

SOUTHERN HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Minutes of the One Hundred and Twenty-second Meeting held in
Quaker Buildings, Lurgan on Tuesday 18 November 2003 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: Mrs Roisin Foster, Chairman
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mrs Annie Burrell
Mr Norman Badger
Mrs Mary Ferris
Mrs Nazy Harris
Mr Clive Henning
Mr Peter Kearns
Mr Peter Murray
Mr Jim McCart
Mr Wilfred McFadden
Mr Charles Rollston
Mrs Eileen Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Delia van der Lenden, Chief Officer
Mrs Nancy Downard, Office Manager
Ms Colette Hart, Complaints Officer
Mr Eddie Ritson, Director of Primary
Care, SHSSB [for part of the meeting]

122/1 APOLOGIES: Mr Pat Brannigan
Mrs Lynne Cairns
Dr John Coulter
Mrs Pat Mallon
Mr Andy Moffett

Prior to the business of the meeting the Chairman welcomed a new member, Mr Norman Badger, Councillor from Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council who had replaced Mr Jim Cavanagh. She wished him well and hoped he would enjoy his time with the Council. In his absence she also welcomed the appointment of Mr Andy Moffett, Councillor for Newry and Mourne District Council, replacing Mr Isaac Hanna. Both members would serve until May 2005.

122/2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes of the previous meeting which had been circulated were agreed subject to minor changes in minute 121/6 - presentation by Mr J Templeton, Chief Executive, CAHGT. Paragraph *"In relation to DBS....."* to be rephrased.

122/3 **MATTERS ARISING**

1 **121/12 GP Out of Hours in the Newry & Mourne area**

The Chief Officer advised members that, following Mr Murray's query, she had contacted the Southern Board's Director of Primary Care and he indicated that the relocating of Newry and Mourne Out of Hours service to Daisy Hill Hospital was under discussion. She said she would encourage the Board to consult with the community before any decisions were made.

2 **121/10 DHSSPS – Review of Public Administration**

The Chairman reminded members of the RPA sub group that the first meeting of the group would be held on Thursday 4 December at 6.30 pm.

3 **121/14 Health Education**

Mrs Harris indicated that she had made a request at the October meeting for a report on the health promotion programme being taught to children in Primary Schools. The Chief Officer said if members were interested in hearing about health promotion work commissioned by the Board that a speaker could be arranged for a future meeting.

122/4 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

1 **SHSSB Meetings in Public**

The Chairman reported that the Chief Officer had forwarded a letter to the Chief Executive of the Southern Board commending the Board on its initiative to hold meetings in community venues on a regular basis and providing the opportunity for informal discussion between local representatives and the Board. She had asked that an invitation be extended to Council members who live or represent the localities in which future meetings were

held. The Chief Executive had responded indicating that in future a personal invitation would be sent to members in the locality of a meeting.

2 Christmas Lunch

The Chairman informed members that the December meeting would be held in the Kearney Suite, Canal Court Hotel, Newry on Tuesday 16 December 2003 at 10.00 am. This would be followed by the Christmas Lunch in the restaurant.

3 Council's Schedule of Meetings for 2004

It was agreed that the meeting in December 2004 would be brought forward to the Thursday previous - 16 December 2004.

4 General Consumer Line

The Chairman informed members of a new pilot telephone helpline provided by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI). She said the helpline which went live on 31 October mirrored the 'Consumer Direct' initiative which has been developed in England, Scotland and Wales. It is the first point of contact for complaints about goods and services. It will provide next steps advice and where appropriate will refer the caller to other consumer bodies including the HSS Councils.

5 Future Housing and Support Options for People with Learning Disabilities in the Southern Board's area – Report by Roy McConkey

It was agreed to provide Mrs Foster and Mrs Ferris with copies of the report which highlighted the housing and support needs of people with a learning disability and the assessment of the likely need for increased housing and support.

6 Invitation

Mrs Annie Burrell agreed to represent the Council at the launch of 'Home is where the Heat is' Craigavon Project on Thursday 11 December 2003 at 11.00 am in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre.

CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT**1 Mental Health Emergencies**

The Chief Officer reported that she had met with the Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust's Director of Mental Health and Disability following the media reports on the death of a Portadown woman, which highlighted the shortage of emergency mental health beds in the Craigavon area. Members also highlighted the death of a young Banbridge man recently that raised similar issues. She said the Trust had reported that there was a regional shortage of acute mental health beds with the Craigavon Unit working close to 100% occupancy. The plan for the new Mental Health Unit on the CAH site would reduce the number of acute beds from 40 to 36. There was a need to improve the staff patient ratio in the mental Health Unit Trust. Although some additional funding had been provided the Trust was experiencing difficulties in recruiting mental health nursing staff. The Trust could not rule out the possibility of having to close the unit at weekends if difficulties continued.

