

SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Ninety-first Meeting held in Quaker Buildings, Lurgan on Tuesday 19
September 2000 at 10.00 am**

91/1 PRESENT: Mrs Fionnuala Cook, Chairwoman
Mrs Joan Baird
Mrs Margaret Campbell
Mr Jim Cavanagh
Mr Robert Cummings
Mr Gordon Frazer
Mr Samuel Gardiner
Mrs Angela Gray
Mr Jim McCammick
Mrs Mary McNally
Mr Charles Smyth

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

APOLOGIES: Mr Pat Brannigan
Mrs Sue Cunningham
Mrs Roisin Foster
Mr Isaac Hanna
Mr Joseph Loughran

The Chairwoman welcomed members to the ninety-first meeting of the Council. She expressed sympathy to Mrs Allister on the sudden death her nephew and his son as a result of a tragic road accident in Tandragee.

91/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting which were circulated were agreed and signed.

91/3 MATTERS ARISING

90/15.1 Pharmacy in the Rathfriland Area

Mrs Baird asked if there were any further developments in respect of pharmacy services in the Rathfriland area. The Chairwoman read a letter from the Director of Public Health explaining that the out of hours rota would be an agenda item for consideration at the autumn meeting of the Area Pharmacy Advisory Committee. She said a meeting had also been arranged between the Chief Officer and Board's Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Mr Timoney. Members would be kept updated.

90/11 Work Programme Update

Replying to Mr Cummings enquiry about the compilation of a self-help guide on social services, the Chief Officer said a meeting had taken place with Community Development and Health Network to identify issues for inclusion.

90/9 Women's Voices - Women's Experiences of Maternity Services at Craigavon Area Hospital following transfer from South Tyrone Hospital

Mr Cavanagh asked what the Craigavon Area Hospital Trust's response had been to concerns raised in relation to the maternity services report. The Chief Officer said the report received widespread publicity and the Trust felt the Council had been unfair in its criticism.

He read a letter from the Trust's Chief Executive in relation to the press coverage of the report. It stated that the Council's next request to the Trust would be met by a reluctance on the part of medical and other care staff to participate. Members were advised of the Council's response to the Trust's letter. Members assured the Chief Officer of their full support on the issue.

The Chief Officer said the Trust's Chief Executive had agreed to set up an implementation group to take forward the recommendations. However, to his knowledge no group had yet been established and the Council had not been advised of developments. He said progress appeared slow in the absence of a Director of Nursing. Mrs Baird said the Trust should employ a deputy director of nursing who could take over in such circumstances. Mr McCammick said he was concerned that the Trust did not have a Director of Nursing for the last 12 months and he asked for an update on the situation.

Mrs Baird asked why the Council was not represented at the recent opening of the refurbishment of Craigavon Area Hospital. The Chairwoman informed her that the Trust had indicated that this had been an oversight.

In relation to 'casualty watch' Mrs Baird asked if any member of the Council was allowed to attend when this exercise was being conducted. The Chief Officer said there was no reason why not but the exercise needed to be conducted in an unobtrusive manner. He said 'casualty watch' was conducted on a quarterly basis at 4.30 pm on a Monday afternoon. Mrs Baird said staff in the A & E department were stressed out and she had recently witnessed patients waiting for 3 to 4 hours to be seen. Mr Cavanagh said no one was more aware of the bed situation than the General Practitioners in Dungannon. They constantly had to send patients through the A & E Department to get them admitted to Craigavon. Mr Gardiner suggested conducting a 'casualty watch' at the week-end. Commenting on staffing levels at the Trust, the Chairwoman said she had concerns about the lack of surgeons in comparison to other hospitals of a similar size. Mr Cummings expressed concern about the Trust's financial situation.

It was agreed to closely monitor the situation and keep members updated.

91/4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1 Conferences

The Chairwoman drew members attention to a list of forthcoming conferences. She asked those who wished to register for any of the events to contact the office.

2 SHSSB Primary Care Department

The Chairwoman said it was with regret that she had to inform members of the decision by the Southern Board's Senior Primary Care Medical Officer, Dr Uel Gillan to resign from his post with immediate effect. She paid tribute to Dr Gillan who had a close working relationship with the Council. She said his departure raised concerns about how the primary care agenda would be taken forward in the Southern Board's area.

