

6. STAFF AND CROSS CARE GROUP DEVELOPMENTS

Human Resources Strategy

Human Resources Strategies adopted by the Board are an integral component of corporate success in operating in a changing environment. It is, therefore, essential that the Board's human resources strategy and policies are dynamic and appropriate to the needs of today and the future.

In the course of the Year 2000 staff in the personnel function will continue to work with managers at all levels to put in place dynamic human resources strategies appropriate to the challenges that are ahead. In a number of areas the difficulties in attracting and retaining appropriate staff is emerging as a problem in delivering the services as set out in the service plan. In order to minimise the impact such staff shortages will have on services it will be necessary to consider new recruitment practices and new working arrangements which will help to attract and retain staff.

General Nurse Registration/Diploma Programme

In 1998 the first intake of 20 students in General Nurse training in the Midland Health Board School of Nursing took place. In 1999 the intake was increased to 30 students per year. In 2000 and for future years the intake will be increased to 40 students per year.

Library and Information Services

In the course of 2000 a strategic development plan will be prepared which will take advantage of the IT system available and which will facilitate the development of electronic information resource facilities within each of the Board's libraries. Further training will be provided for staff on electronic information resources particularly Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) and Medline.

SAP Programme Development

The Board, with assistance from the Department of Health & Children and the North Eastern Health Board, implemented Phase 1 of Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) during 1999, and went live with the Finance and Materials Management modules on the 1st October, 1999.

While SAP is still in its infancy, the benefits to date have been considerable. The Board for the first time has a fully integrated, live stores and financial systems allowing budget holders immediate information on orders, stores issues and expenditure against plan. SAP also brings commitment reporting, enabling budget holders to manage more fully their cost centre budgets. Further development is planned during 2000, with the devolution of the purchasing module to local managers.

It is planned also to integrate the work already begun on Personnel, Payroll, Attendance, Recruitment System (PPARS), which is also to be delivered on the SAP platform, into the Board's SAP Programme. PPARS is an on-line computer system which will generate all data required for payroll processing and will also provide timely management information in the area Personnel, Payroll, Attendance Monitoring, Recruitment and Superannuation. Six health agencies are involved in this project and it is planned that the first elements of the system will go 'live' in the Midland Health Board's area in the second half of 2000.

Health & Safety

The Board will continue to endeavor to provide a safe environment and safe systems of work for its staff. To this end every effort will be made to eliminate hazards and where hazards cannot be eliminated safe work practices will be devised and taught to the staff involved.

In 1999, 67 manual handling instructors were trained. In the course of 2000 these manual-handling instructors will provide training for staff at each work location on safe methods of moving patients and will ensure adherence to good practice in situations where it is necessary to move patients.

Drawing on the knowledge derived from the review carried out in 1999, action plans will be devised and put in place during 2000 to ensure that the Board complies fully with the spirit as well as the letter of the Health and Safety legislation.

The screening and vaccination programme for all grades of at-risk staff will continue. The availability of the computerised database will be of significant benefit in this regard.

Workplace Health Promotion

<p>The partnership project on Health promotion in the workplace initiated in 1999 will continue during 2000 and will in particular address the issue of stress and exercise in the workplace. This health promotion programme is based on a partnership approach with staff.</p>	<p>Target 6.1</p> <p>A partnership working group will be established by January 2000. This group will plan initiatives focusing on staff exercise and mental health.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>Following report from working group appropriate initiatives in place.</p> <p>Target 6.2</p> <p>The Board will plan health promotion programmes in partnership with staff, particular emphasis on reducing stress and promoting increased physical activity among Midland Health Board staff.</p> <p>The Board will offer placement for two health fitness and leisure</p>
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	<p>students for six months to assist with the workplace project.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>Health promotion initiatives in place.</p>
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Tobacco Control

The Board will continue to support the enforcement of tobacco legislation.

<p>Strategic Focus</p> <p>The Board will develop responses to combat tobacco use through the prevention of smoking uptake among young people, empowering people to cease smoking and strengthening policy regulation to restrict smoking and create supportive environments conducive to no-smoking.</p>	<p>Target 6.3.1</p> <p>The Board will provide intervention training for smoking cessation to health care staff.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>9 courses provided in 2000</p> <p>Target 6.3.2</p> <p>The Board will develop a model for smoking cessation for use within health care settings across the Board.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>Model developed</p> <p>Target 6.3.3</p> <p>The Board will develop a response to the cardiovascular strategy which will focus in particular on tobacco reduction and control.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>Response developed by 30th January, 2000.</p>
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	<p>Target 6.3.4</p> <p>The Board will review and update the existing smoking policy within the Board.</p> <p>Performance Indicator</p> <p>Policy developed by December 2000. 0.006M</p>
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Food Safety:

On 4th July 1999, the Midland Health Board, pursuant to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland Act, 1998, signed a Service Contract with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland to carry out, on behalf of and as agent for the Authority, the following functions within its catchment area.

