

NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in the Joey Dunlop Leisure Centre, Ballymoney on Wednesday 4 October 2006.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Mr Tom Creighton

<u>Members:</u>	Mrs Beth Adger	Mrs Rae Morrison
	Mrs Maureen Anderson	Mrs Catherine McCambridge
	Mr Jim Brown	Mrs Noreen McClelland
	Mrs Irene Johnston	Mr Sam McClelland
	Mrs Liz Johnston	Mrs Kate McEldowney
	Prof George Kernohan	Mr Tommy Nicholl
	Mr Danny Kinahan	Mrs Kate Swain
	Mr John Millar	Mr Andrew Wilson

In Attendance: Mr Noel Graham
Mrs Jacqui Erwin
Mr Iain Deboys, Mrs Veronica Gillen, Mr David Johnston
and Mrs Deborah McCord – Agenda Item 6

96/06 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Armstrong, Mrs Montgomery, and Mr Nolan.

97/06 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

He commented upon his attendance at a meeting with the Permanent Secretary, Dr McCormick and a meeting of United Hospitals Trust Board.

Mr Creighton thanked Professor Kernohan for attending the Northern Health and Social Services Board Meeting on his behalf and for raising a number of pertinent issues.

Mr Creighton referred to the joint meeting with United Hospitals Trust Board when issues raised had included the breast screening programme, waiting lists and the NHSSB consultation on future services at Braid Valley Hospital, Ballymena and Inver House in Larne. Members present were presented with a virtual tour of Antrim Hospital following investment under Developing Better

Services, however, they remained concerned about the ability of the ambulance service to cope following the implementation of changes at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals.

98/06 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2006**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

99/06 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 6 SEPTEMBER 2006**

84/06 Breast Screening Services

Members continued to review the situation and had further explored the issue at the joint meeting with United Hospitals Trust Board. The Trust had been unable to say whether the trend in uptake rates had increased or decreased but had confirmed that the programme should make inroads into the backlog.

Clarification had been sought on when women from the Carrickfergus area were likely to be screened. These women had been last screened in 2003 and were due to be screened again in 2006, however, it was likely that this would be delayed until 2008. Mr Brown viewed this as totally unacceptable and feared similar lengthy waits in other locations. He said the problem had been around too long and called for immediate action.

Mrs I Johnston highlighted the increased incidences of cancer in women over 60 and feared that women in the 60-64 age group would now be overlooked.

Mr Creighton drew attention to problems in recruiting Consultant Radiologists and Mrs I Johnston said this could not be used as an excuse as she saw no reason why services could not be bought in from the mainland. She also queried why more training places could not be offered.

Members agreed to write again to the Minister to voice their concerns if no improvements were forthcoming. The issue would be raised with the Northern Health and Social Services Board at the forthcoming joint meeting.

The opportunity was taken to raise the concerns with Mr Deboys, the Northern Health and Social Services Board's Director Information, Risk and Performance Management. He confirmed that arrangements were being made with other service providers and pointed out that it was a regional problem. He said it was important to standardise services across the province and to strive

to achieve equity. He indicated that it was a line of radiology few people were interested in and assured members that every effort was being made to find a way round the problems.

84/06 Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (ICATS)

Members had made strong representation to Mr Marsden, Northern Health and Social Services Board for user input into the monitoring process to ensure that patients do indeed benefit.

In response a representative from the NHSSC had been invited to sit on the ICATS Project Board. This was accepted by Mr McClelland who would attend the first meeting on Friday 27 October 2006. Mrs I Johnston would be the reserve.

84/06 United Hospitals Trust Paper on Proposed Changes to Patient Services at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals prior to the Implementation of Developing Better Services

The Council had voiced concern that such proposals had been approved prior to the necessary services being in place and were particularly fearful that ambulance services would deteriorate even further. The concerns had been raised at the joint meeting with United Hospital Trust Board and in a letter to the Northern Health and Social Services Board which had been copied to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS). A media release had also been issued.

Issues drawn to Mr Deboys's attention included high sickness levels within the ambulance service, the non-receipt of a number of new vehicles, response times and the length of time required to train a paramedic.

Mr Deboys recognised that older vehicles impacted upon response times and indicated that NIAS was appealing to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and to the Strategic Investment Board to approve the replacement of older vehicles. NIAS had indicated, however, that with overtime and reprioritisation of resources from times of low calls to high calls that it would be able to maintain current response times until other staff are trained.

Mr Deboys said he intended to meet with NHSSC in a couple of months time to discuss the ambulance service.

With changes at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals coming into effect towards the end of November members called for written

assurances that the ambulance service would be able to cope with the additional workload. Members agreed to raise their concerns with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

In the meantime the Council would request and consider the range of complaints received and dealt with by NIAS to identify any significant trends.

94/06 Carrickfergus Ambulance Station

The Council had written to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service calling for the provision of a full-time ambulance station in Carrickfergus to be expedited. The response indicated that the current facility, located on the Belfast Road, would be fully manned from 6 October 2006. The facility was, however, on an Industrial Site which was under redevelopment and NIAS is searching for a site within the Carrickfergus area on which to develop a more permanent facility. With sites difficult to obtain NIAS had engaged with designers and landowners to clarify the availability of sites. The process can be lengthy, however, NIAS assured the Council of its commitment to maintaining a presence within the Carrickfergus area.

100/06 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

Meeting with Dr McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The meeting had been useful in getting across the concerns of Health and Social Services Councils about user involvement in the Review of Public Administration approach. A minute of the meeting would be circulated in due course.

NHS Dentistry

The Council had written to Mr MacDonnell, Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Services Board, following public contact on various occasions about the difficulty of getting registered with an NHS dentist.

In response the Board had indicated that there are 84 “High Street” dental practices in its area, of these one is completely private with the rest offering at least some level of Health Service dental care.

38 of the “High Street” dental practices are currently accepting new Health Service patients, however, this situation changes almost from week to week with some practices opening and some closing their lists to new Health Service patients.

45 “High Street” practices have closed their lists to new Health Service patients but continue to see existing registered patients.

In spite of recent moves by some dentists in the Board area, of all the Boards in Northern Ireland, the NHSSB has the largest proportion of its population registered with a “High Street” dentist.

Under the current General Dental Services contract Health Boards cannot compel “High Street” dentists to provide Health Service dental care. The dentist’s independent contractor status and the fact that their equipment and premises are not owned by the Health Service enable them to move readily into private healthcare.

The Board indicated that solutions proposed included the placing of a salaried “High Street” dentist in the new Dalriada Urgent Care premises.

It was also noted that there are 21 Community Dentists who work from 16 Trust owned dental clinics. The Board pointed out, however, that the Community Dental Service’s remit is to provide care for special needs groups and does not include routine care for patients unable to obtain treatment from a “High Street” dentist.

It was agreed that the issue be raised at the Joint NHSSB/NHSSC meeting and members asked that a further letter be sent to the Board enquiring about the availability of Orthodontists and the provision of Orthodontic services for Northern area patients.

Fracture Surgery

The Chief Officer referred to lengthy delays in fracture patients having surgery. Such surgery is carried out in Belfast hospitals or at Altnagelvin Hospital necessitating transfer. The situation and position whereby Antrim Hospital might get its own fracture service would be raised with the Board.

Joint Council Seminar

A Joint Council Seminar would be held on Thursday 30 November 2006. Its aim would be to provide members with a clear understanding of the new performance measures for the Health and Personal Social Services and patient public involvement within the Review of Public Administration.

101/06 **PRESENTATION ON A POLICY OF IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE REPLACEMENT OF BRAID VALLEY HOSPITAL, BALLYMENA AND INVER HOUSE, LARNE**

In January 2006, the Northern Health and Social Services Board published 'All Our Futures' which set out proposals for a major reform of health and social care services over the next 10-15 years, including investment in new services and facilities totalling £600m. The programme of reform will implement decisions made by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, which followed widespread consultation on 'Developing Better Services' in 2002.

Mr Creighton welcomed Mr Deboys, Mrs Gillen, Mr Johnston and Mrs McCord, from the Northern Health and Social Services Board's Information, Risk and Performance Management Department and invited them to explain the proposals for Ballymena and Larne.

Mrs Gillen indicated that the overriding themes of what the Board is trying to achieve are to maintain people in the community and in their own homes where possible, to reconfigure and improve specialist hospital care, to focus on comprehensive person-centred care, to have co-ordinated, integrated services, to have a multidisciplinary team approach and to have greater focus on prevention, health education and effective self care.

This will involve strengthening community services to include more domiciliary focused care, better rehabilitation and a reduction on the reliance on residential and nursing home care. There would also be a need for increased specialist care in the community, new care models and modern accommodation bases from which a broad range of services can be delivered such as a network of Health and Care Centres.

It is proposed to have ten Health and Care Centres in the main towns throughout the Northern Board area by 2010. These will provide a base for the local delivery of diagnosis and treatment through the development of nurse-led clinics and the greater provision of services by GPs with special interests. They will also provide outreach clinics/outpatients from the hospital sector, bring

together primary and community care staff to work in multidisciplinary teams, provide a wide range of diagnostic services and advanced technological services and support moves to an integrated model of out of hours services and the greater involvement of the community and voluntary sector in the provision of care and related services.

The size and scale of the Health and Care Centres will vary according to local circumstances.

Referring to the existing care facilities in Larne and Ballymena, Mrs Gillen explained that they were unsuitable for modern multidisciplinary clinical practice due to ongoing problems such as meeting building and statutory standards, their age, size and inadequate car parking.

The proposal for Larne is to build an 8000m² Health and Care Centre which would have 15 GPs, 4 new dental surgical suites, a community pharmacy retail unit, allied health professions, community nursing and multi-professional teams, community mental health, children services, a minor injury service, voluntary sector advice and support services and a food/retail unit.

In Ballymena it is proposed to build a 16500m² Health and Care Centre. It would be one of 4 centres in the Northern Board's area for the Integrated Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services and would have outpatient services, 22 GPs and an out-of-hours base, 8 new dental surgical suites, a community pharmacy retail unit, a broad range of allied health professions, community nursing and multi-professional teams. It would also have community mental health, a multi-disciplinary training centre, children services, a GP led minor injury service, voluntary sector advice and support services and a food/retail unit.

It is likely that new buildings will also be provided for other developments planned in the Boroughs of Larne and Ballymena. These include Larne Adult Centre, Gloucester Park Day Centre, Glenarm Health Centre, George Sloan Adult Centre, Wilson House and Pennybridge Community Store.

Mrs Gillen explained that an Outline Business Case had been approved in March 2006 and that a more detailed one would be resubmitted in November for phase 1 projects.

Mr Deboys confirmed that almost £6m would be invested in community services this year and next year, followed by further

investment over the next three years. The entire project would be one of the biggest Northern Ireland has ever seen.

He indicated that in addition to the new Health and Care Centres in Larne and Ballymena new facilities would include a specialist palliative care unit and a specialist stroke and fracture rehabilitation ward in Antrim and new local hospitals with geriatric beds at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster.

In terms of new services nursing would be organised to identify patients at risk of multiple hospital admissions, a Community Geriatrician would co-ordinate care for older people living at home, assistive technology would be available in the home and rapid response nursing, acute nursing care and rehabilitation therapy would be provided at home.

As a result of the new facilities and new services most of the beds in Braid Valley Hospital and in Inver House will no longer be required allowing remaining wards to be closed in 2009. Some patients will remain in Antrim in a new purpose built unit for a few weeks after their acute treatment for specialist care and palliative care for the terminally ill will be provided at a purpose built unit in Antrim or locally in designated nursing home beds.

As part of the public engagement process a communication strategy had been drawn up and the consultation document on the proposed changes made widely available. Media briefings and presentations had been organised and workshops with users and other relevant parties planned to consider the questions within the consultation document.

During a question and answer session several members voiced concern about the availability of suitable staff to provide the services. Mr Johnston assured members that although some difficulties had been encountered in recruiting staff the Board was working with Trusts to develop posts in line with what was available and that meetings were taking place with Universities and the Department in relation to the allied health professions. He indicated that a review of nurse staffing had been completed and the Board was working to improve areas where shortages had been identified. He pointed out that some staff currently working in hospitals would transfer to the Health and Care Centres or to the community.

According to Mr Deboys it would be necessary to look at the phasing and planning of the changes by taking a step by step approach.

Speaking on behalf of the Larne community Mr Wilson referred to the lack of confidence in the Board since the closure of the Moyle Hospital and its failure to provide improved alternatives. He sought a rethink on the timescales and clarification on the site for the new Health and Care Centre and the commitment of GPs to move to it.

Mrs Gillen confirmed it was not possible to retain Inver House until the Health and Care Centre was opened and that as part of the outline business case process there was a requirement to consider other possible sites.

