

WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Minutes of One Hundred and Twenty-third meeting of the
Western Health and Social Services Council
held in the ARC Healthy Living Centre
116-122 Sallyswood, Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh
on Thursday 6 November 2003
at 2.00PM**

Present:	Mr R Rogan, Chairman	
	Mr H Andrews	Mr I Maguire
	Mrs V Brown	Mr R McKelvey
	Miss M Burke	Mr V McKelvey
	Mr J Campbell	Mrs F Robson
	Mr P Gilgunn	Mr D Sutherland
	Mrs M Hamilton	Ms M Trimble
Apologies:	Mr E Friel	Mr W Page
	Mr B McAleer	Mrs H Quigley
	Mr P McGowan	Ms M Reilly
In Attendance:	Mrs L Preston	Mrs K Loughran
Presentation:	Mr Brendan McKeever, Facilitator, Family Information Group	

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C74/03 **Presentation:**

Families and their Children with a Disability:

The Chairman introduced and welcomed to the Meeting Mr Brendan McKeever, Facilitator, Family Information Group. and invited him to give a presentation on Families and their Children with a Disability.

Mr McKeever began his presentation by explaining that the group had been founded 6 years ago. He said that they were not a support group but an information group sharing information with families . Mr McKeever explained that membership of the Family Information Group was open to any person who is related to or is the main carer of a child who has a physical and/or sensory disability.

The target groups of the Family Information Group are:

- ❖ Children who have a physical and/or sensory disability.
- ❖ Families of children who have a physical and/or sensory disability.
- ❖ Other professionals and voluntary workers in the field of disability.
- ❖ Statutory and voluntary agencies who plan and/or provide services for families of children who have physical and/or sensory disabilities.
- ❖ The wider community.

Mr McKeever showed two short videos the first one on what the Group was about and the second one on the Homes Fit for Children Campaign.

The first video outlined the aims and objectives of the Family Information Group which are:

- ❑ To collect information that could be relevant to families who have children with physical and/or sensory disabilities. To break the information down into a format suitable for both families and professionals in the field of disability.
- ❑ To listen to family members and ensure that their perceived needs are identified and highlighted to the appropriate authorities.
- ❑ To raise awareness, in the community, of the family aspect of Disability.
- ❑ To seek family representation at all levels on bodies, groups and organisations that serve the needs of children who have physical and/or sensory disabilities.
- ❑ To enhance the quality of life for children with physical and/or sensory disabilities and their families.
- ❑ To develop, train and educate family members so that they can help themselves and participate fully in the lives of their children.
- ❑ To publish information bulletins on disability related issues e.g. housing, education, access, shopping etc. for families, professionals and voluntary workers in the field of disability.
- ❑ Look in depth at issues that affect families who have children with physical and/or sensory disabilities, for families, professionals and voluntary workers in the field of disability.
- ❑ Collate information from families, through an outreach family contact service, and with agreement from families present the information to the appropriate authorities e.g. family perceived needs.
- ❑ Work with other professionals and voluntary workers to ensure relevant information can be directly or indirectly presented to families in a confidential manner.
- ❑ Through co-operation with training/education agencies ensure that the training and education needs of family members are addressed in a realistic and relevant manner.
- ❑ Work closely with other groups and organisations in the field of disability and related areas, to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication and to facilitate the development of an integrated approach to areas of concern.
- ❑ By developing contacts with statutory agencies, ensure that the voice of families has a real impact on the planning and provision of services for children with physical and/or sensory disabilities.
- ❑ Involving family members in raising awareness of the family view of disability through the media, conferences, seminars, presentations and in the training of professionals, voluntary workers and people who should be aware of disability issues.

The second video explained that the Homes Fit for Children Campaign is focused on disabled children, their families and the right to an accessible home. The campaign was officially launched during the summer of 2000.

Families have struggled to try and access the Disabled Facilities Grant which could help towards a better quality of life for their disabled child. The campaign wants to help remove the struggle in the field of accessible housing while at the same time acknowledging that families still must strive to access what often are basic human rights.

Issues discussed by members included:

- ~ Numbers involved with group.
- ~ Equality.
- ~ Membership.
- ~ Work with Western Health and Social Services Board.
- ~ Progress.
- ~ Inclusiveness.
- ~ Involvement of Users.
- ~ Housing/Adaptations.
- ~ Knowledge of how and where to apply for grants.
- ~ Bureaucracy.

The Chairman on behalf of the members thanked Mr McKeever for a very informative and worthwhile presentation.

