

## **EASTERN HEALTH BOARD**

Minutes of proceedings of monthly meeting  
of the Eastern Health Board held in  
the Boardroom, St Brendan's Hospital  
on Thursday 7 April, 1983 at 6 pm

### **PRESENT**

Ald B Ahem TD  
Cllr L Belton  
Mrs B Boner  
Cllr D Browne  
Dr M Butler  
Dr J Buttiner  
Cllr M Carroll  
Dr R Draper  
Cllr B J Durkan  
Mr P Finegan  
Cllr M Freehill  
Mr J Gahan  
Cllr Mrs A Glenn TD

Cllr A Groome  
Cllr T Hand  
Cllr P Hickey  
Cllr F Hynes  
Mr D Kane  
Dr D I Keane  
Dr McCarthy  
Cllr E Stagg  
Cllr J Sweeney  
Cllr G Timmins TD

### **APOLOGIES:**

Mr N Andrews TD, Prof J S Doyle, Prof J McCormick

### **IN THE CHAIR**

Cllr Mrs A Glenn TD

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr K J Hickey  
Mr F J Donohue  
Mr J F Reynolds  
Mr L P Kavanagh  
Mr J N McNee  
Mr G Brennan  
Prof B O'Donne  
Prof Browne  
Mr J Doyle  
Mr F J McCullough  
Mr P J Swords

Mr A O'Brien  
Mr W Doyle  
Mr C Mansfield  
Mr C McQuaile  
Miss T Downes  
Miss M Rice  
Mr M J O'Connor  
Mr T Mahon  
Mrs B Travers  
Miss S Keegan  
Miss A. O'Keefe

7/4/83

30/83

#### CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- (i) The Chairman introduced Mr Noel McNee who had taken up duty as Management Services Officer on 1 April 1983, and welcomed him to his first meeting of the Board.
- (ii) The Chairman, on her own behalf and on behalf of the members, congratulated Cllr Eric Doyle on his appointment as a member of the reconstituted National Rehabilitation Board.

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#### CONDOLENCE

The Chairman informed the members of the recent death of Dr Tom Stewart who had been employed as a Dental Surgeon in Rathfarnham Health Centre. The members stood in silence as a mark of respect to the deceased.

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#### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MEETINGS HELD ON 3 MARCH AND 10 MARCH 1983

The minutes, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr Hynes, seconded by Cllr Hickey.

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#### QUESTIONS

On a proposal by Cllr Freehill, seconded by Mr Gahan, it was agreed that the questions lodged should be answered:

QUESTION: Cllr Mrs E Fitzgerald

- (i) 'What services are provided by the Board for children leaving care at 16 who have grown up in care?'

REPLY:

Children in foster care do not, as a rule, leave the foster home at 16 years of age but continue as members of the families with such support by the Board as may be required until their education and training for employment is completed.

Children in residential care do not, as a rule, leave care at 16 years of age, except for those who may be returned to the care of their parents, and the Board, with the consent of the Minister, continues to pay for the maintenance of a child while completing his/her education or training for employment.

The Board's social workers and foster parents or residential child care staff are all involved in plans for the future of children in care.

QUESTION: Cllr Mrs E Fitzgerald

- (ii) 'Foster Care: Will the CEO give details of the size of the waiting list of foster parents waiting to be assessed, the number of children currently in foster care, and number of families, the number of children awaiting foster care; and the numbers of children coming into care in the health Board in each of the last three years; and whether the Board is in a position to meet its statutory duty to visit children in care once a month.'

REPLY:

- (a) The number of foster care applicants in or awaiting assessment is 212.

The assessment process starts with group meetings of persons who express an interest in foster care, followed by a detailed assessment by an assigned social worker and consideration by a special Advisory Group before formal approval.

- (b) Number of children currently in foster care 397

Category:	Long Term	331
	Short Term	47
	Day Foster Care	19

- <c> Number of Foster Families 334

Category:	Long term	271
	Short Term	40
	Day Foster Care	14
	Holiday & W/Ends	9

The Board has 36 other short term foster families on register who are not available to receive a foster child until some date in the near future.

- (d) The number of children at present in residential care or short term foster care for whom placement in long term foster care is considered more appropriate is 92
- (e) Number of children coming into care of the board in each of the last 3

Year	Total	Residential	Foster Care
1980	494	352	142 47 Long Term 91 Short Term 4 Holiday & W/End
1981	626	436	190 67 Long Term 123 Short Term
1982	746	443	303 96 Long Term 172 Short Term 35 Day Foster Care

- (f) The statutory requirement to visit children in care, as contained in the Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1954, required in the case of children in foster care, visits each month or at such longer intervals as the Board determined, with the consent of the Minister. These regulations have been replaced, with effect from 1.4.83, by the Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1983 which require a visit within each of the 2 months following placement and at intervals not exceeding 6 months thereafter.

In practice, authorised officers of the Board visit foster homes frequently in the early stages following placement; in some cases, daily visiting is required. Thereafter, as many regular visits as are deemed necessary in any case are carried out, as envisaged in the Regulations.

QUESTION: Cllr Mrs E Fitzgerald

- (iii) 'How many home helps/home makers are employed by the Board to work (a) with families (b) with the elderly, and how many were employed in each of the last 3 years, and what plans has the Board to expand this kind of preventive community based service'

REPLY:

In most of Dublin City and County and in parts of County Wicklow the Home Help Service is operated through Voluntary Organisations. The organisations employ Organisers/Supervisors and Home Helps. All funds are provided by the Board. In the remainder of Dublin and Wicklow and in all of County Kildare the home helps are generally recruited by the local nurse and paid through the Community Welfare Officer.

The total numbers provided were:

	Home helps/Home makers with families	Home helps with elderly	Home helps with disabled
1980	184	1.323	345
1981	212	1.469	356
1982	207	1.577	426

In the case of families priority is given to those where children would otherwise have to be placed in institutions.

In the case of aged and handicapped persons priority is given to those who are infirm and housebound.

Each year the Board allocates resources to continue the existing service and endeavours to develop and extend the service to areas where there are unmet needs. As the figures above show it has been possible to achieve a modest development of the service in the past 3 years.

The report of the Board's Committee on the Care of the Aged included plans for the development of this service and it noted that a ratio of home helps to the elderly population of 1.40 had been achieved in a few years. We will continue expansion as resources allow to achieve this ratio in all areas.

A pilot scheme for the provision and training of Home Care Assistants is being undertaken in association with AnCo.

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## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

In the absence of the Chief Executive Officer, Mr K Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, read the following report, which was noted by the Board:

(iii) Procedure for the filling of consultant posts

'Arising out of a recent meeting between the Minister for Health and Comhairle na nOspideal, a revised procedure for dealing with applications for new or replacement consultant posts has been notified by the Department of Health. A copy of the letter from the Department of Health has been circulated for the information of the Board members

(i) Board Meetings May and June 1983

Last year our, May Board meeting Was Held in St Colman's Hospital, Rathdrum, Co Wicklow and the June meetings in St. Vincent's Hospital, Athy, Co Kildare. It may be the members' wish to. continue with this arrangement. If so, perhaps the May meeting could be held in Athy and the June meeting inRathdrum.

(ii) Agreement regarding the cost of Drugs Supplied to the Health Services

'Since the discussion on drug costs at the March meeting of the Board, the Department of Health has circulated to health agencies details of the new agreement reached with the Federation of Irish Chemical Industries. A copy of this agreement and accompanying letter from the Department of Health has been circulated to each member.'

(iv) Health Contribution\*

'Two revised regulations covering health contributions have recently been notified by the Department of Health.

The first concerns a change in the basis for assessing farmers' income and provides that it be assessed on the same basis as that of self-employed persons. Similar regulations have been made in relation to the collection of the Youth Employment Levy from farmers. The implications for health boards of the revised regulations are under discussion at present and the Department of Health has indicated that a further letter will be issued as soon as the position becomes dear: :

The second revision has the effect of raising the income ceiling for health contributions from £9,500 to £11,000 per annum. The new income ceiling is operative from the beginning of the' Contribution year commencing on 6 April 1983.'

Tha members agreed with the suggested arrangements for the May and June Board meetings.

Cllr Stagg enquired regarding the amount of health contributions outstanding from farmers and requested a report for tha next meeting.

36783

## PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING COMMITTEES

The reports of the following committee meetings, having been circulated, were dealt with as follows:

- (i) Community Care Visiting Committee meeting held in Area 4 (Tallaght) on 26 January 1983.

On a proposal by Cllr Sweeney, seconded by Cllr Hynes, the report was noted. It was then agreed that the following motion, which had been tabled by Cllr T Hand, should be considered:

'That out-patient clinics be provided in the Tallaght area, in the interim period awaiting the new hospital'.

The motion was seconded by Cllr Carroll and, following a discussion to which Cllrs Sweeney, Browne, Hynes, and Dr Buttimer contributed, was agreed. It was also agreed, on the suggestion of the Chairman, that discussions should take place with representatives of the Dublin Corporation and Dublin County Council with a view to co-ordinating the approach which should be taken in dealing with the provision of services in the newly developing areas around the city.

The following motion was then proposed by Dr Buttimer, seconded by Dr Butler, and agreed:

'I propose that an approach be made to the Department of Health that, in these times when there is a cut-back in staffing levels in the Health Board, a special arrangement be made for increased staffing levels in deprived and disadvantaged areas, for example, Comm. Care Area A'.

- (i i) Community Care Visiting Committee meeting held in Area 1 (Dun Laoghaire) on 22 February, 1983.

On a proposal by Cllr Hynes, seconded by Cllr Sweeney, the report was noted.

Following a discussion on the provision of headquarters accommodation for the Area 1 Community Care Team to which Cllrs Hynes, Browne, Carroll, and the Chairman contributed, and to which Mr Donohue and Mr Hickey replied, it was agreed that the proposal to build a second floor on the existing premises would be re-examined in conjunction with the proposal to lease a suitable building.

- (iii) No 1 Visiting Committee meeting held in District Hospital, Wicklow, on 22 February 1983

On a proposal by Cllr Sweeney, seconded by Cllr Hynes, the report was noted.

On the suggestion of Cllr Browne, it was agreed that the Board should express its appreciation of the wonderful work which had been done by the voluntary fund-raising committee for the patients in the hospital.

- (iv) No 2 Visiting Committee meeting held in St Brendan's Hospital on 9 March, 1983.

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

A discussion followed on the conditions for patients in the Hospital to which Mr Gahan, Cllrs Durkan, Groome, Browne, Hynes, Carroll and Mr Finegan contributed and to which Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Psychiatrist replied.

Mr Hickey referred to the Report of the Project Team which had been completed in 1982, to the recommendations of the Capital Programme Committee relating to the development of community-based psychiatric units and to the working group established by the Chief Executive Officer on the provision of services for the elderly mentally infirm and the mentally ill. The members noted that the working group would be reporting shortly.

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#### FOSTER CARE SERVICES

The following report no. 5/1983 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted:

Copies of the Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1983, which replace the Regulations made in 1954 are circulated to members together with an explanatory circular from the Department of Health which sets out and discusses the major changes in the new Regulations. Most of the new procedures, especially those mentioned in paragraph 3 and 4, of the circular have been in operation in this Board for some years now.

With the coming into operation of the new Regulations I am taking this opportunity to inform the members of the situation with regard to foster care services operated by the Board.

This Board has always been conscious of the need to find enough foster homes for children who come into its care because their own families are unable for one reason or another, to care for them. Although there are excellent residential care facilities available in the children's homes in its area the Board would always prefer, indeed has an obligation to place children with foster parents rather than in residential care.

When the setting up of the social work teams in the Community Care areas had been accomplished, the Board, in considering the need to accelerate the provision of foster care, set up in 1978, in the Children's Section, a special team, of five trained and highly skilled social workers, now known as the Fostering Resource Group (FRG). The aim of this team was to promote foster care as a community resource, to publicise the need for foster families and to assist the community teams in mounting campaigns to recruit foster parents.

