
WESTERN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Minutes of One Hundred and Sixty-fourth meeting of the
Western Health and Social Services Council
held on Friday 3 October 2008
in the Share Holiday Village, Smith's Strand,
Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh
at 10.00am**

Present:

Mrs F Robson (Chair)	Mrs S Hogg
Mrs V Brown	Councillor B Johnston
Mr J Campbell	Councillor R Lynch
Councillor M Carten	Mr V McKelvey
Councillor G Foley	Ms M Trimble
Councillor M Hamilton	

Apologies:

Councillor M H Durkan	Mr E McGrade
Councillor R Hussey	Mr R McIntyre
Mr I Maguire	Mr M McIvor
Mr P McGowan	Councillor B Page

In Attendance:

Ms M Reilly	Mrs M Gormley
Mrs K Loughran	Miss S Forbes

Mrs Robson welcomed everyone to the 164th meeting of the Western Health and Social Services Council. She said following her appointment to the Chair at last month's meeting a vacancy had arisen for a Vice-Chair and the election for a new Vice-Chair would take place at today's meeting. She invited Mr Michael Gormley Head of Consumer Services, WHSS Board to preside over the election.

Election of Vice-Chair:

Mr Gormley thanked the WHSS Council for inviting him to preside over the election for the Vice-Chair. He said 2 late nominations had been received by WHSSC after the closing date and those envelopes have not been opened. He confirmed there had been no late receipt of ballot papers to his office. The 18 sealed envelopes received by the closing date were opened in accordance with the agreed election procedures and the votes counted for each candidate.

The following number of votes had been received for:

Mr Ignatius Maguire - 7
Mr Victor McKelvey - 6
Mr Michael McIvor - 5

Mr Gormley declared Mr Ignatius Maguire elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the WHSS Council and congratulated him on his appointment.

Chair's Business:

Mrs Robson on behalf of the WHSS Council thanked Mr Gormley for presiding over the election of Vice-Chair. She welcomed Mr Maguire's appointment as Vice-Chair and thanked the other two candidates for allowing their name to go forward.

Mrs Robson drew members' attention to the revised agenda and pointed out that time slots had been allocated to each agenda item. She asked members to adhere to these as strictly as possible.

Mrs Robson said she welcomes the Health Minister's announcement on the abolition of prescription charges which will benefit many people in the Province.

Mrs Robson thanked the members who took part in the recent repeat Bugwatch Survey at Altnagelvin. She also thanked the members who had attended the briefing with the WHSC Trust on the Toner Report.

Mrs Robson said she had attended a meeting of the HSS Councils' Executive Committee at which members of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service were present. She said they are very concerned about the issue of efficiency savings and the need to provide a realistic service given the expectation that they are supposed to cut spending.

Minutes of Previous WHSS Council Meeting:

The Minutes of the previous WHSS Council meeting held on 5 September 2008 were adopted on the proposal of Mr Joe Campbell and seconded by Mr Michael Carten.

Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:

Members were provided with a written update on Action Points carried forward from previous Council meetings.

Action Point AP: g/05/08 – Dispensing of continence products – Eglinton Medical Practice.

WHSC Trust has confirmed in writing to WHSS Council that the dispensing of continence products will remain in Eglinton. These will be dispensed from the

Community Hall, Main Street, Eglinton.

Action Point AP: i/05/08 – Telephone access to Riverview (previously Foyle Trust HQ).

The WHSC Trust responded to WHSS Council regarding the telephone system at Riverview. The Trust has reviewed the options available to callers and an additional option has been added which allows the caller to press '0' to speak to an operator.

Action Point AP: a/09/08 – Election of Vice-Chair to the WHSS Council.

Nomination forms for the election of a Vice-Chair to the WHSS Council were sent out to members on 8th September 2008 for return by 17th September 2008. Ballot papers were sent out on 19th September for return to WHSS Board by the 1st October 2008. An officer from the WHSS Board will attend the WHSS Council meeting on 3rd October to open the ballot papers and announce the result of the election to appoint a Vice-Chair.

Action Point AP: b/09/08 – Care of the Elderly - Care Plans.

Ms Reilly reported that the Business Support Manager and she have been looking at the new quality standards in relation to care plans for the elderly as a result of an issue raised earlier by Ms Lynch. She said it appeared that not every elderly person who has care needs would have a written care plan. Those who are regarded as having more complex needs and are being care managed must have a written care plan and they and a carer of their choice should have access and an input into drawing up the plan.

