

SOUTHERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of the One Hundred and Third Meeting held in Quaker Buildings on Thursday 13 December 2001 at 10.00 am

103/1 PRESENT: Mrs Roisin Foster, Acting Chairman
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Pat Brannigan
Mrs Lynne Cairns
Mr Jim Cavanagh
Mrs Imelda Clarke
Mrs Mary Ferris
Mr Isaac Hanna
Mr Clive Henning
Mr Peter Murray
Mr Brendan Montague
Mr John McArdle
Mr Wilfred McFadden
Mr Charles Rollston
Mr David Simpson

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss Colette Hart, Complaints Officer
Ms Karen McCoy, Research Officer
Mrs Nancy Downard, Office Manger
Mr Eddie Ritson, Director of Primary Care,
SHSSB [for part of the meeting]

APOLOGIES: Mrs Yvonne McKnight
Mrs Nazy Harris
Mr Brendan Curran
Mr Adrian McKinney

Mrs Foster, Vice Chairman extended a warm welcome to all at the meeting and in particular those who were attending for the first time. She informed members that she would act as Chairman of the Council until a new person was elected to the position.

103/2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the previous meeting which were circulated were agreed and signed subject to one amendment. Under the heading speech therapy at Ceara School on page 11, the first paragraph should be amended to read -

'He indicated that the numbers attending the school had risen from 30/40 to 70/75 over a three year period but additional

103/3 MATTERS ARISING

102/11.3 Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust

Mr Cavanagh apologised that he was unable to attend the Trust Board meeting. He was informed that apologies were recorded on his behalf and also for Mr Brannigan who was unable to deputise for him.

102/7 Changes in Coroners' Autopsy Arrangements

Mr Anderson asked if any further information was available in relation to autopsy arrangements. He said a funeral director had made contact with him about the issue and expressed great concern that the situation could move into a similar situation as in England where no week-end burials took place. Mr McArdle was concerned that there was also a financial factor which added to the situation. Mr Hanna said it caused great concern in the Newry and Mourne area and representation had been made through the District Council but to no avail. Mr Anderson said that since the Council's November meeting the issue had raised its head a great deal and there had been much debate about it. Mr Cavanagh expressed concern about the use of the word 'temporary'.

It was agreed that arrangements be made for a delegation from the Council to meet with the Minister. Those who agreed to form the delegation were Mrs Foster, Mr McArdle, Mr Simpson, Mr McFadden and Mr Brannigan.

102/11.2 Speech Therapy at Ceara School

The Chairman read members a letter which had been sent to Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust regarding the speech therapy services provided at Ceara School and also a letter of response from Mrs R Burns at the Trust. In her letter Mrs Burns indicated that the matter had been referred to the Southern Education and Library Board and Social Services Department at the Southern Board.

Mr Cavanagh said it seemed that the whole area was under staffed and he would like an overall picture of what was happening in the Southern Board's area regarding speech therapy. Mr Hanna felt that not enough students who were accepted on to the Speech Therapy Degree course subsequently completed their training. Regarding recruitment of therapists Mr Simpson said he was concerned that the system in Northern Ireland required a student to have 'A' grades in order to gain entry to study speech therapy whilst in England students could be accepted with 'D' grades to

study the same course and come out fully qualified. He said it was important that the University of Ulster considered lowering the criteria in order to encourage more students to enter the course. Mr McArdle, however, felt that the education system here was much superior to England. It was agreed to write to the Minister for Employment and Learning. It was also agreed to invite Dr Cunningham, Principal of Ceara School to a future meeting.

102/11.1 GP Out of Hours at Newry

Mrs Ferris asked if there was any further information in relation to the surface area around the Out of Hours centre at Newry. Ms McCoy informed her that a meeting had been planned with ASADOC on 9 January 2002 to get an update on the recommendations made in the survey report. The issue of the surface area and the height of the steps would be raised. Members would be kept updated.

103/4 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

1 Local Health and Social Care Groups

The Chairman informed members that the Chief Executive of the Southern Board had requested a slot in the meeting for a representative from his department to update members on the Local Health and Social Care Groups. It was agreed Mr Eddie Ritson, Director of Primary Care would attend the meeting at 11.00 am.

2 New Members

The Chairman welcomed new members who had been appointed to the Council from 1 December to 31 May 2003. Mr Brendan Montague, representing voluntary / community groups and Mrs Imelda Clarke, Mr Clive Henning and Mr Peter Murray representing other interests. Mr Wilfred McFadden was appointed from Banbridge District Council to serve from 13 November to 31 May 2005.

3 Stroke Services in the Southern Health and Social Services Board

The Chairman informed members that Dr Farrell, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, SHSSB had written to the Council seeking a nomination to a new Stroke Working Group being established in the SHSSB area to oversee the local implementation of the NI Evidence Based Stroke Strategy. Mrs L Cairns was nominated as representative with Mr Pat Brannigan as deputy.

4 SHSSB - All Inclusive Wraparound Scheme for Children with Disabilities

The Chairman informed members that the Southern Board had been successful in getting funding for an All Inclusive Wraparound Scheme for Children with Disabilities over the next 3 years and the Council had been invited to nominate a representative to become involved in the Stakeholders Group. Mr Jim Cavanagh was nominated as the Council's representative.

5 Implementation Plans for Improving Ambulance Services

The Chairman reminded members of the memo sent to them regarding a meeting with representatives of the Ambulance Service and the DHSSPS on either 18 or 21 December 2001. It was agreed to make final arrangements for Friday 21 December at 10.00 am.

6 Southern Area Audit Steering Group

The Chairman invited members to nominate a representative to replace Mrs Cook on the Southern Area Audit Steering Group. It was agreed Mrs Mary Ferris would represent the Council on the Group.

7 Clanrye Surgery - Update

The Chairman reported that a letter had been received from Clanrye Practice setting out the improvements planned following the survey conducted by the Council. The plans included a payphone in the waiting area, a new PA system for the waiting area and Induction Loop for the deaf, Doctor's corridor to be better sign posted and more privacy at the reception desk. After some discussion about lack of privacy in GP surgery reception areas, confidentiality, and the attitude of receptionists generally, the Chairman suggested that this may be a topic of research to be considered for the Council's work programme but members would be given the opportunity to make suggestions at a later date.

8 Services for Adults with Asperger's Syndrome

The Chairman reported to members that a query had been made to the Council in relation to the diagnosis of adults with Asperger's Syndrome and services for adults with the condition. She explained that it was a form of learning disability within the autistic spectrum.

Miss Hart, Complaints Officer said the matter had been brought to her attention recently. She said there seemed to be a lack of awareness of the

disease not just in the Southern Board area but Northern Ireland wide and there were no specific figures about the number of people suffering from the disease. She said she had written to the Director of Mental Health Services at the Southern Board.

The Chairwoman read a letter of response from the Chief Executive of the Board explaining that there were no specific services for those with Asperger's syndrome in the SHSSB area. The provision of a dedicated service would require additional practitioners and insufficient resources were available at present to allow a comprehensive dedicated service to be provided for the intense continuing care needs of those with Asperger's Syndrome. The additional funding would have to come from the DHSSPS for further service developments to occur. These are concerns which should be raised with the Executive Committee and the Assembly.

It was agreed to write to the Health Committee of the NI Assembly and make them aware of the situation.

9 SHSSB - R & I Units's Advisory Committee

Mr Peter Murray agreed to represent the Council on the Unit's Advisory Group.

10 Appointment of Chairman

The Chairman said that although most members had indicated that they were happy with an election being held in January, she was not sure that members would be in a position to make an informed choice because of the large number of new members appointed. In order to give members more time to get to know each other it was agreed that Mrs Foster would continue to act as Chairman until the Annual General Meeting in May. Members agreed that they would assist her by representing the Council at meetings according to their area of interest or expertise.

11 New Primary Care Arrangements / LHSCGs

The Chairman informed members that the Chief Executive of the Southern Board had written to the Chairman seeking a nomination to the Local Health and Social Care Groups' Project Board. As the nomination was required by 10 December she had agreed to let her name go forward. Members would be kept informed of developments.

12 The National University of Ireland, Galway

The Chairman drew members' attention to a letter from the National University of Ireland, Galway. The letter was sent by a GP researcher, currently working on a feasibility study of cross-border out of hours arrangements. The project is being funded by CAWT with the four border Health Boards' approval - two from each jurisdiction. The letter was seeking the Council's opinion, as a consumer advocate, *'if residents from Northern Ireland, on contacting their out of hours centre were offered the choice of either visiting their usual OoH centre or going to their nearest OoH centre, which may be in another jurisdiction?'* The patient would always be offered the choice and no changes would be made to the current provision in their usual centre.

Members expressed the view that (a) the choice of which service to use lay with the individual and (b) enabling patients to use the nearest service could potentially save lives. It was agreed to respond taking on board the members' views.

Mr McFadden referred to the situation in Ballyward and said choice of access to out of hours services within Northern Ireland would also be helpful to patients in this area.

13 Local Diabetes Service Advisory Committee

The Chairman asked if any member of the Council with an interest in diabetes wished to be involved in the Local Diabetes Service Advisory Committee at the Southern Board. Mr Clive Henning said he had a particular interest in diabetes and agreed to serve on the Committee.

