

**MINUTES OF THE EASTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2008 AT 5.30PM
IN THE LINK ROOM , THE MOUNT CONFERENCE CENTRE,
WOODSTOCK LINK, BELFAST**

PRESENT: Mr B Compston
Mr C Graham
Mrs E Hamilton
Mr R Marshall
Mrs P McGrogan
Mrs R McGrotty
Mr D Meredith
Mrs M Muldoon
Cllr P C Mullaghan
Mr E O'Neill
Miss M Patterson

Mr Graham was in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Richard Dixon, Chief Officer
Mrs Helen Mallen, Job-Share Office Manager
Miss Samantha Lindsay, Personal Assistant, EHSSC
Mr Raymond Newman, Senior Manager, EHSSC for Minute 80/08
Mrs Una Torrens, Bryson House Advocate, EHSSC for Minute 80/08
Mrs Laura Waite, Bryson House Advocate, EHSSC for Minute 80/08

79/08 APOLOGIES were received from Cllr D Curran, Mr J McDowell, Mrs S McGarry and Dr P Kilbane, Chief Executive, EHSSB.

80/08 MR RAYMOND NEWMAN, SENIOR MANAGER, EHSSC

The Chair welcomed Mr Raymond Newman, Mrs Laura Waite and Mrs Una Torrens. He explained that Council has a contract with Bryson House for Mrs Torrens and Mrs Waite to assist Mr Newman with the complaints advocacy service.

Mr Newman commenced by thanking Mrs Torrens and Mrs Waite for their support to him and Council over the last year. He explained that he would present a paper that outlined examples of some of the complaints that Council had provided advocacy on, mainly focusing on the domiciliary and nursing and residential care services. (Paper available separately).

Following his presentation, Mr Newman summarised saying that in dealing with complaints he has noted that:

- A number of complaints that Council is contacted about are in relation to lack of resources at the initial assessment stage
- People contact Council for advice but are sometimes afraid to complain in case the provider withdraws the services altogether. This mainly relates to private care providers.
- The contractual arrangements with private care providers are not robust and closer monitoring of services provided would allow for earlier identification of problems.
- There is also a need for improved adequate notice of withdrawing care
- People who receive community services often never see their care plan and are not aware that a care plan has been developed.

The Chair invited Mrs Waite and Mrs Torrens to report on their experience of assisting with the advocacy service at the EHSSC over the past year.

Mrs Waite said that in most of the cases that she had dealt with people often do not want to make a formal complaint but have genuine concerns. Although people contact Council about isolated individual problems, Council can see that there are some recurring issues. She said that it can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint whom to speak to and that there have been problems with the complaints process because legacy Trusts have been merged into new Trust areas.

Mrs Torrens said that the advocacy work provided in Council has been challenging for them because it is very different to the work she and Mrs Waite would do in Bryson House. Their advocacy work in Bryson House is mainly provided to people with learning disability. She said she was surprised at the vast remit and spectrum of work she has had to deal with in Council. The work is often complex and requires a vast amount of knowledge and she commended Mr Newman for his work and for the mentoring he has provided.

Mr Graham thanked Mr Newman, Mrs Waite and Mrs Torrens for their input to the meeting and said that it had been very worthwhile to hear their insight into the complaints advocacy work provided which is obviously challenging. He commended Mr Newman on the paper he had presented that had certainly provided Members with the reality at the coal face of the service.

Mr Meredith said that care packages are budgeted for and sub-contracted out to outside agencies. He questioned how much feedback and monitoring is done by the organisation commissioning these services and said that the emphasis is often on budgets rather than healthcare.

Mrs McGrotty asked if complaint cases, such as the examples provided in the paper, are discussed with the Chief Executive of the relevant organisations. Mr Newman said that the Chief Executive is involved in the complaints process but sometimes satisfactory individual remedies are found for individual problems without looking at the bigger picture.