Mrs Hamilton asked if Ms Reilly was referring to people who are in their own homes?

Ms Reilly confirmed that the discussion was about domiciliary care.

Ms Lynch asked for clarification that it is only people with complex care needs in the home who would have a care plan?

Ms Reilly said that is her understanding and Mr Alan Corry Finn had confirmed this approach within the WHSC Trust.

Both Ms Lynch and Mrs Brown said it was their understanding that everybody would have a written care plan.

Ms Reilly said that Mr Alan Corry Finn had reported that the practice within the Trust is that individuals who are care managed, i.e. who have complex needs, are offered a copy of their care plan and timetable. District Nurses leave the original care plan in the home for all patients. Clients who are not care

managed and who have less complex needs, are not usually provided with a copy of the care plan but the information regarding the services that will be provided is shared with the individuals.

Action Point AP: c/09/08 – Travel arrangements for the Joint Council event to be sent to members.

Confirmation of the travel arrangements for the visit to the Assembly on 22nd October 2008 has been sent to members.

Action Point AP: d/09/08 – Chief Officer to formulate 2 questions for MLA's on Joint Council visit to the Assembly.

Work in progress.

Action Point AP: e/09/08 – Concerns regarding services in the Southern Sector of the WHSC Trust - Chief Officer to contact WHSS Council Councillor representatives from Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane District Councils to consider arranging a joint meeting of the District Councils and WHSS Council to discuss issues of common concern in the Southern Sector of the Western Trust

The Chief Officer said she had contacted WHSSC Councillor representatives and they are in agreement for her to write to the Chairs and Chief Executives of their respective Councils to invite them to a joint meeting.

Ms Ruth Lynch enquired if she should contact the Chief Executive of Fermanagh District Council to ask him to bring it up at the next meeting of the Council?

Ms Reilly said she had spoken to the District Councillors from Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane who are also members of the WHSS Council and they are in full support of a letter going out to the Chairs and Chief Executives inviting them to a joint meeting. She said it would depend on when the three Councils had their next meeting but, subject to agreement, it is likely to be November or early December before the joint meeting might take place.

Ms Reilly said in order to try and maintain as much neutrality as possible she would propose the meeting if agreed would be held in the Mellon Country Inn or possibly Kelly's Inn.

Mrs Hogg said that the meeting was an excellent idea; before we move to the bigger picture we need to actually identify the issues that are important to this area.

Action Point: AP a/10/08

Chief Officer to write to Chairs and Chief Executives of Fermanagh, Omagh and Strabane District Councils to invite them to meet jointly with the WHSS Council.

Action Point AP: f/09/08 – Chief Officer to write to the Department for an update on the Review of Autism Services consultation.

Agenda item.

Action Point AP: g/09/08 – Chief Officer to contact Joe Brogan at WHSSB for an update on the application for a Pharmacy in Lisbellaw.

WHSS Council has been informed by the WHSS Board that the application for a Pharmacy in Lisbellaw has been granted.

Repeat Bugwatch Survey – Altnagelvin:

Ms Reilly thanked the members who took part in the repeat Bugwatch Survey at Altnagelvin on 24 September 2008 and for attending the briefing session prior to undertaking the survey.

She said members reported a real transformation in the wards since their previous survey. She said although there was a question about why it took the WHSS Council to raise the issues, the Trust is to be given credit for putting the resources in place in order to bring about the transformation especially when there are a lot of competing priorities in the Health Service at the moment. Ms Reilly said the members of the WHSS Council could also take some credit for their work which helped to bring about these changes. She said there was a significant change reported in the elderly care wards in particular given that these wards had caused the most concern to members.

Ms Reilly referred to the overall comments on page 8 of the survey findings and said there were now a few areas of concern.

Ward 31 Surgical:

Chairs in the bathroom with cloth material seats, which are not easily cleaned, were found to be soiled.

A patient informed members that the showers are blocking. Members discussed this with staff on the ward who were already aware of the problem and said it is due to a backflow of water because of the gradient of the floor of the shower. This has previously been reported and maintenance staff have been to the ward to look at the shower to try to address this issue. However the issue remains unresolved.

Ward 15 Maternity:

There is still a concern in relation to the Sharps boxes. They were stored in the clinical room where there is a sign on the door to 'keep closed'; however the door was open. Sharps boxes were not stored above head height and at least 4 boxes checked had the aperture open.

