

# WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

Minutes of One Hundred and Thirty-fifth meeting of the  
Western Health and Social Services Council  
held in Camowen Room, Silverbirch Hotel,  
Gortin Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone  
on Wednesday 19 January 2005  
at 3.00PM

Present:	Ms F Robson (Chair) Mr H Andrews Mrs V Brown Miss M Burke Mr J Campbell Mr M Carten	Mrs M Devlin Mr P Gilgunn Mr I Maguire Mr R McKelvey Mr V McKelvey Mr D Sutherland
Apologies:	Mrs A Bell Mr E Friel Mrs M Hamilton Mr B McAleer	Mr P McGowan Mr M Mclvor Mr W Page Mr R Rogan
In Attendance:	Ms M Reilly Mrs L Preston	Mrs K Loughran

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## C01/05 Chairman's Business:

In the absence of the Chairman Mr Patrick McGowan, Ms Frances Robson, Vice-chair chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone present including two members of the public and said she hoped they all had a happy and peaceful Christmas. She wished everybody a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year.

Ms Robson informed members that Mr Raymond Rogan's son-in-law had died in a road accident in the past week and she sent condolences on behalf of the Chief Officer, staff, members and herself to Mr Rogan. The Chief Officer will write to Mr Rogan expressing condolences on behalf of the Council.

### Action Point AP: a/01/05

Chief Officer to write to Mr Rogan.

The Chair informed members that Mrs Elaine Way had been appointed as Chief Executive of Altnagelvin Area Hospitals Health and Social Services Trust. Mrs Way had been Chief Executive of Foyle Health and Social Services Trust and has been succeeded by Mr Joe Lusby who was the former Director of Business Services at Foyle. On behalf of the Western Health and Social Services Council she passed on congratulations and best wishes to both of them in their new roles.

Ms Robson welcomed Ms Reilly back from sick leave and Mrs Lorna Preston on her return from a spell of annual leave.

**C02/05 Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2004 were adopted on the proposal of Mr Michael Carten and seconded by Mr Reuben McKelvey.

**C03/05 Matters Arising from Minutes:**

In relation to issues raised with the Western Health and Social Services Board Ms Reilly said she was meeting with Mr Michael Gormley Head of Consumer Services on Thursday 20 January 2005.

Ms Reilly said that Mr Gormley and Miss Karen Meehan, Chair of Western Health and Social Services Board had taken the issues raised to Mr Steven Lindsay, Chief Executive and the views of the Council particularly in relation to Developing Better Services were taken on board and will be reflected in the Board's Draft Communications Strategy. Members wished to be reassured that the Western Health and Social Services Board would also address the questions raised regarding service provision now and in the future.

**Sperrin Lakeland Trust Mental Health Review:**

Ms Reilly informed members that her understanding was that the Sperrin Lakeland Mental Health Review was now going ahead.

**Response to Action Point AP: b/11/04 and a/12/04 – b/12/04:**

***Action AP: b/11/04: CR Spray:***

Ms Reilly reported that Dr Hamilton, Consultant in Public Health at the Western Health and Social Services Board had responded to the Council's query regarding the use of CR Spray in relation to public disturbances. Dr Hamilton was not aware of such a product and confirmed that it was CS Spray which was being used by the PSNI and that its use as reported last month was being monitored for adverse health effects.

***Action AP: a/12/04: Children's Ward – Erne Hospital:***

Chief Officer will contact the nurse in Erne Hospital in a few weeks time for an update on the issues raised in her letter.

***Action AP: b/12/04: Sperrin Lakeland Users Group:***

When contacted Ms Bridget O'Rawe, Director of Corporate Affairs, Sperrin Lakeland Trust said the December meeting had been cancelled due to Directors having to attend another meeting and that she had consulted with Users and it was felt there was no need for rescheduling the next meeting before March.

Members discussed this issue further and were unhappy that this Group which normally meets every quarter would as a result of this decision not meet for six months.

The Council's representative on the group confirmed that she had not been contacted by the Trust for her view on this issue.

As a result of further debate members felt it was timely to review all of the User Groups across the Board area to look at their policies and in particular to identify the various Chairpersons and whether users determined or contributed to setting the agenda.

**Action Point AP: b/01/05**

Chief Officer to contact the Trusts and the Western Health and Social Services Board to ascertain the number of User Groups, their policies, who their Chairpersons are and whether they are Users or HPSS staff.

**C04/05 Equality and Human Rights Business:**

Ms Reilly noted that the date for the next Western Equality and Human Rights Forum meeting is scheduled for 4 April 2005.

An information flyer on accessing the Western Equality and Human Rights Forum's Website and E-Learning for all staff was acknowledged.

**C05/05 Trusts' Business:**

**1. *Altnagelvin Hospitals Health and Social Service Trust:***

- Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 2 December 2004 and Agenda for a meeting to be held on 6 January 2005 were noted.
- Response to Derry Journal questions regarding the current financial situation in Altnagelvin Hospital.

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

- Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 16 December 2004 and Agenda for a meeting to be held on 28 January 2005 were noted.
3. *Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Care Trust:*
- Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 16 December 2004 and Agenda for a meeting to be held on 20 January 2005 were noted.
  - A copy of the Trust's procedure manual for responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests were noted.
  - A copy of the Trust's Core Brief for December 2004 was acknowledged.
  - Dates for Trust Board and Clinical and Social Care Governance Committee meetings for 2005 were noted.
  - Waiting List Information for General Practitioners at end of December 2004 was acknowledged.
4. *Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital HSS Trust:*
- Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 4 November 2004 and Agenda for a meeting to be held on 13 January 2005 were noted.
5. *Green Park Healthcare Trust:*
- Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 2 December 2004 and Agenda for a meeting to be held on 6 January 2005 were noted.
  - A copy of the Trust's Draft User Involvement Strategy was acknowledged.

C06/05 **Members' Issues:**

The Vice-chair Frances Robson welcomed the two members of the public and invited them to raise any issues they might wish to bring to the Council's attention having previously identified themselves as the Chairperson and Secretary of the local branch of Parents and Professionals and Autism (PAPA).

These two parents of children with Autism gave a brief overview of their experiences and the difficulties which they continue to encounter in their campaign to get appropriate and most importantly timely services for children diagnosed with Autism.

They reported that a group, Consortium West had been set up which involves the Western Health and Social Services Board, Trusts, PAPA and the education sector. Ms Reilly reminded members of the DHSSPS Priorities for Action 2004/2005 which she said had begun to reflect this need through setting targets for the establishment of diagnostic assessment and early intervention teams for around 200 children and young people with Autism per year.

However she said it would certainly be hoped that this year's Priorities for Action would set priorities for actual service provision whilst continuing to build on the human resource and clinical capacity.

The parents referred to a concern about access to treatment which they had discussed with the Chief Officer some months earlier. Following that meeting they had met with the relevant Trust staff and had believed the issue to be resolved. However they said this had not proved to be so.

The Chief Officer said that given the seriousness of the issue and the need to respect confidentiality that she would welcome an opportunity to meet with them outside the Council meeting and would be happy to support them to take forward these concerns.

The parents were given an explanation of the role of the Western Health and Social Services Council and an undertaking by members that they fully supported their demand for better service provision and would use every opportunity to continue to raise the issue and to lobby the Department, Board and Trusts.

Mr Paddy Gilgunn supported Mr Reuben McKelvey's proposal to ascertain what service provision there was across the other three Board areas and asked the Chief Officer to raise the issue with the other Health Councils.

**Action Point AP: c/01/05**

Chief Officer to propose that the issue of Autism service provision be monitored across the four Board areas as part of the Joint Councils annual objectives for next year 05/06.

**Action Point AP: d/01/05**

Chief Officer to invite the parents back to the Council to discuss the issues further following the publication of the Priorities for Action for 05/06.

**Action Point AP: e/01/05**

Chief Officer to get more information for members on Consortium West and to ascertain whether the Board was taking the lead on this group.

**Action Point AP: f/01/05**

Chief Officer to arrange meeting with the two parents regarding the concern referred to earlier.