Members expressed the view that in an area where mental ill-health rates were the highest in GB it was unacceptable that a reduction in beds was being considered. The possibility of weekend closure was very worrying as was the management of risk if adequate staffing was not available.

It was agreed the Chief Officer would forward a letter to the Board expressing the Council's concerns.

2 Visit of General Dental Council Representatives to NI

The Chief Officer informed members of a visit to Northern Ireland by the General Dental Council on 11 December 2003. She said the Department had given HSS Councils the opportunity to meet with the GDC representatives and raise issues regarding dental services in Northern Ireland. In preparation for the meeting the Council had written to a wide range of community groups in the Southern area asking for comments on dental services. Members were asked to make their views known on the questionnaire provided.

3 Meeting with ASADOC

The Chief Officer updated members on her recent meeting with the Chairman and Manager of the Association of Southern Area Doctors on Call (ASADOC). She said she raised with the Co-op issues of safety at Moylinn and plans for relocation; pharmacy services out of hours (LHSCG plan), and the impact of the new GP contract on the service. However, since her meeting events had moved on following the attack on a GP and an announcement had been made to bring forward the relocation of the facility. Mr Eddie Ritson, the Board's Director of Primary Care had been invited to make a presentation later in the meeting and he would cover the issues.

4 Meeting with NIAS

Referring to the NIAS Trust Board meetings, the Chief Officer said that these were held in different locations across Northern Ireland and she attended the meeting on 13 November in Armagh. She indicated that prior to the meeting she had written to the Trust making it aware that a Council representative would be attending and asked to be facilitated in line with the Minister's guidance on public access to meetings. The Trust responded saying it was willing to afford the facility to the Chairman of the Council only. Members agreed that the issue should be pursued with the Trust to enable any Council nominee to be afforded the facility in the absence of the Chairman. Following discussions with the NIAS acting Chief Executive the option of regular meetings between the Trust and the four Councils is being pursued.

5 Briggs Case – Milroy and Risdon Report

The Chief Officer reported that, in the absence of the Chief Officer of the EHSSC (who liaises with the NIO office on behalf of the four HSS Councils with regard to the Human Organs Inquiry), she was invited to attend a meeting with the NIO to discuss the implementation of the Milroy and Risdon Report. The report documented the failure of the pathologist to identify multiple rib fractures at the post-mortem examination following David Briggs death. She said many of the recommendations had already been implemented and the State Pathology Service was drawing up a detailed protocol to be observed in carrying

out future autopsies. A further meeting was planned for December.

6 MMR Vaccine – Newspaper Article

The Chief officer referred members to a recent article in the Newry Democrat on the MMR vaccine. The newspaper picked up the article from the Council's minutes of the September meeting and contacted Dr John Coulter for further comments. Mr Coulter reiterated what he had said at the meeting and made it clear that the comments he made were his own personal views. However, it was reported incorrectly that he was speaking on behalf of the Council. The Chief Officer said she had contacted the Newspaper's Editor and asked for equal prominence to be given to a retraction of the story. It was agreed to invite a speaker from the Board's Public Health Department to speak at a future meeting on the issue of MMR. Mr Coulter agreed to put his views in writing prior to the meeting.

122/6 STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman referred members to the Council's Standing Orders and said that these had been forwarded to the Department for approval but some amendments had been suggested.

Mr McCart proposed that the Chairman and Chief Officer use their judgement on the matter. Mr Wright seconded the proposal.

Mr Clive Henning left the meeting at 11.20 am

122/7 NEW GP CONTRACT

The Chairman welcomed Mr Eddie Ritson, the Southern Board's Director of Primary Care to update the Council on the new GP Contract and in particular the Out of Hours service.

Mr Ritson thanked the Council for inviting him and said that on this occasion he would concentrate on the development of Out of Hours Primary Care Medical and Support Services and was

willing to come back at a later date to talk about the new GP contract.

He commenced his presentation by giving some background information to members on the role of the GP. He said that GPs had a responsibility to provide their patients with care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week over the year but this had proved difficult to sustain. Approximately 15 years ago some GPs began working in small groups providing an informal rota to patients in their area. In 1995 the Government made it possible to form bigger co-operative arrangements which led to the current position of an Out of Hours service. The local service is known as ASADOC and has 3 separate co-operative structures in Moy, Moylinn and Newry. About 80,000 calls are generated from within the Board's population each year. About 48% of these callers receive telephone advice, 41% attend the centres and the remaining 11% receive a home visit by a GP. To run the current system each week requires approximately 50 GP shifts, each working about 8 hours. All calls are handled in the central system and then dispatched to the 3 centres. The GP will then phone the patient back and assess the situation and make a decision on the appropriate course of action.

Under the new GP contract which has been negotiated and agreed GPs will be able to opt out of their responsibility to work the out of hours service. When this happens responsibility for the out of hours service will then become the Board's responsibility. It is expected that most, if not all GPs across the UK, will opt out of the responsibility but many will wish to make themselves available to work in the new service which will be the responsibility of the Board.

With regard to the vision for the future, Mr Ritson said that the Board's plan was to design and implement a new integrated model of Out of Hours service to be in place by September/October 2004. The model which will take about 6 months to put in place would comprise a central call handling centre and a de-centralised nurse/doctor triage system. Three primary care centres would be co-located with minor injuries units and A & E. There was a possibility of providing additional

facilities to deal with times of peak demand, and an area based home visiting service would be included. Mr Ritson said he was aware that such substantial changes to services would call for public consultation and he would welcome input from the Council on how to take this forward.

In concluding he said the timescale for transition from the existing organisation was short and within the next four months consideration will have to be given to the number of centres, the location, the workforce and the costings.

Mr Ritson responded to a number of questions from members and took on board the point that there was a need to consult with the public particularly in relation to location of the centres.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ritson and he left the meeting.

122/8 LEWIS REPORT – UPDATE

The Chairman referred members to the letter which had been sent to the Minister expressing concerns about the Department's handling of the Briggs case. She said an acknowledgement letter had been received on 7 November and a full response was expected later today. A letter had also been drafted to the Secretary of State regarding the quality of the Lewis report, issues in relation to the State Pathology Service and asking for comments on why it was not considered appropriate for the two departments to co-operate in a single inquiry.

A summary report of the case management was being prepared by the Southern Area Child protection Committee and would be made available to members when received. Members would be kept updated on the issue.

Members congratulated the Chairman on the very robust letter sent to the Minister.

**122/9 SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDING
30 SEPTEMBER 2003**

The Complaints Officer reported that during the quarter ending 20 September 2003 the Council had supported 23 complainants. She said among those who had sought the assistance of the Council the most common reasons for complaint during the quarter were: treatment and care, clinical diagnosis, and staff attitude and behaviour. Organisations most complained about during the quarter were Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust and Family Health Service Practitioners. Complaints outside the Southern Board's area related to the Royal Group of Hospitals. The programmes of care with most complaints were outpatient services and mental health, whilst the professional groups complained about were medical staff and general management.

In response to Mr Murray's question regarding waiting times at A & E at Daisy Hill Hospital, the Complaints Officer agreed to follow up on statistics and the Council's previous correspondence with the Chief Executive of the Trust regarding the matter.

Trusts' Complaints Summaries for the period ending September 2003 were tabled for information.

122/10 EQUALITY – QUARTERLY REPORT

In her quarterly report on Equality, Ms Hart gave members an overview of the initiatives in relation to Racial Equality in Health, the Regional Interpreting Project training and the Good Practice Reviews which have been undertaken.

Mrs Ferris left the meeting at 1.05 pm

122/11 TRUSTS' BUSINESS

SHSSC 03/35

Armagh & Dungannon HSS Trust

Minutes of Board meeting held on 3 September and Agenda for meeting on 5 November 2003

Craigavon and Banbridge Comm HSS Trust

Minutes of Board meeting held on 18 August 2003

Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust

Minutes of Board meeting held on 21 October and agenda for meeting on 18 November (tabled)

122/12 VISIT REPORT

1 Rehabilitation Stroke Unit at Lurgan Hospital

Mrs Wright and Mrs Burrell reported that their visit to the Rehabilitation Stroke Unit was very informative. Patients had the highest regard for the staff and were happy with the services provided. A written report would be made available to members at the December meeting.

122/13 REPORT BACK FROM MEETINGS

1 Invitation to launch of Community Falls Project

Mr Mc Fadden reported that he had attended the launch of the Community Falls Project and it was a very useful project.

122/14 FOR INFORMATION

- SHSSB – Minutes of Board meeting held on 14 October 2003.
- SHSSB – Annual Report 2002/03
- SHSSB – Financial Report 2002/03 (tabled)
- C/B LHSCG Update – November 2003
- A/D LHSCG Update – October 2003
- SHSSC – Schedule of Council Meetings for 2004
- SHSSB – Schedule of Board Meetings for 2004
- SHSSB – Waiting List Performance Management Report 2003/04
- SHSSB – Care Management Pressures – October 2003 Update
- SHSSB – Transfer of Services from South Tyrone Hospital – November 2003 update

122/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1 Trusts' Board Meetings

Mr Murray expressed concern that Trusts may not be giving agenda items the discussion they merited and suggested that they should indicate in their minutes the time their meetings commenced and finished at.

122/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 16 December at 10.00 am in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry

Signed: _____ Date: _____