

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Gortalowry House, Cookstown on Wednesday 3 September 2003.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr T Creighton

**Members:**

Mrs B Adger	Mr N Hamilton
Mrs M Anderson	Mrs I Johnston
Mrs M Baker	Prof W Kernohan
Mrs M Beattie	Mrs J Montgomery
Mrs M Bigger	Prof H McKenna
Mr P Boyle	Mr T Nicholl
Mrs J Drummond	Mr M Nolan
Mrs D Hamill	

**In Attendance:**

Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Ms M Bryson and Ms S McIntyre, Cookstown  
Local Strategy Partnership  
Mr A Marsden, NHSSB (Agenda Item 7)  
Member of the press

Mr Creighton introduced Ms Bryson, Manager, Cookstown Local Strategy Partnership and invited her to tell members about the local area.

Ms Bryson referred to the work of the Partnership, in particular the production of the Cookstown Community Plan in 2001. Consulting people and listening to them were central to the way the Plan was developed. The themes seen as central to the future development and well-being of Cookstown, surprisingly, did not include health and social services. Each year the Plan will be reviewed to make it more effective in shaping the strategic development of the District.

Cookstown has a population of 32,000, with two-thirds living outside the town. Agriculture is hugely important in the District and the local outbreak of foot and mouth disease brought yet more pressure on farming families.

One tenth of the population is in receipt of benefits so advances need to be made to develop and expand the social economy. In particular there needs to be social and economic opportunities for people with

disabilities and employment opportunities for women wanting to return to work.

The youth will greatly benefit from the development of the Loughry Sports Complex and the appointment of two youth workers.

A social audit being conducted will provide information on the Section 75 categories of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

In concluding, Ms Bryson expressed frustration at not being able to identify who's who in Trusts and Boards and at the short term financial commitment made to various organisations and groups. She called for greater promotion of staff and their roles, longer term funding for local initiatives and the full commitment of health and personal social services to work with the community/voluntary sector.

Mr Creighton thanked Ms Bryson for taking the time to meet with members.

### 73/03 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Armstrong, Mrs L Johnston, Mr Montgomery, Mrs Morrison and Mrs McCambridge.

### 74/03 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton, Acting Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular recently appointed members Mrs Bigger, Magherafelt, Mrs Montgomery, Antrim and Mr Nicholl, Cullybackey, appointed to represent Voluntary/Community Groups and Professor Kernohan, Carrickfergus and Professor McKenna, Jordanstown representing other interests.

Mr Creighton referred to his attendance at meetings of United Hospitals and Homefirst Community Trust Boards and Northern Health and Social Services Board. He and Mrs I Johnston had represented members at the official opening, the previous day, of the new Royal Victoria Hospital.

Mr Creighton drew attention to the pending retirement of Professor Bowman, Director of Hospital Services, United Hospitals Trust and asked that Professor McKenna, a personal friend, convey the good wishes of the Council to him.

### 75/03 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2003**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

76/03 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 4 JUNE 2003**

**(i) 65/03 Making it Better – A Strategy for Pharmacy in the Community**

Several members had met with Dr Morrison, Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Northern Health and Social Services Board to discuss the strategy. The consultation document aims to set a strategy for the Department and Boards, working with the various stakeholders, to develop a range of improvements that will make best use of the expertise of Northern Ireland's 1,100 community pharmacists, improve access to pharmacies and ensure the safer use of medicines.

Dr Morrison had informed members that of the 509 community pharmacies in Northern Ireland, 105 were in the northern area, about one third of which are independent. They dispense 6m prescription medicines annually at a cost of £75m.

Generally members were in broad agreement with the thrust of the strategy. Some observations and comments made included the importance for the strategy to have universal acceptance within the pharmacy profession and the support of general practice, the need for equity of access, the need for appropriate manpower resources to meet the likely increase in demand and the need to protect personal details with the wider sharing of information. Of utmost importance is the need for the public to have clear and consistent messages about which services, advice and information can be provided by whom, where and how and whether the services will be without cost. A campaign of awareness is essential.

**(ii) 67/03 Basic Life Support Training**

Participating members had been advised of the training dates.

**(iii) 67/03 Homefirst Community Trust Tasting Events**

Those members who had attended tasting events associated with the introduction of the new domiciliary meals service spoke highly of the choice and quality of the meals and the delivery schedule. Mrs Baker, however, had reservations about deliveries in remote areas and Mr Hamilton about the impact

upon the home help service while Mrs Adger said that a lot of people in the Ballymena area were opposed to the change.

## 77/03 **VISITING PROGRAMME**

### **September Visits**

Arrangements were made for visits to Castledawson Surgery and Ellis Court Hostel, Carrickfergus.

### **Visiting Reports**

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

This report would be considered at the October Council Meeting.

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

Mr Boyle visited the 34 bed psychiatric admission unit which takes admissions from the Causeway area. It is supported by the Community Mental Health Team and local Resource Centres. Like most acute admission units, the Ross Thomson Unit has been experiencing pressures from increased admissions and occupancy levels. Additional nursing staff are being recruited. A copy of the report would be forwarded to Causeway Trust.

#### **Dhu Varren Children's Home, Portrush**

Mr Hamilton reported that when the Team visited there were nine residents, with a further eight on the waiting list. Many of the young people have learning difficulties and require professional support to enhance their personal development.

The property had been renovated since the last visit in March 1997. The vandalism which had been encountered on the previous visit appeared to have been largely eradicated with young residents now showing respect for the property.

Issues raised by staff in relation to heating arrangements in the building would be raised with Causeway Trust.

## 78/03 **TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **Administration Committees – 26 June, 7 August and 21 August 2003**

A copy of United Hospitals Trust response to the draft Antrim Hospital Casualty Watch report had been issued to members. Mrs Baker drew attention to the comment on waiting times and said that the Council had wanted information displayed on how long a patient would wait to see a Doctor, not the total length of time a patient with a specific condition would spend in the department.

Commenting on an attendance, during the summer, at Antrim Hospital Accident and Emergency department, Mrs Hamill said there had been no indication of waiting times and the display of information leaflets had been repositioned.

Mrs Montgomery referred to a recent study by the Independent Health and Care Providers which looked at the times staff spent accompanying patients/residents to hospital appointments which in some instances was 4 – 6 hours. Professor McKenna suggested that rather than take the person out of the Home to hospital arrangements could be made for certain services to be provided in the Home.

Mr Graham highlighted the reference in the response to the building of an extension to the Accident and Emergency Department pending the approval of an outline business case for a permanent Observation Ward. He stated that he and Mr Creighton had been invited to a launch of the new building developments and would take the opportunity to enquire about the issues raised.

Members noted that Sandra McElhinney had been appointed Research Officer and would take up post on 22 September 2003.

Mr Graham referred to a survey of NHSSC premises in relation to Disability Discrimination Act compliance which had identified substantial shortcomings and the committee recommendation that alternative accommodation be sought. Members noted that the process of identifying alternative premises was progressing.

Committee members had discussed the procedures for elections and recommended to Council that elections for both Chairman and Vice-Chairman take place at the November Council Meeting. Members agreed and nomination forms were distributed for return by 22 October 2003.

A copy of Circular HSS (SC) 5/03 Planning for Winter 2003/04 had been issued to members. The Circular outlined the main elements that should be covered in the Winter Plan and summarised the key issues to be considered.

Mr Creighton welcomed Mr Marsden, NHSSB, to the meeting. Mr Marsden distributed copies of the Executive Summary from the NHSSB Winter Pressures Plan 2003/04.

Each year the Board is required by the DHSSPS to develop a comprehensive Plan to meet the increased demands on hospital, community and primary care services over the winter period. The Plan was developed based on the lessons from the previous years in terms of what worked well and the obstacles which had to be overcome. The schemes proposed were guided by 'Facing the Future – Building on the lessons of winter of 1999/2000' and other guides to good practice.

