

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of Proceedings of Monthly Meeting of Eastern Health Board held in the Council Chamber, St. Mary's, Naas, Co. Kildare on Thursday 5th April, 1979 at 6p.m.

PRESENT

Cllr. Mrs. J. Barlow	Mr. K. Harrington
Dr. J. D. Behan	Cllr. P. Hickey P.C.,
Cllr. D. Browne	Cllr. D. Kinsella
Cllr. M. Carroll	Dr. P. McCarthy
Cllr. J. Connolly	Sr. Columba
Cllr. O. Cooney	Mr. M. Matthews
Cllr. H. P. Dockrell	Deputy C. Murphy
Prof. J. S. Doyle	Dr. B. Powell
Ald A. FitzGerald	Dr. B. Sheehan
Cllr. Mrs. A. Glenn	Cllr. E. Stagg
Cllr. A. Groome	Cllr. J. Sweeney
	Dr. J. Walker

APOLOGIES

Mr. H. Corrigan, Cllr. E. Doyle, Cllr. T. Hand,
Ms. N. Kearney, Dr. A. Meade

IN THE CHAIR

Alderman Alexis Fitzgerald

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. J. J. Nolan	Mr. F. J. McCullough
Mr. F. Donohue	Mr. P. J. Swords
Mr. T. Keyes	Mr. H. Dunne
Mr. R. N. Lamb	Mr. J. Doyle
Mr. J. F. Reynolds	Mr. A. O'Brien
Mr. F. J. Elliott	Mr. T. Barry
Mr. J. Sadlier	Mr. C. Mansfield
Prof. B. O'Donnell	Mr. M. Cummins
Mr. J. Clarke	Miss E. Larkin
	Miss B. Kelly

47/79

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey, seconded by Cllr. Kinsella, the minutes of the monthly meeting held on 1st March, 1979 were adopted.

48/79 CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

(i) The Chairman thanked the Kildare County Manager, Mr. J. G. Ward, and Councillor Groome, Chairman of Kildare County Council for making the Council Chamber available for the meeting.

(ii) The Chairman reminded the members that the May meeting of the Board would be held in Wicklow.

(iii) As the first Thursday in June falls on the 7th June which is polling day for the local elections the members agreed to defer the June meeting until Thursday 14th June at 6 p.m.

49/79 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE ON SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

(i) Meeting held on 6th March, 1979

On a proposal by Deputy Murphy, seconded by Dr. McCarthy, the minutes of the meeting held on 6th March were adopted.

Following a discussion on Home Helps it was agreed on a proposal by Cllr. Stagg that in the preparation of next years budget consideration be given to the provision of additional funds specifically for the development of the service. Mr. Donohue said that there was already a submission with the Department of Health for the development of the service. He told Cllr. Mrs. Glenn that it was hoped to have a cadre of full-time home helps for cases such as where the mother in a family died.

(ii) Meeting held on 22nd March, 1979

Dr. Walker pointed out that these minutes had not yet been submitted to the committee for ratification and accordingly it was agreed not to debate them at this board meeting.

50/79 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On a proposal by Cllr. Browne, seconded by Cllr. Carroll, it was agreed to suspend S tending Orders to take item No. 8 on the agenda at this stage.

Cllr. Browne said that he wished to propose again that Mr. Nolan be appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer and he asked for the unanimous support of the board members in their official and personal capacities. He enumerated Mr. Nolan's qualifications for the job which had been particularly apparent

in the last six months while he has been acting as Chief Executive Officer. Cllrs. Carroll and Hickey supported Cllr. Browne in paying tribute to Mr. Nolan and expressed again their disappointment that their previous recommendation had not been accepted. The resolution was passed unanimously with acclamation. In reply to the Chairman, Mr. Nolan read the contents of a letter dated 13th March from Mr. D. O'Shea, declining the post of Chief Executive Officer and read also his own letter of the 15th March to the Secretary of the Local Appointments Commission informing him of Mr. O'Shea's decision and asking for a fresh recommendation for the post.

Dr. Walker, on behalf of the medical members of the Board, and Mr. Matthews on behalf of the staff he represents, joined in the tributes to Mr. Nolan. The Chairman in supporting the motion referred to Mr. Nolan's deep interest in the hospital and health services and his dedication to the Board. He said that he would write himself to the Minister for Health and send a copy of his letter to the Chairman of the Local Appointments Commissioners.

51/79 PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING COMMITTEES

The reports of the following visiting committees having been circulated, were dealt with as follows: —

- (i) No. 1 Visiting Committee held on 7th February, 1979 at St. Coiumciile's Hospital and also 8th March 1279 at St. Coiumciile's Hospital.

On a proposal by Cllr. Carroll, seconded by Deputy MurDhv. the report was noted.

- (ii) No. 1 Visiting Committee held on 21st February, 1979 at St. Colman's Hospital

On a proposal by Deputy Murphy, seconded by Cllr. Carroll, the report was noted.

In reply to Deputy Murphy's enquiry regarding work on the Day Centre at St. Colman's Hospital, Mr. Sadlier said that a contract had been prepared and the Board is awaiting the completion of a Bond.

- (iii) No. 2 Visiting Committee meeting held at St. Patrick's Home on 27th February 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Browne seconded by Dr. Powell, the report was noted.

A discussion followed on the maternity delivery unit at St. Patrick's Home. It was agreed that medical opinion must be accepted and that the unit be closed as soon as practicable. It was hoped that substantial

progress in the provision of a comprehensive maternity unit proposed at James Connolly Memorial Hospital would be made this year and that this facility would be availed of by St Patrick's Home in the future.

In the meantime deliveries could be made in any maternity hospital or unit in the city although it is likely that most cases would go to St. James's Hospital.

No. 3 Visiting Committee held at St. Brigid's Home on 23rd March, 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Dr. McCarthy the report was noted.

No. 3 Visiting Committee held at St. Ita's Hospital on 22nd February 1979

On a proposal by Cllr. Groome seconded by Mr. Matthews the report was noted.

In reply to Cllr. Connolly's enquiry about the 72 bed unit Mr. Keyes said that the first section was due to open on the 17th April but that difficulties in obtaining staff, (many of whom were applying from England), through the normal interview process, was delaying the opening of further sections.

Cllr. Groome as Chairman of the Visiting Committee, agreed that this specialist unit should be adequately staffed by specialist people and he agreed that it was important to select the best staff for the job even if this involved a delay due to the present circumstances.

Mr. Keyes referred to the attendance at this meeting of members of the Association of Parents and Friends of St. Ita's. He said that he intended that the members of the Association would be given the opportunity to meet the officers of the Board and the visiting committee every three months to allow them to have an input to the general development of support services at the hospital.

Cllr. Stagg complimented the members of the Association for their constructive approach and Cllr. Groome also expressed his regard for the Association and hoped that the meetings as proposed would be fruitful.

No. 4 Visiting Committee held at St. Loman's Hospital on 24/1/79.

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Mr. Harrington the report was noted.

Wicklow Local Health Committee — meeting held on 19th January 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Hickey seconded by Cllr. Groome the report was noted.

Kildare Local Health Committee — meeting held on 22nd March, 1979.

On a proposal by Cllr. Stagg seconded by Cllr. Cooney the report was noted. In reply to Cllr. Cooney in regard to eligibility under the new health scheme Mr. Nolan said that he would provide full details of the new health scheme to the Board members as soon as possible after the scheme came into operation. At this stage he informed members that the Local Government and Public Services Union was in dispute regarding the scheme and had instructed members not to co-operate with its introduction and he read the circulars from the Health Board Branch of the Union which conveyed these instructions to members. He also advised members that the Union had instructed its members not to carry out any functions in connection with the delivery of post normally done by post office staff unless in cases of emergency.

Cllrs. Cooney and Stagg said that it would be of help to the north Kildare area if some Dublin hospitals would take in some geriatric patients from there. Mr. Nolan said that in general the Dublin hospitals were not anxious to accept patients other than acute medical or surgical cases. The Board was pressing the Department for 100 additional beds for the Kildare area - a 30 bed assessment unit at Naas together with 70 additional beds for long-stay accommodation for the area. Mr. Nolan agreed with Dr. McCarthy's suggestion that it would be more practicable to include west Wicklow with Kildare for the purpose of providing services on a catchment area basis. It was agreed that the provision of assistance by the board for elderly persons who have relatives living nearby would be referred to the committee for the services for the elderly.

Mr. Sadlier advised the board that in letter dated 29th March 1979 the Minister stated that he agreed the need for extra ambulance personnel for the Kildare area but was not in a position to make a decision at that time. Following a discussion it was agreed to put the matter of extra ambulance personnel together with an estimate of the cost, to the Board at the next meeting.

In reply to Cllr. Stagg Mr. Nolan said that discussions were still proceeding about the proposed laboratory service at the County Hospital Naas as proposals being formulated in conjunction with St. James's Hospital had not yet been completed.

