

**MINUTES OF THE EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2007, AT 5.30PM IN THE  
FORTWILLIAM SUITE, LANSDOWNE COURT HOTEL,  
ANTRIM ROAD, BELFAST**

**PRESENT:** Mr C Graham  
Mr J Hutchinson  
Mr J McDowell  
Miss M Patterson  
Mr B Compston,  
Mr D Spence

Mrs S McGarry  
Mrs P McGrogan  
Mrs R McGrotty  
Miss P McMillan  
Mrs M Muldoon  
Mr R Marshall  
Mr D Meredith

Miss McMillan was in the Chair

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Richard Dixon, Chief Officer  
Mr Sean Brown, Senior Manager  
Mr Ryan Simpson, Information Analyst

**12/07 APOLOGIES** were received from Cllr Mrs E Campbell, Cllr D Curran, Cllr R Drysdale, Mrs E Hamilton, Cllr M Hendron, Cllr M Henderson, Cllr P C Mullaghan, Mr E O'Neill, Mrs M Rooney

Apologies were also received from Dr Paula Kilbane, Chief Executive, Eastern Health and Social Services Board.

**13/07 SYMPATHY OF COUNCIL**

It was with regret that Miss McMillan informed Council of the recent death of Cllr Stephen Moore, one of our Council members

**14/07 SUICIDE AND SELF HARM**

Miss McMillan confirmed that the planned Council public discussion would now take place in March. The Council Office would confirm the venue and time of the meeting.

**15/07 CHAIR'S BUSINESS EC03/07**

Miss McMillan highlighted the following in the Chair's Business:-

- a) Meeting with John Compton, Chief Executive of the South East Trust  
The Chair was pleased to report a positive meeting with Mr Compton and his agreement to address the April Council meeting on his vision for the new Trust.
  
- b) EHSSB Workshop  
The Chair reported on the EHSSB workshop which focussed on the children's adoption service in the Eastern Board Area. The Chair emphasised that the service was focussed on the needs of children and was not to facilitate potential adoption couples. The Adoption Service was divided into three distinct areas Step Adoption, International Adoption and Adoption from Care. The workshop looked at these three areas and the effect on the 1133 looked after children within in the EHSSB area. The

Chair noted that in all cases children were only separated from biological families as a last resort. The workshop also looked at the legal delays to successful adoption and issues faced by the service within the EHSSB area such as foetal addiction.

c) EHSSB Board Meeting

January's Board meeting focussed on the Social Services Inspectorate report and the Adoption Service which was also the theme of the EHSSB work shop mentioned in 13/08 b).

The Chair highlighted the following points from the meeting

- (1) The EHSSB forecasts that it will break even in this financial year.
- (2) The EHSSB considers the timescales set for the delivery of some of its Priorities For Action to be unrealistic
- (3) The Ward Sisters Charter being introduced in Trust was receiving favourable feedback from staff and was a welcome tool. The Chair referred members to the Board papers for more detail on the Charter.

d) Complaints Sub Group

The Chair noted that the inaugural meeting of the Council's Complaints Sub Group had taken place. The Chair thanked members for their contribution to this new group and the other two sub groups who would meet shortly.

## **16/07 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 18 January 2007 were agreed as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair and witnessed by the Chief Officer.

## **17/07 MATTERS ARISING**

The Chief Officer provided an update on the following matters arising:

a) 03/07 (d) Muckamore Abbey Hospital

Following the January Council meeting a Press Release was made expressing Council concerns over mental health care provision in Muckamore Abbey Hospital. The Minister for Health issued a statement several days later detailing the service response to the widely reported issues in the unit. The Chief Officer noted that initial feedback from community groups was that whilst the response was welcome it did not go far enough in addressing the issues.

Mr Graham suggested that the Council write to the Minister welcoming the recent statement and highlighting that the council would continue to monitor developments in relation to these issues.

The Chief Officer highlighted for members three imminent key appointments in relation to Mental Health which would have a major bearing on the delivery of the Health Minister's commitment. These are Director for Mental Health Northern Ireland, Director of Mental Health for the Belfast trust and the Regional Director for Children's Mental Health. Mrs McGrotty asked that the Council seek an early meeting with each of these appointees.

Mr Graham suggested that the Council write to the members of the political parties in the Province urging their support on this issue. The Chief Officer noted that the Council was bound by public body rules on “campaigning” in a pre election period. The Chief Officer would confirm those rules in regard to this request.

b) 07/07 (a) Minute 73/06 – (NIMTT) - Letter of Support

The Chief Officer informed the Council that a letter of support on the work of the Northern Ireland Musical Therapy Trust had been sent to the Permanent Secretary of Health and Social Services, Dr Andrew McCormick and his counterpart in Education, Mr Will Haire

c) 07/07 (b) Minute 73/06 (b) Phab NI facilities

The Chief Officer confirmed a copy of the letter to the North and West Belfast Trust, to his enquiry about the closure of Cedar Nursery had been provided to members in their papers.

d) 07/07 (d) Report on waiting times

The Chief Officer updated the Council on the EHSSB Pressures Group who monitored “Trolley Waits” in Accident and Emergency Departments. The number of patients waiting on trolleys in Accident and Emergency Departments for admission to hospital beds had increased significantly in January. The Pressures Group could provide no rationale for this increase. The Chief Officer noted that the DHSSPS had committed to eradicating “trolley waits” by April 2008.

The Chief Officer also informed the Council that the Priorities For Action for Trust now included commitments on Mental Health and Learning Disability. This was a welcome development in an area on which the Council has expressed concern.

e) 07/07 (e) Consultation on Older Peoples Care Homes

The Chief Officer confirmed that the Council had made a submission to Down Lisburn Trust on its Consultation on Older Peoples Care Homes. The response overall had been significant with 6000 submissions.

f) 08/07 (a) Moving towards a Regional Approach for the HSSCs

The Chief Officer confirmed that he had fed back to the other Health Councils on the EHSSC desire to maintain its own monthly meetings. This would not preclude Council members contributing to Joint Council seminars on specific issues. Three such seminars have been proposed

- i. May 2007 – the new Dental Contract
- ii. Sept 2007 – Local Commissioning arrangements under RPA
- iii. Feb 2008 – the closure of the Health and Social Service Councils.

g) 08/07 (b) Format of Future Council meetings

The Chief Officer noted that this was the first meeting with a truncated order of business. Hopefully this approach would allow Council members the time to adopt a more strategic view and discussion of issues of concern in future meetings.

## **18/07 REPORT FROM CHIEF OFFICER**

- a) The Chief Officer submitted the latest Council Quarterly Activity Report for the Council's consideration.
- b) The Chief Officer gave the Council an update on the forthcoming consultation submission on the proposed changes to the HPSS Complaints Process for Northern Ireland. The key messages from the EHSSC would be
  - i. The removal of the current second stage of the process was unacceptable
  - ii. The proposal to site the only appeal stage within the process outside HPSS sent the wrong message to the public in regard to the new structures under RPA.

It was agreed that Sean Brown draft a letter of response for use by members to allow personal feedback to the Department on the consultation

## **19/07 CORRESPONDENCE PAPER EC04/07**

Paper EC04/07 was taken as read and no additional items were highlighted. The Chair reminded members that if they are interested in seeing any papers listed on the monthly correspondence paper they can request these through the Council office.

Mr Mc Dowell requested that he be forwarded any DHSSPS guidance received in relation to Finance.

## **20/07 INPUT FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- a) Belfast City Hospital Trust Update  
Mr Marshall submitted a report and gave the Council an update on his attendance at the recent Belfast City Hospital Trust Board meeting. This included
  - i. A series of initiatives to address accident and Emergency waiting times
  - ii. 27 complaints received by the Trust as noted in its most recent quarterly complaints report
  - iii. Patient Satisfaction Survey shows over 90+ of service users satisfied with the service provided by the Trust
  - iv. PSNI uniformed officers were starting a three month trial patrolling the Trust grounds to improve safety for staff, patients and carers.

Mr Marshall also sought Council approval to accept a request to sit on the Belfast City Hospital Charitable Trust Committee. The Council supported Mr Marshall's joining the committee and agreed that he would make a valuable contribution to its work.

## **21/07 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other input from members.

**22/07 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 March 2007 at 1.30pm. The venue would be subject to confirmation.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm.

Members joined in a closed workshop session to discuss the HPSS legislation in support of RPA.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Officer