

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Northern Health and Social Services Council held at 1.30pm in Oakfield Community Development Centre, Carrickfergus on Wednesday 2 May 2007.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Mr Tom Creighton

**Members:**

Ms Rosemary Armstrong	Mrs Janet Montgomery
Mr Jim Brown	Mr Tony Quinn
Mrs Irene Johnston	Mrs Kate Swain
Mr John Millar	Mr Andy Wilson

**In Attendance:** Mr Noel Graham  
Mrs Jacqui Erwin  
University of Ulster Nursing Student

### 52/07 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mrs Adger, Mrs Anderson, Mrs L Johnston, Professor Kernohan, Mr Kinahan, Mrs Morrison, Mrs McCambridge, Mrs McClelland, Mrs McEldowney, Mr Nicholl and Mr Nolan.

### 53/07 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. He referred to his attendance at Board meetings of the Northern Health and Social Services Board where he had raised the issue of treatment room services and the recently established Northern Health and Social Care Trust where he had been warmly welcomed and invited to openly participate in discussions.

### 54/07 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 2007**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

### 55/07 **MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING OF 4 APRIL 2007**

#### **42/07 Request for meeting with OFMDFM**

Members' concerns about the lack of progress in the taking forward of the Patient and Client Council had been raised in a letter to the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister. As responsibility for this issue falls under the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety the letter was passed to the Health Minister, Mr

Goggins MP for a response. He pointed out that Mr Creighton and Mr Graham along with representatives from the other Health and Social Services Councils had met with the Permanent Secretary, Dr McCormick, in September 2006 and had discussed the issue of a designate Chair and Chief Executive for the Patient and Client Council. The legislative difficulties surrounding the appointment of designates and the differences between the Patient and Client Council and the Health and Social Care Authority which made it possible to make designations to the Health and Social Care Authority had also been outlined. Legal opinion had since confirmed this position.

Mr Goggins recognised that the appointment of the Chief Executive and Chair in advance of the PCC being established would be beneficial in many ways and the Department is working towards that goal. However, he pointed out that it is crucial that the proper legislative frameworks and powers are in place to underpin these appointments and stressed that this requirement cannot be circumvented.

Mr Goggins hoped the Chief Officer and members would continue to work closely with the Department to ensure that the important services being provided to the public continue throughout this challenging period of change.

#### **42/07 Review of Public Administration**

Feedback on the Review of Public Administration Workshop event had been issued to attendees.

In a letter thanking the NHSSC for its response to the public consultation on the Proposed HPSS (Reform) (NI) Order 2007 Mr Williamson from the RPA Legislative Team addressed some of the comments made.

Recognition was given to the concerns regarding preparations for the implementation of the proposed Patient and Client Council and confirmation given that appointments to the board of the Patient and Client Council, like other health bodies, would be based upon the principles of merit.

#### **44/07 Breast Screening Services**

A meeting took place with Dr Mairs, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, NHSSB, on Friday 27 April 2007 at 2.00pm in Houston's Mill, Broughshane. Members had welcomed the update on breast screening services and the opportunity to discuss the prevalence of prostate and pancreatic cancers.

Mrs Swain, on behalf of Mr Nolan, requested that in due course a letter be sent to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety adding support to Dr Mairs' plans for the breast screening service. This was agreed by members.

**44/07 United Hospitals Trust Paper on Proposed Changes to Patient Services at Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals prior to the Implementation of Developing Better Services**

Information had been sought and received from Fermanagh District Council on the Feasibility Study undertaken by Peter Quinn Consultancy Services on the provision of an air ambulance service.

Mr Quinn drew attention to a newspaper article which referred to the launch of a new Belfast-based charity Alpha 5 which would organise the fundraising campaign to help get Ulster's first helicopter air ambulance off the ground.

The venture is being led by Mr Mark Sellars, Chief Executive Officer of Alpha 5 Ireland Air Ambulance who has proposed that the helicopter be based at Belfast International Airport and be under the control of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

Council members fully supported the provision of an air ambulance and agreed to write a letter of support to Alpha 5, to further raise awareness through the press and to pursue it through the NHSSB Ambulance Service Liaison Group.

**48/07 Roadshow re: Development of the new Women's and Children's Hospital on the Royal Hospital site in Belfast**

As the NHSSC had not been represented at the recent Roadshow an indication of the timescales and costs associated with the project had been requested from the Chief Executive of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

56/07 **CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**

Accountability Review Meeting

Mr Graham reported on the Accountability Review Meeting when he and Mr Creighton had met with representatives from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, to discuss work undertaken by the Council from April 2005 to March 2007. The opportunity was taken to raise issues about the Patient and Client Council and about members/Chairman assessments prior to reappointment.

Patient and Client Council Update

Mr Graham reported that he understood a draft Business Case had been prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel Branch for comment. A preferred option was the matching of PCC locations within the areas of the Local Commissioning Groups.

Dr Stuart, Director of Special Projects, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, would update members on progress at the joint Council event to be held on 23 May 2007. In the meantime Dr Stuart had written to Mr Graham about the need for Health and Social Services Councils to continue to fulfil their unique role within the health and social care function, the need to ensure a smooth transition to the Patient and Client Council and the need for a draft project plan to be submitted by 31 May 2007.

## 57/07 **VISITS**

### **Visit Report**

#### **Ballee Adolescent Unit, Ballymena**

This visit report would be considered at the June Council meeting.

### **Visit Response**

In response to the visits made to Carrickfergus and Ballymena Ambulance Stations the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service assured the Council that it would continue to pursue every effort to improve ambulance service provision and response times within the Northern Division. Continued support from the Council was sought in helping to achieve funds from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

### **May Visits**

Arrangements were made for visits to Wilson House Resource Centre, Broughshane and Inver 1 and 4 at Holywell Hospital, Antrim.

## 58/07 **BUGWATCH SURVEY UPDATE**

Mr Graham reported that following a briefing session for participating members and staff three bugwatch exercises had now taken place and a further number were planned.

## 59/07 **JOINT COUNCIL EVENT – 23 MAY 2007**

During the morning session of the joint Council event members would consider the provision of NHS dentistry with input from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the Northern Health and Social Services Board and a dentist. Following an open discussion any joint action to be taken would be agreed.

In the afternoon members would be given an update on progress with the establishment of the Patient and Client Council and have an opportunity for discussion.

60/07 **REPORTS FROM:**

**NHSSB Avian Influenza Multi-Disciplinary Group**

Following a meeting of the Group Mr Millar had referred to an issue about the cost of equipment and the provision of the most effective type of masks, FP3, to medical personnel only. The issue was raised with the Northern Health and Social Services Board and in its response it was pointed out that the current guidance on personal protective equipment specifies that different levels will be recommended depending on the type of activity being undertaken. At the recent NHSSB Pandemic Flu meeting it had been agreed that the Regional Pandemic Flu Group be made aware of concerns which were being expressed and this had duly been done.

The Board indicated that at present a regional stockpile of personal protective equipment is being secured under control of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. It is expected that a revised version of the Northern Ireland Pandemic Flu Plan would be issued in June 2007 which would provide further directions for the Board's Plan.

Local information on the Winter Willow exercise, a national exercise organised by various government departments, would be received through the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and circulated to the members of the NHSSB Multi-disciplinary Group.

The Council's correspondence to the Board would be brought forward for consideration and discussion at the next meeting of the Group to be held on 6 September 2007.

A report of the meeting was distributed to members by Mr Millar.

Mrs Montgomery indicated that the private sector had still not received any guidance on how to manage a pandemic flu.

## 61/07 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The correspondence list had been circulated with the agenda.

Additional items of correspondence included:

- Invitation from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for two lay representatives from the Health and Social Services Councils to join the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health Regional Steering Group – while there was an interest in the issue no-one from the NHSSC wished to join the Steering Group.
- Information leaflet from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on its Smoke Free Policy. Ms Armstrong drew attention to the numerous leaflets issued to the Rotary Club of Coleraine on three separate occasions and voiced concerns about the cost of printing and postage. This would be raised with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

## 62/07 **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Moyle Hospital Out-patient Eye Clinic**

Mr Wilson commented upon rumours that the weekly out-patient eye clinic held at the Moyle Hospital, Larne and provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust was to be relocated to Antrim Hospital. He drew attention to the number of elderly people who attend the clinic and the difficulties faced by them in travelling to Antrim. Furthermore he pointed out that the people of Larne had been told that no further services would be withdrawn from the area.

Mr Graham would seek clarification on the matter from the Northern Health and Social Services Board.

### **Mixed Sex Wards**

Mrs I Johnston enquired what the policy was on mixed sex wards as it can be embarrassing for patients to be placed in a mixed sex ward. Mr Creighton agreed to raise the matter at the next Northern Health and Social Care Trust Board meeting.

### **Bed Sores, Red Heels and Special Mattresses**

Mr Millar reported on concerns drawn to his attention in relation to patients being discharged from hospital with bed sores and red heels, the limited availability of special mattresses and the loss of Podiatrists from the Community Rehabilitation Team. At risk

patients include those with diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and stroke, however, it was recognised that bed sores were not always associated with poor practice.

Mrs Montgomery and Ms Armstrong commented upon the inequity of the community podiatry service. It is provided free to nursing and residential home residents in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board area yet Northern Health and Social Services Board residents must pay. The feeling was that as Homes provide a service to the community the service should be free to all residents.

During discussion it was pointed out that if people were treated appropriately in the community then in many cases hospital admission could be avoided. Mention was also made of the problem with equipment used in hospital not always following patients into the community.

Mr Graham would raise the matter with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

### **Feeding of Patients**

Mr Millar drew attention to the inability of many elderly patients to feed themselves. He referred to a scheme in the Robinson Hospital, Ballymoney whereby volunteers help feed patients and called for this area of good practice to be rolled out to other hospitals.

Ms Armstrong referred to a similar scheme which had existed several years ago in the Mid-Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt and which had involved administrative staff helping to feed patients during their breaks.

Mr Quinn suggested there may be a role for organisations such as the Salvation Army, Age Concern or St Vincent de Paul in helping to feed patients.

Mr Graham would also raise this matter with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

### 63/07 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be held at 1.30pm on Wednesday 6 June 2007 in the Larne Borough Council area.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm.

Chairman

Secretary

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Date