- a. the inspection, approval, licensing and/or registration of premises and equipment, including premises or equipment used in connection with the manufacture, processing, disposal, transport and storage of food.
- b. the inspection, sampling and analysis of food, including food ingredients, and
- c. the inspection and analysis of food labelling, to determine compliance with Food Legislation.

With regard to the inspection of food premises, the Board is committed to achieving the following initial inspection frequencies in the year 2000,

High Risk Businesses: once a year

Medium Risk Businesses: twice in three years

Low Risk Businesses: once in three years

The following frequencies are targeted for implementation by the third year of the initial three year contract.

High Risk Businesses: three times per year

Medium Risk Businesses: twice a year

Low Risk Businesses: once a year

Quality Management System:

The Board is also committed, under the Service Agreement to the Quality Management System (QMS) for the Environmental Health Services, and aims to achieve accreditation to ISO 9002 over the period of the contract. In an amendment to the above-mentioned Act, the training of food workers has now been included under Section 46 of the Act. This will now become an integral part of the Environmental Health Service in the year 2000.

Information Technology:

The Board is also committed to providing a computerised food control system over the lifetime of the Service Contract. In order to achieve the objectives and targets outlined in the service agreement, the food control development funding of £0.245 m for the year 2000 will focus on the permanent employment of Environmental Health Officer staff, the provision and implementation of a computerised food control system and advancing the implementation of the Quality Management System in the Environmental Health Services in the Board.

Euro Currency

A Steering Group has been set up to oversee the implementation of the Euro currency in the Midland Health Board.

The Group is currently in the process of compiling a Changeover Plan for the Board, which will be in line with the Health Services Euro Changeover Plan while also taking into account any local issues.

The terms of reference for the Group can be summarised as follows:

- to examine the implications for the Board for the changeover to the Euro
- to identify and make such changes to systems and procedures as necessary
- to identify and implement training needs of all staff, directly and indirectly affected by the introduction of the Euro.
- to identify and meet information needs of the public, patients, staff, pensioners and suppliers insofar as such needs arise in respect of Health Board services.

Although the rule of 'No Compulsion - No Prohibition' exists, Government policy is that public service agencies should facilitate the use of Euro if requested to do so. In line with this policy the Board's centres have already been briefed in procedures to facilitate:

- requests from suppliers for payments in Euro
- requests to accept payments in Euro

In 1999, the impact of on the Board of the introduction of the single currency has been minimal, with just one invoice paid in Euros. It is expected, that this will increase in 2000, as the Y2k issues are finalised. The areas to be reviewed and

assessed for compliance in 2000 include all the Board's IT systems, billing and patient management, stationery, legal issues and the Board's relationship with other institutions, e.g. Revenue Commissioners, Banks etc.

Materials Management

The Regional Materials Management Service was established in 1998 to develop, operate and manage a comprehensive materials management service for all goods, services and equipment in the Midland Health Board. This includes: -

- Procurement
- Inventory Management
- Customer Services

The Regional Materials Manager (RMM) has collaborative responsibility with colleague Regional Materials Managers, in other Health Board's and Voluntary Hospitals, to ensure the following are achieved; -

- Best practice Materials Management
- Compliance with all National and E.U. Procurement legislation
- Value for Money through combined purchasing arrangements

Review of Service

In 1999 the following issues were undertaken: -

Board Level

- Responsibility for the management of the Board's two Central Supplies Departments was transferred to the Regional Materials Manager in January 1999
- A Review Group completed a review of the operation of the Central Supplies Departments in November 1999. The findings and recommendations of this review form part of the 2000 Service Plan for Materials Management.
- Three staff from the Materials Management Service were seconded to work full-time on the SAP implementation project throughout the year and the Materials Management Module of the SAP financial Systems was successfully implemented on the 1st October 1999

- Improved procurement arrangements were implemented in respect of equipment purchases through the involvement of the Equipping Supplies Officer working through the Regional Materials Management Service
- Considerable time and effort was devoted throughout the year by Materials Management Staff to ensuring, in so far as is possible, that the effect of any potential risk, to the supply chain, from the Y2K 'bug' was minimised.

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National Level

Work commenced on a number of national contracts.

These include:-

- Incontinence Products
- Food Provisions
- Fuel Oil
- Laboratory Supplies
- X-ray film & chemicals
- Medical / Surgical Gloves

A National Health Service Procurement Policy was drafted by Regional Materials Managers for distribution to all staff involved in the purchase of goods, services and equipment

The National Y2K Supply Chain Special Interest Group developed and implemented National Y2K Supply Chain Strategy

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Savings

The Board's 1999 Letter of Determination included a non-pay savings target of £0.235m. This was an ambitious target which was to be achieved through a combination of Board and national initiatives. During 1999, savings amounting to £0.100m were identified and implemented at Midland Health Board level. There were a number of reasons why the £0.235m target was not reached.

These include: -

- The Board's previous record in implementing Value for Money (VFM), initiatives which resulted in significant savings considerably reduced the Board's capacity to implement further VFM measures. The initiatives have and continue to contribute significantly to the Board's budgetary well-being.
- A number of National Contracts that did not materialise in 1999 will contribute to the savings target for 2000

Developments 2000

Subject to resource implications (where applicable) the following developments are planned for 2000.