3 Fractures Services at the Royal Group of Hospitals

The Chief Officer referred to the number of patients in the Southern Board's area waiting for surgery at the Royal Victoria Hospital. For the first two weeks of September there was a continuous increase in patients waiting in excess of 7 days for surgery.

He advised members that an additional £4m had been invested in the service last year with a promise that it would be greatly enhanced. He said there was clearly a case for the establishment of a fracture service in Craigavon Area Hospital. Mrs Baird said this matter should have been addressed 6 - 7 years ago and it was time moves were made to establish such a service.

Mr Gardiner expressed concern that there appeared to be only limited occupational therapy follow up when patients were discharged from the Royal Victoria Hospital. It was agreed to follow this matter up.

It was agreed that the issue of fractures in the Southern Board's area be pursued with the Minister responsible for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

91/5 SHSSB RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED BY THE COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF RECENT CHANGES AT SOUTH TYRONE HOSPITAL SHSSC 2000/35

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/35.

The Chief Officer referred to the Southern Board's detailed response to issues raised by the Council in respect of changes at South Tyrone Hospital and in particular changes to acute medical services and coronary care. He advised members that a number of issues had been progressed such as the public information strategy and proposals to improve transport for patients and relatives travelling from the South Tyrone area to Craigavon Area Hospital.

It was agreed members would be kept updated on developments.

**91/6 ESTABLISHMENT OF DUNGANNON AND SOUTH TYRONE
COMMUNITY FORUM SHSSC 2000/36**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/36.

He stated that the Minister responsible for health, social services and public safety had asked Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council to establish a Community Forum following recent decisions in respect of South Tyrone Hospital.

The remit of the Forum was to work with the Board and the relevant Trusts to promote the development of a wide range of health and social services on the South Tyrone Hospital site in response to the needs of the local population.

He said membership of the Forum consisted of the Borough Council, Dungannon Scanner Committee, South Tyrone Action Group, UNISON and the GP Forum. The Council along with the Board and the Trusts had been asked to attend the meetings in an advisory capacity. The first meeting was held on 24 August, minutes of which were provided for members.

Before establishing new services on the South Tyrone Hospital, the Chief Officer said it was his view that the needs of the local population had to be assessed before final decisions were made. Mr Cavanagh agreed with the Chief Officer but said there was no budget to fund such an initiative. He said the Borough Council was prepared to service the Forum but the business of ensuring that decisions were taken and implemented was the responsibility of the Board and the Trusts.

It was agreed to keep members informed of developments.

**91/7 NORTHERN IRELAND REVIEW OF ACUTE HOSPITAL SERVICES
SHSSC 2000/37**

The Chairwoman reported that she had been invited to be a member of the Northern Ireland review of acute hospital services group chaired by Dr Maurice Hayes. She said that Dr Hayes has written to all groups and organisations with a relevant interest inviting them to respond to the Review Group before 31 October 2000.

In order to assist the Chief Officer in formulating a response to the Review Group she said the views of members would be greatly appreciated. It was proposed that a small working group be established to assist in compiling the response.

Members who agreed to participate in the sub group comprised Angela Gray, Margaret Campbell, Mary McNally, Jim Cavanagh and Robert Cummings.

Mr Cummings congratulated the Chairwoman and said that a regional review of acute hospitals should have been set up a long time ago. He asked that she keep in mind the lack of services west of the Bann.

It was agreed to arrange a meeting of the sub-group in the near future.

91/8 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF FORKHILL GP SURGERY SHSSC 2000/38

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/38.

The Chief Officer referred members to the proposed closure of the Forkhill GP surgery. He said the Board had been informed of the reasons why the GPs wanted to close the surgery. As part of its consultations the Board had asked the Council for its views on the application. During the summer the Council met with a number of community groups directly affected by the proposal and responded to the consultative document.

Board paper SB 50/00 outlined the results of the consultation process and set out a way forward. Following a recommendation from the Council the services of Mediation Network has been sought to progress the matter.

