

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Willowbank Business Park, Larne on Wednesday 7 June 2006.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr Tom Creighton

**Members:**

Mrs Beth Adger	Mrs Noreen McClelland
Mrs Maureen Anderson	Mr Sam McClelland
Mr Jim Brown	Mr Tommy Nicholl
Prof George Kernohan	Mr Mark Nolan
Mr Danny Kinahan	Mr Ian Stevenson
Mr John Millar	Mrs Kate Swain
Mrs Janet Montgomery	Mr Andrew Wilson
Mrs Catherine McCambridge	

**In Attendance:** Mr Noel Graham  
Mrs Jacqui Erwin

### 69/06 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Armstrong, Mrs I Johnston, Mrs L Johnston, Mrs Morrison, Mrs McEldowney and Mr Quinn.

### 70/06 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman commented upon his attendance at a range of events including a Garden Party at Hillsborough Castle, judging of the United Hospitals Trust Chairman's Award, a luncheon for Mr Mitchell, former Chief Executive of United Hospitals Trust and the Royal College of Nursing Nurse of the Year Awards.

He had also attended meetings of United Hospitals Trust Board and the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

He reminded members to forward a copy of their car registration certificate to the office and called for outstanding Members' Declared Interest forms to be completed.

Members' thoughts were with Ms Armstrong as she recovers from an operation.

### 71/06 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2006**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

72/06 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 10 MAY 2006**

**59/06 Breast Screening Services**

Mr Graham informed members that the Report being produced by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority was now in the public domain. Identified within it were grave concerns relating to professional competence, selection and recruitment processes, non-adherence to the NHS Breast Screening Programme Guidelines and to areas of good governance and failures of management at the most senior level. A media release had been issued by the Council on the subject and had highlighted the worrying fact that breast screening remained suspended in the Northern Board area since October 2005.

In an update from the Northern Health and Social Services Board it had been confirmed that each year around 12,500 women aged 50-64 years are invited for breast screening in the Northern Board and around 9,000 to 10,000 of these women come forward for screening. The Board has been advised by United Hospitals Trust that two new Breast Radiologists have been appointed and the Trust expects to have three radiologists in post by August 2006. This will help to re-establish the Breast Screening Programme on 1 August 2006. The Board has been working with a regional advisory group to look at all possible options to ensure that those women waiting are seen as quickly as possible.

Members would continue to review the situation and agreed with Mr Brown that assurances be sought from the Northern Health and Social Services Board that the service be brought back to where it should be as soon as possible. Enquiries would also be made about Mrs Adger's concerns regarding a waiting list.

The Council's concerns about the twenty nine breast cancer patients from Antrim Area Hospital who had experienced delays in the start of the oncology phase of their treatment due to illness of a Consultant Oncologist from Belfast City Hospital had been raised with Dr McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. In his response he gave an assurance that all the patients affected by the delay would be seen at other clinics as soon as possible and the Department, Boards and Trusts concerned

would continue to work to improve timely access to high quality specialist cancer care for those in need of it and to improve arrangements for managing risks to the continuity of that service.

### **59/06 Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS)**

Although interest had been shown in membership of the ICATS Public Awareness Group Mr Graham reported that the Northern Health and Social Services Board was now rethinking the way forward and would be in contact again shortly. During discussion members expressed a desire to be part of the main ICATS group.

### **59/06 Proposed Relocation of Whitehouse Medical Practice**

Mr Graham advised that, due to further correspondence, a paper relating to Whitehouse Medical Practice's application to relocate its surgeries from the Whitewell Road to the Abbey Centre at Newtownabbey, to be considered at the May meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Board, had been deferred to the June meeting.

### **59/06 Presentation on Ambulance Services**

The Council had written to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service seeking information to enable a more informed case to be put forward for additional funding. Mr Millar wished to use the information to draw a comparison with the Essex Ambulance Service which is similar in size.

### **59/06 Consultation on United Hospitals Trust Policy on Pay Car Parking at Antrim Hospital**

Members noted that United Hospitals Trust had considered and approved an amended policy at its May Trust Board meeting. Members welcomed the extension of the length of time designated for dropping off from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes and noted that the first two hours would cost thirty pence per hour and over two hours would cost one pound. Details of the implementation date would be sought.

### **59/06 GMS Clinical Governance Partnership**

Mr Graham reported that the first meeting of the GMS Clinical Governance Partnership was being held that afternoon. A nomination from NHSSC would be finalised for attendance at future meetings.

**62/06 United Hospitals Trust Paper on Proposed Changes to Patient Services at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals prior to the Implementation of Developing Better Services**

A draft response had been prepared by the Chief Officer and issued to members for comment. Several members had responded and the final response forwarded to the Trust.

In summary, the Council would question the Trust's consultation process, information dissemination and engagement with the public and ask whether the proposals were formulated to meet the needs of the patient. The Council would be concerned that service change timescales were planned in advance of the consultation and to take effect shortly after the consultation closed. There are also concerns that existing services at Antrim Hospital are under pressure and could have difficulty coping with the additional workload. Concerns also exist about other services which will be affected for example primary care, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Services, General Practitioner Out of Hours Service and so on. These need to fully support the changes and be resourced to meet the additional demand.

The public have concerns about remaining acute service provision in rural areas west of the Bann and want options which maintain services locally for example a midwife-led maternity service. There are also public concerns for getting equitable access particularly for the elderly and young people and the implications from delays in reaching appropriate care.

There is public scepticism about downgrading local hospitals and saving money and there is a public confidence issue with Antrim Hospital which the Trust needs to address.

Mr Graham reported that United Hospitals Trust would consider all responses to the consultation at its June Trust Board Meeting. The Council has asked the Trust to be kept informed of developments.

**67/06 Causeway Local Health and Social Care Group Reference Group (Older People)**

Mrs L Johnston had attended a meeting of this Group.

73/06 **CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT and PATIENT CLIENT COUNCIL**  
74/06 **PROJECT TEAM UPDATE**

Equality

In terms of meeting equality legislation Mr Graham reported that all statutory authorities are obliged to review their Equality Schemes after five years. A joint Northern Health and Social Services Board/Council Review had been submitted to the Equality Commission.

Office Premises

Mr Graham updated members on the position with the office premises.

Staffing

Members noted that Mrs McNeill, Information/Complaints Officer remained on maternity leave and that the post was being covered by Mrs Agnew.

Agenda for Change

Mr Graham reported that job matching continued within the Northern Health and Social Services Board area.

Patient Client Council/Review of Public Administration

Mr Graham reported that a paper had now been submitted to those who draft the Instructions to Counsel and that Health and Personal Social Services legislation should be drafted for consultation by the end of the year. A paper had also been prepared by Chief Officers, outlining a proposed structure.

Chief Officers had also met with major political parties and the NHSSC had commissioned stakeholder engagement across ten umbrella groups and their associated membership. While all of the feedback gathered needs to be taken into consideration, a number of themes emerged including the need for the Patient Client Council to have a clear role in monitoring the delivery of health and social care services, to have adequate powers, to be independent, to have a strong local presence and to engage on an ongoing basis with local groups, networks and elected representatives.

Chief Officers had also hosted a workshop as part of a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Community Development and Health Network on behalf of the Health and

Social Services Councils on patient and client advocacy in the new Patient and Client Council.

Mr Graham referred to the variation in timescales for the standing down of the Trusts, Boards and Health and Social Services Councils and to the need to have contingency arrangements in place in view of the many services outsourced by the Councils and the fact that Council staff are employed by their respective Boards.

75/06 **TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETINGS WITH CAUSEWAY TRUST, UNITED HOSPITALS TRUST, AND THE NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

Members were invited to forward suitable agenda items to the Chief Officer.

76/06 **VISITING**

**Visit Reports**

**Causeway Trust Transport and Stores Department, Ballymoney**

Mrs McCambridge and Mr Millar had visited Causeway Trust Transport and Stores Department in Ballymoney.

The visiting team had been particularly interested in the Stores Department where community aids and appliances are stored and issued as required. The Team would welcome the acquisition of alternative premises to meet decontamination requirements for returned equipment and would recommend the disposal of the IT equipment being stored within the building.