Mr O'Neill said that care packages are sometimes determined by finance rather than care. One of the problems he has seen is the constant change of personnel. People who have particular care needs are often vulnerable and the change of personnel in and out of their home can be difficult to adjust to. It is not sufficient to simply say someone is providing cover as there needs to be continuity of care and a bond between the client and carer.

Mr Graham said that he is also aware that change in personnel can be a problem as he had been told that this means that the carer is not always fully aware of the individuals needs and that there would appear to be a lack of ID when people are attending somewhere for the first time.

Mrs Torrens said that she felt that there is more scope for corrective procedures with statutory providers rather than private care providers. Mrs Waite said that in her experience it can be difficult to get change from statutory providers also. She said that it must be recognised that people providing the front line carer service are often low paid and can be dealing with some challenging situations. Unfortunately some of the challenging situations can be due to a person's illness or disability and this is where adequate training for staff is essential. Mrs Torrens agreed that this job requires a lot of

dedication and with the possibility of more cuts in time given to individual clients, carers can often feel rushed.

On discussion about care plans, Miss Patterson said that a copy of the care plan should be made available in the clients home so that they can show this to the carers attending and refer to this for the service they should be receiving.

Mrs McGrogan said that there is a need for basic training and wondered how comprehensive the routine induction of care workers' is. She also said that the problems that can arise with changes in personnel can make clients feel that they have no control or choice over their care.

Cllr Mullaghan said that part of the emphasis put on the New Directions paper produced by the Belfast Trust is local delivery of care. He said that this paper lays out what the Trust aspires to deliver, but the systems and manpower needed are not yet available to provide this.

Mr Graham stressed that in talking about the problems within the health service and in particular about the complaints that Council deal with, it must be recognised that the majority of people are happy with the service they receive and Council only gets contacted by those whose healthcare experience has gone wrong.

On discussion Members agreed that the paper presented needed to be discussed further in order to agree how this is brought forward. It was agreed that this would be the main item on the agenda of the Council Meeting to be held in January 2009.

Mr Dixon said that in making the theme of today's meeting about complaints, he had wanted to let Members see that there is direct contact between the Council and patients and their family and carers. He said that Mr Newman is one of the longest serving advocates in this area and he thanked him for his work that requires a lot of skill and compassion. He also thanked Mrs Waite and Mrs Torrens for their input into the service over the last year. He said that the sub-contracting of their service from Bryson House has been innovative and successful and Mr Newman has been an excellent mentor and manager. It is important to recognise that people often need someone to speak to about their problems and the team provide an excellent service on a daily basis.

Mr Compston said that as a result of the presentation Council may want to select an area of healthcare to 'champion', making people aware of what they are entitled to in specific service areas.

Mr Dixon said that Council is now at a stage where it needs to be considering what its final messages will be and what areas it will be highlighting for future consideration to the Patient Client Council.

Mr Graham congratulated and thanked the speakers for the presentation. Members agreed that a briefing of Mr Newman's paper should be circulated with the next minutes for further discussion at the Council Meeting in January.

81/08 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 20 November 2008 were agreed as an accurate record, signed by the Chair and witnessed by the Chief Officer.

82/08 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- (a) Minute 71/08 (c) Dr Kilbane, Letter of support for capitation submission
Mr Graham reported that a letter has been forwarded to the Minister for Health and has been copied to Dr Kilbane, Chief Executive, EHSSB.
- (b) Minute 74/08 (c) Statement of Council views on LVH proposals for obstetrics services – consideration to further response to consultation
Mr Dixon confirmed that the South Eastern Trust has issued consultation, Local Services for Local People; Safe and Sustainable Services for Populations. This outlines proposals for :
- Transfer of Consultant-led Inpatient Obstetric Services from Lagan Valley Hospital
 - Reshaping the Ards Minor Injuries Unit
 - Reform and Modernisation of Statutory Residential Provision for Older People
 - The future of Mental Health Services

The Council will produce a substantial response in January 2009 and a summary of the consultation document is being prepared for Members. Mr Dixon said a number of public meetings will be held on the consultation and he will be chairing three of the meetings in January.

