

## SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ninety-fourth Meeting held in Quaker Buildings on Thursday 14 December 2000  
at 10.00 am

**94/1        PRESENT:**                Mrs Fionnuala Cook, Chairwoman  
   Mrs June Allister  
   Mrs Joan Baird  
   Mrs Margaret Campbell  
   Mr Robert Cummings  
   Mr Brendan Curran  
   Mrs Roisin Foster  
   Mr Gordon Frazer  
   Mrs Angela Gray  
   Mr Isaac Hanna  
   Mr Joseph Loughran  
   Mrs Mary McNally

**IN ATTENDANCE:**    Mr Seamus Magee, Chief Officer  
   Mrs Nancy Downard, Office Manager  
   Miss Karen McCoy, Research Officer {for part of the  
   meeting]  
   Mr Ricky McAllister, Research Assistant (University  
   Placement) [for part of the meeting]  
   Mr Louis Boyle, Director of Family and Child Care and Mr  
   Martin Kelly, Director of Planning, Craigavon and  
   Banbridge Community HSS Trust [for part of the meeting]

**APOLOGIES:**                        Mr Pat Brannigan  
   Mr Jim Cavanagh  
   Mrs Sue Cunningham  
   Mr Samuel Gardiner  
   Mr Jim McCammick  
   Mr Charles Smyth

### **94/2    MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

### **94/3    MATTERS ARISING**

#### **1        Primary Care**

In response to Mr Loughran's question about Primary Care, the Chief Officer said the matter would be brought to the January meeting.

## **94/4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

### **1 Pharmacy Rotas for the Christmas period**

The Chairwoman advised members of changes to the pharmacy rota hours over the Christmas and New Year holiday period. She said additional opening hours had been agreed in all areas and this should be an improvement on last year. Mrs Baird said the additional opening hours would be appreciated in the Rathfriland area and she thanked the Council for progressing the matter.

### **2 Craigavon Area Hospital**

The Chairwoman referred members to a letter from the Chief Executive of Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust advising that Miss B Foy was the deputy Director of Nursing with responsibility in absence of the Director. Members acknowledged clarification of the matter and apologised to Miss Foy for any misunderstanding.

### **3 Capitation Funding Formula**

Mrs Baird reported that she had attended a recent meeting about Capitation Funding in the Bannville Hotel, Banbridge. She said that there was a very poor attendance and she noted there was no representation from the Council.

The Chief Officer advised that a meeting with the four Health Councils was scheduled for Thursday 21 December in the offices of the Eastern Council. Members who expressed an interest in attending included Mrs Fionnuala Cook and Mrs June Allister.

## **94/5 CRAIGAVON AND BANBRIDGE COMMUNITY HSS TRUST - PROPOSALS FOR A NEW CHILDREN'S HOME IN LURGAN SHSSC 2000/56**

The Chairwoman welcomed Mr Louis Boyle, Director of Family and Child Care and Mr Martin Kelly, Director of Planning, Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust to the meeting to discuss the Trust's proposals.

Mr Kelly said the role of the Trust in caring for children would form the initial part of the presentation after which he would address the strategic development around children's homes.

Mr Boyle informed members that the Craigavon and Banbridge Trust area had a population of 35,000 children but only a small number were in contact with Social Services. He explained that under the Children Order the Trust had a specific responsibility for the provision of residential care for children. Approximately 1300 referrals were made annually either by self-referral, from the police, or from the public. There were many reasons for social services intervention including serious family breakdown, abuse/neglect, children with aggressive or violent behaviour and parental inability/illness. The Trust has approximately 120 children in care, of whom 85% were cared for by foster carers. At present the Trust had 65 foster carers but it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain foster carers.

Regarding the balance, Mr Boyle said the Trust had 25 to 30 teenagers with more challenging behaviour who had to be admitted to residential care. The reasons for admission ranged from sexual abuse, neglect, a breakdown in family placement, parental inability to care, violence, aggression, absconding and drug and alcohol abuse.

In relation to the number of children's homes in the Province, Mr Boyle said there had been a great decline in the number of places over the last 10 years. In 1986 there were 31 statutory and 12 voluntary homes with places for 688 children. By 1997 the number of places had reduced to 240 with only 15 statutory and 6 voluntary homes providing accommodation.

Mr Kelly referred to the report by the Social Services Inspectorate 'Children Matter'. He said the report highlighted concerns about the closure of so many facilities and that existing places were inadequate to meet demand. The report stressed the need to redress the situation in the voluntary sector and a return to the provision that existed in 1986. There was also a need for the Southern Board and Trusts to review the situation in relation to statutory homes and to ensure there were enough places to meet the needs of children.

Referring to the Children's Services Plan, Mr Kelly said it included plans for 3 additional 6-bedded homes for young people with learning disability and 2 6-bedded homes for young people. Currently residential care in the Southern Board's area included Bocombra, Portadown which was registered for 8 places, Drumglass, Dungannon with 8-10 places, Edenvilla, Banbridge with 5 places and Cedar Grove, Newry with 6 places. The proposed new home in Lurgan would act in support of these. It would be a statutory facility providing intensive support to compliment existing provision. When the new home in Lurgan was established it would no longer be necessary to purchase places in more specialist accommodation such as Rathgael or Glenmona.

Mr Kelly said the Trust had set up a project group, an outline business case had been developed and the Trust was now at the consultation stage. He said he did not envisage that everything would run smoothly and there were a number of internal issues to be resolved. One of the difficult issues would be recruiting staff. However, once the consultation stage was completed the full business case would be considered. Mr Kelly referred members to the location map and said the site was self contained and did not encroach on any other property.

Mr Boyle and Mr Kelly responded to a number of questions from members including, concerns about the home being in close proximity to Abbey Field, Leonard Cheshire, Carrick Primary School and a proposed new housing development; the population mix of the area; elderly patients in Lurgan Hospital; stigma attached to the children; the involvement of the Southern Education and Library Board; consulting with the local residents and the need to involve District Councillors.

Mr Curran joined the meeting at 10.40 am.

The Chairwoman requested an update on the situation in respect of facilities in Bowen's Lane, Lurgan.

Mr Kelly informed the Council that he could not provide an update at this stage as no further decisions had been made and the Trust was meeting the Borough Council on 20 December

It was agreed that the Council would formulate a response in support of the proposals to develop a children's home in Lurgan but urged the Trust to consult as widely as possible and in particular to fully consult with the parents of children at Carrick School.

The Chairwoman thanked Mr Boyle and Mr Kelly and they left the meeting.

**94/6 'OPENING THE DOOR TO HEALTH' - ACCESS TO PRIMARY  
HEALTHCARE SERVICES FOR SINGLE HOMELESS PEOPLE IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND SHSSC 2000/57**

The Chairwoman invited Miss Karen McCoy, Research Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/57.

Miss McCoy referred members to the report entitled, 'Opening the Door to Health' - Access to Primary Healthcare Services for Single Homeless People in Northern Ireland. She said the research was a joint project with the four Health and Social Services Councils and the Simon Community (NI) and the aim of the research was to examine single homeless people's access to primary healthcare services. The summary report was written by the Southern Health and Social Services Council and was launched on Tuesday 5 December in Belfast.

She then proceeded to present an overview of the findings to members. She said the methodology was conducted in three stages; with focus group discussions, a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews. She outlined in detail the profile of the respondents and the health status of respondents.

Barriers identified by single homeless people included the stereotypical views that GPs held; the distance to the GP surgery and availability of transport; the attitude of receptionists ; the lack of information and support in completion of forms and difficulties encountered with temporary registration and getting repeat prescriptions.

Health professionals identified issues such as transience, low self-esteem; value of health and limited medical history as their main barriers.

Miss McCoy then outlined the main recommendations contained in the report. She said future health and social services policy/strategic documents should specifically target single homeless people. Training on the needs of homeless people should be provided to primary care, A & E and administrative staff. Details of services available locally, how to access them and advice on promoting good health for single homeless people should be made available. Hostels should have pro forma for recording basic medical details of residents. Hostels should also develop outreach schemes with health professionals, the temporary registration with GPs should be reviewed and the feasibility of single homeless people carrying their own medical records should be considered. She said the recommendations were aimed at a number of people but there had been good working relations throughout the project.

She said the report would be circulated to all interested parties throughout Northern Ireland.

Mrs Foster congratulated the Council on the very interesting piece of work which had been carried out very sensitively.

The Chairwoman thanked the Research Officer and she left the meeting.

**94/7 CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO EXTEND NURSING PRESCRIBING  
SHSSC 2000/58**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/58.

The Chief Officer referred members to a consultation paper prepared by the Department of Health on proposals to extend nurse prescribing. The Department of Health and Medicines Control Agency had asked for views on a range of issues and had put forward a number of options for consideration. The closing date for comments was 10 January 2001.

Mr Cummings said he favoured option 4 and felt that if nurses could be used in these situations it would be a much better arrangement. The Chairwoman felt that option 3 would be a more realistic starting point. She expressed concerns about nurses prescribing drugs where there was no GP involved, for example, in nursing homes. Mr Loughran said the initiative had the potential to benefit people in rural areas. Mrs Baird felt it was a good idea but nurses would have to be fully trained.

Mr Hanna left the meeting at 11.45 am.

Mrs Foster said she felt more comfortable with option 3 with an open door to moving to option 4. Members agreed to support option 3.

It was agreed to prepare a response prior to 10 January 2001.

**94/8 SHSSC - SURVEY OF PERFORMANCE IN ASSISTING COMPLAINANTS**

The Chairwoman invited Ricky McAllister, Research Assistant to present paper SHSSC 2000/58.

He informed members that the Council, as part of its 1999/2000 work programme, proposed conducting a survey of people who had contacted the Council for support or guidance in making complaints. The objective of the survey was to identify users' views of the services provided by the Council.

The methodology consisted of a postal survey of 100 users who had contacted the Council between March 1999 and June 2000. There was a 51% response to the survey.

He provided members with information about the complainants' contact with the Council, the assistance and information provided by the Council, the performance of the Council in handling the complaint, the satisfaction of the respondents, the outcome of complaints and overall satisfaction.

He highlighted suggestions made by the respondents on how the Council could make improvements in handling complaints. Actions currently ongoing included revision of the complaints' leaflet, the production of information leaflets, posters and the establishment of a website.

In summary, he said the majority of respondents were satisfied with the Council's handling of complaints and the vast majority received information which was fully understood.

A full report would be printed at a later date.

The Chairwoman thanked Mr McAllister for the comprehensive report and he left the meeting.

**94/9 SHSSB DRAFT SERVICE AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT  
2001/02 - 2003/04 SHSSC 2000/59**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/59.

The Chief Officer drew members attention to the Southern Board's draft Service and Financial Framework Document for 2001/02 - 2003/04 which outlined the commissioning plan for the three year period to April 2004. He invited members to put forward their views on the content of the framework following which a response would be prepared for submission to the Board before 12 January 2001.

Mr Cummings left the meeting at 11.55 am.

**94/10 TRANSFER OF SERVICES AND CHANGES IN CLINICAL MANAGEMENT  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOUTH TYRONE HOSPITAL - PROGRESS REPORT  
SHSSC 2000/60**

The Chairwoman invited the Chief Officer to present paper SHSSC 2000/60.

The Chief Officer presented a progress report on the transfer of services and changes in clinical management responsibility at South Tyrone Hospital. He said full responsibility for these matters was taken over by Craigavon Area Hospital on 1 December 2000. The paper was discussed at the South Tyrone Hospital Community Forum and it was intended to invite the Chief Executive of the Southern Board and Craigavon Area Hospital Trust to the next meeting to address matters of concern in relation to the rebalancing of inpatient services at South Tyrone Hospital.

The Chairwoman referred to a recent visit to South Tyrone Hospital by Council members and the concern expressed by staff in the minor injuries unit that Dr Wallace planned to retire in April 2001. Apparently no replacement had been appointed and no nurse practitioner had been trained to run the service. Mr Loughran said it was important that a replacement was in post 2 - 3 months before Dr Wallace's retirement. Mr Curran said there appeared to be inability in the health service generally to plan ahead and this often resulted in problems occurring which could have been avoided.

It was agreed to write to the Chief Executive of Craigavon Area Hospital seeking clarification on the situation at South Tyrone Hospital.

**94/11 TRUST'S BUSINESS**

**SHSSC 2000/61**

**1 Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust**

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 17 October and agenda for meeting on 21 November 2000

It was agreed to extend an invitation to Mrs Betty McClurg, the new Chairman of the Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust and Mr John Templeton, Chief Executive to attend a future meeting of the Council.

**2 Newry and Mourne HSS Trust**

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 17 October and agenda for 12 December 2000.

It was noted that two new Non-Executive Directors had been appointed to Newry and Mourne HSS Trust. Mr Curran expressed concern about waiting lists for occupational therapy services. The Chief Officer said all the Trusts had been asked for information on OT waiting lists but the information had not yet been received from Newry and Mourne.

**94/12 VISITS**

**Verbal Reports**

- 1 Craigavon Area Hospital on 22 November 2000
- 2 Royal Victoria Hospital on 27 November 2000

Mrs Baird reported that the Council had a very interesting visit to the Royal Victoria Hospital. She said the visiting team was satisfied with the explanation given regarding the problems that existed in the Southern Board's area in relation to fracture services. The Chairwoman informed members that Prof D Marsh had agreed to attend the January meeting to discuss fracture services.

**94/13 FOR INFORMATION**

- 1 SHSSB - Minutes of meeting held on 14 November 2000
- 2 SHSSB - Working in Partnership - Community Development and Health and Social Services
- 3 Newspaper article
- 4 Minutes of Meeting of South Tyrone Hospital Community Forum held on 2 November 2000
- 5 SHSSB - Annual Report 1999/2000
- 6 A new era of Rights and Responsibilities - Guidance for Public Authorities in NI

**94/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**1 Newspaper Article**

The Chairwoman drew members attention to a newspaper article about the imminent departure of Dr Khan from the Royal Victoria Hospital to a new post in England. In the article Mr John Taylor MP commented that, if he was in charge of the health service in Northern Ireland, he would get rid of the Health Councils which cost £4 million per annum to run. The Chairwoman said this was a gross over exaggeration and the true cost was less than £700,000 in total. Overall, this was excellent value for money.

Mrs Baird proposed that the Council should write to Mr Taylor providing details of the Council's budget. She said all the work carried out by the Council was of the highest quality and that all members including the Chairwoman were working in a voluntary capacity for the people of the area. Mr Curran suggested that the facts be made public. Mrs Baird's proposal was seconded by Mrs McNally. The Chief Officer informed members that a copy of the annual report had been circulated to the MP following the publication of his views.

**94/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 16 January 2001 at 10.00 am in the offices of Banbridge District Council.

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....