Ms Lynch said although not highlighted in the report she wished to point out that conditions in the staff kitchen on the maternity ward were noticeably improved from the previous visit.

Mrs Hamilton raised a concern she had regarding smoking outside the doors of Altnagelvin Hospital. She said Altnagelvin is a no smoking hospital but immediately outside the door there are cigarette butts lying everywhere. She asked if WHSSC could write to the Trust to see if they would put a notice up requesting that cigarette butts are put in the containers provided.

Ms Reilly said she believed all hospitals in Northern Ireland are struggling to deal with this problem. She said there appeared to be an acceptance that people are going to smoke outside the hospital doors therefore resources need to be put in place to keep the area clean.

Mr Campbell said there are literally hundreds of butts lying outside the door which have obviously been there for a long period of time.

Mrs Robson said the general cleaning routine should take care of this problem.

Mr McKelvey said there should be a simple notice up asking people to refrain from throwing butts on the ground. People who are causing the problem should have a receptacle to throw butts into.

Mr Campbell said the cleaners working inside the door at Altnagelvin have only to step one or two yards outside to clean it up and if they did this once a day this would be all that was required.

Ms Lynch said if people see a lot of cigarette butts lying around they will be quicker to throw theirs down also.

Action Point: AP b/10/08

Chief Officer to raise members' concerns about cigarette butts being discarded outside the doors at Altnagelvin Hospital.

Ms Reilly said following the setting up of the new PCC next year it would be hoped that more Bugwatch Surveys will be carried out. She said members should be satisfied with their efforts to help make real improvements for

patients.

DHSSPS Action Plan Autism Services - consultation:

Mr Campbell since raising his concerns at last month's meeting regarding the Autism Services consultation said he had read the consultation document which was sent to him recently. He was pleased to see that all the issues highlighted in Lord Maginnis' Review have been included. He said there is only £2.2million funding allocated over three years which is pretty small considering there is a huge waiting list for assessment and treatment. He felt the WHSS Council should not make a response to the consultation without first meeting with the parents and those affected by autism in order to get their views on the priorities.

Ms Reilly suggested that the Autism Working Group could be re-convened in order that the WHSS Council response reflects the users/carers' views.

Mrs Brown said she read an article in the newspaper saying that an Autism Group was calling for a Specialist Doctor in Autism.

Ms Reilly said that was something the WHSS Council should consider supporting.

Mr Campbell said the parents' groups and those who have drafted the plan including the Department have different priorities. He said it is really about joined up services; a lot of the services are there and it is a matter of getting people to talk to one another. A major problem in the Western area is that waiting lists are much greater and services are so much poorer than anywhere else. Mr Campbell said he was concerned that most of the £2.2 million might be devoted to the Belfast area.

Mrs Hogg said there is an equality issue about access to Autism services. She believed talking to the parents was very important because every child is different. The problem with Autism she said is that there is no common denominator and there simply isn't enough money to deal with the diversity of problems that there are in Autism. She supported the Chief Officer's suggestion to re-convene the Autism Sub-group as the parents who sat on that group are extremely well informed and are dealing with the issues on a day to day basis. Mrs Hogg asked to be involved in the meeting.

Action Point: AP c/10/08

WHSSC to re-convene Autism Working Group in order to reflect the views of parents when making a response to the Consultation.

Mrs Robson welcomed Ms Caroline Kelly from the Southwest Carers Forum and invited her to make her presentation to Council members on the work of the forum. She also welcomed two other members who were in attendance.

Presentation by Ms Caroline Kelly:

Ms Kelly thanked the WHSS Council for inviting her to the Council meeting.

Who are Carers?

Individuals who provide unpaid help and support on a regular basis to a spouse, partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour who is frail, has physical or mental disability or who has a mental health illness or a life limiting disease.

Facts about Carers in N Ireland

- About 185, 000 carers in NI
- Save Government £3.12 billion per year
- 20% women, 10% men regard themselves as carers
- 1 in 7 people juggle paid work and caring
- Predicted increase in over-65 NI population between 2002-2017 29%
- 61% of carers look after someone aged 65 or older

Carers in Northern Ireland

From census carried out in Fermanagh and Tyrone approximately 20% of population appear to be disabled in one form or another (disabled includes those elderly people who are frail)

10% of population caring for:

- the elderly
- people with mental health illness
- learning disabled adults
- physically disabled adults
- people with life limiting diseases
- children with special needs

What Carers do for person they care for:

- physically care up to 168 hours in week
- manage benefits and financial help
- negotiate care support with the Trust
- arrange for attention for health needs

- provide transport and social access
- are usually the main advocates for those for whom they care
- provide transport and social access

What Carers' Problems are

- Invisibility
- Exhaustion
- Poverty
- Isolation
- Stress
- Health Problems
- Lack of choice

What is South West Carers Forum?

