

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Carrickfergus Golf Club, 35 North Road, Carrickfergus on Wednesday 3 March 2004.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr T Creighton

**Members:**

Mrs B Adger	Mr J Millar
Mrs M Anderson	Mrs J Montgomery
Ms R Armstrong	Mr R Montgomery
Mrs M Baker	Mrs R Morrison
Mrs M Beattie	Prof H McKenna
Mrs D Hamill	Mr S Nicholl
Mrs I Johnston	Mr T Nicholl
Prof G Kernohan	Mr M Nolan

**In Attendance:** Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Ms S McElhinney (Agenda Item 5)  
Mr R Lee, Community Development Worker,  
Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development  
Group

Mr Creighton introduced Mr Lee, Community Development Worker, Carrickfergus Neighbourhood Development Group, and invited him to speak about local health and social care issues. Mr Lee reflected on the main issues raised by him a year ago namely delays in getting an appointment with the GP, a shortage of Occupational Therapists and accessing hospital services via ambulance. Since then locums had been appointed to reduce GP appointment delays, five Occupational Therapist posts were about to be advertised for the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey areas and ambulance response times had improved.

Mr Lee highly commended the accessibility of GP services for children and highlighted the reluctance of adult males to attend their GP yet early detection was so important. Mr Lee saw health benefits in Leisure Centre facilities being affordable and accessible to everyone.

Mr Montgomery referred to a Pilot Scheme in the Magherafelt District Council area. The Scheme offers 100 patients from a local GP practice unlimited access to Greenvale Leisure Centre for a 12 week period. Patients follow a fitness programme and benefits are monitored.

Ms McElhinney suggested to Mr Lee that he make contact with the Health Promotion Agency in relation to funding for community health projects through Investing for Health initiative.

Mr Lee called for an increased number of Occupational Therapists to be trained to avoid recruiting for new posts from within the service and suggested greater communication with schools in an effort to influence career choice. He stressed the importance for local ambulances to have the best possible equipment on board in light of the increased distances travelled since Whiteabbey Hospital Accident and Emergency Department ceased accepting trauma patients and children.

Mr Creighton thanked Mr Lee for his comments.

#### 26/04 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Boyle, Mrs Drummond and Mrs L Johnston.

#### 27/04 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Councillor Beattie, Mayor of Carrickfergus Borough Council, extended a warm welcome to everyone.

Availability for a joint meeting with the Northern Health and Social Services Board and interest in attending a joint Council conference on 17 and 18 June 2004 was sought. Mr Creighton reported on his attendance at meetings of the Northern Health and Social Services Board and Homefirst Community Trust.

It was noted that Mr Robert Ferguson OBE had been appointed Chairman of Homefirst Community Trust from 1 February 2004.

Mr S Nicholl voiced concern that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association was starting to look at health and social care issues and members agreed that contact be made with the organisation.

#### 28/04 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2004**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

#### 29/04 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 4 FEBRUARY 2004**

**16/04 Meeting with Management Team of Dalriada Doctor on Call and Mrs Barkley, Assistant Director, Family Practitioner Unit, NHSSB**

As a follow-up to this meeting Mr Drew Boyd, Director Family Practitioner Unit, NHSSB, had been invited to update members on progress within the Northern Board area in implementing the new GMS contract and to outline the impact the new service is likely to have on patients and how this will be communicated to them. Mr Boyd would attend the April Council Meeting.

Mr Graham drew attention to an NHSSB Draft Communications Strategy for the New GMS Contract which had just been published and invited members to submit comments.

**14/04 Meeting re: Review of Mental Health**

Members were reminded of the meeting 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.

**20/04 Meeting with Causeway Trust Board Members**

Members felt this meeting had been useful and informative.

**21/04 Review of Public Administration in NI**

A response had been prepared by the Chief Officer on members' behalf and forwarded to the Review Team.

30/04 **CASUALTY WATCH**

Ms McElhinney, Research Officer, provided feedback on patient experiences during the 24hr observational study of Causeway Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department which commenced at 9.00am on Friday 16 January 2004.

The complete findings of the study would be collated into a Report and shared with Causeway Trust and the NHSSB.

Consideration would be given to several other areas suggested for inclusion in the questionnaire in future exercises.

Mr Graham enquired if members would be interested in participating in an exercise to review the health promotion material which is provided in video format for use by GP Practices. There was some confusion whether this was a commercial venture or a Northern Board funded initiative. Ms McElhinney would clarify the position.

31/04 **VISITING**

### **Visiting Programme – March**

Arrangements were made for visits to Ardrath House Children's Home, Magherafelt and Mountsandel Surgery, Coleraine.

### **Visiting Reports**

#### **Hugomont Children's Respite Unit, Ballymena**

Mrs Hamill reported that the purpose built bungalow offers respite and longer term residential care to children, up to the age of 18, living in the Homefirst Community and Causeway Trust areas who have a severe learning disability with challenging behaviour and/or physical disability including those with complex health needs. The Unit is tastefully decorated and contains a soft ball and multi-sensory room.

Concern was expressed, however, about the availability of suitable services after the age of 18.

#### **Spinal Cord Injuries Unit, Musgrave Park Hospital, Belfast**

The Spinal Cord Injuries Unit provides an intensive, individualised and comprehensive rehabilitation service for patients within Northern Ireland with spinal injuries.

Mr Millar reported that the visiting team toured the unit, viewed equipment and heard about the work undertaken by the NI Spinal Sports Association.

More integrated care patterns, treatment plans and better communication between the Unit, referral agencies and community care teams has reduced the length of stay for patients in this Unit.

The Visiting Team was concerned to learn that, as a regional unit, the EHSSB is the only Board to provide financial support.

The Team was also concerned that patients discharged into the Northern Board area are means tested for domiciliary care packages. Further information would be sought from the Northern Board.

### **Gloucester Park Day Centre, Larne**

The Centre caters for 75 clients on a Monday to Friday basis and aims to meet the assessed needs of people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, physical disabilities, sensory impairment, dementia, addiction problems or acute health problems. During the visit members suggested improvements for recording visitors to the Centre and the development of a staffing model to take account of increasingly dependent wheelchair users. The Visiting Team reported that the Centre was well maintained, resourced and supported by outside agencies. It was evident that clients enjoyed the wide range of activities on offer.

Mr Nolan suggested there was a need to review the visiting checklists and Mrs Montgomery felt it would be useful to organise a training session. The Administration Committee would consider the best way forward.

### **Visiting Response**

#### **George Sloan Centre, Ballymena**

Following consideration of the written response to the Council's report on the George Sloan Centre, Ballymena members had asked the Chief Officer to write to Mrs Simpson and to request a copy of the risk assessment from the Trust and re-visit to the facility. Mrs Simpson had subsequently discussed the content of the letter with Mr Graham and had indicated that a written response would be forwarded.

## **32/04 TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Administration Committee – 12 February 2004**

On the issue of remuneration for Council members, Mr Creighton informed the meeting that he had been advised by the Director of Human Resources, DHSSPS that there are no

proposals at present to introduce any form of attendance allowance for members of Health and Social Services Councils. A reply had been forwarded.

Members were invited to forward ideas to staff for research topics to be included in the 2004/2005 Business Programme.

33/04 **MEETING WITH HOMEFIRST COMMUNITY TRUST BOARD MEMBERS**

The joint meeting with Homefirst Community Trust Board members would be held on Thursday 25 March 2004 at 11.00am in the Board Room, The Cottage, Ballymena. Suggested agenda items included update on the domiciliary meals service, George Sloan Centre, occupational therapy waiting lists, Trust views on the new GMS Contract, home help staffing levels, Agenda for Change, particularly in relation to nurses working within the independent sector and general recruitment difficulties.

34/04 **MEETING WITH UNITED HOSPITALS TRUST BOARD MEMBERS**

The joint meeting with United Hospitals Trust Board members would be held on Thursday 1 April 2004 at 2.30pm in the Lecture Theatre, Fern House, Antrim. Suggested agenda items included trolley waits, delayed discharges, workforce planning in relation to nurses and how training is accessed, provision of minor injury units in Larne and Ballymena, the provision of slip roads from Antrim Hospital and patient welfare at Antrim Hospital.

Professor McKenna informed members that the University of Ulster was working with the Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education to enable access to nurse training courses through experience. He said courses this year were vastly over-subscribed and indicated that the DHSSPS recognised the problems with workforce planning and education.

The final agenda and meeting format would be agreed by the Administration Committee.

35/04 **IMPLEMENTING DEVELOPING BETTER SERVICES**

Mr Graham referred to the decisions announced on 24 February 2003 by the then Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety for modernising acute hospital care in Northern Ireland. Each Board was subsequently asked by the DHSPPS to develop Strategic Implementation Frameworks setting out the future profile of hospital services in their areas. The Northern Health and Social Services Board Framework was approved at its February 2004 Board Meeting and submitted to the Department.

At a regional level, the Department will establish a Regional Steering Group with overall responsibility for the implementation of Developing Better Services and at Board level, each of the four Boards will establish an Area Programme Board that will have oversight of all Developing Better Services projects undertaken within the relevant Board area. Council representation on the Area Programme Board would be discussed with the NHSSB.

Ms Armstrong voiced concern about the increased changes driven by Government which were as always dependent on funding and feared for the provision of essential community services. Mrs Baker particularly drew attention to occupational therapy and podiatry. Professor McKenna informed the meeting that the University of Ulster, Jordanstown now provided drop-in clinics for podiatry and physiotherapy and the University of Ulster, Coleraine for optometry. Clinics are staffed by fully qualified professionals, patients pay a nominal amount and students gain valuable experience.

36/04 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mr T Nicholl drew attention to the correspondence from Councillor P Lewsley, MLA regarding a consultation paper on Area Child Protection Committees Bill and possible next steps. This would be referred to the April Council Meeting for discussion.

Mr Graham referred to several additional items of correspondence:

- Causeway Trust Board Minutes of 26 January 2004
- DHSSPS consultation document "Rewarding Commitment and Excellence in the HPSS" – Proposals for a new Consultant Reward Scheme
- Invitation to RNID NI "Making an Impact" Conference on 31 March 2004.

37/04 **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Local Health and Social Care Group Minutes**

Mrs Morrison expressed an interest in reading the Minutes of her Local Health and Social Care Group meetings. Staff would make the necessary arrangements.

38/04 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 April 2004 in the Larne Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 5.00pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date