

Ref: SM/ND

5 January 2001

Mr Colm Donaghy
Director of Commissioning and Planning
Southern Health & Social Services Board
Tower Hill
ARMAGH BT61 9DR

Dear Mr Donaghy

DRAFT SERVICE AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2001/02 - 2003/04

Thank you for giving the Council an opportunity to respond to the above document.

The Council notes on page 3 that "the overall strategic direction of each programme remains unchanged" and "that this year's service and financial framework document will focus on priority areas for development and change within the Southern Board's area". On this basis the Council has not found it necessary to make a detailed response to the draft document.

Comments are as follows:

- Page 31** The precise responsibility of the Board in delivering impartial prescribing advice on new drugs after their launch needs to be clarified.
- Page 40** In the Council's view further investment in the emergency ambulance service is not only desirable but is necessary.
- Page 41** What shortfalls did the review of PAMS services identify? What actions are planned to ensure greater equity of access to PAMS across the Board's area in respect of speech therapy, podiatry and diabetics etc?
- Page 44** The Council expects the Board to encourage the Trusts to adopt/work through the recommendations contained in the report "Women's Voices". To date the Council has been disappointed about progress in this area. Could reference to this be included in the internal service agreements for 2001/2002?

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Mr C Donaghy

Page 48 Occupational therapy waiting lists are of major concern to the Council. Addressing these should be a key priority for the Board.

The Council believes a review of day hospitals in the Southern Board's area should be undertaken to ensure they are meeting patients' expectations and needs and are being effectively utilised.

In respect of the GP Out-of-Hours service, the Council expects the Board, in conjunction with the Directors of the Out-of-Hours Co-operative, to be proactive in addressing the shortfalls identified with the Newry and Moy centres and those already highlighted by the Council with regard to Moylinn.

It seems clear from the reports of the commissioning workshops that attendance has been poor. Possibly the format adopted by the Board has not generated sufficient interest. Perhaps this is something which could be addressed as part of the Board's community development and user participation policies. The Council would, of course, be willing to assist in this process in whatever way it could.

The Council feels that the well documented difficulties being encountered by Southern Board residents with regard to cardiac surgery, MRI scanning and fracture services should be highlighted in the Service and Financial Framework and appropriate action plans developed to address these.

I trust you will find these comments helpful. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Seamus Magee
Chief Officer