

Bórd Sláinte an Iarthair Western Health Board

Telephone: Galway (091) 7631

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
(Please quote our ref. in any reply)

Headquarters,
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,
Galway.

27th. April, 1976.

To: Each Member of the Board:

Dear Member,

I desire to inform you that the next meeting of the Board will be held in the Boardroom, Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway, at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 3rd. May, 1976. Agenda is set out hereunder.

You are hereby requested to attend.

Following the meeting, the Members will visit Departments in Merlin Park Regional Hospital, as follows:-

General Hospital Care
Standing Committee:

Units 3, 4 & 10.

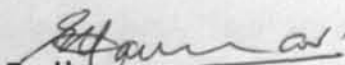
Psychiatric & Geriatric Care
Standing Committee:

Hospital Block.

Community Care Standing
Committee:

Units 5, 6 and 9.

Yours sincerely,


E. Hannan,
Chief Executive Officer.

A G E N D A

1. Opening Prayer.
2. Verification of Minutes of Meeting of 5th. April, 1976,
(Copy herewith).



3. Special Hospital Care Programme Statistics - Year ended 31st. December, 1975, (copy herewith).
4. General Hospital Development - Determination of Priorities.
5. Policy Statement of Comhairle na n-Ospideal dated 24th. March, 1976, re Consultant Appointments, (copy herewith).
6. Health Contributions Act 1976, (report herewith).
7. County Hospital Roscommon/Portiuncula Hospital Ballinasloe - proposed federation.
8. Arrangements for Official Opening of St. Francis Home, Newcastle, Galway.
9. Sale of Dispensary Residence at Roundstone, Co. Galway.
10. Chief Executive Officer's Progress Report:-
 - (1) "Choice of Doctor" and "Choice of Pharmacist" Schemes;
 - (2) Building Programme.
11. Notice of Motion:

"That the Western Health Board and the North Western Health Board jointly approach the Minister for Health to make available, in their respective areas, adequate resources in Personnel and equipment and the necessary funds to bring the Orthopaedic Services, which are now inadequate to meet needs, up to an acceptable level."

P.C. Bresnihan, F.R.C.S.I.

BORD SLAINTE AN IARTHAIR

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of Western Health Board, held at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 5th April, 1976, in the Boardroom, Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway.

- Present: Senator M. D. Lyons, Chairman, who presided.
- Other Members: Messrs. T. Byrne, E. Carey, Miss D. Casey, Messrs. P. Concannon, J. Costello, D. Dalton, G. Dodd, M. J. Dyar, M. J. Egan, M. Gilmore, E. Haverty, M. Kelly, J. D. Kennedy, M. J. McLoughlin, H. Melvin, J. Molloy, P. J. Morley, J. Mulrooney, T. O Baoill, P. O Cathain, J. P. O'Donnell, P. D. Power and J. J. Tobin.
- Apologies: Mr. P. C. Bresnihan, Councillor J. P. O'Callaghan, Vice-Chairman.
- In Attendance: Messrs. E. Hannan, Chief Executive Officer; M. Killeen and S. O'Donoghue, Programme Managers; Dr. J. R. Shea, Chief Psychiatrist, St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe, and J. O'Leary, Secretary.
- Opening Prayer: The Opening Prayer was recited in Irish by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Votes of Sympathy: On the proposal of Councillor G. Dodd, seconded by Mr. M. J. Egan, the Board passed resolutions of sympathy with Mr. C. Crowley, Hospital Administrator, Galway and Merlin Park Regional Hospitals, on the death of his father, the late Mr. James Crowley, and to the relatives of the late Mr. Michael Dockery, Health Inspector, who died on 5th March, 1976. The Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of all sections of the Staff and on his own behalf, associated himself with the resolutions of sympathy.
- Vote of Congratulations: On the proposal of Senator M. D. Lyons, Chairman, seconded by Mr. J. Costello, the Board congratulated Dr. P. D. Power, Galway County Medical Officer and Board Member, on his election as a Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians-Community Medicine, and to Dr. Charles McCon, former Galway County Medical Officer retired, on his election

as Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians-Occupational Medicine.