Board level

Implementation of the recommendations of the Central Supplies Department Review Group report.

These include:-

The establishment of a Central Contracting Unit to manage the Board's non-pay

spend on goods, services and equipment in order to ensure:-

- Value for money through economies of scale
- Compliance with National and E.U. Procurement legislation
- Best practice Materials Management

The establishment of a Community Care Appliances and Equipment service to manage the purchase, issue, tracking, collection and cleaning of community care (and hospital) appliances and equipment in order to ensure:-

- Improved customer focus
- Minimisation of risk
- Improved value for money

- The continued support for the development and roll out of the SAP Materials Management Module in Central Supplies and user locations throughout the Board including:

- Ongoing updating and development of the Materials Management stock catalogue
- The development of a protocol for the introduction of new items to ensure appropriate level of authorisation and budgetary approval
- An assessment of the benefits of a post of stock controller to manage stocks held in Central Supplies with a view to reducing stock holding levels.

Introduction of a storage & delivery service of Health Promotion publications and literature within the Board's Area

Development of a framework aimed at ensuring that the equipping element of all capital projects are managed in a planned and co-ordinated way, collaboration with the Materials Management Services.

Savings:

A Health Service, non-pay savings target of £12.5m has been set by the Department of Health and Children for 2000.

The savings target included in this Board's Letter of Determination is £0.587m. This is

2½ times in excess of the savings target in 1999 and it has been top sliced from the Board's allocation

Based on the developments and activity outlined in Board's Service Plan proposals non-pay savings in the region of £0.300m can be achieved in 2000.

This is based on the following criteria: -

- overall value of spend
- market knowledge
- proposed national initiatives
- planned local initiatives
- available resources

A further £0.150m will be achieved at Board level through the measures outlined in this Service Plan and an additional £0.150m will be achieved through conjoint action at National Level.

The shortfall in the savings target of £0.287m must be addressed at national level and will require significant additional effort over and above that already planned for 2000.

The Board's will, of course, continue to identify improved procurement arrangements and enhanced product / service usage arrangements.

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COMMUNITY WELFARE SERVICE

Introduction

The Community Welfare Service is primarily responsible for the assessment and administration of the means-tested health and personal social services delivered by the Midland Health Board. This includes services administered under the Health Acts and the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme. Other key areas of responsibility for the Community Welfare Service area include the following :-

- The giving of information on health and personal social services administered by the Board and personal social services administered by external agencies (e.g. Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs, the Local Authorities).
- Liaison, mediation, referral and advocacy within and across organisations on behalf of clients seeking services and/or advice.

Current arrangements provide that 70% of community welfare services administrative costs are funded by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, and 30% by the Health Board.

Expenditure on supplementary Welfare Allowances in 1999

To 31/12/1999

Basic SW.A	£3,400,000
Supplements	£3,510,000

Exceptional Needs Payments	£ 525,000
Back to School Clothing & Footwear Scheme	£ 536,468
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Total:	£7,971,468

Review of Service Development Activities in 1999

Review and revision of reasonable rent limits payable under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme conducted (March 1999)

Training and/or information seminars provided in:

- Freedom of Information Act
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Critical Incident Debriefing

Review and revision of maximum rates payable towards the cost of funerals under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme conducted (November 1999).

Survey of training needs within the community welfare service completed and presented to management (November 1999)

Draft memorandum of understanding covering procedures for responses to homelessness agreed with the Housing Authorities within the Midland Health Board area.

In co-operation with the Housing Authorities, accommodation was sourced to facilitate the planned dispersal of asylum seekers, which formed part of a national strategy. The Health Board on behalf of the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs meet the personal income needs of the asylum seekers and the health needs were met by local General Practitioners and Health Board staff.

Planned and/or anticipated activities for the year 2000.

1. Maintain the current availability and accessibility of the Community Welfare Service to the public throughout 2000. There are scheduled attendances at 59 public offices throughout the Board's area each week.
2. Replacement laptop computers incorporating the most up-to-date software will be provided for each current laptop user during 2000. Funding has been approved by the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs
3. A programme of training, in response to the training needs identified, will be put in place during 2000.
4. Provide support to the Primary Care Unit in the development of an effective, efficient and customer friendly system for processing of applications and review of decisions on health service eligibility.

5. Evaluate and revise internal guidelines on levels of payment for rent supplementation and exceptional needs payments.
6. Participate with the statutory and voluntary agencies, in providing quality health and personal social services to asylum seekers under the dispersal programme.
7. Explore, through the medium of the Health Board/Local Authority Housing Forum, ways of integrating and maximising the effectiveness of services to clients in whom each organisation has a mutual interest.
8. Signing off of memorandum of understanding with Housing Authorities within the Board's area in relation to homeless persons early in the year.
9. A sum of £0.035m has been included in the Board's allocation for the year 2000 to fund targeted services for adult homeless and this initiative will be facilitated by the Community Welfare Service.