C75/03 Chairman's Business (including Chief Officer's Report):

Mr Rogan said that no doubt the most pressing issue for the Council recently had been the tragic incident in Derry City in the early hours of Saturday 11 October morning when a young man Mr James McGinley was fatally stabbed.

Mr Rogan on behalf of the Western Health and Social Services Council extended deepest sympathy to the McGinley family.

The Chairman explained that first reports said that following the emergency call for an ambulance that neither of the 2 Derry ambulances were available. The protocol he said is to then get the next nearest ambulance out which in this case was Enniskillen. However one of the Derry ambulances became available having left their patient at the Altnagelvin Hospital and turned around to respond to the incident.

Having met with Mr Alan Cahill, Western Divisional Manager the Chairman said he had been assured by Mr Cahill that the Derry ambulance would have reached Mr McGinley within the 8 minute standard laid down by ARCON. He said it appeared that the PSNI took the decision to remove Mr McGinley to hospital before the Derry ambulance arrived as they reported that they were facing a hostile crowd.

Mr Rogan said that he and Ms Maggie Reilly met with the Western Health and Social Services Board to first get a picture of the events that occurred and to highlight the growing Council and public concern about ambulance provision in Derry City.

Mr Rogan reminded Members that this was the latest in a series of such incidents which were highlighted no later than last month at the joint Western Health and Social Services Board/ Western Health and Social Services Council meeting. He said that this latest incident had served to move the issue to increase the urgency for a review of ambulance provision in the Western Board area.

The Chairman said that Mr Steven Lindsay Chief Executive Western Health and Social Services Board appreciated the Council's concerns and as a result the Council will be meeting with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust and the Western Health and Social Services Board to look very closely at all the areas of concern.

A number of issues which the Council intend to fully explore are:

- ~ The use of the 2 Derry City ambulances;
- ~ To compare weekday and weekend pressures;
- ~ To ascertain how often and from where other ambulances are called in to support the Derry City area;
- ~ To examine the protocol currently used whereby potentially an Enniskillen ambulance could be the nearest and why it is not possible to activate ambulances in for example the Northern Board area which is considerably closer to Derry City.

Mr Rogan said that the Council would want to look at ambulance service provision within the Sperrin Lakeland Trust area and particularly the Castlederg situation and also to look at the number of crew members, shifts, training and sick leave holiday cover.

He acknowledged that the Council was aware that there is a big issue about overtime and ambulance staff feeling so vulnerable to attack that they are unwilling to provide overtime cover.

The Chairman said the Council will also want to look at the introduction of a system which prioritises 999 calls. He said that at the moment this does not happen and all 999 calls are treated as an emergency.

Mr Rogan said as members were aware there had been huge media attention to the Derry City incident. He said that public confidence in the ambulance service was under considerable pressure. He said the Council will sit down out of the spotlight and unravel all of the issues so that recommendations based on facts and evidence can be put forward.

Mr Victor McKelvey said he wished to acknowledge and commend the Chief Officer on her comments about the Derry City ambulance incident when she was interviewed for a radio programme. He said she had helped to defuse the situation which he had felt was getting out of hand and wished to express his gratitude to her.

Mr Andrews said there was a concern among the public about the lack of ambulance cover. He enquired if there is a bigger demand on ambulances transferring patients from the West to hospitals in Belfast for specialised treatment. He said if this was the case then there is a need for extra cover.

Mr Rogan said that this issue would be raised during the forthcoming review of the Western area ambulance provision.

Mr Gilgunn was concerned about another review being carried out and was ensured by the Chairman that it would be solely for the Ambulance Service in the Western area. He said the Western Health and Social Services Council would be fully involved in the review, identifying needs and discussing with the Western Health and Social Services Board together with the Ambulance Service within the Western area the best way and means of using the resources that are available and pushing for extra resources if required.

Mr Victor McKelvey stressed the need to work with the Western Health and Social Services Board to have a proper ambulance service and to recommend a zero tolerance in relation to any deficiency whatsoever to any victim of an accident or illness in getting to the hospital and that the Council has got to impress on the Board that this is the only acceptable solution and that these type of problems that arise, maybe infrequently, must not ever arise again irrespective of what the situation is.

Mr Sutherland queried if there was a formula which dictates how many ambulances should be available based on the number of people in the area coupled with the distances travelled. Mr Rogan responded by saying that a formula called the ARCON system exists at present but acknowledged that it had not been changed for some time.

