

SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ninetieth Meeting held in Quaker Buildings, Lurgan on Tuesday 20 June 2000 at 6.15 pm

90/1 PRESENT: Mrs Fionnuala Cook, Chairwoman
Mrs June Allister
Mrs Joan Baird
Mrs Margaret Campbell
Mr Robert Cummings
Mr Samuel Gardiner
Mrs Angela Gray
Mr Joseph Loughran
Mr Jim McCammick
Mr Charles Smyth

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Seamus Magee, Chief Officer
Mrs Nancy Downard, Office Manager

APOLOGIES: Mr Jim Cavanagh
Mrs Sue Cunningham
Mrs Roisin Foster
Mr Gordon Frazer
Mrs Mary McNally

The Chairwoman welcomed members to the ninetieth meeting and apologised for having to delay the meeting. This was due to the Chief Officer and herself attending a meeting with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to the transfer of acute services from South Tyrone Hospital.

90/2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

At this stage of the meeting Mrs Cook, the outgoing Chairman vacated her seat and the Chief Officer presided over the election of a Chairman and a Vice Chairman.

He informed members that 3 nominations had been received for Mrs Cook as Chairman and one nomination for Mrs Roisin Foster as Vice Chairman. He declared Mrs Cook duly elected as Chairman and Mrs Foster as Vice Chairman for the period ending 31 May 2001. Members congratulated both Mrs Cook and Mrs Foster on their election.

90/3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting which were circulated were agreed and signed subject to a minor amendment. To be recorded that Mrs Baird and Mr Loughran left the meeting after the ambulance service presentation.

90/4 MATTERS ARISING

89/4 Quality of Care Provided in Nursing and Residential Homes

Mrs Allister asked if any further information had been made available on the registration of workers in nursing and residential homes. The Chief Officer informed her that the Southern Board's Social Care Department had been contacted and on receipt of the information it would be forwarded to her.

89/5 SHSSB - Allocation of Additional funds for 2000/01

The Chairwoman informed members that the allocation of additional funds for the Southern Board's area would be discussed at its next meeting on 27 June. It was agreed to keep members updated.

89/6 Strategic Review of Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Mr Loughran referred to Mr Frawley's comments in relation to the provision of an air ambulance which would cost of £1.42m. He said human life was more important than cost. It was agreed to include reference to the need for an air ambulance in the Council's response to the Review.

90/5 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1 Northern Ireland Housing Executive Consultation Seminar

The Chairwoman informed members of a consultation seminar being arranged by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive on Friday 30 June 2000 in Navan Fort, Armagh from 9.30 am to 1.00 pm. The objective of the seminar was to hear and discuss the Executive's views on how it could engage more fully with health and social services and community and voluntary groups to improve the health and wellbeing of the whole community. Members wishing to attend were asked to inform the office.

2 Meeting with Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety

The Chairwoman reported that the Chief Officer and herself had been invited to attend a meeting called by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety to discuss the situation in relation to South Tyrone Hospital. Other organisations attending the meeting included representatives from Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and the South Tyrone Action Group. Each organisation was given the opportunity to put forward their views and concerns. Mrs Cook again stressed the need for the DHSSPS to carry out a review of acute hospital services across Northern Ireland. She said the meeting was very constructive and amicable.

3 Royal Hospitals Trust Public Meeting

The Chairwoman informed members that the Chief Officer and herself had been invited to attend the Royal Hospitals Trust public meeting on 6 July 2000 in Ballybot House, Newry

and to join the Chief Executive and Directors for lunch following the meeting. Mr Smyth and Mrs Cunningham also agreed to attend the meeting.

90/6 SHSSC - RESPONSE TO EQUALITY SCHEMES

SHSSC 2000/27

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/27.

The Chief Officer reported that the Council had received 26 draft Equality Schemes for consultation but due to the limited resources available to the Council it was impossible to respond to all of those received. However, responses had been prepared to schemes prepared by the Board and Trusts. It was expected that the Board and Trusts would reflect the comments in their revised schemes due to be submitted to the Equality Commission by 30 June 2000.

He said the Council had also prepared its own draft scheme which was widely distributed and a large number of comments had been received. It was noted that no response had been made by the Southern Board. The comments received were currently being collated and the amended scheme would be forwarded to the Equality Commission prior to 30 June 2000. Members were invited to express their views on the responses compiled to date.

Mr Cummings said it was very disappointing that no reference was made to the Council in most of the draft schemes. Mr Loughran congratulated the Chief Officer on the responses and in stressing the need for the schemes to be written in plain English.

90/7 SHSSC RESPONSE TO SHSSB CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR ACUTE MEDICAL SERVICES AT SOUTH TYRONE HOSPITAL

SHSSC 2000/28

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/28.

The Chief Officer referred members to the Council's response to the Southern Board's plans for the relocation of acute medical services from South Tyrone to Craigavon Area Hospital. He said the Council had made a number of specific comments and raised serious concerns about the ability of all stakeholders to deliver in the proposed time frame. He thanked members for their comments which had been incorporated in the final response.

The Chief Officer said the Board had been asked to provide written responses, on issues highlighted in the Council's response, prior to the Board meeting on 27 June 2000. The main concerns being cardiac care and the ability of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to provide additional services within a very tight time frame.

Mr Cummings was concerned that the Ambulance Service would have difficulty in training extra staff in the short term. The Chairwoman said the GP Out of Hours service was also of concern and she felt that this service would be better placed on a hospital site. Mrs Baird said she was involved in the Southern Board's group that was conducting research into the Moy and Newry Out of Hours centres. She urged all those who received questionnaires to complete and return them.

It was agreed to keep members updated on developments.

Mrs Baird left the meeting at 7.05 pm

**90/8 SHSSC RESPONSE TO SHSSB CONTINGENCY PLAN FOR MOBILE
CORONARY CARE UNIT (MCCU) IN THE SOUTH TYRONE AREA
SHSSC 2000/29**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/29.

The Chief Officer made reference to the Council's response to the Board's consultative document on the mobile coronary care unit in the South Tyrone area. He said the response raised a number of specific questions about the proposals contained in the consultative paper. He thanked members for their comments which assisted in compiling the response forwarded to the Southern Board in advance of its meeting on 27 June 2000.

It was agreed to keep members updated on developments.

**90/9 WOMEN'S VOICES - WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF MATERNITY SERVICES
AT CRAIGAVON AREA HOSPITAL FOLLOWING TRANSFER FROM SOUTH
TYRONE HOSPITAL
SHSSC 2000/30**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/30.

The Chief Officer referred members to the final report on research conducted by the Council into women's experiences of maternity services at Craigavon Area Hospital following transfer from South Tyrone Hospital. He said over 800 women were invited to participate in the research and 71% returned completed questionnaires. A total of 38 recommendations have been made to improve the provision of maternity services.

He said there was scope for improvement and the Council would monitor the situation to ensure that the recommendations were implemented.

The Chairwoman congratulated the Chief Officer, the Research Officer and the Research Assistant on the excellent report. She expressed a special thanks to Miss Caroline McKenna, University of Ulster student who has been on placement as a research assistant for the past year.

It was agreed that the maternity report be widely circulated to all interested parties.

**90/10 COMPLAINTS SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2000
SHSSC 2000/31**

The Chairwoman informed members that in the absence of the Complaints' Officer the Chief Officer would present paper SHSSC 2000/31.

The Chief Officer reported that the total number of complaints for the year ending 31 March 2000 was 113 and although this represented a fall of 20 on the previous year the number of complex complaints was growing. The professions most complained about

were general management, GPs and medical staff. Complaints mostly related to treatment and care, staff attitude/behaviour and clinical diagnosis.

In relation to the quarter ending 31 March 2000 he said 36 complainants had been assisted by the Council. Again professions most complained about were medical, general management and GPs and related to the treatment and care, staff attitude/behaviour, transport late/non-arrival and clinical diagnosis.

He indicated that most of the complaints were from the Craigavon/Banbridge area and consequently there was a need to raise awareness of the Council in the Newry and Mourne and Armagh and Dungannon areas. He reported that the Council had recently published a new leaflet for distribution throughout the Southern Board's area. The leaflet was designed to inform users of health and social services how they could get free, independent and confidential advice.

Suggestions put forward by members for the circulation of the leaflets included the free newspaper, a roadshow, the volunteer bureau, the district Councils, Community Fora, Churches, shop mobility and the Trusts.

90/11 SHSSC - WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

SHSSC 2000/32

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/32.

The Chief Officer presented members with an update of progress to date on the annual work programme for 2000/01.

