

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Adult Education Room, Oakfield Community Development Centre, Carrickfergus on Wednesday 2 March 2005.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr T Creighton

Members: Mrs M Anderson Professor G Kernohan
Ms R Armstrong Mr J Millar
Mrs M Baker Mrs J Montgomery
Mrs M Beattie Mr R Montgomery
Mr P Boyle Mrs R Morrison
Mrs J Drummond Mr S Nicholl
Mrs D Hamill Mr I Stevenson
Mrs I Johnston

In Attendance: Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin
Mr K Keenan – Agenda Item 5
Reporter – Carrick Times

24/05 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Adger, Mr Hamilton, Mrs L Johnston, Mrs McCambridge and Mr Nolan.

25/05 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mrs Beattie welcomed members to the Carrickfergus Borough Council area on behalf of the Mayor, Alderman Hilditch and distributed promotional packs to members.

Mr Creighton welcomed back Mr Montgomery who was recovering from an operation.

Mr Creighton commented upon his attendance at the Board meetings of the Northern Health and Social Services Board and United Hospitals Trust.

26/05 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2005**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

27/05 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 2 MARCH
2005**

**14/05 Visit to Elderly Care Unit, Mid-Ulster Hospital,
Magherafelt**

A further meeting had been held with Trust staff to discuss a number of issues raised by relatives following the visit. The meeting had been very reassuring and the offer of further contact with Trust staff was accepted.

28/05 **PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON LEARNING DISABILITY**

Mr Creighton welcomed Mr Keenan, Assistant Director Social Services, Northern Health and Social Services Board. Mr Keenan commented on how fortunate the learning disability programme of care had been in the last 2 years. It had benefited not just from the annual allocation of funding through Priorities for Action, but from retraction from Muckamore Abbey Hospital, Antrim, as a result of the extensive resettlement programme in recent year. Also from a prioritisation of funding for this programme of care by Mid-Ulster Local Health and Social Care Group and the so called 'easement' monies released to the Board through the introduction of Supporting People. All this has enabled the Board to make significant further progress in shifting from a hospital driven model of commissioning to one where community services have become a major consideration.

In the Homefirst Community Trust area investment has been made in the development of a new social work team for East Antrim, in the establishment of a challenging behaviour team and in the provision of additional physiotherapy support for day care. Additional speech and language therapy and occupational therapy has also been provided and a specialist epilepsy nurse appointed. The Board has also funded additional support worker posts and a management post with a specific oversight of supported living in the Trust's area. The Supporting People initiative offers an opportunity to develop a new model of accommodation for people with learning disabilities and a new scheme is being developed in Crumlin.

The Causeway Trust area has benefited from additional social work and nurse staffing to provide support to facilities which have been de-registered as a result of the Supporting People initiative. Funding was given to MENCAP to establish a

northern area office in Ballymoney which underlines the value of preventative orientated work.

Alongside new models of services are respite and day care. In an attempt to modernise day care Causeway Trust has developed, in Coleraine and Ballywillan, two new, smaller alternatives to the existing large scale, institutional model. This has helped relieve pressure on existing facilities and the Trust continues to develop innovative, more vocationally orientated alternatives. In Homefirst Community Trust area focus has been on smaller scale projects, in conjunction with voluntary sector providers.

Respite care has benefited from additional investment, primarily to promote family based care. The Mid-Ulster Local Health and Social Care Group made a major financial contribution to this.

The comprehensive changes in community services link in with the changing role of specialist hospital services. During 2004/2005 a further 9 Northern Board patients were resettled from Muckamore Abbey Hospital, Antrim and plans are in place to resettle a further 11.

Progress with Phase 1 of the new hospital is well advanced with 53 beds scheduled to be opened in December 2005. Phase 2 will provide another 35 beds. Discussions are ongoing about the eventual relocation of children's services to an alternative site.

Commenting on problems within the hospital, including cost pressures, Mr Keenan said that efforts have continued to manage the delayed discharges from treatment wards. This is caused by difficulties in finding placements suitable for patients whose needs have changed since they were admitted. In the past this resulted in some patients having to move to a different ward each night to sleep to avoid unsafe patient numbers in some wards. Fortunately, this practice has been eradicated.

The hospital has a number of adolescents who need special provision but for whom the only provision is the adult ward and also several forensic patients who have been convicted of offences.

Mr Keenan referred to the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability. Proposals include a radical reduction in the

number of hospital beds, a major overhaul of day care, a very different vision for residential care, an emphasis on inclusion and mainstreaming and a focus on increasing respite. With the Review due for completion by the end of 2005, its Chairman, Professor Bamford wrote to the Minister for Finance in December 2004 requesting that funding to implement the recommendations be made a special funding case within the budget allocations for 2005-2008. The Minister for Finance assured Professor Bamford that his views would be taken into consideration as part of the overall response to the consultation in finalising the Priorities and Budget.

In looking to the future Mr Keenan referred to piecemeal development over the next twelve months and the need to modernise services. He drew attention to the bleak financial situation and the absence of any ring-fenced money with the only lifeline being the funding of innovative ideas known as 'flagship schemes'.

During a question and answer session Mrs Beattie and Mrs I Johnston enquired about the forensic patients in Muckamore Abbey Hospital. Mr Keenan explained that these people were in Muckamore rather than prison as they needed treatment and rehabilitation, some had been there a long time. To resettle these people in the community would be very costly. While there are no plans to build a secure unit for people with a learning disability, however, a new forensic unit with 20 beds is being built.

Mrs Drummond enquired about the future of Clogrennan Hostel in Larne and was informed that it will be a supported living facility. She also raised the issue of respite. Mr Keenan referred to the models of respite. In Causeway Trust there is no residential respite, only family based and it is very successful. Homefirst Community Trust, however, has greater dependence upon residential respite and will have to move away from this.

Commending various initiatives, Ms Armstrong enquired how transport for clients accessing day care was managed stating that she felt there was a certain amount of inflexibility with transport. Mr Keenan referred to the use of both Trust transport and community transport and Mrs Baker to the use of rural community transport in the Mid-Ulster area.

Mr S Nicholl enquired if the full range of activities can be offered in smaller day care units and Mr Keenan pointed out the need for units to more focused, tailored and targeted.

Commenting on the Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability Mr S Nicholl felt it would highlight nothing new and that with the scarceness of financial resources the findings would be used as an excuse to close facilities. Mr Keenan agreed that the timing was unfortunate.

Mrs Morrison referred to the plans to resettle further patients from Muckamore Abbey Hospital to the Ballymoney area and enquired how long this would take. Mr Keenan explained that planning was well advanced, however, there was no set formula, it depends on the individual and sometimes on the Housing Association. Once discharged the hospital would hold the bed for at least three months.

Ms Armstrong drew attention to the number of people with learning disability now diagnosed with dementia who are inappropriately placed in facilities. Mr Keenan explained that the Board was addressing the bulk of the population, however, he recognised there were special groups of people within this and that this particular group needed a more specialised service.

On behalf of members Mr Creighton thanked Mr Keenan for his informative presentation.

29/05 **VISITING**

Visiting Programme – March

Arrangements were made for visits to the Elderly Care Wards, Whiteabbey Hospital, Newtownabbey and Glenmona Resource Centre, Cushendun.

Visiting Reports

Rathmoyle Resource Centre, Ballycastle

This report would be considered at the April Council Meeting.

Maghera Day Centre

The Centre caters for people with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, elderly people with varying degrees of disability, people with confusion and people with mental ill health. The Centre's role is to enable people to live as independently as is possible for them in their local community and to support carers.

Mrs Baker reported that the Visiting Team had commended the new extension and refurbishment of bathrooms, etc, carried out since the last visit in 2000 which have greatly improved conditions.

Also commended was the involvement of local schools, churches and sports clubs. There are three pool teams within the Centre, an A, B and women's team and one client is a women's world pool champion. Playing pool improves the clients' confidence, unfortunately, however, there is a threat to funding for this activity. There is also a threat to funding for rural transport. Clients are heavily dependent on this form of transport as local public transport is poor.

Visiting Response

Cookstown Day Centre

The Visiting Team had commented upon limited car parking and were advised by Homefirst Community Trust that currently there are plans to widen the Westland Road which will result in a net loss of car parking space from the day centre area. However, two spaces will be reserved for disabled parking as opposed to one at present. The grass will be removed at the entrance to accommodate this.

Space continues to be an issue as these premises were not purpose built for current usage. However, in the new bathroom, which forms part of the extension currently being built, there will be additional floor to ceiling storage. The Trust is also looking at the possibility of re-structuring the reception area to free up some space.

The Trust agreed to raise the issue of the front door opening outwards again with Estate Services with a view to costing an alternative which would improve access for people with a disability.

30/05 **TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETINGS WITH TRUSTS AND BOARD**

The joint meeting between Council and Homefirst Community Trust Board members would be held on Thursday 24 March 2005. Suggested agenda items included delayed discharges, community health development, training for physiotherapists in hydrotherapy, home care recruitment, staff sickness, access to free podiatry services, waiting lists, threat of Avian flu, legal costs and models of respite for people with a learning disability. The agenda would be finalised at the Administration Committee meeting.

The joint meeting between Council and United Hospitals Trust Board members would be held on Thursday 28 April 2005. Suggested agenda items included car parking, fracture services and the pain relief clinic at Antrim Hospital, medical negligence claims, hospital acquired infections, hygiene and delayed discharges.

Dates for the joint meetings with Causeway Trust and the Northern Health and Social Services Board had not yet been agreed. However, suggested agenda items for the meeting with the Board included 24 hr cover at Carrickfergus Ambulance Sub-Station, funding for rural community transport, delayed discharges, flu vaccination, elderly care funding, respite services for young people with Multiple Sclerosis, fracture services, tariffs for care and under- funding for community care.

In advance of the joint meetings members requested that the Chief Officer obtain an update from the Board on the threat of Avian flu.

31/05 **INVITATION FROM HOMEFIRST COMMUNITY TRUST RE: INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT STRATEGY**

Members noted that Homefirst Community Trust was currently developing a strategy which will describe how it would like its services to look during the coming five years. The Council was invited to be involved in a number of ways. Members agreed to

be represented at a consultation event and to accept the offer of a meeting.

32/05 **REPORTS FROM:**

DHSSPS Regional Workshop on feedback from Trusts re: Snap Shot Survey of pressures and delays in the emergency care pathway

This event had been attended by Mr Graham, Mr Millar and Mr Nolan. Mr Graham reported that this was a follow on conference to one held in May 2004. Its aim was to look at how to reduce the numbers of hospital admissions and for those admitted how to care, treat and discharge efficiently and effectively.

Delegates had the opportunity to participate in workshops which were useful in identifying some of the issues which hinder progress and/or cause delays but would have benefited from primary care input.

Ms Armstrong felt ambulance personnel should have a choice in where they take patients as the Accident and Emergency Department was not always the most appropriate. Mr Millar drew attention to the limited number of ambulance crews and vehicles.

NHSSB Workshop on the Management of Long Term Conditions

Mr Graham reported that the Northern Board had brought together Board and Trust officers to consider Action Plans for the management of long term conditions. The workshop included presentations from an Evercare pilot site in Bristol and the Unique Care Scheme in Castlefields, both of which have been shown to improve management of patients with chronic conditions.

33/05 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

Mr Graham drew attention to the letter and copy correspondence received from Professor Watson, Director of Public Health, NHSSB in relation to the site investigations in

and around the former Courtauld's site in Carrickfergus. Mrs Beattie updated members and confirmed that no tests have yet been carried out.

Members noted that copies of the DHSSPS Twenty Year Vision for Health and Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2005-2025 'A Healthier Future', launched before Christmas were still awaited.

Additional items of correspondence included:

- 'Tried, Tested, Shared 2' DHSSPS Summaries from the Service Improvement Projects 2003-04
- Health Promotion Agency Health and Lifestyle Survey for NI 2002
- Pre-Consultation on service user involvement within cancer services - 'Not Why – But How'

34/05 **OTHER BUSINESS**

Sudan 1

Mrs I Johnston drew attention to the large scale withdrawal of food products due to the presence of the banned dye Sudan 1 and enquired what assurances were being given to the public that food is now completely safe and free of Sudan 1. Mrs Beattie and Mr Montgomery commented upon the role of Environmental Health Officers and the Chief Officer agreed to seek information from the NHSSB and the Food Standards Agency.

35/05 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 6 April 2005 in the Larne Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date