The DHSSPS has indicated that non recurring funds of £480k will be available for implementation of the plan but the Board has already anticipated that at least £1.6m will be required to fund the recommended proposals. The Board advanced plans to implement schemes to the value of £1m and remains hopeful of receiving further non recurring funds from the DHSSPS in the Autumn.

Each year the Plan uses non recurring funds to build on the increasing range of core services which have been developed and funded on a permanent basis to deal with pressures which now extend throughout the year.

Last year the main constraints were seen to be delayed discharges from hospital, the limited range of community alternatives to hospital, including a shortage of nursing home beds and home helps, difficulties with recruitment and retention of staff, lack of observation beds and assessment facilities in Accident and Emergency Departments and a shortage of medical beds in the right place at the right time, leading to patients being cared for in Accident and Emergency areas.

Mr Marsden explained that strict criteria was used to assess bids. Strict monitoring of recruitment is undertaken to ensure that services are in place at the right time. If schemes are at risk because posts cannot be filled, the Board will agree with

providers alternative winter pressures services. Mr Marsden listed examples of supported non-recurring schemes in 2003/04 and examples of schemes supported in principle subject to successful recruitment and further funding becoming available.

Professor Kernohan enquired if schemes would be evaluated and was assured that evaluation was indeed undertaken and that last year's evaluation was included in the full Winter Plan document.

Mr Graham felt that more emphasis should be given to addressing delayed discharges. Mr Marsden said there were no easy answers to eliminating delayed discharges and that it was not just about funding. He informed members that Management Consultants had been commissioned to look at the whole area of delayed discharges. Members welcomed Causeway Trust's success in reducing delayed discharges in July from 40 to 10. This was mainly attributed to the orthogeriatric scheme. Mr Marsden indicated that the intention was to extend schemes that worked well to other areas.

Mrs Montgomery referred to the Department's establishment of a modernisation unit and felt the funding of such schemes as the 1,000 respite bed days and 2 respite beds for the winter period to facilitate discharge and prevent admission to hospital would have little impact. Mr Marsden confirmed that the Board was indeed working with the Modernisation Unit and reminded members that the Winter Plan did not try to solve all the problems, it was an opportunity to pilot new schemes during a six month period.

Mrs Montgomery and Mrs Bigger both raised issues in relation to nurse recruitment. Mr Marsden stated that Trusts would not know if staff were available until they advertised. He further stated that he intended to monitor the schemes post by post.

Mr Creighton thanked Mr Marsden for his comprehensive presentation.

80/03 **DHSSPS CONSULTATION PAPER ON COMMUNITY  
MIDWIFERY UNITS**

Discussion on this document was deferred until the October Council Meeting.

81/03 **NHS PRESCRIPTION CHARGES**

The case referred to by Mrs Adger would be drawn to the attention of the Complaints/Information Officer, if approval was obtained from the complainant.

82/03 **PODIATRY SERVICES**

This item was deferred until the October Council Meeting.

83/03 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Any member interested in representing the Council on the Northern Antenatal Infection Screening Co-ordinating Group or interested in attending a DHSSPS Workshop on Antenatal Screening was invited to contact office staff.

Mr Graham referred to some additional items of correspondence:

- Letter from DHSSPS re: HPSS Restructuring
- Registration and Inspection Unit Twelfth Annual Report 2002/2003
- EHSSC Minutes of 18 June 2003
- United Hospitals Trust Minutes of 3 July 2003
- Northern Childcare Partnership Second Childcare Plan 2003/04 – 2005/06
- DHSSPS Consultation Paper A Strategy for Children in Need

84/03 **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Presentations**

Mr Creighton asked members to consider the best forum for presentations and to feed back at the next Council meeting.

85/03 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Due to Mr Creighton's unavailability on the first Wednesday in October, members agreed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday 8 October 2003 in the Ballymoney Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date