- (c) Minute 74/08 (f) Minor Ailment Service
Mr Dixon confirmed this is work in progress.
- (d) Copies of Healthy Cities Report, 12 November 2008
Cllr Mullaghan said that Healthy Cities are holding their Annual General Meeting on Friday 12 December 2008 and confirmed that he had requested copies of the 'Divided by Health; A City Profile' report that had been launched in November 2008. Mrs Malen will contact the Healthy Cities Office in relation to this.

83/08 INPUT FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

- (a) GMC Recertification Workshop, 27 November 2008
Mrs McGrotty had attended this workshop on behalf of Mr Graham. The workshop was primarily aimed at people who employ or contract doctors and focused on Regulating Doctors Medical Practice. The following issues were discussed:
- The future of medical regulation
 - Medical Revalidation, its impact on the medical profession
 - The GMC's plans for introducing licences to practice in Autumn 2009
 - The key elements of revalidation
 - How the DHSSPS is taking medical revalidation forward in Northern Ireland

Mr Graham thanked Mrs McGrotty for attending this workshop and also thanked Mrs Muldoon for attending the GMC event the evening before, as he was unable to attend.

- (b) Antimicrobial Resistant Action Plan Working Group

Mrs Hamilton said she had attended a meeting of this group recently and will submit a report to the office.

(c) Mater Hospital Community Forum Meeting, 11 December 20089

Cllr Mullaghan had attended this meeting and said that it was interesting to hear two patients give their account of their recent experience of discharge from two different hospitals. It was definitely a case of two extremes, with one patient giving their account of a good care package and one giving their account of an inadequate care package.

Mr Graham said that this is an example of striking a balance. Whilst there can be problems with care provided it is important to recognise that good care is being provided also.

84/08 CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr Graham reported on the following:

(a) Minister's announcement of the Chairs (Designate) for the four new HSC organisations

Mr Graham said that the Minister for Health announced the Chairs (Designate) for the new organisations on 9 December 2008 as follows:

- Dr Ian Clements, Regional Health and Social Care Board
- Ms Mary McMahon, Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being
- Mr Alexander Coleman, Regional Business Services Organisation
- Mr John Keanie, Patient and Client Council

A paper outlining the appointments was circulated to Members.

Mr Graham said that the process of appointing the Chief Executives is currently underway and by the time Council meets in January the Chief Executive of the new Patient Client Council will have been announced.

85/08 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

(a) Patient Client Council Project Board

Mr Dixon reported that the main piece of work that he has been doing since the last meeting has been in relation to the Patient Client Council Project Board. Mr Dixon sits on this group but as it is policy in process he is unable to report on this in detail.

(b) Consultation papers

As reported earlier, Mr Dixon said that there is a major consultation being carried out by the South Eastern HSC Trust on future direction. He said he is expecting the Belfast Trust to carry out major consultation following on in more detail from their New Directions paper. The NI Ambulance Service has also issued major consultation on their proposals for efficiency savings and comprehensive spending review in 2008-2011.

86/08 CORRESPONDENCE – PAPER EC 14/08

Paper EC14/08 was taken as read, with no additional items being discussed. Members were advised to telephone the office as soon as possible if they were interested in requesting any of the documents itemised.

87/08 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Council Meetings January to March 2009

The dates for the last three Council Meetings to be held from January to March 2009 were agreed at the last meeting and circulated to Members.

(b) Joint Council Forum 26 and 27th February 2009

Mr Graham encouraged those Members who have not yet responded to the invitation to attend the Joint Council Forum planned for February 2009 to respond as soon as possible. He said he hoped that Members would attend, as it will be a form of recognition for the work of the Council Members.

88/08 DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Mr Graham thanked Members for their commitment and dedication in this transitional period. He took the opportunity to wish the Members and staff a Happy Christmas.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 15 January 2009, at 5.30pm in the Lagan Room, Mount Conference Centre, Woodstock Link, Belfast

Signed: _____ Date _____
Chair

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Officer