

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in The Sandel Centre, Knocklynn Road, Coleraine on Wednesday 4 February 2004.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr T Creighton

Members:

Mrs B Adger	Mrs J Montgomery
Ms R Armstrong	Mr R Montgomery
Mrs I Johnston	Mr T Nicholl
Mrs L Johnston	Mr M Nolan
Mr J Millar	

In Attendance: Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin
Ms S McElhinney (Agenda Item 7)

13/04 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Anderson, Mrs Baker, Mrs Drummond, Mr Hamilton, Professor Kernohan, Mrs Morrison and Professor McKenna.

14/04 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended an invitation to members to attend a Regional Prosthetic Services Open/Exhibition Day at Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast on Friday 13 February 2004. He then referred to his and the Chief Officer's attendance at the official launch of the refurbished acute admission (Tobernaveen) wards at Holywell Hospital, Antrim. He had also attended a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Board and he and the Vice-Chairman meetings of Homefirst Community Trust Board and United Hospitals Trust Board.

Ms Armstrong referred to current unrest in the community in relation to service provision and felt it would be useful for members to collate concerns and to have them raised at Trust Board meetings. She highlighted difficulty in recruiting staff and felt there was little innovation used throughout the health and social services in attempting to sort out the problems. She also felt that often the health and social services was entrenched in bureaucracy.

Mrs Adger cited her experience of inadequate doctor staffing in the Antrim Hospital Accident and Emergency department during a recent attendance and Mrs I Johnston commented on the large number of people awaiting assessments by occupational therapy staff in the Causeway Trust area.

Mr Graham pointed out that members would have the opportunity to raise issues at the joint meetings with the three local Trusts and the Northern Health and Social Services Board which were currently being arranged.

During the ensuing discussion, Mr Montgomery suggested meeting the Trusts more regularly and Mrs L Johnston pointed out that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association now met every six months with Coleraine Borough Council and had arranged to meet the Minister with responsibility for Health, Social Services and Public Safety on a number of health and social care issues.

15/04 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JANUARY 2004**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

16/04 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 7 JANUARY 2004**

2/04 Meeting with Management Team of Dalriada Doctor on Call and Mrs Barkley, Assistant Director, Family Practitioner Unit, NHSSB

This meeting had been very informative and worthwhile. Mrs Montgomery particularly welcomed the introduction of the nurse triage system and stressed the need to fully inform the public about the changes to be brought about by the introduction on the new General Medical Services contract.

Members would request representation from NHSSB's Family Practitioner Unit at the March Council meeting to provide an update on progress within the Northern Board on implementing the GMS contract and to outline the impact the new service is likely to have on patients and how this will be communicated to them.

Ms Armstrong drew attention to a recent Belfast Telegraph article on the subject and suggested issuing a statement to the press.

4/04 Meeting re: Review of Mental Health

Members were invited to meet with Professor Roy McClelland, Convenor, Adult Mental Health Working Committee, to discuss adult mental health services on Friday 19 March 2004 in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown.

17/04 **VISITING**

Visiting Programme – February

Arrangements were made for visits to the Spinal Cord Injuries Unit, Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast and Gloucester Park Day Centre, Larne.

Visiting Reports

Hugomont Children's Respite Unit, Ballymena

This report would be considered at the March Council Meeting.

Broadway Workshop, Newtownabbey

The Workshop is a purpose built complex which offers training opportunities for up to 100 adults with learning disabilities. The aim is to help clients achieve their fullest potential and level of independence.

Mrs Montgomery reported that staff had a good rapport with clients and commended the regular meetings with clients. The visiting team suggested, however, that written records be kept of such meetings.

Many other positive comments were made about the staff and services provided and the environment within which this takes place. Particularly highlighted, however, were the need for improved signage and car parking, the provision of staff ID, the replacement of shabby waste disposal bins and the need for more frequent fire drills.

Although the building has recently undergone some refurbishment, the visiting team were of the opinion that some work of a major nature is needed, however, their impression was that this is not regarded as high priority within Homefirst Community Trust.

The report would be shared with the Trust and details sought of any work carried out or proposed and the projected timescale for this work to be done. The visiting team indicated their wish to see change in the short term and would request a re-visit to the facility.

Visiting Response

George Sloan Centre, Ballymena

Members had visited the Centre in October 2003 and raised concerns about the standard of the building and some health and safety issues. Mrs Simpson, Director Social Care and Disability, Homefirst Community Trust had taken the opportunity to verbally feedback comments at the January Council meeting and had subsequently forwarded a written response. This letter generated considerable debate with strong feelings about a number of issues. The Council asked the Chief Officer to write to Mrs Simpson and to request a copy of the risk assessment from the Trust and a re-visit to the facility.

18/04 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Committee – 15 January 2004

Due to a lengthy delay in reaching a final decision on the mileage allowance for members, Mr Creighton had written to the Permanent Secretary, stressing the urgency of the matter. A response from Mr Allen, Acting Director of Finance, DHSSPS, indicated that the Department's basic aim has been to unify all expenditure rates across all Departmental Committees and sub-committees and for all professionals attending Departmental working groups, etc. This proved to be more complicated than anticipated and, as a result, it was decided to separately revise the rates of payment for travel and other allowances to members. Guidance on this would be issued shortly.

A letter had also gone to the Department requesting some form of remuneration for Council members, given the fact that many other bodies within health and social services are being reimbursed. A response was awaited.

19/04 CASUALTY WATCH

Ms McElhinney, Research Officer, commented upon the observational study of Causeway Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department carried out over a 24hr period commencing 9.00am on Friday 16 January 2004.

The aim of the Casualty Watch was to assess the Accident and Emergency department from a user's perspective, by observing and scoring the quality of the facilities and services available and establishing feedback about patient experiences through a questionnaire.

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

Ms Armstrong thanked Ms McElhinney for her support to participating members and Mr Creighton thanked those members and staff who had participated.

20/04 MEETING WITH CAUSEWAY TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

The joint meeting with Causeway Trust Board members would be held on Monday 23 February 2004 from 10.30am – 12.30pm in the W S Tweed Room, Robinson Hospital, Ballymoney. Suggested agenda items included a short presentation to Board members on the Council's role, casualty watch feedback, the recruitment and retention of home helps, the mental health out of hours service, waiting lists for domiciliary care packages and MRI scanning. The final agenda and meeting format would be agreed by the Administration Committee.

21/04 REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN NI

This is the first major re-examination for 30 years of how public services in Northern Ireland are organised and delivered. The review seeks to develop best arrangements for public administration consistent with the Agreement and restoration of the Assembly.

With over 140 organisations within the public sector, the review recognises that it is not possible to examine the detailed operation of all them, so it will focus on the major public services which have most impact on people and the organisations which deliver them. Of the major services covered by the review, the largest in terms of expenditure, is Health and Personal Social

Services accounting for 44% of expenditure followed by Education and Libraries at 24%.

The review document set out a range of models and refers to perceptions that there exists too many bodies providing public services and the need for better co-ordination and co-operation between sectors and organisations.

It was suggested that what is needed is an objective analysis of the performance of organisations in delivering those public services. There is also a need for analysis of regional, national and international issues likely to have implications for public services. As new structures will take some time to settle in and deliver full benefits a timescale of 20 years ahead seems appropriate.

The Chief Officer was asked to prepare a response on behalf of the Council.

22/04 **DHSSPS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – FIVE YEAR SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

The Strategy aims to improve, protect and promote the sexual health and well-being of the population of Northern Ireland. It sets a target to reduce the number of sexually transmitted infections and adopts the targets in the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy to reduce teenage pregnancy and support teen mothers to continue in education.

Members noted that only £125,000 would be made available by the DHSSPS in the first year to implement the Strategy and Action Plan with continued support over the five year lifespan.

Ms Armstrong highlighted the absurdness of an annual budget and called for at least a five year budget plan for health and social services.

Members were invited to forward any comments to the Chief Officer for inclusion in the response.

23/04 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mr Graham referred to the 'DHSSPS Consultation Document on Post Mortem Examinations' and suggested a joint Council approach.

24/04 **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business had been tabled.

25/04 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 3 March 2004 in the Carrickfergus Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.50pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date