

**MINUTES OF THE EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2003 AT 1.30PM IN  
GLENADA CONFERENCE CENTRE, SOUTH PROMENADE, NEWCASTLE**

**PRESENT:** Mrs Sandra Adams Mrs Eileen Askham  
Mr Brian Coulter Cllr Dermot Curran  
Mr Cecil Graham Dr Michael Harriott  
Ald Michael Henderson Mr Brian Henning  
Mr James Hutchinson Cllr Joseph Lockhart  
Miss Patricia McMillan Mr George Monds  
Mrs Mary Muldoon Miss Muriel Patterson

Mr Coulter was in the Chair.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Jane Graham, Chief Officer  
Mrs Brenda Devine, Senior Manager  
Mrs Helen Mallen, Office Manager  
Mr John Compton, Chief Executive,  
Down Lisburn Trust – For Minute 32/03  
Mr John Simpson, Director of Planning and Performance,  
Down Lisburn Trust – For Minute 32/03

**31/03 APOLOGIES** were received from the following members:  
Cllr Alan Crowe, Cllr Gordon Dunn, Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton, Mrs Sylvia McGarry,  
Mrs Myrtle Neill. Apologies were also received from Dr Paula Kilbane, Chief  
Executive, EHSSB.

**32/03 DOWN LISBURN TRUST**

Mr Coulter welcomed Mr John Compton and Mr John Simpson and invited them to update Council on service pressures and service development at the Trust.

(a) Down Lisburn Trust funding

Funding in Down Lisburn locality is below target which has implications for the accessibility of services in the area. The Eastern Board have now confirmed that there is £9.6 million additional funding to be redeployed through four localities and Down Lisburn Trust will receive £3.788 million.

The money is being allocated with specific mandates and these coincide with the target areas identified by the Trust, specifically family and childcare and mental health. It is anticipated that this money will enable the appointment of staff and these appointments will be targeted at areas of concern.

Mr Graham asked if all of the new money will be used to employ staff for the Trust or if some of the money will be used to assist the voluntary/community sectors. Mr Simpson confirmed that there are a number of initiatives linking with the community/voluntary sectors.

Mr Coulter asked if the Trust had a view on the equity issue as it applies to the Local Health and Social Care Groups (LHSCGs') within the Trust area. Mr Compton

explained that the equity arrangement is not static as the demographic features are changing in the Eastern Board area and these dictate the money allocated. The Trust is liaising with the Eastern Board to examine sub-equity spend which will measure if there is a fair and equitable share of money based on the population, and this will have an effect on LHSCGs’.

(b) New Downpatrick Hospital

Mr Simpson outlined the plans for an enhanced local hospital in Downpatrick. The new hospital will have a total of 114 inpatient beds and 36 day places in four key areas:

- Diagnostic and treatment centre
- Ambulatory care centre
- Inpatient centre
- Rehabilitation and resource centre

Mr Simpson outlined the project plan for the new service model, showing construction starting in 2005 running through to June 2007 with opening planned for August/September 2007. The Trust have recommended that:-

- Consultant obstetric inpatient services will cease in August 2003
- Emergency surgery will cease around the second quarter of June 2006 and there will be no inpatient surgery. It is proposed that elective surgery with a length of stay of less than 2 days will be transferred to day surgery.
- General medical and coronary care services will continue

In response to Dr Harriott’s question, Mr Simpson explained that the falling number of births and issues arising from the increased use of locum staff are contributing to pressures in the Maternity Unit.

Cllr Curran welcomed the new hospital but expressed sadness for the people of the area on the closure of the maternity hospital. Cllr Curran asked if planning permission for the new hospital had been sought. Mr Compton confirmed that this cannot be applied for until the design work is completed. It is anticipated that this will not be a problem as some elements will be similar to the previous application. The total cost for the new build is estimated at £34 million. Cllr Curran stressed that the Trust will need to demonstrate to the public that there are clear gains for the area from the loss of the maternity hospital.

Mr Coulter asked that if the Trust requires to commence enabling work in August and the service must cease, to what extent had assurances been given to alternative service provision. The Council has expressed very grave concern about capacity as well as conditions in relation to the Royal Jubilee and the provision on midwifery led services elsewhere is very unclear.

Mr Compton said that the Trust has also raised concerns about alternative services and has conducted some research on stand alone midwifery services but more research and consultation is needed. With no medical cover, stand alone midwifery led care would not be an adequate replacement for current hospital services. He said he would expect the greater number of patients to go to the Royal Jubilee but that antenatal services could continue at Down Hospital. Mr Compton confirmed that the Trust Board will

be talking to the Eastern Board, Department of Health and other Trusts regarding alternatives.