He referred to the 'Relatives' Experiences and Perceptions of Care Provided in Nursing and Residential Homes' and said the data analysis had been conducted and the final report was currently being prepared for publication.

With reference to 'Women's Experiences of Maternity Services at Craigavon Area Hospital' he said the findings had been analysed and the final report printed. It would shortly be distributed to all interested parties.

The project on 'Healthcare Needs and Access to Health and Social Services for Homeless People' has been jointly undertaken by the four Health and Social Services Councils and the Simon Community. Questionnaires were distributed to 671 homeless people in 40 hostels in Northern Ireland and 355 were returned. A detailed report has been prepared and discussed by the Councils and the Simon Community. A summary report is now being prepared for publication.

Referring to 'Users and Carers Experiences of Mental Health Services' and 'The Experiences and Aspirations of Children in Care' the Chief Officer said background work was ongoing but the methodology had yet to be agreed.

'Uptake Rates of Breast Screening in Newry and Mourne'. Questionnaires will be distributed to all women in Newry and Mourne area who have recently been invited to the breast-screening clinic at Daisy Hill Hospital. These will be sent out on 21 and 22 June.

Comparisons will then be made between the attitudes and experiences of those who attended and those who did not.

In relation to the 'Primary Care Commissioning Group - Consultation and Community Involvement' project he said discussions had taken place and specific areas within the pilot area had been identified where focus group discussions would take place. Areas selected included Spring/Orangefield areas of Armagh City, Keady, Tynan, Darkely, Markethill and Killylea.

A joint steering group involving the four Boards and Councils would be established to explore research into 'patient satisfaction with prosthetics'.

The four Health and Social Services Councils have been approached by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to assist in organising a Northern Ireland wide conference in the autumn on how to involve service users. This will replace the Council's plans to organise such an event.

It has been agreed by the Council to work with Community Development and Health Network in compiling a self-help guide to accessing sources of information on health and social services, health rights and health education.

It was agreed members would be kept updated as projects developed.

**90/12 EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE
PRESCRIPTION ONLY MEDICINES (HUMAN USE) ORDER 1997
SHSSC 2000/33**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/33.

The Chief Officer referred to the consultative document proposed by the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) to re-classify the substance Levonorgestrel from prescription only to pharmacy availability for women aged 16 and over. This would apply across the UK. Members were asked for their views on the proposal after which a response would be prepared and forwarded to MCA prior to the closing date of 29 June.

The Chairwoman said it was a way of reducing unwanted pregnancies but she had concerns that it may increase the instance of sexually transmitted disease, the drug could be bought from a different chemist each time, GPs would have no record of those who used it and there was no mention of the consequences of continued use of the drug. Mr Loughran said this was a serious matter as every drug had side effects and he was opposed to any change. Mr Smyth said not enough information was available and he supported option 1 that it should be prescription only. Mr Cummings said some people did not like approaching their GP on such matters but if the drug was available from the pharmacist it would be helpful.

It was agreed that a response would be formulated expressing the view that the Council supported the retention of the status quo on the basis that not enough information was available in the consultative document to make informed comment.

90/13 TRUSTS' BUSINESS

SHSSC 2000/34

1 Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board Meeting held on 22 March 2000

2 Newry and Mourne HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board Meeting held on 18 April 2000

90/14 FOR INFORMATION

- 1 NHSSC - Minutes of meeting held on 3 May 2000
- 2 WHSSC - Minutes of meeting held on 4 May 2000

90/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Pharmacy in the Rathfriland Area

Mrs Baird asked if any further information was available on pharmacy out of hours services in Rathfriland. The Chief Officer advised that no further correspondence had been received from the Southern Board but the matter had been referred to the Pharmacy Practice Committee. It was agreed to follow up on the issue.

Future of Trusts

Mr Smyth asked if there was any further developments in relation to the amalgamation of Trusts. The Chairwoman informed him that the matter had not been discussed with the Minister.

Trusts' Financial Situation

Mr Cummings referred to the Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust's deficit of £4m and Armagh and Dungannon Trust's £2m deficit. The Chairwoman said Mr G Howarth the previous Minister had informed the Trusts that the new money must not be used to pay debts. Mr Cummings asked if there was any indication of what the cost in relation to the transfer of services in South Tyrone would be. It was agreed members would be kept informed.

90/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 19 September 2000 at 10.00 am in Quaker Buildings.

Signed: Date: