

## **EASTERN HEALTH BOARD**

**Report of Meeting of Committee of the Whole House held in the  
Boardroom, St Brendan's Hospital,  
on Thursday, 21 January, 1982 at 6.00 pm**

### **PRESENT**

**Ald B Ahern TD  
Dr. J D Behan  
Cllr Belton  
Mrs B Bonar  
Cllr D Browne  
Cllr M Carroll  
Cllr Mrs A Glenn TD  
Cllr A Groome**

**Cllr T Hand  
Mr K Harrington  
Cllr P Hickey  
Cllr F Hynes  
Ms N Kearney  
Mr M Matthews  
Cllr H Reilly  
Cllr W Willoughby**

### **APOLOGIES**

**Prof J S Doyle  
Ald A FitzGerald**

**Dr J Walker**

### **IN THE CHAIR**

**Cllr Dan Browne**

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

**Mr P B Segrave  
Mr T Keyes  
Mr K Hickey  
Mr PJ Swords  
Mr J Doyle  
Mr FJ McCullough  
Prof B O'Donnell**

**Dr V Molony  
Mr L Sweeney  
Mr M O'Connor  
Mr M Cummins  
Miss B Blanche  
Miss F. Carolan  
Mr McCann**

At the commencement of the meeting, on the suggestion of Cllr Mrs A Glenn, it was agreed that the members' wishes for a speedy recovery should be conveyed to Miss E Fulham, Superintendent Public Health Nurse, Co Kildare.

The meeting had been arranged, as agreed at the December meeting of the Board, to consider the report of the Mental Handicap Committee "Planning Mental Handicap Services".

At the request of the Chairman the Chief Executive Officer introduced his report no. 41/1981 of 2 December 1981.

"Members of the Board have been given copies of the report entitled 'Planning Mental Handicap Services' which was drawn up by the special Mental Handicap Committee comprising the Medical Directors of the voluntary organisations providing services for the mentally handicapped in the Board's functional area and officers of our Board.

As explained in the foreword to the Report, this Committee originated in 1968 with the objective of co-ordinating the efforts of the voluntary organisations and the Dublin Health Authority, which was the statutory body then responsible for the provision of those services. The Committee has continued in existence since the Eastern Health Board succeeded to this statutory responsibility.

Members will also have received copies of the Report entitled 'Services for the Mentally Handicapped' which was produced by a Working Party set up by the Minister for Health.

Following publication of the latter report, the Board's co-ordinating committee undertook a review of the state of development of the mental handicap services in the Eastern Health Board area. The purpose of this review was to ascertain the present needs of the services and to draw up guidelines for the assistance of the Board and the Department of Health in planning a comprehensive community-based service.

The Committee has now completed that task and has submitted its recommendations. These are based on the concept of the development of comprehensive mental handicap services on a catchment area basis, aimed at the maintenance of mentally handicapped persons in the community for as long as possible.

In examining the Committee's recommendations, it will be necessary for the Board, in its role as co-ordinator and as the body responsible for the development of the services in its area, to determine how best the services can be decentralised, and a co-ordinated move towards comprehensive catchment area services and facilities be brought about, if this basic concept is acceptable.

With a view to the implementation of the Board's decisions and priorities for the further development of this important service I have assigned Mr Frank McCullough to the Mental Handicap Service on a full-time basis".

Dr Vincent Molony, Director of Mental Handicap, explained the six major basic social skills, which were used in assessing mentally handicapped persons to categorise them into one of the four recognised groupings:

- (i) **Profoundly Handicapped**
- (ii) **Severely Handicapped**
- (iii) **Moderately Handicapped**
- (iv) **Mildly Handicapped**

He described the type of care needed by each of the groups and the ages up to which they could reside in their own homes. He also elaborated on the main recommendations contained in the report of the Mental Handicap Committee.

In a discussion on the Report, to which Cllrs Hynes, Mrs Glenn, Carroll, Reilly and Ahern. Miss Kearney, Mr Harrington, Dr Behan, Mrs Bonar and Mr Matthews contributed, the members of the Mental Handicap Committee were complimented on the production of a very worthwhile report.

With regard to the development of hostels/community homes Dr Molony stated that the Committee had suggested that two semi-detached houses in each parish should be obtained for use as hostels. In this connection Cllr Reilly stated that public representatives should put pressure on their respective local authorities to provide housing for the handicapped. He had expected that some progress would have been made in this area during 1981 - the International Year of Disabled Persons. In this connection it was stated that Monaghan County Council had resolved some years ago to devote 1 % of their houses for use as hostels and community homes and that the urban district councils had followed their example. They now had 23 such hostels in the County and the arrangement was working quite well.

The following motion was then proposed by Dr Behan, seconded by Cllr Mrs Glenn, and unanimously agreed:

"That the Board adopt the Report of the Mental Handicap Committee and seek an early deputation from the Board to the Minister for Health to seek the early implementation of its recommendations."

The members thanked Mr McCullough and Dr Molony for the manner in which they had answered their questions.

**The meeting concluded at 8.00 p.m.**

**CORRECT: P B Segrave  
Chief Executive Officer**

**Chairman**