## **Chiropody Services at Erne Hospital:**

Mrs Valerie Brown reminded members that she had raised this issue on a previous occasion and as a result the Council had been assured that the card system for further appointments was under review. Mrs Brown stated that the cards were still being issued and that she was aware that access to the service was still a major problem.

### **Action Point AP: g/01/05**

Chief Officer to check if review was undertaken and what the outcome was. She will also check the waiting list and waiting times.

## **Home helps:**

Miss Mary Burke raised the issue of home helps arriving at a clients home late and leaving early in order to reach the next clients home in time.

Members heard that one home help had to assist 8 people to bed resulting in some elderly people having to go to bed early in the evening and some very late at night to accommodate this workload. Members agreed that this was a situation which should not be tolerated.

Ms Reilly said she had been aware of some of these issues and reported to members that she had recently met with a group of home helps and was planning a second meeting with them in order to better understand some of the background to these issues which included:

- Home helps can be directly employed by Trusts or work for independent agencies. This gives rise to different pay and conditions.
- Many home helps require a sufficient allocation of clients in order to make a decent weekly wage.
- Because of the rural nature of the Western area clients may be dispersed across many miles.
- Often home helps allocated time for clients does not take account of travel time between clients.
- Home helps feel unsupported, unsupervised and undervalued.
- There is a severe shortage of home helps often resulting in lack of cover for sickness or annual leave.

Mr Reuben McKelvey said he was aware of an elderly man who prior to hospitalisation had 45 minutes of home care per day and who on discharge received a letter to say his home help was being cut to 30 minutes. Members were very concerned that yet again it appeared that the most vulnerable groups were being hit hardest when it came to efficiency savings.

**Action Point AP: h/01/05**

Chief Officer to hold second meeting with home helps.

**Action Point AP: i/01/05**

Following second meeting Chief Officer to contact Directors of Elderly Care Services and seek meeting to discuss the Council's concerns.

**Orthopaedic Waiting Lists:**

Mr Gilgunn alerted members to the fact that some patients who may have already waited 12-18 months for an outpatient appointment are then experiencing a double wait if the Consultant decides that the patient requires an MRI Scan in order to arrive at a diagnosis or to determine if there has been any deterioration between consultations.

Mr Gilgunn said he had been contacted by people who have had this experience and were now expected to wait an additional 9-12 months for a scan.

Members were deeply unhappy with the implications of this on an already overburdened waiting list system.

The patients journey from attending their GP to inpatient treatment requires a long and growing wait to be seen at an outpatient clinic. Following an assessment and a requirement for treatment in hospital a patient then begins another long wait for admission. The situation where this second wait will become even longer because of a third wait for access to diagnostic services was in the opinion of members a disgrace.

The Chief Officer was asked to investigate this claim further.

**Action Point AP: j/01/05**

Chief Officer to contact Musgrave Park Hospital for further information and discuss with Eastern Health and Social Services Council's Chief Officer.

outpatient clinic the Consultant determined that the specific problem was best dealt

with by a colleague and the patient was referred to another Consultant resulting in going on to a new waiting list.

This led to a discussion about the way in which GPs make referrals to Consultants and the complexities of Specialties and sub Specialties.

**Action Point AP: k/01/05**

Chief Officer to raise this issue with GPs and discover what criteria is used to determine which Consultant a patient is referred to and what information GPs have about the areas of expertise for each Consultant.

**Out of Hours - New arrangements:**

Mrs Devlin reported that she was aware of three new Locum GPs who had been contracted to provide cover for the Out of Hours Service in the Western Health and Social Services Board area. There was she said significant concerns about their apparent lack of the English language and poor knowledge of the area they were expected to work in.

Members were concerned to know if these doctors had received appropriate support and supervision to carry out their duties and what measures were in place to ensure quality of service.

**Action Point AP: l/01/05**

Chief Officer to contact Family Practitioner Services Unit at the Western Health and Social Services Board and raise these issues.

**C07/05 Chief Officer's Report:**

**General Medical Council Hearing:**

Ms Reilly reported that on her return to work she had accompanied a patient to a GMC hearing in Manchester regarding a GPs fitness to practice. Ms Reilly said she had acted to support this complainant over the last 1½ years culminating in the hearing last week.

The Chief Officer explained that the hearing was continuing but was expected to reach its conclusion over the next few days. She said this particular complaint was of a serious nature and if upheld could lead to the GP being struck off.

**Action Point AP: m/01/05**

Chief Officer undertook to make members aware of the outcome at the next meeting.

### **Member resignation from Sperrin Lakeland Trust's Clinical and Social Care Governance (CSCG) Committee:**

Members were reminded that Mr Joe Campbell had resigned from Sperrin Lakeland Trusts' CSCG Committee and his letter of resignation read out at the Trust/Council Liaison meeting in November.

Mr Campbell was invited to reiterate his objections and concerns about his and the Council's continued involvement on this Committee. This is the only Trust in the area which had invited a Council member to attend such a Committee. Members were also asked to note that Mr Campbell was there as an observer and would not have any role to play in any decision making.

However he felt that his presence had the potential to be perceived as rubber stamping decisions within the arena of Governance. Some of these decisions he said could be in direct conflict with the position that this Council might take on certain issues.

Members debated the merits and value of observing the processes of Governance. This was seen as a positive role for the Council. However this was weighed against the perceived level of involvement of a monitoring/watchdog body working within a sub-committee of the Trust Board.

Members felt this issue should be debated more fully across the four Councils as part of the ongoing review of the future role of HSS Councils.

#### **Action Point AP: n/01/05**

Members will be given a copy of the minutes of the last two CSCG Committee meetings in order to better understand its function and remit.
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It was agreed to defer any decision about continuing membership until after the wider debate at the Joint Health and Social Services Council meeting.

### **Occupational Therapy Services/Letter:**

The Chief Officer read out a letter she had received from Sperrin Lakeland Trust Community OT staff regarding the decision not to replace two temporary staff, an OT Assistant and Clerical Officer. The letter highlighted the implications for maintaining services and the impact on implementing the recommendations of the Review of OT Services.

Members were very concerned that there appeared to be a pattern of cuts in OT Services and home help provision which directly impacted on the most vulnerable and ran contrary to previous recommendations for service improvement. If these were part of the Sperrin Lakeland Trust's efficiency savings members would strongly resist such moves. The Chief Officer was asked to clarify the situation.

**Action Point AP: o/01/05**

Discuss the letter with Ms Clare McGartland, Allied Health Professions Commissioner, WHSS Board and find out how the Board and Trust planned to address the issues raised.

C08/05 **Any Other Business:**

**Meetings and Events attended by Members for period 17/12/04 – 18/1/05**

**Date:** 12 January 2005  
**Meeting:** Oral Health Planning Team  
**Venue:** Council Offices, Strabane  
**Nominated:** Mr V McKelvey

**Date:** 13 January 2005  
**Meeting:** Joint HSS Councils' Steering Group  
**Venue:** Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown  
**Nominated:** Mrs Robson

**Date:** 13 January 2005  
**Meeting:** Fermanagh Inter Agency Group for Older People  
**Venue:** Townhall, Enniskillen  
**Nominated:** Miss Burke

**Date:** 17 January 2005  
**Panel:** National Appeals Panel  
**Venue:** Belfast  
**Nominated:** Mr McGowan

**Meetings and Events attended by Chief Officer/Staff for period 17/12/04 – 18/1/05**

**Date:** 11/12 January 2005  
**Hearing:** GMC Fitness to Practice  
**Venue:** Manchester

**Date:** 13 January 2005  
**Meeting:** Joint HSS Councils' Steering Group

**Venue:** Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown

**Date:** 13 January 2005

**Meeting:** Freedom Of Information

**Venue:** The Tidal Centre, Toome

**Date:** 17 January 2005

**Meeting:** HSS Councils' Chief Officers

**Venue:** EHSS Council Offices, Belfast

C09/05 **Next Council Meeting:**

**Date:** Wednesday 2 February 2005

**Time:** 3.00pm

**Venue:** Derry City Council Offices

Strand Road

Derry

**The meeting ended at 5.55pm**