- created by Carers for Carers
- representing views of Carers
- established in late 2007
- covering Fermanagh, South Tyrone
- managed on a voluntary basis
- advocates for Carers

Foundation of Forum

- families supporting families
- creation of Circles of Support
- helping Carers advocate for services
- building self confidence
- focus on person centred planning
- use of Direct Payments and Independent Living Fund
- taking control

Combined Knowledge

- Needs Assessments
- Child Protection

- Carers Assessments
- Domiciliary Care
- Occupational Therapy
- Respite
- Direct Payments
- ILF Payments
- Day Services
- Who's who in WHSCT etc
- Autism
- Dementia
- Down Syndrome
- Behavioural Issues
- Nursing Needs
- Residential Homes
- Nursing Homes
- POCVA Checks etc

We link in with

- Carers NI
- Other Carer Groups
- Disability Groups
- Senior Citizens Groups
- Parents Groups at Special Schools
- Service Providers invited to associate

What we have done so far

- Obtained small amount of funding
- Organised public meetings for carers
- Run carer to carer network groups
- Represented carers at consultations
- Registered 200+ carers as members
- Listened, talked, shared experiences

What Carers Need

Recognition from society

- Special Status valuing our contribution
- Understanding of our role
- Key partners in providing care
- Awareness training for public sector
- Life outside caring

Better services for carers and those we care for

- Fair deal for providing unpaid care
- Choices in type of care support
- Same standards across N Ireland
- Professionals as members of Circles

Income

- Benefits
- Decent income
- Flexible benefits
- Services that fit around working lives
- Tax and pension benefits

Health Care

- Fast tracking for carers and those for whom they care through system
- Choice to care or to manage care
- Training in how to care
- Regular breaks
- Peace of mind

We need your help

- Help raise public recognition of carers
- Make us partners in planning
- Remind other organisations about us
- Meet with our carers regularly
- Consult with us about our needs
- Help us ADVOCATE for better services

What your help will do for us

- Raise our self esteem
- Build our self confidence
- End our isolation
- Give us recognition and respect

- Enable our experience to be shared
- Put us at the heart of service design

Empowerment for Carers

“We want carers to be actively involved in the design, development and delivery of services. We want carers to be recognised and involved as key partners in the provision of health and social care services.”

Carers NI submission to Equality Commission

Ms Kelly said some of the members of the Southwest Carers Forum sit on various Steering Groups organised by the local Trust e.g. she sits on a Learning Disability Transition Group and a Carer’s and Direct Payments Steering Group. She said they are there as carers, but have a feeling of tokenism when they are there. Decisions are being made behind closed doors and they haven’t been involved from the outset. She referred to the issue recently in the Press of rewards for adults in Learning Disability and said five or six care representatives spent three years going up and down to Derry to be informed by the Western Board and the Western Trust on a new strategy for Day Care for Learning Disabilities called Day Opportunities. With a lot of fighting and arguing and actually a very successful coming together of the partners and stakeholders the strategy was produced in January 2007. She pointed out that rewards was an intrinsic part of the system. She said for a period of three months over six meetings they met to discuss an implementation plan for Day Opportunities. In March/April 2008 a plan was developed and they were happy with it. The next time they heard about it was when the Trust arranged information meetings in Limavady, Strabane, Derry, Omagh and Enniskillen to tell them they had to cut £450,000 from Learning Disabilities under the Comprehensive Spending Review and they were going to stop paying the reward money. Ms Kelly said that unfortunately is the face of engaging, you can be at the table, you can do a tremendous amount of talking and at the end of the day it’s worth nothing. However she said this would not stop them from continuing to be involved.

Members’ questions to speaker:

Mrs Robson on behalf of the Council thanked Ms Kelly for her very informative presentation and invited members’ questions.

Mrs Brown

Mrs Brown asked Ms Kelly if reports in today’s papers were accurate that the decision to stop paying the rewards had been rescinded?

Ms Kelly said the report was accurate and what had happened on this occasion was that the parents got MLAs to come along to the information meetings. The MLAs were shocked at the decision and some of them spoke to the Health Minister who she reported had denied all responsibility for having made the

decision. Mr McGimpsey then met with the Chief Executive of the WHSC Trust on Wednesday and the decision was rescinded. Ms Kelly pointed out that apparently in the Southern sector of the Trust some years ago they had tried to take these rewards away and that decision had been rescinded also.

Ms Lynch

Ms Lynch said she had noted how the MLAs picked up on it but in fact they knew about this five or six months ago. She said none of them protested about it until the carers raised it. She said it shows the importance of the carers being there at the beginning and the importance of corresponding at the outset with people who are on the ground and those most affected by these decisions.

Ms Kelly said she asked the question at a meeting; 'What exactly is the budget for Learning Disabilities in the Western Trust area?' Mrs Rosaleen Harkin said it was about £29 million. Ms Kelly said she wondered where that £29 million was going and out of that £29 million the only money they could find to cut is the money that is going directly to the adults for Learning Disabilities who are the most vulnerable of all. Ms Kelly said the only other money that they are cutting is in closing a ward in Lakeview Hospital which was built three years ago for assessment and treatment of behavioural and Learning Disabilities. It has 43 beds but it has never been occupied. She believes the average occupancy is approximately 27 beds. She stressed that everyone needs to work together and make sure that when decisions are made that they are responsive to what is happening on the ground. Ms Kelly said some of the members of the Southwest Carers Forum are looking at issues around resources under Bamford and looking to see if there are enough resources coming to the West for disability generally. She said the main concern among the Southwest Carers Forum is the waste of resources they see every day. She said the Trust has got embattled staff who never actually deliver anything other than assessments, regrets and apologies; although she said she is not blaming them. The whole thing has got to be turned around and she believes that is what they want to do and it is this that is driving them.

Ms Martin a carer colleague pointed out that it took four months to get through the layers of management when accessing Direct Payments. She said it was crazy having to deal with so many people.

Ms Kelly gave an example of an ongoing issue they are dealing with at the moment. She said it concerns a single parent with four children one of who has severe behavioural difficulties and complex needs. Her son had been given a mattress which he tore up and he has been lying on bare boards and a bit of foam for a month. The Social Workers and Community nurses said they would contact the District Nurses and the District Nurses say they can't give him a mattress. Ms Kelly said the Carers Forum have told them that they are going to make a public appeal on the radio for money to pay for the mattress but cannot get details of the name, the size or type of the mattress.

Mr McKelvey

Mr McKelvey said they should not have to do that as there is a benefits system where a mattress can be approved. He said there is a thing called the Social Fund and if the person happens to be on benefits there would be no reason why they shouldn't get a replacement mattress. He asked Ms Kelly if her group had legal representation and if this service is subject to equality across the region?

Ms Kelly said she herself was a solicitor. In the Southwest Carers Group they choose to be advocates and want to continue focussing on advocacy. In dealing with a particular problem she said she had sat down with a family and wrote a complaint to the Trust. Copies were sent to the WHSS Council, the Equality Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the Law Centre in Derry and to a lady who looks after the Equality Impact Assessments in the Trust. She said it is beyond families to sit down and write eight letters and get the addresses and talk to the people concerned. The Southwest Carers Forum has the capacity in the group to do that but are not going to take on to do it. Instead she said they will network with any organisation that supports advocacy and can create a tier whereby when more specialised advocacy is required then it can be accessed.

Mr McKelvey asked Ms Kelly if whenever the Trust came out with this dramatic decision to cut the rewards did she ask them if it was happening elsewhere?

Ms Kelly said they did not get a chance to address it until the information meeting that was held.

Mr McKelvey said he feels strongly that there has got to be total equality for people no matter where they live. He said the funding is there for the entire Province and if there is a deviation in any way we have got to ask the question, what about equality and why has this been taken out? We cannot have local chiefdoms deciding to take money out of the budget; there has got to be equality not only for the people who live in Fermanagh but for the people who live anywhere in the Province. If you don't reinforce that at every stage, then you are losing out and we will not tolerate that and the WHSS Council will seek to ensure that there is at least equal treatment. There are other factors like the rurality and we have got to make sure that this is taken into account. He said people are often too slow to ask questions at meetings and then talk outside the meetings; we need to start talking inside the meeting and when you get the opportunity you can actually advocate for what's best for your community.

