

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in The Crieve Centre, Stewartstown on Wednesday 7 September 2005.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr T Creighton

Members: Mrs M Anderson Mrs C McCambridge
Mr T Douglas Mr S McClelland
Prof G Kernohan Mr M Nolan
Mr J Millar Mr I Stevenson
Mrs J Montgomery Mrs K Swain
Mrs R Morrison

In Attendance: Mr N Graham
Mrs J Erwin

61/05 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Adger, Ms Armstrong, Mrs Hamill, Mrs I Johnson, Mrs L Johnston, Mr Kinahan, Mrs McEldowney and Mr Nicholl.

62/05 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

Mr Creighton welcomed members back after the summer break. He introduced and welcomed recently appointed members Mr Douglas, Mrs Swain and Mr McClelland all from Newtownabbey. Also appointed but unable to attend the meeting were Mrs McEldowney, Maghera, representing Magherafelt District Council, Mr Quinn, Cookstown, representing Cookstown District Council and Mr Kinahan, Templepatrick, representing Antrim Borough Council. He congratulated Mrs L Johnston, Mrs Adger and Mr Stevenson on being re-appointed.

The Chairman commented upon his participation in the judging of United Hospitals Trust Quality Awards and his attendance at a meeting of United Hospitals Trust Board.

He thanked Mr McClelland and Mrs I Johnston for deputising at other Board meetings. Feeding back from the Northern Health and Social Services Board meeting Mr McClelland said the Board welcomed the Health Minister's announcement to tackle

waiting lists and was pleased to be providing high quality cancer screening programmes within its area.

A meeting to update members on the new General Medical Services Contract would be held with representatives of the Northern Health and Social Services Board's Family Practitioner Unit on Friday 7 October from 2.00pm – 5.00pm in Antrim Technology Park. Suggested agenda items included dealing with violent patients, access to GP services and the out-of-hours service.

Members were requested to update their Register of Declared Interests pro-forma.

Recently appointed members were requested to attend an 'On Board' training course on the afternoon of Wednesday 23 November 2005 at the Templeton Hotel, Templepatrick.

63/05 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2005**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

64/05 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 1 JUNE 2005**

52/05 Avian Bird Flu and Flu Pandemic

Mr Graham referred to the confusion between Avian Bird Flu and the Flu Pandemic. Having spoken to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety he explained that Avian Bird Flu is a disease which attacks birds and the lead on this is the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Scientists predict that we are due for a flu pandemic (happens every 30/40 years) and the likelihood is that it may come here within the next few years. Until its origins are known it is not possible to produce a vaccine. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is purchasing £5m worth of anti-viral drugs based on scientists expectation that 25% of the population is the likely attack rate and this will be used to treat those who get flu.

Planning in Northern Ireland has been ongoing for 18 months and links closely with the UK plan. The plan is adaptable as information becomes available and involves a range of professions.

Mr McClelland said it was important that action was being taken, however, he felt it would be useful to educate those most vulnerable in how to protect themselves.

Mr Millar provided feedback from a recent meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Board Avian Influenza Multi-disciplinary Group and expressed concern that not enough vaccines were being purchased by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety.

52/05 Eating Disorders

Details of the current funding position would be sought and shared with Ms Armstrong.

54/05 Visiting

Mrs Morrison referred to the process whereby visit reports were compiled and forwarded to Trusts. She highlighted that Trusts were very slow at sharing the report content with staff met on the Council visits. Mrs Morrison called for swifter action within Trusts and also sought a quicker response from Trusts to Council on the issues raised by members during visits. Trusts would be asked to respond by the following Council meeting and details of action undertaken would be requested within a year.

Since issues raised are often concerned with the premises Mrs Montgomery referred to the useful meeting with Homefirst Community Trust to discuss its Estates Strategy. The meeting agreed to request a similar meeting with Causeway Trust.

The role of the Health and Personal Social Services Regulation and Improvement Authority was discussed and contact would be made regarding reports produced within Council.

59/05 Visiting Times – Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt

Members noted that all wards are now displaying signs which indicate the new visiting times and that this would be published in the local press.

65/05 24HR CASUALTY WATCH, MID-ULSTER HOSPITAL, MAGHERAFELT – 20/21 MAY 2005

Mr Graham advised that over the summer break a draft Casualty Watch report had been shared with participants. Comments received had then been included in the final report which had now been copied to all members for information and to United Hospitals Trust for comment. He thanked all those who took part in this exercise. The report had also been sent to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Health and Social Services Board and would shortly be placed on the Council's website.

66/05 **REVIEW OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

A draft document dealing with the future of Health and Social Services Councils under the Review of Public Administration (RPA) was considered by members. This was the outcome of the joint Working Party set up by the four Health and Social Services Councils. This draft response considers the current functions of Councils and the core issues to be addressed notwithstanding RPA. It also looks at the opportunities and challenges arising from RPA and the future purpose, composition and infrastructure of a single Council. Reference is also made to the financial and legal implications and to the need to maintain independence.

Since compiling the draft document it had been decided to also include a recommendation that the Council be a non-departmental public body reporting directly to the Minister.

The meeting accepted the recommendation of the Administration Committee to adopt the proposals. The Chief Officers of the four Health and Social Services Councils would meet shortly to finalise the response. Following agreement a meeting would be requested with the Health Minister to discuss the proposals.

67/05 **STRATEGY FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF HEALTHCARE ACQUIRED INFECTIONS/BUGWATCH**

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety consultation on A Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Healthcare Associated Infections in Northern Ireland 2005 – 2010 recommends that 'HSS Boards should support an annual 'Bugwatch' survey involving the HSSC of all hospitals environments.' In response to this the four Health and Social Services Councils are organising visits to acute hospitals in their areas. A regional Bugwatch will take place in the Royal

Group of Hospitals on Monday 19 September 2005 and locally in Antrim Hospital on Wednesday 21 September and in Causeway Hospital on Thursday 22 September 2005.

Participating members and staff were invited to attend a briefing session on Wednesday 14 September 2005 from 10.00am – 12.30pm in the Southern Health and Social Services Council Offices, Lurgan.

68/05 **TO CONSIDER BUSINESS OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Administration Committees – 9 June and 1 September 2005

Mr Graham had advised that in light of the significant change in membership visits had not been arranged for September but would recommence in October.

Mr Graham commented on the revised visiting pro-forma and format. He then informed the meeting that Committee members had suggested that in future a visiting team consist of 2 members, with a reserve, rather than 3, that training be considered several months into the new arrangements and that visits be targeted around current health and social care issues.

Several members were apprehensive about reducing the visiting team to 2 with a reserve, however, agreed with other members to pilot this for a trial period.

The election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman will take place at the November Council meeting. Nomination forms were distributed to members to allow time for them to be returned to the Secretary by the 18 October 2005 and be signed by the proposer, seconder and person nominated.

Committee members had considered the current practice of election by show of hands, in accordance with Standing Orders and requested a notice of motion be put to members that election be by ballot. The suggested amendment to the Standing Orders was approved by Council.

A number of requests for membership of various groups and Panels had been referred by Committee members to the Council meeting:

Northern Health and Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel – no nomination would be made at the present time

Homefirst Community Trust Complaints Committee – Mrs Montgomery agreed to represent the NHSSC

Antrim and Ballymena Local Health and Social Care Group Reference Group – Mrs Adger who had already been nominated by Ballymena Borough Council also offered to represent the NHSSC

Sub-Group of the Northern Investing for Health Partnership to contribute to the development of an action plan to tackle obesity in children and young people and also to consider partnership action to tackle obesity in adults – Mr Millar agreed to represent the NHSSC

Members were encouraged to share feedback when representing Council on Groups, Committees, Panels, etc using the agreed pro-forma. This would be re-issued.

The list of Groups and Panels on which there is Council representation would be updated and shared with members.

Committee members had noted that the annual Equality Progress Report on behalf of the Northern Health and Social Services Board and the Northern Health and Social Services Council had been submitted to the Equality Commission.

Several members queried the current practice within Council whereby the Chairman has sole discretion to decide membership of the Administration Committee. Mr Creighton suggested this be reviewed following the election of Chairman/Vice-Chairman. This was supported by the meeting.

69/05 **VISITS**

Visiting Report

Drumross Adult Centre

Mrs Hamill, Mr Nolan and Mr Millar had visited the Centre. Situated in Newtownabbey the Centre caters for individuals with a learning disability. Visiting team members were warmly welcomed and were generally impressed by the facilities

available and general décor, however, the canteen needs to be modernised.

The Centre offers a wide range of activities including, art, sensory room and crafts and clients take part in a wide range of community based activities.

Comments made would be shared with Homefirst Community Trust.

Visiting Response

Elderly Care Wards, Whiteabbey Hospital

Members welcomed the action taken to address various issues raised by the visiting team.

To reduce infection additional notices for visitors have been provided to all wards.

In relation to staffing levels a Trust-wide review of nurse staffing levels has been undertaken and a report sent to the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

Student nurses are not part of the rostered staffing quota and are therefore supernumerary unless they are in the final six months of their course during which time they are part of the rostered complement, as is standard throughout the province.

Since the Council's visit the high level of staff sickness in Ward 10 has been addressed and has improved. Recruitment of nurses to Whiteabbey Hospital in the current climate continues to be difficult but has not yet reached a stage to cause United Hospitals Trust undue concern.

The issue of transport difficulties is an item on the Trust's Modernisation Committee agenda and a meeting has been arranged with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Trust Chief Executive.

While funding is limited in-year, the Trust noted the general points raised by the visiting team concerning the environment in Wards 9 and 10 and, indicated that where practicable, these will be considered through normal processes for prioritising bids for IT, minor works and so on.

70/05 **REPORTS FROM:**

Launch of the Northern Trauma Advisory Panel Directory
of
Trauma Support Services and Resource Pack

The Northern Area Trauma Advisory Panel received funding from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister, Victims Unit to design and produce a Directory of Trauma Support Services and a Trauma Information Resource Pack.

During the Launch, attended by Mrs Anderson, details were shared of some of the service development work being provided in response to the needs of victims and survivors of the Troubles in the Northern Health and Social Services Board area.

Mrs Anderson provided a comprehensive report of the Launch.

Public Meeting to Consult on Services for Victims and Survivors

Mr Stevenson reported on his attendance at a public meeting hosted by The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister to seek views on the next phase of policy in relation to Services for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and on the establishment of a Commissioner for Victims and Survivors.

Mr Stevenson felt there had been little opportunity to offer views and referred to confusion in relation to who the victims are.

71/05 **CORRESPONDENCE**

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

72/05 **OTHER BUSINESS**

A Manifesto for Arthritis

Mr Millar sought Council support for a new Manifesto to be launched in October by Arthritis Care. Members agreed that a letter be sent to the Health Minister.

73/05 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

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

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date