Mrs Graham enquired if any timescales had been indicated for proposed changes to maternity services in Lagan Valley Hospital. Mr Compton has been in liaison with the Department of Health and he expects no significant change to any of the services at Lagan Valley, including maternity and accident and emergency, within the next 6-7 years.

### **33/03 CHAIRMANS BUSINESS**

The Chairman highlighted the following issues:

- (a) Royal College of General Practitioners'  
Mr Coulter confirmed that at this meeting on 24 March 2003 he had indicated the Council's support on General Practitioner representation on the Post-Graduate Council for Medical and Dental Education which is being reviewed.
- (b) De-registration of residential care units  
Mr Coulter raised concerns about the regulation and inspection of units which are now de-registering to accommodate the changing financial payments under Supporting People Funding which came into effect from 1 April 2003. This is a UK social security driven initiative which deals with different financial payment systems.

There does not appear to be any alternative regulation procedures in place for those Units which are choosing to de-register. Mr Coulter proposed that the Chief Officer ask the Eastern Board and Registration and Inspection Units to provide information on how many units are de-registering, what services these units provide and what procedures are in place to regulate them. Council Members supported this proposal.

### **34/03 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2003 were approved as an accurate record by Council Members.

### **35/03 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

- (a) Minute 27/03 (b) Patients waiting on trolleys

Mrs Graham confirmed that a further response from Nigel Dodds had been received regarding Councils concerns. The Minister gave Mr Dodds assurances that no changes will take place in any of the acute hospitals until arrangements have been put in place to ensure that there is sufficient capacity.

The March 2003 figures indicate that 871 patients waited on trolleys longer than 2 hours with the most significant pressure on the Ulster, Mater and Lagan Valley Hospitals. In addition Mrs Graham highlighted the following pressures with patients waiting for community care.

<b>Trust</b>	<b>Number of people in hospital</b>	<b>Number of people in the community</b>
Down Lisburn Trust	8	38
North & West Belfast Trust	33	67
South & East Belfast Trust	39	38
Ulster North Down and Ards Trust	15	18

Mrs Adams asked if it is known how people are coping in the community while awaiting new or improved care packages. Mrs Graham agreed to look into this on behalf of the Council.

(b) Minute 27/03 (e) Councils Executive Committee Meeting

The 4 Chairmen and Chief Officers met with Clive Gowdy, Permanent Secretary, on 31 March 2003. The following issues were discussed:

- **Future Role of the Councils**

A decision on the future role of the Councils is awaiting consultation in the second phase of Developing Better Services. If no announcement is made by 28 April 2003 there will be no further progress until after the Assembly elections. Mr Gowdy confirmed that there will be some mention of Patients and Public Involvement in the consultation document. The earliest proposed changes could take effect would be April 2005.

Mr Gowdy expressed a willingness to look at the Councils resources and to look at highlighting and promoting Councils role.

Mr Graham asked if the Council have made proactive representation for maintaining an independent council. Mr Coulter confirmed that Mr Gowdy had been persuaded by the Council's argument and now recognises the Councils specialised role. It would appear that some of the MLAs' have made unwelcome comments whilst not being fully aware of the Councils role and this may need to be examined in the future.

- **Public Appointments**

The issue of Council Members vacancies was raised with Mr Gowdy. He has agreed to look into having vacancies filled quicker. He had explained that a new database has been set up which means that people have to reapply for public representation appointments. At present there are over 400 appointments to be made.

Dr Harriott asked if any decision has been made on remuneration for Council Members. Mr Coulter said that this was still to be looked at and agreed that some remuneration would be welcomed, especially for those members who contribute actively to Council work.

- **Corporate Accountability**

In relation to corporate accountability, Mr Gowdy confirmed that guidance is being issued to the Trusts. At present the Council's corporate accountability comes under the Board but it is recognised that this compromises the Councils independence and will have to be reviewed.

- Charter Standards

Mr Gowdy confirmed that charter standards do still apply. These are due to be reviewed and it is anticipated that new systems devised under the Clinical and Social Care Governance remit will be more robust for checking compliance with standards.

(c) Minute 29/03 (a) Ulster Hospital

At the last meeting Council had raised concerns regarding language problems and supervision of overseas nurses. The Chief Officer confirmed that she has written to Professor Sydney Salmon, Director of Nursing at the Ulster Hospital regarding these two issues. The issues have also been raised with the Director of Nursing at the Eastern Board.

The use of the day rooms as temporary wards has been raised with both the Belfast City and Ulster Hospitals on a number of occasions. The Chief Officer took the opportunity to raise this issue through the Eastern Board Pressures Group where all Trusts, the Department and the Board are represented. This has also been raised at the Eastern Board's Management Team meeting. The Trusts and Board gave assurances that this practice is being monitored.

