

**NORTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL
WORK PROGRAMME 2007-2008**

Update to 30/9/07

Aim 1 To increase visibility and accessibility to members of the public

OBJECTIVES

Engage public in HSSC
Role and activity

ACTIVITY

- Public invited to Workshop held in Cookstown on draft legislation proposals affecting HSCA and PCC. This was organized by HSSCs on behalf of DHSSPS.
- All information materials updated with new NHSSC address, phone no, etc before issue
- NHSSC website maintained and updated monthly and links to other sites reviewed
- NHSSC Press Releases issued as appropriate and particularly around incidents such as TB scare at Causeway Hospital.
- After due consideration by the four HSSCs the Yellow Pages advertisement has been commissioned for a further year
- The single HSSC freephone telephone number is included on all NHSSC promotion material and advertisements
- NHSSC continues with monthly meetings except July and August. During each of these two months NHSSC members are sent information detailing publications, invitations, correspondence and other issues of interest
- In conjunction with other Councils a joint HSSC event is held every 3-4months with Councils hosting in turns. NHSSC hosted the May 2007 event where the main theme was NHS Dentistry with an update on PCC progress. NHSSC produced a paper for to consider and agree. This was shared with the Health Committee when Miscellaneous Provisions Bill and a meeting has been arranged with the November 2007. In advance of this NHSSC will be examining within its area.

individual Councils
reviewing the
Minister on the 7
Orthodontistry provision

Develop Media Strategy

- The media strategy is applied by NHSSC as appropriate
- Further media strategy development with a shadow PCC awaits ministerial decisions and announcements

Increase Accessibility of NHSSC to public

- Accessibility to public is maintained during office hours by phone, minicom, email and for personal callers. Out of hours this Council can receive messages by answer machine, email or fax. For personal callers the new NHSSC location offers convenient parking, disabled access and improved facilities for private discussion.
- Signposting continues within this Council. The volume has increased since Trust restructuring and there is a need for Trusts to widely publicise new contact information. New Trust structures and responsibilities are kept as much up to date as possible in order to appropriately.
- The NHSSC website maintenance contract has been extended. The site is updated monthly.
- Promotion materials levels are monitored and issued in measured supplies in advance of change to PCC.

signpost

Aim 2 To monitor HPSS provision to the public

To enter and inspect HPSS facilities

received experiences of

- Visits by NHSSC members continue to be arranged. Since April 2007 four have taken place with reporting back to Council and Trust. In addition meetings are taking place with a number of voluntary organisations who provide support within the community. Many have some element of HPSS project funding. Council in discussions is seeking their the wider HPSS interaction, co-operation and support.
- NHSSC carried out 'Bugwatch' surveys within 10 wards of Antrim and Causeway Hospitals in April and May 2007. This is a follow-up exercise to that done in 2005. A report has been sent to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and follow-up discussions will take place.

Project investigation into aspects of HPSS operation

- In discussions between this Council and the Board on Breast Screening the Council supported the plans prepared and submitted to the Department. The Council continues to monitor the

clinics. position in terms of targets and staff cover and waiting times for Breast Symptomatic

- As stated earlier NHSSC raised the issue of access to NHS dentistry noting that in Magherafelt, Cookstown and Carrickfergus no dentists were taking on new NHS patients. The Board and Council discuss this on a regular basis.
- The four Councils and RQIA are involved in a project looking at Advocacy Services for Older People in Homes. An audit was carried out of homes, residents, relatives and stakeholders and the findings presented at a June 2007 workshop in Portadown. A report has been drafted with recommendations and will be launched later in 2007. The Minister has been approached about writing a foreword to the report.
- Ambulance service issues raised by members, etc are channelled through the NHSSC representatives on the Northern Area Ambulance Liaison Committee.
- Information for a booklet aimed at mental health services users and following the 'Let's Talk' format is being gathered. The NI Clinical Care Governance Support Team is leading on this with input from each HSS Council and users.
- The NHSSC Chair and Chief Officer met with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to agree protocols for working with the Trust. Agreement was reached on attendance at Trust Board meetings, sharing of Trust papers and documents, keeping Council informed of serious incidents, complaints procedures, etc. NHSSC has

now

accepted invitations to sit on the Trust Clinical Governance Committee, Complaints Committee, will attend Trust Board meetings with speaking rights and has been briefed updated on the TB scare at Causeway Hospital. A full Trust Board/Council meeting

and
will take

place later in the year.

- The Council has now established a joint Forum with the NHSSB Primary Care Unit and meets every quarter. This year among the issues covered were GMS contract, Out of Hours provision, Practice Treatment Room Services, NHS Dentistry, Clinical Governance, Public awareness, and Practice Registration areas.

Monitor Complaints

- Support for complainants continues with monitoring of resources to meet demand. Complex

and lengthy complaints take up most resources which makes overall numbers irrelevant. Best practice is shared within a quarterly HSS Complaints Officer Forum and issues or recommendations for efficiency or improvement brought to the attention of Chief Officers. Chair of this Forum rotates around the four HSSCs.

Aim 3 Advise on Health and Social Care Policies, Strategies and Operation

Act as Advocate for User Involvement

- The issue in September 2007 of DHSSPS Guidance on Strengthening Personal and Public Involvement in Health and Social Care was welcomed. HSSCs had inputted into this in draft stages.
- NHSSC will be raising this with the Board and Trust and jointly with other HSSCs to ascertain how the guidance will be implemented.
- HSSCs will promote and monitor Involvement against the guidance.
- Within the Councils work is underway looking at Principles of Public and Personal Involvement applicable to HSSCs. These drafts will be compared against the DHSSPS Guidance and applied to the engagement by Councils. It is intended to have HSSC Involvement evaluated in due course.

Represent public interest in HPSS consultations

- Councils co-operate in prioritising and leading on consultation responses.
- The method of response is often dictated by the consulting body. The leading Council will seek input from all four HSSCs and share draft and final response.
- Between April and September 2007 Northern Council was invited to contribute to nineteen consultation issues.

Maintain appropriate representation

- The Council is reviewing its representation on various bodies at both a regional and local level.
- Local Committees and Groups set up by Trusts are being followed up within the new Trust structures.

Aim 4 To develop a medium/long term strategy/plan for HSSCs

Develop a strategic plan

- Information regarding PCC developments as it emerges is shared with staff.

for HSSCs

- Staff are encouraged to undergo training organized through NHSSB in relation to thinking about future employment options and to update and review their personal skills and objectives.
- In the interim period staff work/life balance requirements are acknowledged in order to maintain a skills and knowledge base within NHSSC.
- Members are given the opportunity at joint Council events to hear and raise issues with DHSSPS representatives.
- At NHSSC monthly meetings the Chief Officer and Chairman will update on current developments.
- There are currently 8 NHSSC members who have had a membership extension to 31/08/08. There is one vacancy.
- The voluntary contribution of members is much valued. A request for a review of mileage travelling rates has been submitted to the Permanent Secretary.
- Chief Officers continue to work closely together on various projects.
- Chief Officers are exploring training opportunities in preparation for recruitment to a PCC.
- The uncertainty regarding PCC timescales and the need to appoint a designate Chairman and Chief Executive to take forward planning around structures, locations, etc is distracting.
- The NHSSC Exit Timeframe target dates have slipped although the Timeframe is still active and relevant.
- NHSSC has reviewed its filing systems and applies its disposal schedule.
- As PCC timeframes become clearer NHSSC will engage with PRONI.
- There are currently no NHSSC files in deep storage.
- No action has taken place on close down arrangements or giving notice on lease and contract undertakings.
- A complete Inventory of Assets has been compiled and is kept up to date.

Aim 5 To fulfill organisation requirements of the Council

To deliver all organisation requirements of NHSSC

- The Council meets all its statutory obligations in regard to Council activities.
- Staff receive regular refresher training on Fire Safety.
- The Council has designated staff identified for:
 - First Aid

- Emergency Life Support
 - Health and Safety
 - Fire Wardens
 - Risk Management
 - Non Smoking Facilitator
 - Data Protection
 - Freedom of Information
 - Equality and Human Rights
- All electrical equipment has been tested in August 2007.
 - Premises were surveyed in August for presence of asbestos.
 - There is one staff vacancy within the Council and since September there has been a reduction in total staff work hours. The Council in the absence of definitive decisions and timeframes has delayed filling this post.