

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of monthly meeting
held in
The Boardroom, St Mary's Hospital, Chapelizod Dublin 20
On
Thursday 12th December. 1991 at 6:00 p.m.

Present

Cllr. M. Barrett T.D.	Mrs. B. Bonar
Cllr. G. Brady	Cllr. B. Briscoe T.D.
Cllr. E. Byrne T.D.	Cllr. I. Callely T.D.
Mrs. D. Clune	Cllr. B. Coffey
Cllr. J. Connolly	Dr R Corcoran
Dr. P. Devitt	Cllr. J. Doyle T.D.
Cllr. B J. Durkan T.D.	Cllr. K. Farrell
Cllr C Gallagher	Cllr. R Greene
Cllr. F. Hynes	Cllr. J. Jacob T.D.
Dr. D.I Keane	Cllr T Keenan
Cllr. D. Marren	Mr. G. McGuire
Cllr. O. Mitchell	Ms. M. Nealon
Cllr. Dr. W J. O'Connell	Dr. J. Boyle
Dr. B. O'Connell	Cllr. J. Relly
Cllr.R Roche T.D.	Cllr. R Shortall

In the Chair

Cllr. F. Hynes

Officers in Attendance

Mr. K. Hickey, Chief Executive Officer
Mr. J. Doyle, A/Programme Manager. Community Care
Mr. S. O'Brien, A/Programme Manager. General Hospital Care
Prof. B. O'Donnell. Dublin Medical Officer of Health
Mr. G. Brennan, Technical Services Officer
Mr. M. Gallagher. Finance Officer
Ms. M. Kelly. A/Personnel Officer
Mr. M. O'Connor, Secretary

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CONDOLENCES

On the proposal of the Chairman votes of sympathy were passed with the following:

1. Una Gallagher, Community Welfare Officer, on the death of her father.
2. Mr. Liam Behan, Community Welfare Officer, on the death of his mother.
3. Ms. Olive Power, Asst Supervisor, Haven House, on the death of her father.
4. Brenda Harvey, Night Worker, Women's Refuge on the death of her mother.
5. The family of Catherine Donnelly, Staff Nurse, St. Columcille's Hospital [R.I.P]

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CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman read the following report which was noted by the Board.

1. **January Board Meeting**
With the members' agreement it is proposed to hold the January meeting of our Board on Thursday 9th January. 1992.
2. **December Meeting of the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee**
Arrangements have been, made to hold the December meeting of the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee on Thursday 19th December. 1991 at 11:00 a.m. in the Nurse Education Centre. St. Brendan's Hospital.

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF MONTHLY MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER, 1991

The minutes of the monthly meeting held on 7th November. 1991, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Mrs. Clune, seconded by Ms. Nealon.

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QUESTIONS TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On a proposal by Mrs. Chune, seconded by Dr. O'Boyle, it was agreed to answer the questions which had been lodged.

1. Cllr. E. Byrne, T.D.

To ask the Chief Executive Officer to make available to Board Members the latest report available from the Central Planning Committee for coordinating the overall provision of services for persons with a mental handicap.

Reply

A Report incorporating waiting lists for day and residential services for 1991 - 1992 for people with mental handicap is currently being completed by the Central Planning Committee. In accordance with previous practice this will be circulated for consideration by the Special Hospital Care Programme Committee at its January meeting before its submission to our Board. Members will, accordingly, have an opportunity to consider the Report in some detail.

2. Cllr. D. Roche, T.D.

To ask the Chief Executive Officer if his attention has been drawn to the report contained in the Wicklow Times of 25th September, 1991. on an Environmental and Health survey conducted by Arklow Environmental Awareness Group and. in particular, if his attention has been drawn to the findings in the report regarding the incidence of children born with severe limb defects and if he win make a statement on the matter and cause a full enquiry to be conducted by the Health Board on all the issues raised by this survey.