Mr Deboys recognised the importance of people having confidence in their local services and the need to demonstrate the ability of community services to cope.

Mrs Gillen confirmed that quite a number of GPs in the Larne area had indicated an interest in relocating to the Health and Care Centre and that discussions were ongoing with GPs in relation to agreeing a process for providing a minor injuries service.

Mrs I Johnston pointed out that where GPs were providing an out-of-hours service they needed to be contracted separately to avoid payment of overtime.

Mr Nicholl expressed his delight at the new Health and Care Centre planned for Ballymena. He empathised with the people of Larne and assured Mr Wilson that it was possible to restore confidence as had happened in the Ballymena area. He asked that the Council seek an assurance from the current Health Minister that the implications of the Review of Public Administration would not impact upon the current thinking on the programme of reform within health and social care.

Mrs Gillen referred to the various drawings from design teams and said she would welcome the opportunity to share these with Larne and Ballymena Borough Councils and the NHSSC.

102/06 **TO CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR JOINT MEETING
WITH NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

The joint meeting with the Northern Health and Social Services Board would be held on Tuesday 7 November 2006 at 10.00am in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Ballymena.

Suggested agenda items included breast screening, dental services, implementation of proposed changes to patient services at

Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals, fracture services and funding for voluntary groups.

103/06 **VISITS**

October Visits

Arrangements were made for visits to the Robinson Memorial Hospital, Ballymoney and Inver House, Larne.

November Visits

Following individual member requests it was agreed that the November visits be to the Ambulance Stations at Carrickfergus and Ballymena.

104/06 **REPORTS FROM:**

Northern Investing for Health Partnership Launch of the Advice 4 Health Evaluation Report – 29 September 2006

Mrs McCambridge reported on her attendance at the Launch of the Advice 4 Health Evaluation Report. The Advice 4 Health project had been developed in an attempt to reduce poverty and tackle disadvantage by maximising benefit uptake in the community, with a particular focus on the elderly, people with disabilities, people with mental health difficulties and families living in poverty.

Working within a range of health and social care settings, four specialist Advice 4 Health workers have been available to offer support to vulnerable clients who may not traditionally access mainstream advice services.

During the first year of the project, the four workers dealt with 8,500 enquiries and accessed over £720,000 in additional benefit entitlement for clients.

Causeway Local Health and Social Care Group Adding Life to Years Public Consultation Event – 18 September 2006

Homefirst Community Trust has taken the lead in developing a strategy for Mental Health Services to Older People in the Northern Area. The strategy 'Adding Life to Years' was developed in partnership with Causeway Trust and the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

The Launch, facilitated by Causeway Local Health and Social Care Group, was attended by Mr McClelland who reported that the strategy aims to improve the quality of service to older people with a mental health need and to their carers and makes 68 recommendations.

105/06 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The correspondence list had been circulated with the agenda.

Additional items of correspondence included:

- Letter from The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority seeking expressions of interest among members in the role of volunteer lay reviewers. The Chief Officer had reservations about conflict of interest but the letter did state that reviewers would operate outside their own geographical area. Prior to undertaking a review all reviewers would be required to attend a two day training programme. Application forms were distributed to interested members.
- Northern Ireland Social Care Council Newsletter Summer 2006.
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency Hospital Statistics 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006.
- Invitation from the Royal National Institute for Deaf People to an event on Saturday 14 October 2006 at the new Ballymena North Centre as part of RNID's 'Deaf People's Access to Democracy' Project, funded by the Electoral Commission.
- Northern Health and Social Services Board Annual Report 2005/2006.
- Causeway Trust Annual Report 2005/2006.
- Invitation from the Northern Health and Social Services Board seeking a nomination to a Sub-Committee to consider requests from general medical practices to reduce their patient registration areas. Mr Millar agreed to represent the Council.

106/06 **OTHER BUSINESS**

Presentations

It was agreed that in future all presentations be at a meeting separate from the Council Meeting to allow time to get through the often lengthy agenda.

Treatment Room Services

Mr Millar sought an update on funding for treatment room services.

Environmental Cleanliness Action Plan

Mr Millar referred to the minutes of the July Trust Board Meeting of Homefirst Community Trust and voiced concern that Broadway Workshops, Newtownabbey had been given a red rating of 27%. Details of the action plan to address the issues would be requested.

107/06 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 1 November 2006 in the Ballymena Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 4.59pm.

Chairman

Secretary

Date