Ms Reilly

Ms Reilly said equality right across the board for all the services in the Western area is something that we are struggling with at the minute. She said the four Councils have an opportunity to go to the Assembly to speak to the MLAs and

one of the issues being highlighted is why the West appears to be lagging behind on service equality. She said there is inequality in the West versus the rest of Northern Ireland and within the West it is our experience that quite often the Southern sector of the West is the least equal of all of the groupings. Ms Reilly said the Health Councils were trying to capture some of the issues that need to be handed over to the new PCC and one of the things she would be advocating for is an alliance with groups such as the Southwest Carers Forum because they have the legitimacy to speak for carers, and are able to bring their experience to the table.

Mr Campbell

Mr Campbell said it is unfortunate that the only time the Trust reacts is when there is adverse publicity. He said it is appalling that when the Trust wants to make savings they target people in the most vulnerable sector of our society and it is to be condemned.

Mrs Hamilton

Mrs Hamilton thanked Ms Kelly for her presentation and said she admired the work the group does as she herself has experience of the problems mentioned. She said the support of the carers group is a great help to other people.

Ms Lynch

Ms Lynch said she didn't feel that male carers were accurately reflected in the statistics because she is aware of a number of male carers in her own area. She said the leaflets produced by the Southwest Carers Forum are very useful because it is harder to get men to engage in groups.

Mrs Robson thanked Ms Kelly and her colleagues for attending the meeting and said they were welcome to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

WHSSC Business continued:

Patient Client Council (PCC) Update:

Ms Reilly reminded members that there are three working groups looking at staffing and locations and organisational structures, governance systems and procedures and the first year's business plans. She said there is an expectation that the Chair and Chief Executive should be in post by Christmas or early new year. Currently work is underway in describing the 2nd and 3rd tier staffing for the new organisation.

Members' Issues:

Mrs Robson:

Mrs Robson drew members' attention to a booklet produced by the NI Cancer Network (NICAN) which they had received in July. She said it is generally about services and involved a lot of consultation with patients who have been diagnosed with cancer. She advised members they could maybe pass it around to friends or give out information. Anyone who did not get a copy can request one from WHSS Council office.

Mrs Brown:

Mrs Brown said she had completed the form at the back of the booklet and passed it on to someone she knows who has just been diagnosed with cancer. Mrs Brown said the patient had been given no information, no support and no counselling. She said, as she had highlighted at the last meeting, there is nothing in the booklet about the Fermanagh area and people do not know who to contact.

Mrs Robson said the NICAN office will give details of anything that is being set up even if it is in the pipeline or the nearest place to the patient.

Ms Reilly said her understanding is that there are self help groups operating in the southern sector of the Western Trust area and she had recently seen a poster in the Erne Hospital about such a group.

Mrs Robson said she would talk to Ms Janis McCulla NICAN about the entries and report back at a future Council meeting.

Action Point: AP d/10/08

Mrs Robson to speak to Ms Janis McCulla NICAN and update members at a future WHSS Council meeting.
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Mr Campbell:

Mr Campbell referred to an article that had appeared in the Ulster Herald where Councillor Ross Hussey requested information under the Freedom of Information Act from the WHSS Board regarding services at Tyrone County Hospital. He said the Board had refused to provide the information to Councillor Hussey under Section 38. He said this is again creating problems for the people in the area because no one seems to know what is happening to services. Mr Campbell asked if the WHSS Council could request the information from the WHSS Board?

Mr Campbell said another issue raised by Councillor Hussey that appeared in the press was in relation to the Comforts funds for people with disabilities. It was alleged that money was used from the Comforts fund to provide two special mattresses for the elderly in Larch Villa. The Trust he said seems to be

suggesting that because it was for the elderly and because they were special mattresses that this was an acceptable way to use the money. Councillor Hussey's attitude was that it was something that should have been provided directly from the service. Mr Campbell said he was aware that there are many bequests and gifts given to the day centres and day opportunities and he wondered if they are being used for the benefit of the clients or are they being just subsumed into the general budget of the Trust to make up the shortfalls?

Mrs Robson said she was at the Trust Board meeting this week and Councillor Hussey gave a very passionate lecture again as he has done at a number of previous meetings and he is not going to let go until he gets an answer.

Mr Campbell said the WHSS Council represents the public and need to know the answers also.

Ms Reilly said she would find out what information Councillor Hussey was requesting and the Council will make the same request.

She said she will also enquire as to what the governance arrangements are for the use of patient comfort funds. Ms Reilly said there should be clear governance arrangements around the use of such funds and what the money can and cannot be used for.

Action Point: AP e/10/08

Chief Officer to contact Councillor Hussey for details of his information request and ask for same from WHSS Board.

Action Point: AP f/10/08

Chief Officer to contact WHSC Trust for details of governance arrangements for the use of patient comfort funds.

Mr McKelvey:

Mr McKelvey drew members' attention to a Press Release dated 4th September 2008 relating to the development of new Primary and Community Care facilities at Lisnaskea. He said the WHSC Trust had welcomed the Minister's announcement but when referring to the Business Case the statement said 'if approved'. This he said could mean it might not be approved. Mr McKelvey said the WHSS Council need a more definitive answer about this i.e. when are they going to go ahead and if it is promised will it take 5, 10 or 15 years?

Ms Reilly said when the Health Minister was appointed he announced a review of the PCCI strategy and the investment for the next 10 years in Capital Projects and this is one of them. The outcome of the review has not yet been reported. Ms Reilly said because there were some concerns being raised

about Lisnaskea specifically the Minister made a visit to Lisnaskea Health Centre and made a commitment to the development of the Health Centre.

Mr McKelvey said the Trust Press Statement of the 12th September 2008 announcing the appointment of a Colorectal Surgeon was excellent news. He said the WHSS Council also needs to pursue the Trust regarding the recruitment of a second surgeon.

Mr McKelvey said the Minister had announced yesterday that the ageing ambulance fleet was to be replaced. He said that helps regarding concerns about the ambulance service irrespective of whether you live in Derry, Strabane, Omagh or Enniskillen. Mr McKelvey said the statement did not give any information on the expansion of the service. He said we need to make sure that it is not a one for one replacement policy and that there is an extension and expansion of services.

Mr McKelvey referred to the Bain Report and said he was disappointed that there are no jobs set for Strabane. He said he had been present when Lord Bain met with the Chief Executive of the District Council, several of the Councillors and the Chamber of Commerce and hopes it does not end up as if they were all talking a lot of hot air as they were trying to be absolutely reasonable. Strabane is an area that has got to be recognised as a community area that's got to be served as well. He said there is a large volume of people from that area travelling to Derry and elsewhere and it needs to be recognised that Strabane needs jobs just as much as anybody else.

Ms Reilly said when she had received the Press Release regarding the appointment of the Colorectal Surgeon she had contacted Mrs Margaret Kelly, Director of Acute Services with the Trust to enquire if all the services are at Altnagelvin and patients won't have to go to any other hospitals outside the Trust for their care during the interim period whilst they wait to appoint a second surgeon. Mrs Kelly said that the Trust have secured one colorectal surgeon so there is still one vacancy. She said they have set up an arrangement with the South Eastern Trust to provide outreach services one day per week to provide outpatient services, participate in cancer MDT meetings and provide advice if required. A small number of patients will attend the Ulster Hospital for their operation. The Trust will be advertising shortly for the second post.

Mrs Hogg:

Mrs Hogg asked if there was any information on the uptake for the cancer vaccination programme? She said she would like to know if it has been successful because there have been some newspaper reports of parents not giving consent.

Mrs Robson said she was at a cervical screening meeting in Belfast and the doctors there seem to think that it is essential, particularly against most of the

viruses but not all of them. There is another vaccine which is slightly more expensive which will protect against more viruses and it was said to her that some parents prefer to get that vaccine from their own GP if their child is going to be vaccinated at all.

Mrs Hogg said she believed there are some parents who do not want any vaccination at all. She wondered if this has been properly explored with them and it is something the WHSS Council should keep a watching brief on.

Ms Reilly said the WHSS Council can request figures from the Western Board as to what the take up has been and if they have encountered any issues in relation to concerns being raised by parents.

Action Point: AP g/10/08

Chief Officer to contact WHSS Board for figures on the uptake of the cancer vaccine.
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Mrs Hogg said she had a concern regarding the Bamford Review and the fact that whatever the Bamford Review says it is not actually happening on the ground. She said she believed the WHSS Council should have another meeting about this as people with mental health problems cannot stand up for themselves and the Council needs to stand up for them.

Ms Reilly reminded members that in the Western area the two Trusts (formerly Sperrin Lakeland and Foyle) carried out their own review 'Moving Forward' and which in essence was based on predicting what Bamford would propose. The new Trust is taking forward these proposals but concerns were being expressed that the pace of implementation was slow. She said she would arrange a briefing to update members.

Action Point: AP h/10/08

Chief Officer to arrange a briefing on the work of the Bamford Review.
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Mr Foley:

Mr Foley asked if the WHSS Council had been contacted by a family from Strabane that he had been dealing with regarding a care issue for their daughter?

Ms Reilly said she had been made aware of the family through the Southwest Carers Forum.

Ms Kelly said the Southwest Carers Forum had been working with the family in

Strabane and there is no development yet.

Any Other Business:

Chair in Media:

Mr McKelvey said he noted the Chair has been in the Media. He said he didn't hear any of the interviews but anticipated that there would be no complaints and wished to congratulate her.

Mrs Robson thanked Mr McKelvey for his comments.

Environmental Assessment of Shannaragh Road A32:

Ms Reilly said the Council had received a letter from Faber Maunsell who have been appointed by DRD Road Service to undertake an environmental assessment for proposed improvements to the Shannaragh Road A32, between Omagh and Dromore, Co Tyrone. They stated they were currently in the preliminary stages of the process and were seeking to gather background information to assist with the base line of environmental conditions. The project consists of improvements to the A32 road from the B4 at Drumlish to the outskirts of Dromore. Due to the tight timeframe responses are required by the 24th October in order that any issues raised as a result of the consultation process can be adequately dealt with. Ms Reilly said that given that that might be part of the route that Tyrone people have to use to go to the Erne Hospital, members particularly from the Omagh area might want to make some kind of comment.

Mrs Hogg proposed sending the document to all members.

It was agreed to copy the document to all members.

Action Point: AP i/10/08

Copy of letter from Faber Maunsell to go to all members.
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WHSC Trust Annual Report:

Ms Reilly said the WHSC Trust Annual Report has been published and the Council received 10 copies. She said the Council has asked the Trust for additional copies so there is one for all members.

Northern Ireland Minors Ailments Scheme:

Ms Reilly said members would be aware that the Northern Ireland Minor Ailments Scheme which was being delivered through high street pharmacies had been suspended. It would appear she said that the background to it is that

there was a breakdown in the contract and the financial arrangements between the Department and Pharmacy. The Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee have contacted the WHSS Council with a view to making a comment. She said she would make a comment on behalf of members as she felt the Council should have a view on this. The good thing about having this type of service through high street pharmacies is that this reduces the need to go to the GP for things like winter ailments, the sorts of minor things that we know good Pharmacists can actually deal with.

Action Point: AP j/10/08

Chief Officer to provide comments on behalf of members on the NI Minor Ailments Scheme.

Dental Access:

Ms Reilly drew members' attention to a Press Release where the Health Minister Mr McGimpsey said that a tender to secure additional dental services should dramatically reduce access problems for patients by the end of next year. Members were issued with a copy of the Press Release.

Ms Reilly said the Minister had also announced that he had made funding available for five additional dental students from August 2008 which now makes Queen's University the largest Dental School in Ireland.

Visit to Erne Health Centre:

Ms Reilly said the Business Support Manager and two members will visit the Erne Health Centre on 14th October 2008.

Visit to Mental Health facilities at the Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital:

Ms Reilly said she and two or three members will visit a range of units in the Tyrone and Fermanagh hospital on a date to be arranged.

Date of Next meeting:

The next meeting will be on Friday 14th November 2008 in Strabane District Council Offices.

The meeting will be a Liaison with the WHSC Trust.

There will be a presentation from Ms Maura Mason, Co-ordinator for the Surestart Partnership in the West.

Ms Reilly asked members to send any questions or concerns to the office they wish raised with the Trust prior to the meeting.

Ms Lynch apologised that she would not be able to attend the next meeting but she would like an issue raised regarding a Surestart Expansion Programme in Roslea and Newtownbutler and looking for it to be extended to Lisnaskea. She said she would get details of that for the Chief Officer for the meeting on 14th November.

Action Point: AP k/10/08

Members to forward issues they wish to raise with WHSC Trust at Liaison meeting with WHSS Council on 14 th November 2008.
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The meeting ended at 12.30pm