Reply

The Director of Community Care and Medical Officer of Health for Co. Wicklow reports as follows: -

"I have received a copy of the Arklow Environmental Awareness Group Report. I was invited to comment on the Report and to attend at the meetings of the Arklow Urban District Council at which deputations from the Group were received, and I have given the Council my views on health matters in the Report

We have also studied mortality patterns in the small areas (D.E.D.s) of County Wicklow for the years 1986 to 1987 i.e. Observed and Expected Deaths and Standardised Mortality ratios for the D.E.D.s in the county. We have studied the deaths from all causes, lung cancer, bowel cancer and malignant neoplasms and we have discussed these matters in regard to Arklow with the Council in relation to the environment.

With regard to congenital limb defects in Arklow our Board is aware of three cases of children with congenital limb reduction defects born to residents of the Arldow area in 1988 and 1989.

A preliminary review of data in our Board's EUROCAT Register of an congenital malformations, including hmb defects, revealed 73 cases of children with congenital limb reduction defects born to mothers resident in the Eastern Health Board area between 1980 and 1991. Ten of these were to mothers resident in Co. Wicklow. The incidence rate per 10.000 births for Co. Wicklow is not significantly different from the rate for our Board's area as a whole.

An investigation to establish the incidence rate per 10.000 births in the Arklow area is under way. This requires coding of birth data to D.E.D. level and win take some time".

3. Cllr. K. Greene

What efforts are being made by the Board to ensure that elderly patients needing fun-time care are accommodated in Homes within their own catchment area?

Reply

Elderly patients who can no longer be managed in their own home environment are assessed by a Consultant Geriatrician. Following assessment a decision is made in consultation with the patients relatives as to the most appropriate placement for the patient if deemed in need of long-term nursing care.

In general terms it is Board policy to place patients who are in need of long term care in suitable accommodation as close as possible to their families.

In addition to the Health Board's own facilities the Board in its continuing efforts to implement this policy has contracted in excess of sixty nursing home beds throughout the Board's area. Our Board's own capital development priorities which have been submitted to the Minister for Health for approval include the provision of a number of community based nursing units in strategic locations.

4. Cllr. E. Byrne. T.D.

That the service to Local Elected Representatives and other Board members by the officials of this Health Board be examined with a view to speeding up response time to queries, letters, or motions and questions that are withdrawn from the order paper in favour of written reports and that a more centralized and streamlined handling of such issues be instigated immediately.

Reply

Letters seeking information or making representations on behalf of individual cases are received from members of our Board and other public representatives either centrally at Head Office, through the Programme Managers' offices or at local office level.

It is our policy that requests for information and representations in individual cases from elected representatives in general, and from members of our Board in particular, are acknowledged, carefully considered and replied to as quickly as possible. A follow-up system is operated with a view to ensuring that this objective is met.

The volume of letters received from public representatives and from other members of our Board varies from month to month. A survey of the volume in the period August to October 1991 shows an average of 500 letters per month. In addition a considerable volume of queries is received by telephone.

If any member is dissatisfied with the response time to any letter or query the Board Secretary will be happy to expedite the response.

5. Cllr. E. Byrne, T.D.

How many homeless people are presently in Eastern Health Board funded Bed and Breakfast accommodation, how many homeless people are being dealt with on a weekly basis by the staff at the Eastern Health Board Homeless Section in North Great Charles Street and can he say what is the annual budget allocated to the Homeless Section of the Eastern Health Board?"

Reply

The Homeless Persons' Unit at Charles Street West is administered with the co-operation of, and assistance from the three Dublin local authorities and has an overall co-ordinating function in relation to several categories of homeless persons.

During week ended 23rd November, 1991, 12 family units [29 persons] were provided with bed and breakfast accommodation for a combined total of 47 bed nights.

In week ended 8th December, 1991. 466 cases were dealt with in the Homeless Persons Unit, comprising 402 single men, 21 single women. 35 families and 8 persons under the age of 18 years.

The approximate annual cost of the Unit is £650,000

6. Cllr. R. Shortall

Will the Chief Executive Officer please report on the Home Help Scheme and provide details of the following:-

- (i) Total cost of this Scheme.
- (ii) What percentage of this is met by the Eastern Health Board.
- (iii) Number of people benefiting from the Scheme.
- (iv) What portion of overall cost is recouped from those availing of the Scheme.
- (v) Amount of individual weekly contribution.
- (vi) The basis on which a person's contribution is determined.

Will the Chief Executive Officer furthermore comment on the Board's delay in releasing payment cheques to those operating the Scheme?

Reply

- (i) The total expenditure on the Home Help service in 1991 is estimated as £3,950,000
- (ii) Our Board is meeting the total cost of the service, apart from contributions made by recipients [5% approx.]
- (iii) Approximately 5,000 persons per week avail of the Home Help Service.
- (iv) Estimated contributions for 1991 will be £200,000, based on figures supplied by the Voluntary Organisations involved in delivery of the service.
- (v) Individual weekly contributions which vary in accordance with means and level of service provided range from £1 to 25 per week and average £3 per week.
- (vi) The Home Help Organiser will decide the appropriate contribution having regard to factors such as the applicants' means, their service requirement in terms of hours, their outgoings, their family circumstances and any other relevant details. Organisers operate flexibly in relation to contributions and ensure that no client suffers financial hardship as a result of contributing to the cost of their Home Help. This flexibility is regarded as a vital element in the effectiveness of the Home Help Service.

Delays of up to two months in issuing cheques to Home Help Organisations were the norm during 1991. However, this delay has now been reduced to one month. It is expected for 1992 that monthly cheques will continue for Home Help Organisations.

7. Cllr. R. Shortall

In relation to the recent water pollution incident in Naas will the Chief Executive Officer please :-

- [i] Provide full data of all test results for all drinking water tests carried out in September and October, 1991 (address supplied).
- [ii] Provide details of the time and date when the tests showing E - Coli were available in relation to samples of Naas drinking water.
- [iii] Provide details of when the results of these tests were advised to the local authority and specifically who was advised and exactly when.
- [iv] Outline in detail, the plans, if any, which the Eastern Health Board have to monitor the long term effects on the health of the population of Naas of this pollution incident.
- [v] Provide details of the timing and precise nature of advice given to food retailers in Naas by the Eastern Health Board.

Reply

- [i] As the Health Board monitors water on an agency basis for the Local Authority all results are sent to the Council and particular enquiries should be taken up with the local authority. All water is sampled regularly and up to the date [7th October], when contamination of this supply was found, sampling disclosed no contamination before that date.
- [ii] A complaint was received from a consumer in Roselawn Estate on Monday 7th October as to the quality of her water supply. A sample was taken by the Environmental Health Officer and sent for analysis.
- [iii] A visual inspection of the water source was carried out by an Environmental Health Officer early on 8th October. Following this the County Engineer was advised by the Director of Community Care and Medical Officer of Health of suspected contamination of the water supply.

The preliminary result of the sample referred to at [ii] was received on the afternoon of 8th October and showed water contamination. However the test result did not specify the type of contamination. The County Engineer was also advised of this.

Further results of this test received on 9th October showing E-Coli contamination were also advised to the County Engineer as a receipt of same.

- [iv] In order to assess the health of the population on an ongoing basis, the D.C.C. & M.O.H. has arranged the following:
 - (a) General Practitioners have been requested to advise the D.C.C. of any infectious diseases or other problems arising in the affected area. They have been asked to refer any patients who have chronic diarrhoea for investigation to Naas Laboratory. The Laboratories have been advised of this situation and are in constant touch with the D.C.C. Stools are being monitored for microorganisms.

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to be members of the St James's Hospital Board for the period ending on 5th December. 1902.

The Establishment Order also provides that the Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Health Board (or his nominee) shall also be a member of the St. James's Hospital Board. I have also received notice of re-appointment by the Minister for a further year.

5. *Procedures Governing the Disposal of Property by a Health Board*

I have circulated, with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of letter dated 20th November, 1991 from the Department of Health regarding the procedures governing the disposal of property by a Health Board, stressing that the sanction of the Minister for Health to the disposal of property by a health board is a statutory requirement, and that no transaction should be finalised before that consent is obtained.

6. *Drugs Refund Scheme*

I have circulated, with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of letter dated 5th November, 1991 from the North Eastern Health Board conveying the text of a motion adopted by it at its October meeting calling on the Minister for Health to revert to the old system of the Drugs Refund Scheme.

7. *Health Services News*

I have circulated, with the agenda papers for the information of members copies of the November, 1991 issue of "*Health Services News*" published by the institute of Public Administration.

8. *National Rehabilitation Board – Annual Report 1990*

I have circulated, with the agenda papers for this meeting, copies of the National Rehabilitation Board's Annual Report. 1990.

This Report can be considered in greater detail by the Community Care Programme Committee.

9. *Sale Solvents to Children*

I have circulated this evening, for the information of members, copies of letter dated 5th December, 1991 from the Department of Health advising that Section 74 of the Child Care Act. 1991 was brought into operation on 1st December, 1991.

Section 74 makes it an offence to sell solvent based substances to children for "glue sniffing" and empowers the Gardal to seize such substances from children in certain circumstances. The enforcement of the new provisions will be a matter for the Gardal.

It should be noted that Section 2 of the Act also commenced on 1st December. This Section, which is effective in relation to Section 74, defines a child as a person up to 18 years of age other than a person who is or has been married.

10. *1991 Health Allocation of National Lottery Proceeds*

I have circulated this evening, for the information of members, copies of letter dated 5th December, 1991 from the Department of Health regarding the allocation of £185,000 from the 1991 health allocation of the National

Lottery proceeds for child care services in our Board's area, together with details of the amounts payable in respect of the various projects approved for funding.

11. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome [Cot Death] - Guidelines

I have circulated this evening, for the information of members, copies of letter dated 5th December, 1991 from the Department of Health setting out guidelines recommended by the Minister for Health which may help parents and those caring for babies to reduce the risk of sudden Infant death.

12. Medical Practitioners Act, 1978

I have circulated this evening, for the information of members, copies of letter dated 4th November, 1991 from the Department of Health stating that the Minister has under consideration at present proposals from the Medical Council for amendment of the Medical Practitioners Act, 1978 [mainly in the areas of registration and fitness to practice].

Our Board is invited to make a written submission outlining proposals, if any, for amendment of the Act.

A response is at present being prepared and will be advised to the General Hospital Care Programme Committee at their meeting on 23rd January, 1992.

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POST OF SECRETARY/MANAGER, JAMES CONNOLLY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

A report from the Chief Executive Officer (Copy appended to official minute) was circulated proposing with the approval of the Board to abolish the office of Secretary/Manager James Connolly Memorial Hospital.

Proposed by Mrs. Clune, seconded by Dr. Keane, and agreed

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TEMPORAY BORROWING

Copies of letter dated 6th December, 1991 from the Department of Health conveying sanction to the incurring by our Board of temporary overdraft on the revenue account up to a maximum of £7m for the period to 31st December, 1991. were circulated.

On a proposal by Mrs. Clune, seconded by Dr. O'Boyle, it was agreed to approve of borrowing by way of overdraft to a maximum of £7m during the period ending on 31st March 1992.

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PROGRESS REPORTS FROM PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

1. Special Hospital Care Programme commtttee

On a progosal by Dr. O'Herilhy seconded by Dr. O'Boyle, it was agreed to adopt the report.

The following matters were dealt with in the report:-

- (a) **Psychiatric Services - Co. Kildare**
- (b) **Postgraduate Training - Mental Handicap Service**
- (c) **Bord Altranais approval of Postgraduate Training Programme for Psychiatric Nurses in Challenging Disturbed Behaviour**
- (d) **Letter of Congratulations from Royal College of Psychiatrists regarding manner in which the Area 7 psychiatric team had organised the examination centre for the MRC Psych. (Part 1) Examination**
- (e) **Report on Services provided by St Michael's House in Community Care Areas 6, 7 and 8**

2. General Hospital Care Programme

On a proposal by Mr. McGuire, seconded by Cllr. Reilly it was agreed to adopt the report. The following matters were dealt with in the report:-

- (a) **Comhairle non-Ospideal Report on Neurological Services**
- (b) **Interviews for Consultant ENT Surgeon's Post and Consultant in Rheumatology and Rehabilitation, James Connolly Memorial Hospital**
- (c) **Commencement of in-patient service in the new Psychiatric Unit in Naas General Hospital to mid December**
- (d) **Recommendation that a letter should be sent to the Minister for Health requesting approval to proceed with the next phase of the development of Naas General Hospital**
- (e) **Recommendation that our Board should acknowledge the contribution made by the late Cllr. Austin Groome to the health services, particularly in the Kildare area, and that a suitable plaque be erected in his memory**
- (f) **Dublin Hospitals Accident and Emergency service**
- (g) **Schedule of meetings of the Committee arranged for 1992**
- (h) **Report on services in Naas General Hospital**

3. Community Care Programme Committee

On a proposal by Mrs. Clune, seconded by Dr. O'Boyle, it was agreed to adapt the report of a special meeting of the Committee held on 5th December to consider the Child Abuse Prevention Programme.

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NOTICES OF MOTION

1. The following motion was proposed by Cllr. O. Mitchell:-

“That the Chief Executive Officer report to the Board on

- [a] how many couples have applied to the Board for assessment as suitable parents under the foreign adoption legislation enacted last June;
- [b] how many cases have been processed and home study reports sent to the Adoption Board, and
- [c] that the Board give some consideration to the manner in which this legislation is being *administered* by the Eastern Health Board." [Deferred from November meeting]

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Marren and following a discussion to which Cllr. Mitchell, Cllr. Green, Mrs. Clune, Cllr. Coffey, Dr. O'Boyle, Cllr. Reilly, Mr. Nealon contributed and to which the Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Doyle, A/Programme Manager, Community Care Services replied, it was noted that 190 enquiries had been reciped regarding assessment as suitable parents under foreign adoption legislation. Following initial briefing meeting with these enquirers 97 applications were received. Six families are currently being assessed and, while the assessment process is lengthy, the aim is to have all assessments completed within 18 months.

The Chief Executive Officer assured the Board that the Social Workers engoged in these assessments are offering non-directive advice to enquirers and that he was satisfied with the manner in which were being processed by our Board's staff.

2. The following motion was proposed by Cllr. R. Greene and seconded by Mrs. B. Bonar:-

“Could the Eastern Health Board study the feasibility of extending the service to the homeless provided by Brother Luke of Church Street by providing all day facilities [Shlter, reading and recreation rooms] for the homeless.”

Following a discussion to which Cllr. Greene and Mrs. Bonar contributed and to which the Chief Executive Officer replied it was agreed that a general up-date report an services for homeless persons woulds be prepared for a future meeting of our Board.

3. The following motion was proposed by Cllr. R. Greene and seconded by Cllr. J Reilly:-

“That the Board discuss the situation where an eighty year old woman [name supplied] has been given a week to vacate a bed in St. James's Hospital [Unit 1, Hospital 4]- Her husband is 81 years of age.”

Following a discussion to which Cllr. Greene, Cllr. Marren, Cllr. Reilly and Cllr. Brady contributed Mr. O'Brien, A/programme Manager, General Hospital Care auttined in full detail the focts of this case which, inter atia indicated that the family had never been requested to take the patient out of the hospital within a week there appeared to have been a misunderstanding between her family and the Hospital authorities

Cllr. Greene informed the members that he had been speaking to Mr. O'Brien and his staff regariting the particular case. He was very grateful to them for the sympathetic manner in which they had dealt with his enquiries. The patient concerned had, unfortunately, died since he had cobled the notice of motion.

4. In response to the notice of motion in the name of Cllr. E. Byrne T.D. calling on the Health Board to make every effort to ensure that St. Helena's Nursery in Finglas gets its 70% Health Board finding in advance, and to an enquiry from Mr. McGuire, the Chief Executive Officer informed the Board that a grant of £34,298 had been provided to the Day Nursery during 1991. Payments had been made in February, May, October and November, generally six weeks in advance of £9,000 in respect of 1992 finding was being processed and it was expected that this advance would be made available early in January.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Items of correspondence as referred to in the Chief Executive Officer's Report were noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.30 p.m.

CORRECT: K. J. Hickey,
Chief Executive Officer



Chairman