In reply to an enquiry from Cllr. Connolly Dr. O'Donnell said that the incidence of brucellosis in Kildare is comparable with other counties and does not give cause for concern nor did he consider that the sale of unpasteurised milk which was not extensive, constituted any hazard.

53/79 QUESTIONS

Cllr. J. Connolly

QUESTION (1):-

"When will the Committee set up to consider "Fitness for All" meet and will it meet before the "Sports for All" weekend on 21st/22nd April 1979".

ANSWER:-

Following the nomination of a Committee of the Board in December, 1976 to look into proposals for better living, a committee of officers of the Board was set up and met on four occasions. This Committee then met the Committee of Board members in November, 1977, Cllrs. Hickey and Carroll being in attendance. The Committee submitted a report (No. 39/77) to the Board at its December, 1977 meeting. The committee considered that a campaign as envisaged at the appointment of the Committee would be too diffused and suggested that it would be more preferable to run specific campaigns on specific matters and that the Directors of Community Care would be the appropriate persons to organise such campaigns.

Since then the Directors have nominated health education officers in their local areas and the Programme Manager Community Care has appointed a senior officer of his Programme to co-ordinate their activities. The Health Education Bureau is providing advice and facilities to the Board as well as conducting campaigns on a national scale. The Board's Committee has not met since November, 1977 but is still in existence should any specific subject arise which could be usefully referred to the Committee such as the matter referred to above.

Cllr. J. Connolly

QUESTION (2):-

"Will the Chief Executive Officer state what are the arrangements to keep up to date in modern medicine General Practitioners in Community Care Areas, and if these arrangements include periodical checks of their medical knowledge and practising qualifications?"

REPLY:

'The need for all doctors to keep up to date is universally recognised. I quote as follows from the Todd Report (Report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education):—

'Because of the speed of advance of medical knowledge and technique doctors in all branches of medicine must make unceasing efforts if they are to keep abreast of developments... All doctors, in whatever branch of medicine, must have the opportunity and the time for continuing education in order to keep up to date in their own field and to remain reasonably well acquainted with developments in others.'

The following was amongst the recommendations of the Working Party on the McCormick Report (the Report of the Consultative Council on General Medical Practice) and was adopted by the Board.

'Continuing education for General Practitioners should be available on an organised basis as early as possible and the Health Board should be prepared to make a financial contribution. General Practitioners should be afforded financial assistance in attending a postgraduate course each year.'

The task of organising for the continuing education of doctors has been entrusted to the Council for Post Graduate Medical and Dental Education. In this Area the Council has appointed four coordinators of Post Graduate Education who are attached respectively to the Mater, St. Vincent's, St. Laurence's and St. James's Hospitals. One of their functions will be to organise lectures and demonstrations for family doctors who, in general, are in practice within the catchment area of the hospital.

Recently the Health Board has provided a prefab building at St. James's Hospital which is being presented to the Hospital on condition that it is made available to general practitioners as required for the purpose of continuing training. General practitioners are represented on the organising committee. There are in addition a number of groups of general pract-

itioners who themselves organise seminars and discussions and who may be expected to develop close working arrangements with the appropriate coordinator."

Cllr. J. Connolly

QUESTION (3):-

"That a full report be made on the Free Fuel Scheme particularly in relation to the request to extend this scheme to the County areas and also the recent strike affecting the delivery of the turf".

ANSWER:-

A full report on the Fuel Scheme, including the request for extension of the scheme to other areas and classes of recipients was made to the Board on 8th February 1979 (Report No. 10 A/79). The Dublin scheme is no longer administered by this Board, having been returned to Dublin Corporation at the commencement of the 1977/78 scheme. Since the last report there has been no change in the situation as the Minister has not yet indicated the results of his consideration of the report of the Working Party set up by him to review the Fuel Scheme.

With regard to the strike some time ago which affected delivery of turf by the Contractors to the Corporation it is understood that delivery is now made by the Corporation's own transport service and recent enquiries indicate that the service has now returned to normal.

Cllr. P. Hickey, P.C.

QUESTION (4):-

"Will the Chief Executive Officer state having regard to

- (i) the terms of the following motion and response to it as reported in item 50/77 (d) page 80 of Board minutes of 14th April, 1977 viz.

"(d) The following motion was proposed by Cllr. Hickey and seconded by Mr. Corrigan:—

"That having regard to the wide areas of common interest both in regard to people in need and kinds of need to be met, this Board supports the Free Legal Advice Centres (F.L.A.C.) campaign for the speedy introduction of a State-sponsored comprehensive system of free legal aid for the less well off."

It was noted, on the advice of the Programme Manager Community Care, that the provision of free legal aid is not a function of the Board."

and

- (ii) A recent magazine news item (supplied) to the effect that an official of the Eastern Health Board recently promised to make payments for wages £4,200 available to the Coolock Community Law Centre (which is associated with F.L.A.C.)

How the activities of C.C.L.C. differ from those of F.L.A.C. so as to make the former eligible for such support from the Board, the grant of which would, of course, be noted with pleasure."

REPLY:

The Community Law Centre at Coolock employs a Community Law Officer whose activities are separate from the ordinary services of a free legal aid centre as operated by F.L.A.C.

As recorded in the minutes of the Board's meeting of 14.4.1977 the provision of legal aid is not a function of the Board. Following discussions with officers of the Department of Health an application for a subvention in respect of the community development, social research and welfare services provided by the Coolock Centre I have indicated that the Board would be prepared to give favourable consideration to the application on submission of the usual detailed reports on services provided, together with relevant statistical and financial data. These are awaited.

Cllr. P. Hickey. P.C.

QUESTION (5):-

"Will the Chief Executive Officer state what progress is being made towards provision of Nursery Centres throughout the Board's area and if it is proposed to provide any in the Ballinteer/Dundrum areas."

REPLY

Pre-School Day Nurseries

The Board is supporting 20 Nurseries distributed as follows:

Community Care Areas	No. of Nurseries
1	2
2	
3	3
4	
5	2
6	3
7	2
8	6
Co. Kildare	1
Co. Wicklow	1

The addresses of the Nurseries and the organisations managing them are shown on the attached.

It is expected that the following will be operational in:

1979 3 (Tallaght from 1.6.1979

(Coolock from 1.7.1979

{Blanchardstown 1.11.1979

The Board's intention is to provide Day Nurseries in areas where these are required and where suitable sites are available (usually in sites adjoining health centres). There is at present, no suitable site available in the Dundrum/Ballinteer area, and a suitable site is being sought.

Community Care Area	Name and address of Pre-School Nursery	Organisers	Tel. No.
	Dun Laoire Day Nursery, St. Mary's Dominican Convent, Convent Rd., Dun Laoire,	Dun Laoire Nursing Committee c/o St. Mary's Dominican Convent, Dun Laoire, Co. Dublin	801379
	Monkstown Day Nursery, Monkstown Hse., Monkstown, Co. Dublin.	Social Service Committee Monkstown Community Centre Ltd., c/o 22 Monkstown Ave., Blackrock, Co. Dublin.	
	The Liberty Creche, 92 Meath St., Dublin 8.	The Liberty Creche Committee, 92 Meath St., Dublin 8.	753469
	Hoiylands Day Nursery, Holylands Hse., Off Nutgrove Ave., Churchtown. Dublin 14.	Hoiylands Day Nursery Committee. I.S.P.C.J.C. 20 Molesmorth St. Dublin 2.	761293
	St. Joseph's Day Nursery, Morning Star Rd., Maryland, Dublin 8.	The Civics Institute of Ireland Ltd., Mountjoy Sq. Park Nth. Dublin 1.	757891/ 744340
	Sevenoaks Day Nursery. Sevenoaks Convent. Sarsfield Rd.. Inchicore. Dublin 12.	Sevenoaks Nursery Committee, Sevenoaks Convent. Sarsfield Rd., Inchicore, Dublin 12.	751131
	St. Vincent's Day Nursery Ballyfermot Rd., Dublin 10.	Sr. Michael Cowman. Drs. of Charity St. Vincent de Paul Nth. William St.. Dublin 1.	364000
	Finglas Day Nursery, Social Service Centre, Wellmount Rd. Finglas, Dublin 11.	Finglas Council of Social Services. Wellmount Rd, Finglas Dublin 11.	342843
	St. Mary's Day Nursery, 8 Henrietta St., Dublin 1.	Drs. of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Our Lady's Home. Henrietta St.. Dublin 1.	744842
	Our Lady's Day Nursery. Sillogue Rd.. Ballymun, Dublin 11.	Ballymun Nursery Committee. Sillogue Rd.. Ballymun. Dublin 11.	421142
	St. Brigid's Day Nursery Mountjoy Sq. Park Nth. Dublin 1*.	The Civics Institute of Ireland Ltd.. Mountjoy Sq. Park Nth. Dublin 1.	744340
	St. Vincent s. Nth William St.	Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Nth. William St. Dublin 1.	745374
	Bonnybrook Day Nursery, St. Maria Goretti School. Bonnybrook. Dublin 5.	Bonnybrook Day Nursery Committee c/o 79 Riverside Pk. Coolock. Dublin 5.	
	Edenmore Day Nursery. St. Gabriel's Convent.	Edenmore Day Nursery Committee.	311825
	KilMester Day Nursery. Social Service Centre. 2 Sybil Hill Rd. Dublin 5.	Council for co-ordination of Social Services i Edenmore' Killester' Rahenyl 2 Sybil Hill Rd. Raheny. Dublin 5.	313700
	Kilmore West Day Nursery. Cromcastle Green, Kilmore, Dublin 5.	Kilmore West Day Nursery Committee, 3 Cromcastle Green. Dublin 5.	316702
	Kilbarrack/Foxfield Nursery Day Centre. Scoil Iosagain, Greendale Rd., Dublin 5.	Nursery Management Committee c/o Scoil Iosagain. Greendale Rd.	323316

	Grange/Kildonagh Nursery Swan's Nest Court, Kilbarrack. Dublin 5.	Grange/Kildonagh Social Service Council	336767
Kildare	Kilcullen. Co. Kildare	Kilcullen Community Council	
Wicklow	Bray Day Nursery	Bray Social Service Council c/o The Health Centre. Killarney Rd., Bray. Co. Wicklow.	862172

54'79 CHILDREN LIVING ROUGH

The following report No. 18/1979 concerning children living rough, from the Programme Manager Community Care was submitted:—

"Following discussion of the Report of the Joint Committee on Children Sleeping and Living Rough (Report 14/1979) it was agreed that a report would be submitted regarding the matter of residential places for the custody of children and reception centres.

The authority of the Health Board to provide care for children away from the families is contained in Section 55 of the Health Act, 1953.

Section 55 (1) and (2) provides that Boards may be ordered to provide places for children who are deserted by their parents or orphaned.

Section 55 (3) enables Boards, with the approval of the Minister and with parental consent, to provide similar services for other children.

The Board has no general power to take children from their families or to detain them against their own wishes or their parental wishes.

Children's Act, 1908

Section 20 (2) provides that a child taken to a place of safety may be detained there until he can be brought before a court which may make an order for the care and detention of the child pending the making of a charge against the person committing the offence or the determination of any charge against him.

^: OS cU tIGI! wf any ptiiS«J!^ JOI df! Otfc Cc ArCuiid Ho: al, t ,,-. z matter for the Gardai.

We are advised that the Board would have no authority to provide a detention centre for children. This would be a matter for the Department of Justice and the Garda authorities. We will have further discussions with the Gardai and the Department of Justice on this matter.

Reception and Assessment Centres

It is clear that one reception centre would not suffice for all ages, or classes of children. A reception etc. centre for children of tender years would not be suitable for young persons in their teens. A reception centre for teenagers might not suitably cater for both sexes. Because of the special problems associated with itinerant children it is generally acknowledged that they would need special provision made for them. A number of such centres therefore would have to be provided. If they were to function properly such centres would need to cater for only small numbers, would need a high staff to child ratio and would therefore be expensive to run.

Any decision to provide centres of this kind would require careful consideration and planning.

We have had discussions with the authorities at Teach Ultain, Charlemont St. which has functioned for many years as a children's hospital. This institution has also provided nonmedical social care for children of tender years (i.e. up to 10 years of age) and has a tradition of providing such care for children of travelling families. They have confirmed that they will continue to provide such care and have indicated that they are in a position to receive children at any time and care for them pending determination of their future and that of their families.

Teach Ultain has available all necessary medical etc. facilities to aid in the assessment of children who might be placed in its care. This will be an invaluable resource in catering for the particular problems of these children.

Some other facilities recently provided'-

The Board is supporting the following;

(1) HOPE This body provides shelter and counselling for children sleeping rough, in a house in Harcourt St. The organisation is endeavouring to find a more suitable premises for its work and has approached the Board and Dublin Corporation who are assisting in the quest.

The organisation is also at present conducting a survey to try and discover the dimensions of the probes of children sleeping rough. This survey will be completed and the findings made available later this year. The cost will be in the region of £8,000. The Board has given a grant towards the cost.

(2) LOS ANGELES SOCIETY; The Board has given a grant of £60,000 for the purchase of a premises at Blackrock, Co. Dublin for a new hostel. This is expected to be available by June 1979 when necessary works are completed and will cater for up to 20 boys, including some requiring emergency or over-night accommodation.

(3) **RUDDER HOUSE, NEWTOWNMOUNTKENNEDY, CO. WICKLOW;** This is a special residential facility for children of travelling families. It is at present catering for 25 children of up to 16 years of age, including some girls. The Board provided the monies for the purchase and renovation of the premises. It is conducted by the Dublin Committee of Travelling People.

(4) **ST. COLUMBA'S DAY CENTRE AND SPECIAL SCHOOL. STRAND ST., DUBLIN;** This Centre, conducted by the Dublin Committee for Travelling People, caters for children of travellers who need special care and educational facilities. It is caring for 32 children at present and includes those who engage in begging in the city. The Department of Education funds the education facilities.

The Committee are anxious to have a second such Centre in Dublin and have said that they wish to run a small residential centre in association with the Centre.

PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN OF TRAVELLING FAMILIES WHO ARE BEGGING

Discussions with members of the Dublin Committee for Travelling People confirm that:

- 1) The children begging come from a small number of families.
- 2) The number of whom it might be said that they are regularly neglected by their parents is also small.
- 3) The Day Centre at Strand St. caters for numbers of these children.
- 4) The Committee would run another day centre if a premises and finance were to be made available.
- 5) They would be in a position to have a small residential centre, for overnight stay of children associated with the Day Centre and a hostel for the older girls, if a suitable premises were made available.
- 6) Their staff would be in a better position to do some work with the families of the worst off children if reserved sites for a small number of such families were provided in suitable locations in the city by *the* Dublin Corporation.

They agree that the solution is not simply to take children from the street and detain them but to identify those in need and work with their families to reduce their problems. The taking of the children from their families' and their placement in residential care should be a matter of last resort.

Consultations with the Committee are continuing and it is hoped that the projects envisaged can be started in the current year.

Finally, I think it is worth quoting from the Report for 1978 of the Dublin Committee for Travelling People;

Families with Problems. Just as in the settled community, there are families who have a problem with alcohol and the other problems, which follow, so there are such families among the Travelers. The children in these families are often very deprived and neglected. Some people feel that these children should be removed from their parents and put into institutions. While this may be necessary in a minority of cases, one should always be reluctant to remove children from their parents and particularly so with Travelers, unless it is absolutely necessary for the welfare of the children. Quite apart from the difficulty of finding a suitable home to take the children, as many children's homes would not welcome Travelers, or the children would not stay in them, there is the danger of creating fresh problems for the child. It is a tremendous change for a Traveler's child to be removed from his or her surroundings and be confined to an institution. Then there is the danger that the child may become divorced from its own people, their way of life and thought, and yet they are not fully members of the settled community either. This may cause grave problems to the children when the time comes for them to leave the institution. We should be very sure that there is no better solution, before we take such action. Our Committee's aim, therefore, is to try to help these families as a unit by helping both parents and children.

Assisting these parents is a long term process, and in the meantime, we must also think of *the needs of the children*, who are widely known for begging on O'Connell Bridge and elsewhere. In December 1977 with financial assistance from the Eastern Health Board and the Department of Education, we opened St. Columba's Day Care Centre for these children. At present we have 32 children on the roll, with an average attendance of between 26 and 28. We hope to extend this work in due course, but as we remove the children from the streets, others come to take their places, and not by any means are all of these children from the most deprived families. Therefore, even when we are catering for all the children there may still be children on the streets. This is because begging in Dublin is very profitable. People who give money to the children should remember that their action is encouraging some parents to exploit their children by sending them out to beg. When people stop giving money to these children, begging will stop."

Cllr. Mrs. Glenn, who was chairman of the joint Committee on Children Sleeping and Living Rough, said that a major consideration was the need for premises to which Gardai could refer children found on the street and where they could receive shelter, a bath and a meal. She said the Dublin Corporation was prepared to provide half the funds necessary for such a facility if the health board would provide the other half. The Chairman told the meeting that since the last board meeting he had met the City Manager with Cllr. Mrs. Glenn and Mr. Nolan and Mr. Donohue, to discuss the situation. Mr. Donohue said that following that meeting he had discussions with the Gardai, District Justice Kennedy, the management of St Ultan's Hospital and the Dublin Committee for Traveling People. It is clear the board has a responsibility to make provision for homeless but only if these people are prepared to stay voluntarily in the accommodation provided. The health board administers only Part 1 of the Children Act 1908 relating to fostering etc. and cannot detain children against their parents' consent. The other parts of the Children Act are the responsibility of the Gardai and other bodies.

However, the Board as a citizen can go to the Courts and obtain a Fit Person Order where danger to life and limb is an issue and must provide accommodation where a child is subject to such an Order. Mr. Donohue said he had contacted Teach Ulain who are prepared to accept children up to ten years of age and to keep them until other arrangements are made for them but there probably would be difficulty in placing children in suitable schools, homes etc. The schools that cater for such cases could be offered financial assistance to meet the cost of extra expenses and staff that would be incurred in maintaining such children but while this might provide extra accommodation it is a fact that the schools need not accept such cases if they wish. He said that in addition to Teach Ulain the committee for Trudder House would consider providing accommodation including accommodation for females but these were long term proposals. He was consulting with other agencies at present but had no details as yet.

It was agreed that the item would be put on the agenda for the June meeting for discussion. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Mrs. Glenn and Mr. Donohue for the report which was adopted.

55/79

NOTICES OF MOTION

The following motion was proposed by Cllr. E. Stagg and seconded by Sr. Columba:—

'That this Board calls on the C.E.O. and the Minister for Health to increase the income limit for eligibility for Medical Cards, in view of the recently announced increase of 18% in food prices.'

Cllr. Stagg said that while he understood it was usual to revise the medical card scale on the basis of the Consumer Price Index he considered that it should be revised on the basis of the Index for the heading of food only as this accounted for most of the expenditure of persons in the lower income bracket. Mr. Dunne explained the procedure adopted in revising the medical card guidelines, that it was done on a national basis by the C.E.Os. and the Department of Health and they used the Consumer Price Index as a basis for the revision. He said that the guidelines were kept constantly under review and that on one occasion in 1976 when there was a very large increase in the index in the first half of the year the guidelines were revised in July of that year. Mr. Nolan said that the establishment of guidelines was a function of the CE.O. The Department of Health through the C.E.Os. Group had standardised the basic rates throughout the country. The next meeting of the C.E.Os. Group later this month will be attended by officers of the Department of Health and it was probable that revision of eligibility scales would be considered. A discussion followed to which Cllrs. Stagg, Cooney, Carroll, Ald. FitzGerald, Drs. Sheehan, Powell and Behan and Prof. Doyle contributed. It was agreed to recommend that the Consumer Price Index table should be altered to exclude Tobacco and Alcohol, that guidelines should be kept under constant review, that they should be revised at more frequent intervals and they should take account of projected inflation for the coming period. The Chairman also requested that the Board be given a report every six months on the situation.

In the discussion it was pointed out that the revision of guidelines in general was based on the mid November index which represented an increase of 11.6% in food in the year and an overall increase of 7.9%. Accordingly Cllr. Stagg agreed to delete from his motion the words "in view of the recently announced increase of 18% in food prices." and the motion as amended was agreed.

56/79

ETHICAL CODE FOR HOSPITALS

Mr. Nolan read a letter dated 29th March 1979 from Dr. Dermot Ryan, Archbishop of Dublin, advising him that he had set up a small committee which in consultation with

medical and legal experts had drafted a code of ethics for hospitals and which he wished to have brought to the attention of members of his church who are engaged in hospital work. In discussion of the text of the code which had been circulated to the members they agreed to refer the text for consideration to the Scientific Committee of the Board which would in turn report to the full Board in due course.

**57/79 PRESS RELEASE - FOUNDATION FOR
THE PREVENTION OF CHILDHOOD HANDICAP**

The Chairman told members that the Foundation was a recently established company to carry out medical and scientific research into the prevention of handicaps of natal, pre-natal and prenatal origin. It was agreed at the request of the members that the names of those involved in the Foundation would be recorded in the minutes.

The following are Directors — Dr. V. Coffey, Prof. J. Bonner Dr. J. St. L. O’Dea, Mr. L. M. Hogan, Mr. J. J. Nolan, Mr. P. Kennedy and Mr. P. Flannery.

It is hoped that two further Directors will be nominated, one each by the St. James’s Hospital Board and Eastern Health Board.

58/79 OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) Mr. Nolan informed members that the Central Council of the Federated Dublin Voluntary Hospitals had now agreed to the Board’s decision that should the membership of St. James’s Hospital Board be increased to 24 members, 50% thereof should be Health Board representatives and include two members of the Hospital consultant staff viz. Drs. Blayney and Malone.
- (si) Mr. Nolan informed the members that Dr. Godfrey, Medical Superintendent, St. Mary’s Hospital had been conferred at the Hospital with an honorary Fellowship by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and the members joined with him in congratulating Dr. Godfrey.
- 'iii) Mr. Nolan introduced the following Report No. 19/1979 — Relief of Hardship — circulated at the meeting to the members who noted with satisfaction the comprehensive measures taken by the staff to relieve distress during the cold spell.

"In view of the unusually severe and extended spell of cold and inclement weather, we have been endeavoring as far as possible to alleviate hardship in individual and family situations. The concurrent fuel supply diffi-

culties have added to that problem as well as endangering heating and hot water services in many of our residential institutions and in health centres, office units etc. I have had detailed discussions with the Programme Managers and with the Technical Services Officer and Engineers and have agreed with them on the steps to be taken. The general position is as follows: —

Cheap Fuel Scheme

Dublin Corporation report the scheme to be working well. The problem of shortage of vouchers at sub-post-offices is being solved by the provision of temporary vouchers through fuel depots and the delivery service. There have been problems in the delivery service due to change-over from delivery by contractor to the Corporation's own delivery service. The service is now reported to be "almost normal". In cases, coming to our notice, where the delivery service breaks down and is not satisfactorily resolved by the Corporation cash payments are being made by the Community Welfare Officers where need exists.

Other Measures

Since the beginning of the cold spell a flexible attitude has been adopted to providing for heating needs under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance Scheme, with the alleviation of hardship being the prime consideration. Superintendent Community Welfare Officers and Community Welfare Officers are dealing with each case on its merits and the ways in which assistance is provided include:—

- (a) Direct supply of solid fuel
- (b) Making cash payments for purchase of fuel
- (c) Payment of E.S.B. and Gas Bills and in particular accepting responsibility for increased usage due to cold weather.
- (d) Supply of blankets and other bedding
- (e) Supply of clothing
- (f) Supply of electric fires, oil heaters, gas heaters, etc.

Members of the Community Care Teams and of Voluntary Organisations have been asked to bring any cases of hardship of which they are aware to the notice of the Community Welfare Officer. Supplies of blankets and, in some cases, heaters are also held and distributed by Public Health Nurses at their discretion.

Institutions etc.

The units operating on turf burning boilers have no great problem but it is difficult to maintain heating and hot water services in units which have oil-fired boilers without regular deliveries. Daily pressure is maintained on our oil supply contractors and so far no real crisis has occurred. In discussions with the Technical Services Officer and his area assistant engineers it was agreed that a continuous check would be maintained on oil stocks in each institution and that non-essential heat usage would be eliminated. Immediate consideration is being given to the possible use in such institutions of super paraffin oil with necessary additives or to the adaptation of existing burners to use heavy oil. In addition it was decided to use, where appropriate, and where wiring is adequate, oil filled radiators and/ or electric convector or fan heaters. Bottled gas heaters will also be used if required."

- (iv) Mr. Nolan informed the members that preliminary discussions were taking place with the staff and unions on the possible introduction of flextime on a pilot basis and that pre-retirement courses for staff were also being arranged.**
- (v) Mr. Nolan told the members that the Board's proposals re admissions of certain type of patients to Central Mental Hospital Dundrum had been conveyed to the Department of Health but that a reply regarding reception of a deputation had not yet been received.**
- (vi) Mr. Nolan told the members that contracting out of maintenance work was not proving satisfactory particularly in the Wicklow and Kildare areas and it was proposed to divert some of the allocation for maintenance to the employment of extra staff for this work. This proposal was agreed by the members.**
- (vii) Professor Doyle asked that the progress of the Rutland Centre be also referred to the proposed meeting of the Scientific Committee and this was agreed. He said he would like to see a report to the Board on the progress of the Beaumont Hospital Project and the Chairman suggested that Professor Doyle might consider making a presentation to the Board as was done By Professor Doyle for St. James Hospital**
- (viii) The Chairman informed the members that Mr. James .;. Molloy, Dublin City Manager has signified his intention to retire after 44 years in the local service. The Chairman paid a tribute to Mr. Molloy in which the members joined and it was unanimously agreed that the Board's best wishes be conveyed to Mr. Molloy.**

- (ix) **Or. Walker expressed the Board's thanks to the County Manager and the staff of the Hospital and Kildare County Council for all the arrangements which had been made which contributed to the great success of the Opening Ceremony, the meal and the Board meeting.**

The meeting terminated at 9 p.m.

Correct

**J. J. Nolan
Chief Executive Officer**

Signed

CHAIRMAN