The first major undertaking of the FRG was to spearhead a publicity campaign in March 1978, using extensive media coverage including press conference, to stimulate public knowledge of the need for this resource. Since then the FRG has continued to use various methods of campaigning with some considerable success as the following figures will demonstrate:

Numbers of Children place in Foster Care in each of the years

Year	Long term	Short term	Day Foster Care	Total
1975	22	36	-	58
1976	15	20	-	35
1977	29	31	-	60
1978	16	92	-	108
1979	37	73	-	110
1980	47	95	-	142
1981	67	123	-	190
1982	96	172	35	303

The FRG as has been mentioned, provide special support for their colleagues in the Area teams, and with the teams, organise special campaigns for recruiting foster parents for particular children. Each Community Care Area has had at Mast one campaign in its area. Such campaigns involved advertising in local newspapers, conducting Qubic. information meetings, setting up publicity stands at shopping and other •centres and organising group meetings and training sessions for couples showing an interest in foster cere.

Two campaigns in recent times have attracted extensive coverage from the media viz: Campaign for day foster parents in July 1981 in the Ballymun district. Campaign to find families for sibling groups in March 1983 in Area 7 - North Inner City Area.

The campaign for day foster parents was a pilot project and it met with tremendous success. Of a total number of 20 applicants. 11 were approved and are caring for children.

The Board has since extended Day Fostering to Area 1 and we hope the remaining areas will also be covered as the need for this type of care arises.

The campaign for sibling groups has resulted in a large number of enquiries and 15 families have indicated further interest by completing applications which are currently being processed.

Apart from initiating and supporting campaigns in specific Community Care Areas the FRG hold a public information meeting once a month in a city centre hotel at which 14 couples on average attend.

Following the success of the major campaign in 1978 and those in 1981 and March of this year the FRG now propose a further major campaign for end of April 1983 to recruit foster parents for 92 children currently awaiting foster homes, and for children who will be coming on the list for placement.

The proposed campaign will entail the making of a special video film to form part of a TV documentary programme, audio cassettes for radio, another special video film for use in recruitment and training for prospective foster parents and newspaper features. A firm has been engaged to give technical assistance in the campaign and are also prepared to provide many facilities at minimal or no charge. When all of the preliminary work has been completed it is proposed to launch the campaign with a press conference.

The work in this service is exacting and very demanding of the personal resources of all the staffs involved as well as being time-consuming, it is, however, most rewarding and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of all for their work and effort.

Following, a discussion to which Cllrs Carroll, Freehill, and Mrs Bonar contributed and Mr Hickey, Deputy Chief Executive Officer replied. It was agreed, on a proposal by Cllr Hynes, seconded by Cllr Sweeney that the report be adopted.

Cllr Freehill proposed a vote of thanks to the Fostering Resource Group and the community care teams for their work which resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of children placed in foster care since 1978.

Mr Hickey, on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer, thanked the staff concerned for their contribution to the success of the various campaigns which the Fostering Resource Group had organised.

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#### PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL COMMITTEES

The reports of the following Local Committee meetings, having been circulated, were dealt with as follows:

- (i) Dublin County Local Committee meeting held on 10 February, 1983.

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

- (ii) Dublin City Local Committee meeting held on 14 February, 1983.

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

- (iii) Dun Laoghaire Local Committee meeting held on 8 March, 1983.

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

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#### NOTICES OF MOTION

The motion, notice of which was given by Cllr Mrs Fitzgerald was, in her absence, not taken.

Cllr Stagg agreed that the motion which he had tabled regarding the facilities for homeless persons should be deferred to the May meeting of the Board.

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CORRESPONDENCE

- (i) Letter from the Department of Health enclosing a copy of the new agreement regarding the cost of drugs supplied to the health services which had been reached between the Department and the Federation of Irish Chemical Industries was noted.
- (ii) Circular no. 5/1983 dated 8 March, 1983 from the Department of Health regarding a revised procedure for dealing with applications for new or replacement consultant posts was noted.

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OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Rnegan referred to the post-graduate training and education of nurses and enquired if an officer could be assigned exclusively to co-ordinate the postgraduate training of all nurses in the Board's service.

Correct: K J Hickey  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer

CHAIRMAN