Chief Executive Officer, on behalf of all sections of the Staff, and on his own behalf, associated himself with the vote of congratulations. Dr. P. D. Power thanked the Board and Chief Executive Officer for their kind remarks.

Minutes:

Minutes of Monthly Meeting of 1st March, 1976, copies of which had been circulated to each Member on 30th March, 1976, and of Special Meeting of the Board of 26th March, 1976, copies of which had been circulated to each Member on 2nd April, 1976, were adopted on the proposal of Mr. J. Costello, seconded by Councillor H. Melvin, and then signed by the Chairman.

Overdraft
Accommodation
Quarter Ending
30th June, 1976:

It was proposed by Mr. M. J. Egan, seconded by Councillor G. Dodd, and resolved:-

"That we hereby authorise the raising of overdraft accommodation in the sum of three-million, four-hundred-and-fifty-thousand pounds (£3,450,000) for the period ending 30th June, 1976, pursuant to Section 33 of the Health Act 1970".

Blind Welfare
Allowances -
Increased Rates:

Explanatory memorandum from Mr. P. McDaid, Programme Manager, Community Care, of 5th April, 1976, circulated at the meeting, was considered. Chief Executive Officer stated that the estimated cost of paying the increased Blind Welfare Allowances recommended by the Minister for Health from 1st April, 1976,

was five-thousand, five-hundred-and-sixty-nine pounds (£5,569) in the current year.

It was proposed by Councillor D. Dalton, seconded by Mr. T. O Baoill, and resolved:-

"That we hereby approve of the recommended increases in Blind Welfare Allowances from 1st April, 1976, and authorise the incurring of the excess expenditure necessary to meet the cost".

Excess
Expenditure:

It was proposed by Councillor D. Dalton, seconded by Mr. T. O Baoill, and resolved:-

"That we hereby authorise the incurring of the following excess expenditure in 1976 over and above the amount approved by the Minister for Health, as set out in Department of Health Circular HSG 354 of 12th January, 1976:-

- (a) Amount by which the Minister's allocation falls short of the Board's estimate, four-hundred-and-sixty-two-thousand-pounds (£462,000).
- (b) Increase in employer's contributions to Social Welfare Insurance, one-hundred-and-twenty-six-thousand, six-hundred pounds, (£126,600)."

Disposal of
Turloughmore
Dispensary
Residence to
Dr. T. O'Shea,
Turloughmore:

It was proposed by Councillor H. Melvin, seconded by Councillor M. Kelly, and resolved:-

"That we hereby consent to the sale of dwelling-house situated on approximately 2 roods of land at Turloughmore, Co. Galway, to Dr. T. O'Shea, General Practitioner in the General Medical Service, Turloughmore, for the sum of

eleven-thousand, two-hundred-and-fifty pounds (£11,250), the purchaser to be responsible for all costs incurred in connection with the disposal, and the Board to have first option to re-purchase in the event of re-sale at an agreed price, or in the absence of agreement, at a price to be determined by arbitration".

Long-Term
Illnesses and
Diseases -
Coeliac
Disease:

Chief Executive Officer read the following letter dated 15th March, 1976, from the Department of Health, which was noted:-

"A Chara: I am directed by the Minister for Health to refer to your recent letter concerning the provision of gluten free diet free of charge to persons suffering from coeliac disease. The position is that the prescribed list of long-term conditions has been reviewed on a number of occasions and extended last year. When this Minister was reviewing the Long-Term Illness Scheme, the position in relation to other illnesses was examined, including coeliac disease to which particular consideration was given on each occasion, but it was not found possible to include these on the prescribed list at present. It is unlikely that there will be any further extension to the Scheme in the immediate future. Mise, le meas, F. Foley".