(d) Minute 29/03 (b) Privatisation in Dentistry

The Chief Officer reported that Will Maxwell, Director of Dental Services in the Eastern Board has agreed to attend a future council meeting to discuss the policy and plans for dealing with privatisation in dentistry. Mr Coulter asked members to notify the Chief Officer of any questions they may have in order to prepare for a future meeting.

(e) Minute 29/03 (c) Assault on Ambulance and Accident and Emergency Staff

The Chief Officer reported that all Trusts have a harassment policy but at present she is trying to find out who monitors these attacks. Mrs Graham has also made contact with the Ambulance Service Training Unit to ascertain if they have policies for staff on the management of assault and to identify what support they offer to staff who have been attacked and if there is ongoing monitoring of attacks.

Mrs Adams reported that she had attended a meeting with GPs' to discuss violence against staff and it was unfortunate that there was no PSNI representation at the meeting. GPs' reported that they do not routinely report incidents as they have no confidence in what action is taken as a result of this information. The PSNI will only attend if there is physical abuse and will not attend if abuse is off a verbal or threatening nature. It is clear that recording of the incidents of abuse needs to be implemented as any current records would not give an accurate picture.

(f) Minute 29/03 (d) Rehabilitation of Schedule 1 Offenders

The Chief Officer reported that a meeting with the MASRAM representative in South and East Belfast Trust had taken place. The previous Director of Social Services from the Eastern Board had attended a previous Council meeting to explain the MASRAM procedures which are in place for assessing and monitoring sex offenders. Schedule 1 offenders include sex offenders plus people who are convicted of assault or murder, but the MASRAM procedures are specific to sex offenders. A gap in the monitoring of people convicted of assault or murder has been identified.

The MASRAM representative explained that an assessment begins in prison and the lead agency in this process is the Probationary Service. As part of the MASRAM process the Trust, PSNI and Probation Board carry out risk assessment on a local basis. If risk is assessed as high there is a NI wide body who make decisions on whether the community and local schools are informed. This body has representatives of the Education and Library Board, PSNI, Probation Board, Social Services and Housing Executive.

There are currently two hostels in South and East Belfast, one on the Ormeau Road and one in Botanic Avenue and other offenders reside in the Holy Land District. There are also two hostels in North and West Belfast. There are 437 sex offenders on the register, of which 50% are housed in the Belfast area.

The Chief Officer reported that this issue has been noted by the media with concerns raised about the facility on the Ormeau Road being around the corner from a primary school. The rights of individuals needs to be balanced against the rights of children to be protected and the BBC have therefore asked the Probation Service to comment on this situation.

A booklet on 'Protecting our Children, A Guide for Parents' has been produced. There is a list at the back of the book of organisations where parents can get help. Mrs Graham reported that contact numbers for Social Services are actually difficult to find in the telephone directory. It has previously been raised with the Eastern Board that a central contact number would be easier for the public rather than having to try and find a correct number or possibly be passed around various departments.

Mr Coulter proposed that the Chief Officer send copies of the advertisement pages to the Director of Social Services to raise concerns about contact arrangements. It was agreed that this should also be copied to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

(g) Minute 29/03 (e) Care Management Packages

The Chief Officer confirmed that Mr Hugh Connor, Director of Social Services, Eastern Health and Social Services Board, has agreed to attend the next Council meeting to discuss care management packages.

**36/03 QUORUM FOR MEETING**

As some members had to leave at this stage, Mr Coulter asked for confirmation that the meeting could proceed without a quorum. Members agreed.

**37/03 ANNUAL EHSSB/EHSSC MEETING**

The Chief Officer confirmed that the annual Eastern Board and Council meeting will be held on the 8 May 2003 at 5pm and she will write out to confirm attendance and venue. The Council will take this opportunity to discuss the Regional Strategy for Health and Social Services for the next 20 years.

### **38/03 REPORT FROM CHIEF OFFICER**

(a) New Central Belfast Maternity Hospital

The Chief Officer confirmed that a response has been made to the consultation document on a new maternity hospital for Belfast. The Council had hosted public meetings and held 3 focus groups and the comments gained from the public were included in the Council's response.

The loss of inpatient maternity services at Downpatrick from 1 August 2003 will place more strain on an already overstretched service in Belfast. The Chief Officer has raised these concerns with the Eastern Board. Mr Coulter proposed that the Chief Officer issue part of the response document as an information sheet to elected representatives to highlight Council concerns. This was agreed by Council Members.

(b) Northern Ireland Hospice Review

The NI Hospice Review Team have met with the Eastern Board Management Team. The Review Team have indicated that they are willing to meet with interested people. It was agreed that a meeting be sought.

(c) Eastern Board Meeting, 10 April 2003

The Chief Officer highlighted the number of papers sent for this meeting and confirmed that these had not been circulated to members due to the high volume.

At the meeting the Health and Well-being Investment Plans were presented. The Chief Officer raised the following issues on behalf of service users:

- Rheumatology drugs – 140 people are currently waiting for therapy in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board area. Funding will permit 35 people to access therapy which will leave 105 people waiting.
- Additional Care Packages - 550 additional packages across Northern Ireland will not clear the waiting list nor permit any development.
- Domiciliary providers have traditionally been only getting annual goods and services uplift. A gap has been developing and providers have difficulty recruiting and some are going out of business. The Board have given Community Trusts additional funding which should permit a 5.7% increase. This is welcome but does not adequately address the problem.
- Specialist services for children - there is no reference to specialist services for children with a learning disability currently provided in Muckamore Abbey Hospital. There has been ongoing discussion for many years to relocate this service. The publication of the Children Matter Phase 2 document is awaited.
- Consultation with GPs' – There is reference made to consultation with GPs' but the Chief Officer had enquired how this was being done in the absence of GPs' on Local Health and Social Care Groups.
- Child and adolescent mental health services - Progress has to be made in some trust areas except Down Lisburn Trust. The response indicated that Down Lisburn Trust have the funding but have been unable to recruit staff.
- Prosthetic services – raised concern about the lack of reference to prosthetic services when gaps have been identified.

Mr Coulter highlighted that a letter had been sent by the local Medical Committee to the Eastern Board stating that they want to distance themselves from LHSCGs' until a decision is made by the British Medical Association. As a Council there are concerns

about the detrimental effect this continuing situation will have on patient services and it was agreed by members that the Chief Officer should write to GPs' highlighting the Council's disappointment that there now appears to be no informal contact with Local Health and Social Care Groups by GPs'.

(d) NI Audit Report on Operating Theatres

The Chief Officer confirmed that a NI Audit Office Report on Operating Theatres was recently issued. The Report highlighted that 37% available weekday theatre time is not used and there appears to be problems in the system for monitoring theatre usage. It was agreed that the Chief Officer should seek further clarification on this issue.

(e) Social Work Industrial Action

Social Workers are striking on 16 and 17 April 2003 and will work to rule from 23 April 2003. Negotiations are underway with the Union to link pay reform with the modernisation of working practices and improvement in service delivery.

(f) Annual Work Programme

The Chief Officer provided members with an update of the achievements of the Annual Work Programme for 2002/03 and plans for 2003/04 which included:

- details of how public awareness was raised
- the completion of a 10 year report
- the commencement of the council website on 1 April 2003
- continued plans for service user involvement
- the monitoring of complaints
- plans for research projects
- monitoring activities
- details of representation on committees
- details of statutory duties

On behalf of the members, Mrs Adams congratulated Mrs Jane Graham and her team on completion of another successful and full year and for the plans for the coming year.

Mrs Graham confirmed that although there is uncertainty over the future role of the Councils, she has met with the Eastern Board to discuss future work the Council would like to undertake. The planned programme will continue with emphasis on increased public awareness. The Council's team would benefit in the future, from someone with expertise in engaging children.

(g) Declaration of interests

The Chief Officer circulated a copy of the members declaration of interests that are on file. She asked Members to check this and to notify her off any changes as these will have to be made available on the website.

Mrs Graham will be writing to members to request background information which can again be included on the website. Personal details such as addresses and telephone numbers will remain confidential.

(h) Premises

The Chief Officer confirmed that the Council currently has a 20 year lease for Bedford Street. There is an option to break this at 10 years and the decision to do this

was taken based on increasing rent and rates and the need for larger premises. Negotiations are underway for suitable premises.

The Chief Officer asked for Council's support for the proposed new work programme for 2003/04 and the signing of a new lease. This was agreed.

**39/03 CORRESPONDENCE PAPER EC/10/03**

The Chief Officer drew members attention to Item 6 under Consultation Documents received which is a Report on Private Dentistry in the United Kingdom. This will be off interest in light of concerns raised by Council on the monitoring of privatisation of dentistry in Northern Ireland.

**40/03 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

(a) Belfast City Hospital

Dr Harriott highlighted an incident of old post-mortem consent forms being used in error following a death in the Belfast City Hospital intensive care unit. This meant that new post-mortem forms had to be signed which delayed the issuing of a death certificate at a very sensitive time. He also highlighted that conditions in the intensive care unit are not ideal for both staff and patients.

Dr Harriott agreed to liaise with the Chief Officer on this matter in order that these issues can be raised with the Chief Executive of the BCH.

(b) Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr Graham raised the issue of difficulties accessing the chaplains room in the new building at the RVH. The Chief Officer was asked to make enquires about this.

Mrs McMillan raised concerns about the money which the Royal Victoria Hospital propose to spend on smoking rooms and said it would be of interest to know the exact amount spent.

**41/03 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Council meeting will be held on Thursday 15 May 2003 at 5.30pm in Grosvenor House Training & Conference Centre, Belfast.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Officer