14 Armagh Cancer Care Group

The Chairman advised members that a new representative was required to replace Mr Cummings on the Armagh Cancer Care Group. Mr Charles Rollston was nominated to represent the Council on the group.

15 Invitations

Invitations were tabled for members in relation to Christmas festivities at the Royal Group of Hospitals, Green Park Healthcare Trust, the Health Promotion Agency and North and West Belfast Trust.

16 SHSSC - Schedule of Meetings - 2002

Members agreed the schedule of dates for Council meetings throughout 2002. District Councillors in the different areas agreed to check out the possibility of hosting meetings in February, March and April.

17 Trust Board Meetings

Mrs Mary Ferris agreed to attend the Green Park Healthcare Trust Board meeting on 17 December 2001.

No one was available to attend the Royal Hospitals Meeting.

Mr Simpson left the meeting at 12.00 noon

103/5 DHSSPS - SPECIFICATION FOR A NEW CENTRALISED MATERNITY HOSPITAL SHSSC 2001/52

The Chairwoman invited the Research Officer to introduce paper SHSSC 2001/52.

Ms McCoy informed members that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety had initiated a process of public consultation on a specification for a new centralised maternity hospital in Belfast. The specification was developed in consultation with a number of key interests including the Belfast City Hospital, the Royal Group of Hospitals Trusts, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, the Jubilee Action Group, the League of Friends of Jubilee and the Maternity Liaison Group.

She said that following the period of consultation, the final specification would be formally issued to the Belfast City and Royal Group of Hospitals Trusts and each would be invited to submit proposals for developing the proposed maternity service on their respective sites. The Trusts' proposals would then be issued for further public consultation.

Members were invited to put forward their views in relation to the specification in order that a response could be prepared and submitted by 18 January 2002.

Mr Hanna expressed the view that the service should be more central to people in rural areas. In general, members agreed that this was an essential service and must be provided. The specification was considered to be fair and impartial for the two Trusts to develop their proposals.

103/5(B) LOCAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE GROUPS (Presented at 11.00 am)

The Chairwoman welcomed Mr Eddie Ritson, the Southern Board's Director of Primary Care to update members on the position in relation to Local Health and Social Care Groups.

Mr Ritson said that since he had spoken to members at the Council's November meeting the Board had held a workshop on 28 November involving representatives from the Board, Trusts, Primary Care professionals and a representative from the Council. The workshop had proved very successful. Timescales for the establishment of LHSCGs was shorter than the normal timescale and in light of this the Board had prepared a consultation paper on the new primary care arrangements. The paper was approved at the Board meeting on Tuesday 11 December 2001.

In introducing the consultation paper to the members, Mr Ritson said it outlined what the Board was trying to achieve and explained in detail the new arrangements for primary care, the role of Local Health and Social Care Groups, what would change in terms of commissioning responsibilities from the Board to the Groups and how the new arrangements would affect the Southern Board's area.

Mr Ritson reported some initial consultation had been carried out with a range of stakeholders, professionals, user representatives and managers and a number of options for the size and shape of the new groups had been proposed. The options included, five LHSCGs based on Council areas within the Southern Board; three LHSCGs based on Community Trust boundaries in the Southern Board's area; or two LHSCGs with the Southern Board. Those consulted to date considered the option of three LHSCGs the best option.

Referring to the guidance from the DHSSPS, he said that all GP practices in the Southern Board area would belong to a group within the area. However, some GP practices around the Board's boundary may feel that their patients would be better represented in a neighbouring group. It will be necessary to address this and ascertain the views of the practices.

He said the Board would like people's views on the options for LHSCGs in the Southern Board's area and how community representatives would best be empowered in representing these groups. He informed members that the DHSSPS guidance requested that the Board's proposals must be received by 11 January 2002 but the final details would not be provided until after 25 January 2002.

He asked the Council to consider the proposal and look at how communities could best be engaged on the groups and also to consider the boundary issues.

Members raised a number of concerns with Mr Ritson regarding the unreasonable timescale issued by the DHSSPS, whether or not local District and Borough Councils had been consulted on the matter, the benefits to be gained by the establishment of the Groups, the lack of information regarding the finance involved, and also the fact that figures for the Newry area had not included patients who lived along the Border and returned to the North for their treatment. Mr Cavanagh said it was important to ensure that there was equity of the Groups over the whole of the Board's area. The Chairman said it would be necessary for the Council to form a working party to consider the matter. She thanked Mr Ritson for the presentation and he left the meeting.

103/6 SHSSC REPSONSE TO NHS COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE - NATIONAL EVALUATION SHSSC 2001/53

The Chairman invited the Complaints Officer to present paper SHSSC 2001/53.