Mr Sutherland suggested a Research Officer could take a lead in researching population shifts and densities and compare with the ARCON formula. Mr Rogan said that this issue would be dealt with in the review with the Western Health and Social Services Board, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and the Western Health and Social Services Council. The Chairman recognised that the Ambulance Service met their targets 95% of the time.

Miss Burke raised the issue of a flying ambulance. Mr Rogan said that the Western Health and Social Council suggested this at the first review of ambulance services and it was taken up at a cross border ministerial conference but nothing ever came of it.

Mr Sutherland suggested that the Western Health and Social Services Council should have more input to the press to establish that the Council are an independent body from Boards and the Ambulance Service to assure the public that there is someone looking after their interests. Mr Rogan agreed that there should be closer contact with the Press.

The Chairman said that as the Chief Officer was off on sick leave he would give a report on areas of work she had been involved with in the past month. He said that he had spoken to Ms Reilly during the past week and she was recovering well and hoped to return to work shortly. Best wishes were extended to her from all present.

Before the Chairman presented the Chief Officer's report a minute's silence was observed for Fireman Joe McCloskey from Dungiven who died whilst carrying out fire fighting duties in Limavady on 1 November 2003.

Mr Rogan said that before going on sick leave on Friday 17 October Ms Reilly had been involved in the ambulance issue.

The Chief Officer met with both the Northern and Southern Local Health and Social Care Group Managers and Chairmen. They gave her an overview of their work to date. As a result of the meeting it was agreed that the Managers of the Local Health and Social Care Groups will give a presentation on their role and work to a full Council meeting early in the New Year.

Ms Reilly has continued to work with her colleagues from the other three Health and Social Services Councils in preparing the Western Health and Social Services Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme. Mr Rogan said members will receive a copy when it is completed.

The Developing Better Services redesign group continue to meet and are currently holding a series of public meetings. Ms Reilly has expressed a hope that Members will be able to attend their local meeting and asked if they could report back what the public feeling was in relation to the Board's initiative.

Mr Rogan also reported that Ms Reilly had chaired a public meeting held in the Fermanagh area concerning the possible amalgamation of three rural GP Practices. All three of these Practices have come to a point where the buildings in which they are housed are unsuitable or the lease has run out. This coupled with the new demands of the GMS Contract has prompted a rethink on the service provision. There are two full time GPs (husband and wife) and one part time GP providing cover over the three areas.

The GPs are proposing a centrally located new build, modern facilities, better IT and enhanced services. Because such a proposal will impact on their patients it was appropriate to inform all of the patients and invite them to a public forum to hear the proposals in more detail and to listen to the concerns of patients.

As well as the Chief Officer and the three GPs Dr Brendan O'Hare Medical Advisor with the Western Health and Social Services Board was also present.

Approximately 170 people attended with about twenty patients from the smallest Practice and the rest equally divided between the other two.

A number of people spoke raising issues of access for older patients.

The GPs informed them that they had contacted 'Rural Lift' (transport initiative) and they had the capacity to provide a door to door patient service to the new surgery.

One member of the audience reminded the others that there had been a suggestion a few years ago that Fermanagh could end up with 4-5 large Practices to cover the county. This amalgamation would ensure that their area had one of these Practices. Another member of the audience was very strong in his opposition to such a move saying there had been a GP in his village for the last 40 years.

Another elderly person said he was attracted to the idea of a new Practice that would allow him to see his doctor but also see the chiropodist in the same building.

When asked by the chair how many in the audience favoured the proposal about half were favourable. When asked how many would be opposed only one person indicated opposition.

The people attending were told from the outset and reminded at the end of the meeting that no decision had been taken and that the meeting was an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and information.

The Chief Officer reported that she had information that one area may be particularly opposed to the idea. Mr Eugene Gallagher Head of Primary Care and Family Practitioner Support Services, Western Health and Social Services Board proposed that two more public meetings could possibly be held to ensure that patients from each area affected will have the opportunity to air their concerns. The Chief Officer agreed that this would be the proper course of action and she will keep the Council informed of any developments.

Ms Reilly has had a very positive meeting with Mr Steven Lindsay Chief Executive Western Health and Social Services Board about additional resources for the Council. Mr Rogan said that this will be moved forward on her return to work.

Mr Rogan said that the Chief Officer has also continued to support complainants who are at various stages in the complaints process.

The Chairman said that Ms Reilly hoped to meet with Council members again at the December meeting but in the meantime it was important that members continued to keep in contact with the Council Office and to work through the Chairman in the event of any issues arising.

C76/03 **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on **Thursday 2 October 2003** having been previously circulated were adopted on the proposal of Mrs Hamilton and seconded by Mr Andrews.

C77/03 **Matters Arising from Minutes:**

C66/03 Response to Action 1:

Action 1 (figures for out of court settlements):

The Chief Officer will write to Western Health and Social Services Board for clarification.

C78/03 **Equality and Human Rights Business:**

Agenda and relevant papers for a meeting on 24 October 2003 were received.

C79/03 **Trusts' Business:**

1. Altnagelvin Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust:

- An invitation to the official opening of Altnagelvin's Healthclub was received.

2. ***Foyle Health and Social Services Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 26 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 7 November 2003 were noted.

3. ***Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 21 August 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 23 October 2003 were noted.
- Minutes of a Clinical and Social Care Governance Committee meeting held on 18 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 20 November 2003 were noted.
- A copy of the Trust Core Brief October 2003 was acknowledged.
- A copy of the Trust's first Acute Services Project Newsheet October 2003 was received.
- The Learning Disability Committee Newsletter No. 2 October 2003 was received.
- An invitation to 'See Us At Work' Events in Omagh and Enniskillen was acknowledged.

4. ***Royal Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 4 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 6 November 2003 were noted.

5. ***NI Ambulance Service HSS Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 5 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 13 November 2003 were noted.

6. ***Belfast City Hospital Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 26 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 28 November 2003 were noted.
- A copy of the Trust Newsletter 'Cityview' November 2003 was acknowledged.

7. ***Green Park Healthcare Trust:***

- Minutes of a Trust Board meeting held on 29 September 2003 and an Agenda for a meeting to be held on 6 November 2003 were noted.
- A copy of the Trust Newsletter 'Grassroots' November 2003 was acknowledged.

C80/03 **Members Issues:**

Mr Gilgunn asked that a representative/s of Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) should be invited to a Council meeting to give a presentation on their work.

Action 1

Chief Officer to write to CAWT and invite them to a meeting in the New Year.

Mr Gilgunn said that the water in the Enniskillen area has currently a bad smell and taste of it with the result that patients in the Erne Hospital are having to buy bottled water. He suggested the Western Health and Social Services Council should write to the Trust asking them to put pressure on the Water Service to do something about it.

Action 2

Chief Officer to write to Sperrin Lakeland Trust.

Mr Victor McKelvey said he had attended the public meeting in Strabane on Improving Health and Social Services in the Western area and he was the only member of the public in attendance. He pointed out that the headlines in the local paper stated that the Health Board's local hospital proposals were met with public apathy. He said that members of the Western Health and Social Services Board had explained that Strabane and Omagh District Councils were not participating in the public discussions and because of this he felt that the Western Health and Social Services Council should monitor the situation closely to ensure that the Board are consulting with the public.

Action 3

Chief Officer to raise these issues at next Public Engagement meet the WHSSB.

Mr Victor McKelvey said he had been approached by a number of people who had Ophthalmic appointments deferred on several occasions for up to three or four months.

Action 4

Chief Officer to contact Altnagelvin Area Hospital for update on Ophthalmic Appointments - waiting list.

Mr Victor McKelvey drew the member's attention to an article in a newspaper about the new GMS Contract that GPs would be getting an average £15000 per head of a pay increase with the new arrangements. He said that the Western Health and Social Services Council would need to monitor the new arrangements very carefully especially if the Doctors decide to work from 9 – 5 daily. He said that it was imperative that the Council work with the Board to ensure that there is 24 hour care available.

Mr Sutherland said he had attended a GMS meeting. He said that it appeared at this stage that 90% of GPs would be opting out of the out-of-hours service. Mr

Sutherland said that there had been little feedback from the practices to the Board to inform them of what they will be offering.

Mr Rogan said that if members needed clarification on any concerns they had with the new GMS contract that Mr Eugene Gallagher would be invited to a future Council meeting to address their concerns.

Action 5

Chief Officer will feedback information on out-of-hours to Council.

Mrs Hamilton queried if there had been any correspondence from Altnagelvin Area Hospital on the issue of assisted feeding of elderly and disabled patients.

Action 6

The Chief Officer is meeting with the Chief Nurse WHSSB to follow this up.

Mr Campbell asked if the Council had any communication with Sperrin Lakeland Trust on the resignation of a Senior Nurse from the Intensive Care Unit at Tyrone County Hospital which was reported in the local papers because of lack of qualified staff and support. He said that it left the Intensive Care Unit grossly under staffed and would heighten fears in the community.

Action 7

The Chief Officer will write to Sperrin Lakeland Trust to get details of the true position.

Mr Andrews requested that the Council investigate the circumstances of an elderly man who was admitted to the City Hospital in Belfast for an EPS test and who subsequently died. Mr Andrews said he would supply fuller details to the Chief Officer.

Action 8

Chief Officer will liaise with Mr Andrews.

Miss Burke requested that it be recorded that a 90 year old woman whose family she had been approached by and who did not wish to make a formal complaint felt that Occupational Therapists when visiting the elderly should be more sympathetic and patient friendly. The lady needed a stair lift and she felt that she had been put through a mental aptitude and physical test with the result that she was annoyed and upset because she felt that the Occupational Therapist did not believe how serious her condition actually was. Her family bought the stair lift themselves because it was going to take so long and to save her going through the trauma of this again.

Items of correspondence received during the month of October 2003:

- **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.** 'From People to Parents' A Public Consultation Document and its corresponding Draft Equality Impact Assessment on the Future of Fertility Services in Northern Ireland.
- **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.** Report on the Review of Clinical Genetic Services in Northern Ireland and its corresponding Equality Impact Assessment Consultation Document.
- **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.** Document: Proposals for new legislation on Human Organs and Tissue (Why we need new laws by Dr H Campbell Chief Medical Officer for NI).
- **Western Health and Social Services Board.** Financial Review October 2003 and Financial Performance Report (Incorporating the General Revenue Allocation and Family Health Services) September 2003.
- **Local Health and Social Care Group (Southern Sector).** Briefing Note 6 October 2003.

C82/03 **Any Other Business:**

The Chairman asked Members to consider attending events during the month of November 2003:

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| Date: | 5 November 2003 |
| Meeting: | New GMS Contract |
| Venue: | Tower Hill Hospital, Armagh |
| Nominated: | Mr Sutherland |
| Date: | 12 November 2003 |
| Meeting: | Omagh Independent Advice Services AGM |
| Venue: | Community House, Omagh |
| Nominated: | Mr Campbell |
| Date: | 14 November 2003 |
| Event: | 'See us at Work' Sperrin Lakeland Trust |
| Venue: | Coleshill, Enniskillen |
| Nominated: | Mr Andrews Miss Burke Mr Gilgunn Mr Sutherland |
| Date: | 14 November 2003 |
| Review: | Eye Help Desk Programme |
| Venue: | Balmoral Hotel, Belfast |
| Nominated: | Mrs Preston |
| Date: | 18 November 2003 |
| Meeting: | Age Concern AGM |
| Venue: | Ramada Hotel, Belfast |
| Nominated: | Mrs Hamilton |
| Date: | 18 November 2003 |
| Launch: | Care Co-ordination Network UK |
| Venue: | Island Civic Centre, Lisburn |

Nominated: Mr Campbell
Date: 19 November 2003
Conference: Feedback on Draft Older People Strategy (WHSSB)
Venue: Fir Trees Hotel, Strabane
Nominated: Mrs Robson

Date: 20 November 2003
Meeting: Regional Advisory Committee on Cancer
Venue: Castle Building, Stormont, Belfast
Nominated: Mrs Robson

Date: 20 November 2003
Presentation: Investing in Primary Care
Venue: Verbal Arts Centre, Londonderry
Nominated: Mr Rogan

Date: 21 November 2003
Conference: Pride and Prejudice
Venue: City Hotel, Londonderry
Nominated: Mr Kerr Mr Page

Date: 21 November 2003
Event: 'See us at Work' Sperrin Lakeland Trust
Venue: Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, Omagh
Nominated: Mr Campbell

Date: 24 November 2003
Launch: 'Stories from the Third Age' (Senior Citizens Consortium S/L)
Venue: Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh
Nominated: Mrs Loughran

Date: 3 December 2003
Meeting: New GMS Contract
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry
Nominated: Mr Sutherland

Meetings and Events attended by Chief Officer

Date: 24 November 2003
Meeting: CSF3 Team
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry

Date: 24 November 2003
Meeting: Head of Consumer Services (WHSSB)
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry

Date: 24 November 2003
Meeting: Underperforming GP Committee
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry

Date: 26 November 2003

Meeting: Service Re-design Group
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry

Date: 28 November 2003
Meeting: Western Equality and Human Rights Forum
Venue: WHSS Board Headquarters, Gransha Park, Londonderry

C83/03 **Next Meeting:**

Date: 4 December 2003
Time: 2.00pm
Venue: Silverbirch Hotel
Gortin Road
Omagh Co Tyrone

Following the meeting a Christmas meal will be served in the hotel restaurant.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm