for in the independent sector. Particularly highlighted was the fact that statutory authorities pay their own staff the national increases in salary yet do not recognise the same additional costs in the independent sector. IHCP believe that until the Balanced Scorecard Group working in the Eastern Board has reported and resultant action has been taken, Boards and Trusts who continue to allow the differentials leave themselves open to challenge.

Mrs Montgomery drew attention to the benefits of fair pricing which included quality improvements, private payers not subsidising state funded payers and Home staff having similar opportunities to those employed in the NHS.

As Secretary of the IHCP, Ms Armstrong declared an interest before quoting from the content of a factsheet prepared for BBC Radio Ulster programme 'On Your Behalf' by Professor Eileen Evason. It stated that where people choose independently to enter such accommodation this is purely a private transaction. Assistance may be provided at a later date when resources diminish but there is no provision to the effect that Trusts must take on the costs of care in such circumstances.

Ms Armstrong and Mr Creighton, however, were both of the opinion that elderly people should not have to pay for their care

since they are the only group of people penalised financially in the UK. Mr Nicholl felt Boards and Trusts were saving money by allowing some Homes to charge the families of residents 'top-up' fees. He felt that all nursing care should be free, however, had issues around personal care.

On behalf of members, Mr Creighton thanked Mrs Montgomery for the opportunity to clarify issues about the fee structure within the private nursing home sector.

### 70/03 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Ms Armstrong and Mrs Hamill would attend a consultation seminar, organised by Barnardo's Northern Ireland, to discuss the ways in which social care staff use research in their everyday work.

Mr Graham referred to an additional item of correspondence:

- Invitation to Independent Health and Care Providers Conference – 24 September 2003, Dunadry Hotel, Antrim – Mr Graham to attend.

### 71/03 **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Causeway Trust Board Meeting**

Mrs I Johnston drew attention to the recent Complaints Report produced by Causeway Trust and said she would again be requesting that a more detailed explanation be given when recording the outcome of complaints.

### 72/03 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2003 in the Cookstown Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.26pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date