Mr McCammick left the meeting at 11.15 am

Mrs Baird sought clarification on who owned the building in Forkhill and why its physical condition was allowed to deteriorate. She suggested it was the responsibility of the landlord to keep it maintained. The Chief Officer said the Mullaghbawn Health Centre was a modern building which had opened about 3 years ago and was located just over two miles from Forkhill. He said a lot of work needed to be done to maintain good doctor/patient relationships in the area and hopefully the matter could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

It was agreed to keep members updated on progress.

Mrs McNally left the meeting at 11.36 am

91/9 SHSSB WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT 2000/2001 SHSSC 2000/39

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/39.

The Chief Officer made reference to papers prepared by the Southern Board detailing how it intended reducing waiting lists in its area, the corporate monitoring report from the DHSSPS which showed that almost 50,000 people were on waiting lists in Northern Ireland and a press statement issued by the Minister outlining a new framework for action to reduce waiting lists.

Members expressed concern about the increasing waiting lists but welcomed the fact that positive action was being taken to address the situation.

It was agreed to continue monitoring the situation and invite a Board representative to a future meeting to discuss progress.

Mr Gardiner left the meeting at 11.42 am

91/10 CARDIAC SURGERY SHSSC 2000/40

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/40.

The Chief Officer advised members that the Council had written to the Board on 5 July 2000 expressing concerns about the difficulties Southern Board residents were having in accessing cardiac surgery at the Royal Victoria Hospital. It was clear from the Board's report that there were major difficulties with waiting lists and the number of operations being performed had dropped substantially. A copy of the Board's response was forwarded to the Royal Hospitals Group Trust but no response had been received.

The Chief Officer reported that the Minister responsible for health and social services and public safety had announced a review of cardiac surgery in Northern Ireland to be taken forward by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Campbell. It was agreed that the Council forward information to assist her in reviewing cardiac surgery.

91/11 REVALIDATION OF DOCTORS

SHSSC 2000/41

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/41.

The Chief Officer referred members to the Council's response to the GMC's consultative document on the revalidation of doctors. He said the four Health and Social Services Councils held two seminars on 4 and 5 September at which representatives from the General Medical Council gave 70 delegates an insight into the GMC's thinking. The Council's response was prepared as a result of the issues raised and comments received. Mr Cavanagh said he attended the Belfast seminar and found it very useful.

Members congratulated the Chief Officer on the preparation of the response.

91/12 REVIEW OF GENERAL ANAESTHESIA AND SEDATION FOR DENTAL TREATMENT

SHSSC 2000/42

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/42.

The Chief Officer referred to a letter from the Chief Dental Officer, Mrs Doreen Wilson in which she sought the Council's support in making general anaesthesia for dental treatment as safe as possible.

Members welcomed the document and agreed to support its recommendations.

91/13 TRUSTS' BUSINESS

SHSSC 2000/43

1 Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board Meeting held on 31 May and agenda for meeting on 26 July 2000

2 Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 19 June and agenda for meeting on 29 August 2000

3 Craigavon and Banbridge Comm HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 8 May and agenda for meeting on 26 June 2000

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 26 June and agenda for meeting on 4 September 2000

4 Newry and Mourne HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 20 June and agenda for 15 August 2000

91/14 FOR INFORMATION

- 1 NHSSC - Minutes of meeting held on 7 June 2000
- 2 SHSSB - Minutes of special meetings held on 25 July 2000 and 8 August 2000
- 3 DHSSPS - Breast Cancer Waiting times: Two-week Outpatient Target
- 4 Trusts' Annual General Meetings/Public Meetings
- 5 SHSSC Response to Strategic Review of NI Ambulance Service – June 2000
- 6 Hospital Services – Important Information for people living in the Dungannon South Tyrone Area
- 7 SHSSB Minutes of Meetings held on 9 May, 25 May and 27 June 2000

91/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 Waiting Times for Housing Adaptations

Mrs McNally asked that waiting times for housing adaptations be investigated by the Council. She stated that it was taking up to three years for some people with disabilities and stroke patients to have adaptations carried out. It was agreed to progress this issue.

The Chairwoman suggested that the issue was something that needed to be raised with the Assembly.

2 Newry & Mourne HSS Trust AGM

Mr Smyth reported the announcement at the Trust's AGM that a CT Scanner would be in operation at Daisy Hill Hospital before the end of December 2000.

91/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17 October 2000 at 10.00 am in Quaker Buildings.

Signed: Date: