

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Marine Hotel, Ballycastle on Wednesday 1 December 2004.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr T Creighton

**Members:**

Mrs B Adger	Mrs L Johnston
Mrs M Anderson	Mr J Millar
Ms R Armstrong	Mrs J Montgomery
Mrs M Baker	Mr R Montgomery
Mrs M Beattie	Mrs R Morrison
Mr P Boyle	Mrs C McCambridge
Mrs J Drummond	Mr T Nicholl
Mrs D Hamill	Mr M Nolan
Mr N Hamilton	Mr I Stevenson
Mrs I Johnston	

**In Attendance:** Mr N Graham  
Mrs J Erwin  
Mrs J McNeill  
Mrs R Simpson – Agenda Item 5

Mrs C McCambridge welcomed members to the Moyle District Council area.

### 106/04 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Professor Kernohan and Mr S Nicholl.

### 107/04 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton commented upon his attendance at training events on dealing with the media and interviewing skills.

The Chairman invited Mr Graham to comment on the recent meeting with Mr Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and staff.

In advance of the meeting Mr Gowdy had been sent a copy of the evaluation on Health and Social Services Councils, proposals for a future structure document, the joint Councils'

Work Programme for 2004/2007 and a report on liaison with the community and voluntary sector.

Mr Gowdy had described the Department's approach to the Review of Public Administration and indicated that a consultation document was due for publication in the next few weeks, however, this timescale was dependent upon the political situation.

The Department had been supportive of the joint approach proposed and taken by Health and Social Services Councils and agreed that the work of the joint Councils' Working Group should link with the Department at various stages to discuss and sign off progress.

Ms Armstrong highlighted the importance of Council representation at the Board meetings of local Trusts and the Northern Health and Social Services Board and recommended that in the event of the Chairman's unavailability a deputy attend.

#### 108/04 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2004**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

#### 109/04 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 3 NOVEMBER 2004**

##### **98/04 HSSCs' Work Programme 2004/2007**

Mr Graham reported that the second meeting of the HSSCs' Working Group had been held on 19 November 2004 and that for the next meeting, on 13 January 2005, members were tasked with considering how they see the future of Health and Social Services Councils.

##### **89/04 Pain Relief Clinic, Antrim Hospital**

The Council had reiterated its concerns in a further letter to United Hospitals Trust and would raise the lengthy waiting time for an appointment at every opportunity. Mr Creighton informed the meeting that he had also spoken personally to Mr Mitchell, the Trust's Chief Executive. Mrs Baker felt that the existence of the pain relief clinic merely offered false hope to those in need of its service.

##### **99/04 Draft Minimum Care Standards**

Members from the four Health and Social Services Councils had met with Departmental representatives on Friday 19 November to discuss the first tranche of standards. The feedback will be used to refine and amend the draft standards.

The second tranche, just launched, covers standards for services provided by residential family centres, day care centres and independent health care. A third tranche will follow.

#### **100/04 Causeway Trust Response to NHSSC 24hr Casualty Watch January 2004**

The Council had written to Roads Service regarding appropriate signage for external routes to the hospital. An acknowledgement letter had indicated that the correspondence was receiving attention and that it was hoped a reply would be issued by 10 December 2004.

#### **101/04 Visit to Elderly Care Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt**

Mrs Montgomery and Mr Montgomery were unhappy with the conduct and nature of the meeting arranged with United Hospitals Trust staff to discuss a number of issues raised by relatives after the visit. The matter would be taken up in a letter to the Trust's Chief Executive.

#### **104/04 Mileage Allowance**

A copy of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Circular HSS (F) 48/2004, advising of an increase in travelling and other allowances was distributed to members. Mr Montgomery paid tribute to the Chairman's work in lobbying for an increased rate.

#### **104/04 Terminal Illness**

Mrs McCambridge had highlighted the service provided by Marie Curie Cancer Care and had sought details on other similar providers. The Council had written to the Board and a response was awaited.

#### **104/04 Antrim Hospital – M2 On-Slips**

Mr T Nicholl had sought an update on the position with the provision of new motorway on-slips which would allow immediate access from Antrim Hospital on to the M2, west towards Randalstown and east towards Belfast.

Mr T Nicholl had subsequently obtained an extract from the November 2004 Roads Service Report which stated that the planning for the new on-slips was well advanced with the Environmental Statement and Designation Order already completed. A Notice of Intention to Make a Vesting Order had been published to acquire the lands required to construct the scheme and the scheme has been included as part of a Public Private Partnership package of road improvement schemes.

Mr Graham indicated that United Hospitals Trust had sought an update from the Roads Service, particularly in relation to the timescale and would keep the Council informed.

110/04 **PRESENTATION ON DOMICILIARY MEALS, HOME CARE SERVICE AND DIRECT PAYMENTS**

Mr Creighton welcomed Mrs Simpson, Director Social Care and Disability with Homefirst Community Trust.

Mrs Simpson informed members that the cook/chill domiciliary meals service, is now operational throughout the Homefirst area. There has been increased uptake in the meals provided and the latest audit has shown a high level of satisfaction with the service across the Trust area. 1,100 questionnaires were issued and a response rate of 76.6% recorded. Structured interviews and spot checks were also carried out. The majority of recipients felt the meal size was just right, had no difficulty reheating meals, rated the quality of meals as high, felt they were good value and understood the bill. The Trust is, however, considering with the supplier of the meals, improvements to the procedure for cancelling or altering an order. The majority of meals are reheated in a microwave and unlike other Trusts Homefirst has retained a high number of home care workers to reheat meals.

Mr Montgomery felt old people were reluctant to complain for fear of losing their home care worker. Mrs Simpson recognised this was a perception and referred to a possible reduction in hours for some home care workers and the need to empower elderly people. She also pointed out that the Trust did not have a large number of people cancelling the service.

Mr Montgomery said he was aware that some recipients did not receive what they ordered. Mrs Simpson confirmed that following discussion with the supplier a copy of the order placed is now left with the recipient. She indicated that additional staff and vehicles had also been employed by the supplier.

Responding to Mrs Baker's comments on the size and content of the meals, Mrs Simpson explained that when the Trust contracted with the supplier it opted for a medium sized meal which suited the majority of recipients. Further consideration will have to be given to the provision of larger meals and to gravy being provided separately. Mr Hamilton called for the cost incurred for a larger meal to be met by the Trust while Mrs Montgomery felt it would not be unreasonable to charge more. Mrs Simpson pointed out that the meal supplied was not the only source of nourishment for an individual and assured members that all issues surrounding the domiciliary meals service are raised at the regular contract monitoring meetings.

Mrs Simpson acknowledged the difficulties in the recruitment and retention of home care staff and highlighted steps being taken to increase the number of home care workers employed by the Trust. The Trust is now offering contracts with minimum guaranteed hours, has extended the operation of rota teams and increased the training opportunities available to staff including access to NVQ qualifications.

In response to comments on infection control, Mrs Simpson said that a uniform policy was being considered and that staff wear disposable aprons and gloves.

Speaking on the Direct Payments Scheme Mrs Simpson highlighted the confusion between this Scheme and the one widely promoted by the Social Security Agency.

She explained that a Direct Payment is a sum of money paid to an individual in lieu of personal social services they have been assessed as needing, thereby enabling and empowering the individuals to purchase the services from sources other than the Trust.

Direct Payments was introduced in 1997 acknowledging that people with a disability wished to exercise more choice, control and flexibility with regard to how their personal and social care needs are met. The Direct Payments Scheme allows

individuals, on the basis of their assessed needs, to decide who works for them, when they work and what they do. The individual can either use Direct Payments to employ their own staff or buy services from an agency.

Mrs Simpson said there had initially been a slow uptake of the Scheme, however, as at the 30 September 2004 there were 17 Direct Payments recipients within the Homefirst area, the majority of which are individuals with a physical disability. Most are in the 46 – 55 age group and care ranges from 7 hours per week to 34 hours domiciliary support.

The Northern Board is currently providing ring-fenced money to support the Scheme and the Trust has appointed a part-time officer to work on operational issues.

Mrs Morrison enquired if Direct Payments recipients were continually assessed and if assessments were multi-disciplinary. Mrs Simpson confirmed there was an annual review, usually undertaken by a Social Worker, however, recipients could raise any issue direct with the Trust. Mrs Morrison called for increased monitoring to ensure appropriate use of the payment.

Mr Nolan enquired if any problems had resulted from the individual being an employer. Mrs Simpson referred to problems regarding recruitment of staff and drew attention to the role of the Centre for Independent Living based in Belfast, an organisation which provides information, advice and advocacy relating to Direct Payments and personal assistance.

Mrs Simpson reminded the meeting that the individual must have the ability to manage the Scheme and that the regional guidelines state that a close relative, living in the same house, cannot be employed, except in exceptional circumstances.

Mrs McNeill drew attention to delays, within the Trust, in implementing care packages and felt there was an apparent reluctance amongst Social Workers in promoting the Direct Payments Scheme. Mrs Simpson commented upon the advantages for Social Workers when clients opted for the Scheme, however, felt there was probably a lack of awareness about the Scheme amongst the profession.

Mrs Baker said she welcomed the progress of the Scheme and hoped anomalies in relation to which budget the Scheme is funded from could be sorted out.

Mrs Drummond was concerned that the Scheme may be used by the Trust as an opt out of its responsibilities. Mrs Simpson said this would be entirely unacceptable, that the Scheme was completely voluntary and that the Trust was required to satisfy itself with the arrangements.

Mr Creighton thanked Mrs Simpson for her informative presentation.

111/04 **VISITING**

**Visiting Report**

**Cookstown Day Centre**

The Centre assists people with disabilities to lead a full and active life within their capabilities and promote their independence as far as possible. It also provides support and respite to those people caring for disabled relatives and friends.

Mr Millar commented upon his and Mrs Baker's visit to the Centre. As in 1999, when the Council last visited, car parking remains a problem. Storage is also extremely limited and the visiting team felt that larger premises would soon be needed. Despite these shortcomings staff manage to provide a friendly and professional service with input from the Friends of Cookstown Day Centre.

112/04 **TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETING:**

**Administration Committee – 24 November 2004**

Copies of the notes were distributed to members. The meeting had been updated on progress with the Health and Social Services Councils' Work Programme April 2004 – March 2007 and had considered a draft policy on Council representation on Committees.

Mrs McNeill had presented details of contacts to the NHSSC. During the period April – October 2004, 2352 contacts had been made with the Council, an increase of 881 on the same

period the previous year. 408 related to enquiries, 72 to complaints and 1872 to web site hits.

Members had been informed about the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations Act 1992 which create a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities with effect from 1 January 2005. This right is subject to certain conditions and exemptions. The intention of the Acts, however, is to provide transparency in the conduct of public affairs and these conditions/exemptions are therefore limited. Furthermore, the Acts place a statutory duty on public authorities to provide advice and assistance to applicants. Under the Data Protection Act, people already have the right to access information about themselves held on computer and on paper. FOI extends those rights to allow access to all the types information held by a public body, with very few exemptions.

The next Administration Committee meeting would be held on Thursday 6 January 2005.

113/04 **CAUSEWAY HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TRUST  
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY AND PUBLIC  
INVOLVEMENT FRAMEWORK**

Mr Nolan highlighted the need for service users to have meaningful representation not just a tokenistic input.

Other members with comments were invited to forward them to the Chief Officer by mid-December.

114/04 **REPORTS FROM:**

**Launch of Barnardo's NI Fifth Policy and Practice Briefing**

Mrs Adger and Mr Millar had attended the launch of Barnardo's fifth Policy and Practice Briefing which had taken the form of a morning seminar introduced by the Director, Lynda Wilson and facilitated by Benny McDaniels from the Barnardo's NI Parents and Children Together Project. P.A.C.T offers accommodation and assessment, with support 24 hours a day, to young women aged 16 to 24 years and their children aged 3 years and under. The Policy and Practice Briefing provides an overview of the Neglect Prevention Programme and reports on an evaluation of this work.

## **Meeting of the State Hospitals (Carstairs) Board for Scotland**

The State Hospital provides high security inpatient provision for Scotland and Northern Ireland and currently has 19 male patients from NI. The State Hospital is, however, undergoing considerable change and it is anticipated that, as medium-secure and other community services develop, there will be a marked reduction in the overall number of places. In Scotland, to take forward the broad range of service developments in an organised manner, a Forensic Mental Health Services Managed Care Network has been established.

The State Hospital Board holds its bi-monthly meetings across the various regions of Scotland but this was the first time to meet in Northern Ireland. The meeting was attended by Mrs Anderson and offered the opportunity to meet the Board, including the Chief Executive of the Managed Care Network, observe the routine business and discuss issues for Northern Ireland patients, the future of The State Hospital and benefits of links with the Managed Care Network. A report of the meeting was distributed to members.

### 115/04 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Additional items of correspondence included:

- Invitation to Homefirst Community Trust Workshop on Developing a Primary Care Strategy – Tuesday 21 December 2004 from 9.30am – 4.30pm in the Ross Park Hotel, Kells. Mr Millar would attend.
- Invitation to NHSSB Workshop on Primary Care – Thursday 9 December 2004 from 4.00pm – 8.00pm in the Ross Park Hotel, Kells. Mr Millar and Mr Graham would attend.
- NIPEC Consultation document Development Framework for Nursing and Midwifery, NI
- Causeway Trust Board Minutes of 27 September and 25 October 2004

- Homefirst Community Trust Board Minutes of 28 October 2004
- Northern Ireland Audit Office Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General re: Waiting for Treatment in Hospitals
- Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability – Equal Lives Report on Learning Disability.

116/04 **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Drugs Overspend at Belfast City Hospital**

Ms Armstrong referred to recent media coverage in relation to an overspend on cancer drugs at Belfast City Hospital and enquired about the situation at Antrim Hospital. Staff agreed to make enquiries.

117/04 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 January 2005 in the Coleraine Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.24pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date