Miss Hart referred members to the Council's response to the NHS Complaints Procedure National Evaluation which was carried out between January 1999 and December 2000 on an UK-wide basis. She said the objective of the survey was to provide an evaluation of how the new complaints procedures were operating across all parts of the NHS and to meet the information needs of policy makers and managers concerned with the future development of the system.

She explained that 400 questionnaires were distributed to those with experience of operating the complaints procedures and those with experience of using the procedures. 300 Interviews were also conducted with complainants and staff complained about. A number of focus group meetings were facilitated for those working in primary care and workshops with key stakeholders.

The key findings of the report which was issued in September 2001 indicated that complainants felt that complaints were not handled well, it took too long to resolve complaints, many were not satisfied with the outcome, the process was unfair or biased and it was stressful and distressing. Complainants were asking for greater independence in the procedure.

With reference to the Council's response Miss Hart said the Council's response confirmed that it was willing to participate in taking forward the

findings and recommendations of the report. The response also raised concerns about a number of general issues around the complaints procedure.

Miss Hart said a letter had been received from the DHSSPS saying that it would be summarising the responses in the next few weeks. It was agreed to keep members updated.

103/7 INDUCTION TRAINING FOR NEW MEMBERS

As part of an induction plan for new members, the Chairman invited the Complaints Officer to give a presentation on the Role of the Council and the Complaints Procedure

Miss Hart gave a very informative and detailed explanation of the role and function of the Council, its key activities, the make up of its membership, the structure of the DHSSPS, Health Boards, Trusts and Family Health Practitioners.

In the second stage of her induction Miss Hart provided members with an in-depth talk on the complaints procedure and its different stages. She outlined to members what information should be made available to a complaints officer, the response times for complaints, what to look for in a response, and finally, the Council's role in assisting with complaints and monitoring of complaints.

Mrs Cairns left the meeting at 12.40 pm.

The Chairman then invited the Research Officer to give an overview of the Work Programme / Research Projects

Ms McCoy explained that under the Health and Social Services Councils' Regulations - Paragraph 15(2) each Council was compelled to draw up an annual programme of work it proposed to undertake in the succeeding year. The main sources of the work programme included work rolled forward from the previous year, work committed to during the course of the year, new work - consultation, and reactive work. The annual work programme was agreed with the Southern Health and Social Services Board at a joint meeting in March each year.

Ms McCoy updated members on the projects currently being undertaken by the Council, the methodology used for each project and the current stage of the project. Projects included; Attitudes to Breast Cancer Screening in Newry and Mourne, Quality of Care Provided on levels 4 and 6 of Daisy Hill Hospital, Patients' Satisfaction with Services provided at Mullinure Day Hospital, Users' views of the Prosthetics Service, Children as

Complainants. She also briefed members on a number of other smaller projects which had either been completed recently or were still ongoing.

Members were made aware of large research projects undertaken in the past and copies of the published reports were made available to them.

The Chairman thanked Miss Hart and Ms McCoy for their comprehensive presentations and said she hoped that the new members would find the information very helpful.

103/8 TRUSTS' BUSINESS

SHSSC 2001/54

1 Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust

Minutes of Trust Board meeting held on 3 October 2001 and agenda for meeting on 5 December 2001.

2 Craigavon and Banbridge Comm HSS Trust

Agenda for Trust Board meeting on 26 November 2001.

103/9 FOR INFORMATION

1 SHSSB - Minutes of Meetings of the Pharmacy Practice Committee held on 12 and 27 September 2001

2 SHSSB - Minutes of Board Meeting held on 13 November 2001

3 SHSSC - Schedule of Council Meetings for 2002

103/10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 Sandown Group of Residential Homes

Mrs Foster expressed concern regarding the continuity of care for residents of Homes in the Sandown Group since it went into Receivership. It was agreed to write to the Director of Social Services at the Southern Health and Social Services Board for clarification.

Mr Anderson left the meeting.

2 Feedback from SHSSB Meeting

Mr Brannigan reported back from the Southern Board meeting held on 11 December 2001. He briefed members in relation to the Disability

Discrimination Act, Equality Impact Assessment on services transferred from South Tyrone Hospital, Winter Pressures, Mental Health and the Board's Annual Report.

The Chairman suggested and it was agreed that a slot be made available in future meetings for members feedback from Board or Trust meetings.

3 Antenatal Clinic - Banbridge Polyclinic

Mr McFadden expressed great concern that the antenatal clinic held in Banbridge Polyclinic had closed. It was agreed to write to the Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust and ask what plans were in place to reinstate the service.

103/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15 January 2002 at 10.00 am in Quaker Buildings.

Signed: _____

Date: _____