

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Linenhall Centre, Upperlands on Wednesday 5 May 2004.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr T Creighton

Members:

Mrs B Adger	Mr J Millar
Mrs M Baker	Mrs J Montgomery
Mr P Boyle	Mr R Montgomery
Mrs J Drummond	Mrs R Morrison
Mrs I Johnston	Professor H McKenna
	Mr T Nicholl

In Attendance: Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin

Ms McClean, Vice-Chairman, Upperlands Community Development Group welcomed members to the Linenhall Centre. She explained that Upperlands Community Group was established in 1994 with a view to revitalising a declining linen village economically, socially and environmentally. Numerous projects have since been completed, including the purchase of the village hall site to build a community hall, industrial units and retail units. Further work is ongoing.

Upperlands has a population of approximately 1,500. It has an ageing population and the main problem for villagers is isolation. The bus service is practically non-existent. A Health and Well Being Club has recently been established with lunches, purchased from the local primary school, available one day a week. The Group is currently in the process of establishing a Community Safety Project.

A vital concern affecting all the residents is the speed of the traffic through the village and some measure of traffic calming is currently being sought.

A Prince's Trust 'Off the Streets Initiatives' for teenagers has just been completed and the Group is endeavouring to get a Club for younger children set up.

Mr Creighton thanked Ms McClean for the insight into the surrounding area.

53/04 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Anderson, Ms Armstrong, Mrs Beattie, Mrs L Johnston, Professor Kernohan, Mrs McCambridge and Mr Nolan.

54/04 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton congratulated Professor McKenna on his recent inaugural professorial lecture entitled Evidence Based Practice: Profusion of Evidence, Confusion in Practice.

Mr Creighton commented upon his attendance at meetings of United Hospitals Trust Board and Northern Health and Social Services Board. He also mentioned an interview with Mr Bridge, a Consultant with Simon Bridge and Associates Ltd who is undertaking an evaluation of Health and Social Services Councils.

Members noted that Mr Creighton and Mr Graham would shortly be meeting with Mr Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS.

55/04 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 APRIL 2004**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

56/04 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 7 APRIL 2004**

**40/04 Joint Health and Social Services Councils
Conference 17 and 18 June 2004**

Further details would shortly be issued to those members attending.

42/04 Meeting re: Review of Mental Health – 6 May 2004

Members who had expressed an interest in this Review were reminded of the meeting the following day in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown when discussion would take place on dementia and older people with mental health problems and the Mental Health Commission.

30/04 Health Channel

Mr Graham reported that staff had surveyed three GP Practices to review the material on the health channel and as a result had

decided not to continue with further visits since videos were either not being played or not being watched.

43/04 The New GP Contract Leaflet

Mrs Montgomery had queried why Northern Board residents should have to pay to use the telephone helpline when the other three Boards had free-phone telephone numbers. The Board's Public Relations Officer pointed out that the same telephone number was listed for EHSSB and SHSSB. Callers to this number were redirected to the nearest Board from where they were calling. NHSSB had decided not to use this number since callers from the Newtownabbey area would be directed to the EHSSB area and instead had quoted the number of their existing patient/client information service which is already a well-publicised number. At the time of speaking to the Public Relations Officer there had been no enquiries to any of the telephone helplines.

Mrs Montgomery referred back to the presentation given at the May Council Meeting on the new GP contract when she had voiced concern about the reluctance of GPs to register elderly patients and had been given an assurance that no practice lists are closed in the Northern area. She confirmed that GPs, in some areas, were refusing to register elderly patients and highlighted the need for those staff making a referral to be made aware of the right of the elderly patient to be registered. The Council would convey this information to the NHSSB Registration and Inspection Unit.

45/04 Homefirst Community Trust Estates Strategy

This meeting would take place in June. Members would be advised of the date in due course.

57/04 VISITING

Visiting Programme – May

Arrangements were made for visits to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit, Antrim and the Elderly Care Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt.

Visiting Reports

Ardrath House Children's Home, Magherafelt

Ardrath House was opened in June 2002 and offers short to medium term care for children aged 11 years and upwards. It is a bright, modern, spacious, two-storey detached residence, tastefully decorated throughout which is convenient to schools, shops, leisure facilities, health centres, community services and bus routes.

The Visiting Team welcomed the opportunity to visit and commended the provision of such a facility in the Magherafelt/Cookstown area.

Mountsandel Surgery, Coleraine

This report would be discussed at the June Council meeting.

Inver House, Larne

Inver 1 is a 23 bedded unit with its main function as a rehabilitation unit for patients post-surgery. It generally caters for elderly patients but has cared for numerous younger patients over the years, most commonly those with rare debilitating illness who have difficulty finding appropriate accommodation.

Inver 2 is a 22 bedded rehabilitation unit, encompassing a two bedded palliative care unit.

On arrival at the Unit, the visiting team experienced difficulty obtaining parking spaces and one member found it difficult to locate the hospital mainly due to a lack of signage coming from Antrim into Larne.

The Visiting Team found Inver House to be spacious, very clean and very relaxed and homely. Each Unit has access to physiotherapy and occupational therapy, however, of late occupational therapy has been limited due to a lack of staff.

Units were found to be well resourced with a range of moving and handling equipment and pressure relieving mattresses some of which were supplied by local community groups.

Following a visit by the Council in 1997 the Visiting Team recommended that two seated showers be installed. A commitment was given by United Hospitals Trust to cost and

install the showers in the near future, however, the Visiting Team was disappointed to learn that this had not been done.

The Visiting Team commended the staff for the work done within the unit and called for more similar Units.

Visiting Responses

Magherafelt Adult Centre

Members noted that Homefirst Community Trust is undertaking an accessibility audit of all its facilities which will highlight problems likely to be encountered by people with a disability. When this is complete, the Trust hopes over time, to bring its facilities up to a standard suitable for disabled access, including the adult centre. Once this work has been completed, necessary redecoration will be carried out.

In relation to speech and language therapy services, the Trust recognises that, with the resources available, services to clients at the adult centre are limited. The Trust has, however, made bids for funding to the Northern Board and will continue to raise this as a priority area. Mrs Baker understood the problem to be a recruitment problem as opposed to a funding issue.

It was noted that a decision was taken that staff should not wear uniforms or identity badges in adult centres in order to promote a more mature environment. New information literature has also been made available within the centre.

Hugomont Children's Respite Unit

Members were pleased to learn that Homefirst Community Trust is currently addressing the psychology support for the unit and that the floor heating would be checked to identify any problems.

With regard to transition planning, the Trust is aware of the young people who are approaching adulthood and for whom there remains a lack of resources. The Council understands that a proposal will be forwarded to the Northern Board to look at a transitions unit for the young people currently accessing the Unit.

Spinal Cord Injury Unit, Musgrave Park Hospital

A number of issues had been raised with the Board following the visit. Members were assured that the Board recognises the demands placed on spinal services and is committed to their development through funding its capitation share of the recent investment in staffing at the Unit.

The Board felt that misunderstandings concerning means testing may have arisen due to the small number of patients who are not discharged directly home from the Spinal Unit. DHSSPS guidance requires that patients requiring home help services are means tested, and there may also be an element of means testing, in cases where patients are discharged, as an interim step, from hospital to a nursing home. As the vast majority of patients being discharged from the Spinal Injuries Unit do not require home help services they are, therefore, not subject to means testing.

Members would seek further clarification of the issues raised.

58/04 **TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING**

Administration Committee – 29 April 2004

Mr Graham had updated members on the position regarding the NHSSC offices.

As a pilot exercise, refreshments would be available to members prior to the commencement of the June Council meeting.

Mr Graham had reported on the meeting he and Mr Creighton had in late March with DHSSPS representatives to outline details of the Council's performance against the individual objectives/targets agreed in the Annual Business Plan 2003/04.

Mrs McNeill, Information/Complaints Officer, had presented details of contacts to the office. During the year 2003/2004 3068 contacts had been made with the Council, an increase of 1506 on the previous year. 619 had related to enquiries, 2264 to website and 185 to complaints.

59/04 **MEETING WITH NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

The joint meeting between Council and NHSSB would be held on Tuesday 25 May 2004. Agenda items would include Implementation of Developing Better Services, capital

investment in community services facilities, Priorities for Action, allocation of resources against the identification of need across the programmes of care and short-term voluntary and community grants. Members debated the format for the meeting and voted in favour of that previously used in recent meetings with Trusts.

60/04 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mrs Montgomery offered to represent the views of the four Councils on the appropriateness of the content, stakeholder involvement and the development of the New Nursing Strategy or Position Paper for Northern Ireland which will replace the strategy for Nursing – Valuing Diversity, developed in 1998.

Mr Millar accepted the invitation from the NI Council for Ethnic Minorities to the launch of Delivering on Equality, Valuing Diversity Report on the health needs of NI's ethnic minority communities.

Mr Graham referred to additional items of correspondence:

- Invitation to launch of the Northern Ireland Essence of Care Project
- Invitation from Director of Secondary Care, DHSSPS to Regional Workshop on Improving the Flow of Emergency Admissions – Mr Millar and Mr Nolan to attend
- Invitation from National Children's Bureau to Spring Seminar and Reception – Mrs Montgomery to attend

61/04 **OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business had been tabled.

62/04 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2 June 2004 in the Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date