**Visit Response**

**Hawthorns Adult Centre, Carrickfergus**

Members welcomed the response from Homefirst Community Trust. It gave a commitment to pursue the recommendations with the appropriate departments, such as transport and estate services. These related to a worn floor covering, leaking guttering, décor, and the need for an increased number of touch screen computers and the provision of another bus.

77/06 **REPORTS FROM:**

**Homefirst Community Trust Workshop on Living Well, Ageing Better – Draft Strategy for Services to Older People – 17 May 2006**

A report, compiled by Mr Millar, had been issued to members. The Draft Strategy for Services to Older People, developed by Homefirst Community Trust, reflects the needs and aspirations of all those involved with the lives of older people. The workshop provided the opportunity to discuss the strategy in more detail and to make further comments.

**Arthritis Care Northern Ireland Annual Conference – 19 May 2006**

This year's Annual Conference looked at how new treatments can benefit people with arthritis of all ages, how the proposed changes in the health service will impact on people with arthritis and what Arthritis Care is doing to make sure that all arthritis services are fit for the future. Mr Millar attended and provided other members with a report of the event.

**Launch of the Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Newtownabbey – 26 May 2006**

Mrs Swain had attended the Launch of the Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Newtownabbey. In a report, circulated to members, she explained that the concept of the strategy stemmed from an interest by a number of stakeholders in supporting local communities with health and well-being issues identified locally. The aims of the Strategy include helping people to be aware of the major policy influences on health and well-being matters, to build understanding of how local people can influence policy and the planning and delivering of health and social care services, to help people be aware of how health and wellbeing initiatives are delivered and to help statutory providers and others understand how the community and voluntary sector plays its part in supporting health and well-being in the area.

**The Royal Hospitals Roadshow on the new Women and Children's Hospital – 1 June 2006**

The Royal Hospitals Roadshow provided an opportunity for those in attendance to shape services at the new Women and

Children's Hospital in line with new clinical developments and the needs of to-day's patients and their families. Mr Millar had attended and reported that all rooms would, in the main, be for single occupancy and have en-suite facilities. Walls would be painted in attractive pastel shades with matching furniture and seating would be available for family members. Plans of the layout would be produced in the next six months and presented to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

### **Northern Neighbourhoods Health Action Zone – 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference – 2 June 2006**

Mr Nolan commented upon the enthusiasm shown during a series of presentations which had demonstrated innovative approaches to improve health and social well-being in a community setting at the Northern Neighbourhoods Health Action Zone 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

#### **78/06 CORRESPONDENCE**

The correspondence list had been circulated with the agenda.

Mr Millar and Mr Brown accepted the invitation from Carers Northern Ireland to the Caring for Carers Conference on Wednesday 14 June 2006

Additional items of correspondence included:

- Letter from Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety re: Generic Prescribing Policy Update
- Protect Life, a Shared Vision – The Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy
- 'Where 2 Turn' Booklet from The Relatives Association

#### **79/06 OTHER BUSINESS**

##### **Intensive Care Paediatric Beds**

Mr Stevenson drew attention to a shortage in intensive care and high dependency paediatric beds in Northern Ireland. He indicated that there were presently seven paediatric intensive care beds and two paediatric high dependency beds in Northern Ireland, all based at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. He referred to the life of a child from the Ballymoney area having been put at risk when she had to be

airlifted to a hospital in Scotland due to the unavailability of a bed in Northern Ireland. Members agreed to support Mr Stevenson in writing a letter to the Minister calling for an increase in the number of beds available and parity with England, Scotland and Wales.

**Partial Hearing Unit, Ballee Community High School, Ballymena**

Mrs Adger drew attention to the benefits gained by children attending the Partial Hearing Unit at Ballee Community High School and sought Council support in preventing further cutbacks within the Unit. Members agreed to write to the Chief Executive of the North Eastern Education and Library Board and to copy the letter to Mrs Stevenson, Director Child and Allied Health Services, Homefirst Community Trust.

80/06 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 6 September 2006 in the Cookstown District Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date