

SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ninety-second Meeting held in Quaker Buildings, Lurgan on Tuesday 17 October 2000 at 10.00 am

92/1 PRESENT: Mrs Fionnuala Cook, Chairwoman
Mrs June Allister
Mrs Joan Baird
Mr Pat Brannigan
Mrs Margaret Campbell
Mr Robert Cummings
Mrs Roisin Foster
Mr Gordon Frazer
Mr Samuel Gardiner
Mrs Angela Gray
Mr Joseph Loughran

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Seamus Magee, Chief Officer
Mrs Nancy Downard, Office Manager
Miss Colette Hart, Complaints Adviser [for part of the
meeting]
Dr A M Telford, Director of Public Health Medicine,
SHSSB [for part of the meeting]

APOLOGIES: Mr Jim Cavanagh
Mrs Sue Cunningham
Mr Isaac Hanna
Mr Jim McCammick
Mrs Mary McNally
Mr Charles Smyth

92/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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

92/3 MATTERS ARISING

1 91/3 Pharmacy Out of Hours in Rathfriland

Mrs Baird asked for an update on the pharmacy out of hours situation in Rathfriland.

The Chief Officer informed Mrs Baird that he had met the Board's Pharmaceutical Adviser who informed him that discussions were under way with a view to enhancing out of hours pharmacy services in Rathfriland. The Chairwoman said the matter was also raised with the Southern Board at its meeting on 10 October. It was agreed to keep members informed of developments.

2 91/4.3 Fracture Services

The Chairwoman advised members that a letter had been sent to the Minister responsible for health, social services and public safety expressing the Council's concerns about fracture services in the Southern Board's area. She said the Chief Executive of the Royal Group of Hospitals was meeting with the Chief Officer and herself on Wednesday 19 October 2000 when the matter would be discussed. Members would be kept informed of developments.

3 91/9 SHSSB Waiting List Management 2000/2001

Mrs Baird asked if a Board representative had been invited to discuss the situation with members. The Chief Officer informed her that Dr Telford, the Board's Director of Public Health had been invited to the meeting to discuss winter pressures initiatives and members would also have an opportunity to raise concerns about waiting lists.

92/4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1 Visits to Daisy Hill and South Tyrone Hospitals

The Chairwoman reminded members of the visit to Daisy Hill Hospital on 24 October at 10.30 am. Mrs Gray and Mr Cummings asked that their names be included on the visiting team. In relation to the visit to South Tyrone Hospital on 7 November, Mr Loughran and Mr Cummings asked to be included.

2 Schedule of meetings for 2001

The Chairwoman advised members that the April 2001 meeting would have to be rescheduled to Wednesday 18 April as the 17 April was a statutory holiday. The December meeting was re-arranged for Thursday 13 December 2001.

3 November 2000 Meeting

The Chairwoman asked if any of the District Councils had agreed to host future meetings of the Council. It was agreed to contact the Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council and Banbridge District Council.

92/5 SHSSC - DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

SHSSC 2000/44

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/44.

The Chief Officer referred members to the draft of the Ninth Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2000. He asked members for comments in relation to the content and layout of the report. Mrs Baird asked for clarification on her attendance record as did Mr Loughran who felt he had attended 10 meetings of the Council. The report's contents were agreed by members.

**92/6 CRAIGAVON AREA HOSPITAL - ACUTE SERVICES PRESSURES
SHSSC 2000/45**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/45.

The Chief Officer informed members that Mr Templeton, Chief Executive of the Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust had been invited to attend the Council meeting to update members on developments but due to a prior appointment was unable to be present. However, he agreed to attend a future meeting of the Council.

The Chief Officer then referred members to three letters which had been provided for information. The first was that of the Trust's 'Warning Notice - Critical Services Situation' which had been widely circulated by the Trust to all GPs, GP Fora, Trusts, District and Borough Councils and MLAs. The second was a letter from the Council expressing concern at the Trust's decision to close a 20 bedded ward at Lurgan Hospital and to relocate it to Craigavon Area Hospital, without consultation. The third was a copy of a response written by the Southern Board's Chief Executive challenging the issues in the Trust's 'Warning Notice' letter and clarifying the situation. Members were invited to express their views on the situation.

Mr Loughran said he was alarmed at the transfer of 20 beds from Lurgan to Craigavon and in his view the Trust's 'Warning Notice' letter had been greatly exaggerated. The Chairwoman said she was concerned that the underlying reason for a lot of change was to move the remainder of psychiatric beds from the Craigavon site. Mr Cummings said he felt the Council should have been consulted on the removal of 20 beds from Lurgan Hospital. He also highlighted the fact that service changes in Craigavon were having an impact elsewhere in the Board's area and this was often not understood.

Mrs Baird, whilst not agreeing with certain aspects of the Trust's letter said she was of the opinion that someone had to take a stand. She said the problems facing the Royal Group of Hospitals and the Ulster Hospital were the same as those in Craigavon yet nobody was prepared to say anything publicly. She said she regularly talked to nurses in Craigavon Area Hospital who explained the stressful situation under which they had to work. Mr Gardiner said he was aware the Trust had plans to install a new heating system and provide oxygen to wards in the Psychiatric Unit. Mr Frazer said it was more important to reduce tiers of management rather than nursing staff.

At this stage of the meeting a letter faxed from the Chief Executive of the Craigavon Hospital Group Trust was tabled. The letter was in response to the Council's letter of 5 October. It explained the circumstances behind the temporary closure of 20 beds at Lurgan Hospital. In light of this it was agreed that the Chief Officer and the Chairwoman would attend the Trust Board meeting later that afternoon to discuss the Council's concerns. Mrs Campbell and Mrs Gray said they would also attend the Trust Board meeting.

It was also agreed to write to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety asking what action it intended taking in situations where services or facilities were withdrawn without consultation with key stakeholders including the Councils.

92/7 SHSSB - WAITING LIST INITIATIVES

SHSSC 2000/46

The Chairwoman referred members to paper SHSSC 2000/46 relating to the Southern Board's waiting list initiatives and how it intended addressing increased waiting lists in its area. She said all Boards had been asked to develop similar proposals and submit plans to the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety by 13 October 2000. She said a letter outlining the Board's progress in respect of those waiting for cardiac surgery was also attached.

Members were asked to consider the paper and raise any concerns with Dr Telford, the Board's Director of Public Health.

Mrs Baird commented favourably on the Board's plans to send some patients to Glasgow for cardiac surgery. Mrs Campbell sought information on the cost of sending patients to Glasgow and wanted to know if costs were in excess of £8,000. Mrs Foster's concern related to the level of expertise of doctors carrying out operations in the HCI in Glasgow and whether all were cardiac surgeons.

It was agreed to invite a Board representative to a future meeting of the Council to discuss specific matters in respect of waiting list initiatives.

92/8 SHSSB - WINTER PRESSURES

SHSSC 2000/47

The Chairwoman welcomed Dr A M Telford, the Southern Board's Director of Public Health who agreed to attend the meeting to outline the Board's plans for addressing winter pressures.

Dr Telford explained that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in its report on winter pressures 'Facing the Future' set out a framework based on lessons learned from last year. It provided guidelines for Boards and Trusts in planning for 2000/01. Finalised plans were to be submitted to the DHSSPS by 13 October.

In relation to the development of the Board's winter pressures plan she said she had been identified as the lead person and had received assistance from the Board's Planning Department. Membership of the managing acute pressures group had been widened and included representatives from a range of organisations including the Council.

She reported that the Southern Board's action plans covered primary care, community care, secondary care and wider issues. In relation to primary care, additional support would be provided for primary care teams and the GP out of hours service while there would be a focus on increasing influenza vaccination.

Plans for community care included the extension of step down schemes, more use of nursing homes and a major investment in domiciliary care services. Armagh and Dungannon Health Action Zone was working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to examine the links between energy inefficiency, fuel poverty and ill health particularly in rural communities.

With regard to the ambulance service two new intermediate care vehicles would operate from 11 am to 7 pm to facilitate the prompt discharge of patients from hospital. Referring to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Craigavon Area Hospital, Dr Telford reported that the number of ICU beds would increase from 4 to 6 and High Dependency Unit (HDU) beds from 2 to 3.

Within Daisy Hill 11 winter pressures beds would be opened from early December. A new bed manager had been appointed and would liaise with the bed manager at Craigavon Area Hospital. A 'discharge lounge' would be opened at Craigavon Area Hospital while initiatives to attract nurses back to the profession would continue.

In order to ensure that clear and agreed public messages were communicated the Board and Trusts had adopted a co-ordinated approach. Details of province-wide public information campaigns were still being finalised.

Dr Telford then referred to the 'Critical Services Situation' at Craigavon Area Hospital and in particular the Chief Executive's letter of 28 September. The letter stated the Trust would have to reduce staff by 100 in order to address a £2m overspend, that winter pressures planning was no further advanced than this time last year and waiting lists/times were continuing to increase. Commenting on the bed capacity Dr Telford indicated that detailed discussions had taken place in relation to bed numbers and 18 beds had been set aside for winter pressures. However, the Trust had closed beds in Lurgan and moved these to Craigavon at the expense of winter pressure beds.

In concluding Dr Telford said there were bed capacity problems at Craigavon Area Hospital but the Board was working with the Trust and other providers to minimise the impact and the situation would be closely monitored. She said she understood that the Chief Executive of the Craigavon Area Hospital had agreed to publicly retract his statement of the previous week.

Mr Loughran left the meeting at 11.18 am.

Members said they were very impressed with the Board's comprehensive plan to deal with winter pressures. Dr Telford then responded to questions from the members about a range of topics including the permanence of the Board's plans, the Trust plans to provide oxygen in psychiatric wards at Craigavon Area Hospital, delayed discharge, the possibility of the beds being returned to Lurgan Hospital, the position regarding psychiatric provision at Craigavon Area Hospital, the possibility of a local orthopaedic service and the question of who paid for patients discharged from an acute hospital and moved to a nursing home for a short period of time.

Mr Frazer and Mr Gardiner left the meeting at 12.00 noon.

**92/9 COMPLAINTS SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2000
SHSSC 2000/48**

The Chairwoman invited the Complaints Officer, Colette Hart to present paper SHSSC 2000/48.

Miss Hart reported that the Council had assisted 23 complainants in the first quarter ending 30 June 2000. She provided members with a breakdown of the complaints by profession, reason for complaint and the organisation complained about.

Most complaints were about general management, GPs and the medical profession. In the majority of cases the reason for the complaint was about treatment and care followed by staff attitude / behaviour.

In reply to Mrs Baird's question, Miss Hart said none of the complaints were about the Moylinn Out of Hours service but were general complaints.. Two applications had been made for independent review and decisions were awaited.

When asked by the Chairwoman if there was equity across the Trusts in respect of the complaints system, Miss Hart said there was a concerted effort by all Trusts to resolve complaints. On occasions it was difficult to get a comprehensive response although it was difficult to generalise across Trusts.

In reply to Mrs Foster's question as to the type of things complained about, Miss Hart said attitudes of staff and treatment were the main cause of complaint but communication difficulties remained at the heart of most complaints. Replying to Mrs Baird's question about the two out-of-area complaints, Miss Hart stated that relatives of the persons concerned resided in the Southern Board's area.

The Chairwoman thanked Miss Hart and she left the meeting.

92/10 TRUSTS' BUSINESS SHSSC 2000/49

1 Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust

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

2 Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 4 September and agenda for meeting on 25 September 2000

3 Newry and Mourne HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 15 August and agenda for meeting on 17 October 2000

92/11 FOR INFORMATION

- 1 SHSSB - Pharmacy Practice Committee - Minutes of meeting held on 22 June 2000
- 2 NHSSC - Minutes of meeting held on 6 September 2000
- 3 SHSSB - Minutes of meeting held on 12 September 2000
- 4 WHSSC - Minutes of meeting held on 14 September 2000
- 5 South Tyrone Hospital Community Forum - Minutes of meetings held on 14 and 25 September and agenda for meeting on 12 October 2000
- 6 DHSSPS - Regulating the Social Services Workforce
- 7 DHSSPS/SSI - An introduction to Personal Social Services
- 8 DHSSPS - Strategy for reducing alcohol
- 9 CAHGT - Annual Report

92/12 OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

92/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21 November 2000 at 10.00 am. Venue to be arranged.

Signed: **Date:**