

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Environmental Information Centre, Ecos Centre, Ballymena on Wednesday 3 November 2004.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr T Creighton

Members:

Mrs B Adger	Mr J Millar
Mrs M Anderson	Mr R Montgomery
Ms R Armstrong	Mrs C McCambridge
Mrs M Baker	Mr T Nicholl
Mrs M Beattie	Mr M Nolan
Mrs I Johnston	Mr I Stevenson
Mrs L Johnston	

In Attendance: Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin
Member of the Press

Mr T Nicholl extended a warm welcome to the Ecos Centre.

95/04 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Boyle, Mrs Drummond, Mrs Hamill, Mr Hamilton, Professor Kernohan, Mrs Montgomery and Mrs Morrison.

96/04 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton informed members that the presentation, due to be given later in the meeting, by Mrs Simpson, Director Social Care and Disability, Homefirst Community Trust had been deferred. Mr Graham explained that this was due to other work commitments and the incompleteness of an evaluation of domiciliary meals service. Mrs Simpson had offered her apologies and had indicated her availability to attend the next Council meeting.

Mr Creighton commented upon his attendance at a further meeting of the Research Advisory Group for a project to explore innovative nursing and midwifery roles and associated levels of practice throughout Northern Ireland.

Due to hospitalisation, Mr Creighton had been unable to attend Board meetings of Northern Health and Social Services Board, United Hospitals Trust and Homefirst Community Trust.

97/04 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2004**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

98/04 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 6 OCTOBER 2004**

89/04 HSSCs' Work Programme 2004/2007

Mr Graham updated members on progress on a number of objectives contained within the HSSCs' Work Programme.

In order to increase visibility and accessibility to the public a joint Council freephone telephone number will be available from Monday 8 November 2004 and advertisements on the role of the Councils will appear in a number of daily newspapers following this. New posters and leaflets will be printed in November and widely distributed. The joint Councils' advertisement in the telephone directories will be revised to include the freephone telephone number and a joint Council website www.hsscouncils.org will be up and running shortly with links to individual Council sites.

In order to improve the role of Councils in monitoring Health and Personal Social Services draft visiting guidelines were produced and circulated to members at the October meeting.

Mr Nolan commented upon the limitations of the current visiting checklists, in particular the ability to differentiate between service provision and estate and suggested they be reviewed. He also called for training in the completion of the checklists to ensure uniformity. This was reiterated by Ms Armstrong who also commented upon the need to carefully consider the make-up of a visiting team to ensure an appropriate skill mix in order to identify areas of good practice.

Mrs Baker voiced concern that the role of the Council member in a visit appeared to have changed from lay person to that of inspector. Mr Graham said that although the word 'inspect' was used in the Health and Social Services Councils Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1991, members were expected to view facilities from a lay person's perspective.

Mr Graham drew attention to the need to consider the target audience when writing a report. Although Council members hear feedback in the first instance, the report is ultimately received by the Trust. A brief outline of the service provided is therefore sufficient with the main substance of the report concentrating on feedback from talking with those people using the services, areas of good practice and problems causing concern.

Mr Graham reported that the first meeting of the HSSCs' Working Group had been held on 13 October 2004. Fourteen Council representatives had attended and had discussed a draft terms of reference. The Group planned to meet on a two monthly basis and by the next meeting would hopefully have a greater understanding of what the future holds for Health and Social Services Councils following the meeting with Mr Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

89/04 Pain Relief Clinic, Antrim Hospital

The issue of waiting time for an appointment had been raised with United Hospitals Trust. In a response it was explained that the pain service at Antrim Hospital is provided by one Consultant Anaesthetist with a commitment of three sessions per week and that in his absence there is no service. A second Consultant with an interest in pain took up post on 1 August 2004 and it was planned to seek funding from the NHSSB to develop the service, unfortunately this Consultant has obtained another post and plans to leave the Trust in November/December 2004. The Trust has previously had discussion with NHSSB regarding the provision of a chronic pain service but it has not been possible to prioritise this service in face of other demanding pressures. Any further development, even if funding were available, would also be constrained by the difficulty experienced by the Trust in recruiting and retaining Consultant Anaesthetists and the relative priority of demands on their time.

Members noted that staff within the Trust were keen to explore other ways of providing a pain service and had received funding from NHSSB and Local Health and Social Services Groups for a range of initiatives and were working closely with the NHSSB, GPs, Homefirst, Causeway and Greenpark Trusts to develop a musculoskeletal service with the Board area.

The Trust recognised the continued need to develop the Anaesthetist led element of the service and would continue to explore longer term options.

Members felt that immediate access to the pain relief clinic was vital and were astounded by the current level of service provided. The Council would write again to the Trust outlining its concerns and raise this issue at every opportunity.

99/04 **DRAFT MINIMUM CARE STANDARDS**

In place of the scheduled agenda item Mr Graham commented upon the twelve new draft minimum care standards just published by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. In future services provided by nursing homes, residential homes and children's homes or by agencies involved in foster care, domiciliary care or nursing care must meet minimum care standards. Similarly services to children under 12 such as childminding, full day care, pre-school sessional care, out of school care, crèches and early years services by HPSS Trusts must also meet minimum care standards. It is expected that all must comply by 1 April 2005.

The draft standards have been developed following consultation on the document 'Best Practice – Best Care' which sets out proposals to raise the quality of health and social care services provided to the community. The standards have been developed by working groups comprised of representatives from the HPSS, other service providers, service users, carers and professionals.

The DHSSPS is currently seeking to obtain the views of those who have an interest in the services covered by the standards. This information will be used to refine and amend the standards. The consultation period will run until 20 December 2004.

Members would have an opportunity to comment on the standards at a joint HSSCs' event on Friday 19 November 2004 in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown.

100/04 **CAUSEWAY TRUST RESPONSE TO NHSSC 24HR CASUALTY WATCH JANUARY 2004**

Members considered an action schedule, prepared by Causeway Trust in response to the Council Casualty Watch.

They welcomed the comprehensive feedback and action proposed/taken by the Trust and asked that their thanks be passed on through Mr Braiden, Acting Chief Executive, Causeway Trust.

An issue regarding appropriate signage for external routes to the hospital would be pursued by the Council with the Department for Regional Development Roads Service.

101/04 VISITING

Visiting Programme – November

Arrangements were made for a visit to Cookstown Day Centre. The visit to the Elderly Care Wards at Whiteabbey Hospital was postponed due to other commitments on the day suggested.

Visiting Reports

Coronary Care Unit, Causeway Hospital

The Coronary Care Medical Monitoring Unit has 14 beds, 6 acute admission and 8 rehabilitation beds. Patients are admitted via the Cardiac Ambulance, Emergency Department and from other wards or departments throughout the hospital. The Unit provides holistic care for all patients from admission to post discharge. A team of specialist nurses are based in the Unit and include a cardiac liaison nurse, a heart failure nurse, an angina nurse and a resuscitation training officer.

In the visit report Mrs Morrison, Mr Nolan and Mr Stevenson drew attention to the various sources of funding for the heart failure nurse, the angina nurse and the cardiac liaison nurse.

The visiting team commended the laundering of staff uniforms but was surprised that the student nurses were excluded from this system.

It was noted that not all staff were wearing name badges and those that were worn looked faded.

While staff were aware of the evacuation procedure for the Unit in the event of fire it concerned the visiting team that they had never had a fire drill. The team was also concerned that when a member of staff leaves the unit to accompany an ambulance

crew the remaining staff face considerable pressure if there are several new admissions.

The visiting team commended the cleanliness of the Unit and the high standard of equipment available. Issues raised by the team would be forwarded to Causeway Trust.

Antrim Day Centre

Antrim Day Centre opened in October 1974 and provides a comprehensive range of services for clients ranging in age from early twenties to mid nineties. Services encourage independent living and minimise disadvantages while at the same time enhance quality of life, enabling clients to remain in their own home and in the community.

During the visit members Mrs Hamill and Mrs Montgomery took the opportunity to speak with both staff and clients. Clients were clearly enjoying the activities they were involved in which included knitting, sewing, crafts, painting, reminiscence therapy and woodwork.

The visiting team also met with several people from Adapt, a new group for people with head injury that meets in Antrim Day Centre, Monday to Thursday. They too were enjoying the activities and commented upon how much support they received from fellow clients.

The overall impression of the visiting team was that the Centre provides an invaluable service to the local community. This would be conveyed to Homefirst Community Trust.

Elderly Care Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt

Mr Montgomery reported that he and Mrs Montgomery still awaited contact from United Hospital in relation to a number of issues raised by relatives during the visit.

102/04 **REPORTS FROM:**

Improving the Educational Outcomes for Looked after Children Regional Seminar

Mr Millar gave a detailed report on his attendance at this seminar. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Department of Education and Looked After Children

in Education Project hosted a number of seminars as a way of promoting a coherent approach to meeting the needs of looked after children and improving their educational outcomes. These seminars will help the DHSSPS in the development of the Children and Young People in Need Strategy through informed input from key stakeholders, particularly in relation to the looked after children population.

The current position on provision for looked after children and the findings of local research were reviewed at the June seminar. From this review a number of issues emerged and the October seminar focused on these issues in relation to children in residential care, fostering, secure care and leaving and aftercare and the action which might be taken to address them.

There are approximately 2,500 children/young people in care in Northern Ireland and from the evidence presented there is a marked difference in the key stage attainments of looked after children in NI compared with their counterparts in England. It was also felt that it is not always helpful to compare educational outcomes for looked after children with those of their peers who are not looked after.

Of particular concern was the apparent development of support services in isolation from each other, the disjointed approach to corporate parenting and the provision of short-term funding. Some Trusts and Education and Library Boards have succeeded in joint bids for European funding, however, this has been time-limited, therefore adding to the pressures to seek other secure funding to sustain the service.

As a foster carer himself, Mr Millar commented upon the shortage of foster carers in Northern Ireland and the Department's drive to recruit another 1,500 in the next 2 years. He added that older children were more difficult to place.

DHSSPS/NICON Training and Awareness Workshop to consider strategic issues impacting on the Health and Social Services

Mrs Anderson and Mr Millar had attended the Workshop. Mr Millar advised that with approximately 384,000 people of pensionable age by the year 2028, many suffering multiple long term chronic diseases, more demands will be placed on health and social services. The current system would be unable to cope. Any new system would need people to be able to control

their own illnesses and to be able to access the same level of information on their illness. There needs to be more engaging with the public and the message got across that inappropriate use of Accident and Emergency facilities is not acceptable and that effective community care will keep people out of hospital. Delegates were reminded, however, that there was a need to balance optimism with reality in terms of resource limitations.

Mrs Anderson commented upon the mediums used to increase awareness. While television and the media are very effective everyone has an individual responsibility for their own health and shouldn't leave it to others.

HPSS Workshop to present and discuss the Fourth Report from the Capitation Formula Review Group

Mr Graham reported that the Capitation Formula Review Group had been established in 1994 to look at ways to improve how the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety allocates resources to Health and Social Services Boards to meet the health and social care needs of their respective populations. The formula that is used also informs Boards' allocations to local areas.

The Review Group's Third Report was published in 2000 and is used as the basis for the current formula. Since this the Group has been taking forward a significant programme of research and analysis and its conclusions and recommendations are included in the Fourth Report which is now out for consultation.

Commenting on the structure of the formula, Mr Graham explained that there are separate formula for each of the nine Programmes of Care. These nine formula are brought together to give a weighted capitation share covering all services. The weighted capitation principles are based on population size, age/gender adjustment, additional needs adjustment and other adjustments such as rural costs, economies of scale and income. The population size is the most important element. Previously mid-year population estimates were used, however, the 2001 census population figures now used are more accurate. New data now available will result in changes to the distribution of resources between Boards with a shift in resources from the Eastern Health and Social Services Board to

other Board areas. Allocation of the additional funding, however, will be gradual.

103/04 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mrs Anderson accepted the invitation to attend a meeting of The State Hospital (Carstairs) Board.

Mr Graham referred to additional items of correspondence:

- DHSSPS Guidance on Drug and Substance Misuse in Mental Care Settings
- DHSSPS Guidance on Discharge from Psychiatric or Learning Disability Hospital and the Continuing Care in the Community of People with a mental disorder who could represent a risk of serious physical harm to themselves or others.

104/04 **OTHER BUSINESS**

Resettlement in Community Settings

Ms Armstrong stressed the importance of local communities being given advance notice of resettlement programmes. Consideration would be given to a presentation on the progress with current resettlement programmes.

Mileage Allowance

Mr Creighton reported that a circular, advising of an increase, would shortly be issued.

Terminal Illness

Mrs McCambridge enquired about the right of terminally ill people to die at home. She referred to the high percentage who would prefer to die at home but are unable to do so. She highlighted the service provided by Marie Curie Cancer Care and sought details on other similar providers. Staff would make enquiries.

Future of Health and Social Services Councils

Mr Stevenson enquired about the future of the Health and Social Services Councils. Mr Creighton advised that a meeting would shortly be held with Mr Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when Councils would have the opportunity to suggest a future role.

Antrim Hospital Visit

Mr T Nicholl commented upon a recent visit by members of Ballymena Borough Council Health Committee to Antrim Hospital. He said members had been pleasantly surprised by the many new initiatives taking place and suggested a similar visit be arranged for Health and Social Services Council members. In terms of financial investment and improvement he said he wanted to see Antrim Hospital get its fair share.

Mr T Nicholl sought an update on the position with the provision of slip roads from the hospital to the M2. Mr Graham agreed to contact United Hospitals Trust.

105/04 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1 December 2004 in the Moyle District Council area.

The meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date