Reports from
Insights of
Helicopter
based at
Galway:

Chief Executive Officer read the following letter of 23rd March, 1976, from the Department of Defence, which was noted:-

"A Chara: With further reference to your letter (115/1/3A) of 3 February, 1976,

Member of the Committee. He stated he knew of no precedent for parent bodies to furnish minutes of their proceedings to members of subsidiary bodies, and that the cost of the preparation and circulation of the minutes, together with the voluminous documentation which accompanied them, would be considerable. All communications from the Local Committees were acknowledged and dealt with and each Committee had a full-time officer of the Board of Section Officer rank, as Secretary.

In support of the proposal, it was stated by Members that circulation of the minutes would forestal statements based on inaccurate press reports, but, it was pointed out, such press reports appeared before the Board's minutes were validated. The Secretaries of the Local Committees were in possession of the minutes and a member of the Board's Management Team attended these meetings. It was proposed by Councillor J. Mulrooney, seconded by Mr. T. O Baoill, and resolved:-
"That the Secretary of each Local Health Committee make available for consultation at each meeting of the Local Committees, copies of the adopted minutes of the Western Health Board".

Reports from
Meetings of
Standing
Committees:

Minutes of Meetings of the Board's Standing Committees, copies of which were circulated to each Member on 30th March, 1976, were considered and noted and recommendations therein approved as follows:-

- (1) General Institutional Care - Meeting of 30th January, 1976.

conveying the text of a further resolution passed by your Board on 2 February, 1976, regarding the above matter, I am directed by the Minister for Defence to state that the matter has been re-considered. The position, however, is still as indicated in this Department's letter of 12 June, 1974 (copy enclosed).

In elaboration of the operational considerations involved, I am to state that for Search and Rescue/Air Ambulance purposes, one helicopter based at a location other than Baldonnell could not be sustained on its own. To ensure that a helicopter and crew would be immediately available for such purposes, at least three helicopters, eight pilots and twelve winch operators/crewmembers would be required. This would necessitate an increase of almost 50% in the present helicopter flight. In addition, a servicing back-up of technicians, hangarage, accommodation, servicing equipment and specially heated storage and drying facilities for the helicopter rescue equipment would be necessary.

In the circumstances it is regretted that the request to have a helicopter based at Galway cannot be agreed to. *Mise, le meas,*
L. Fletcher, Runai".

Circulation
of copies of
Board Meeting
Minutes to
Members of
Mayo Local
Health
Committee:

Chief Executive Officer stated that Mayo Local Health Committee, at its meeting on 13th February, 1976, passed a resolution that copies of adopted minutes of meetings of the Western Health Board be circulated to each

(2) Special Hospital Care - Meeting of
14th November, 1975.

Chief Executive
Officer's
Progress Report:

Chief Executive Officer reported as follows:-

1. General Medical Services:

The position with regard to the filling of vacancies in the General Medical Services "Choice of Doctor" Scheme is as follows:-

COUNTY GALWAY:

Carraroe:

A candidate has been recommended for appointment to this area as a result of interviews held on 18th March, 1976.

Williamstown:

A vacancy has arisen due to the resignation of Dr. J. Garrity with effect from 30th June, 1976. Vacancy was advertised on 4th April, 1976, with closing date, 29th April, 1976.

COUNTY MAYO:

Westport:

The recommended candidate proposes to take up duty on 1st May, 1976.

Swinford:

A candidate has been recommended as a result of interviews held on 18th March, 1976.

Louisburgh:

Candidate has been recommended as a result of interviews held on 18th March, 1976.

COUNTY ROSCOMMON:

Frenchpark:

A vacancy has arisen due to the resignation of Dr. M. J. Duignan on the grounds of ill health, with effect from 18th April, 1976. Vacancy advertised on 4th April, 1976, with closing date, 29th April, 1976.

Latest returns from the General Medical Services (Payments) Board give the following particulars in respect of the Board's area:-

(a) Payments:

	<u>Doctors</u> £	<u>Pharmacists</u> £ (Cost of Drugs & Disp.)	<u>Total</u> £
1/1/'75 to 31/12/'75	1,248,414.00	2,023,508.00	3,271,922.00
December	118,928.00	191,635.00	310,563.00

(b) Breakdown of Payments to Pharmacists: December 1975:

	<u>Cost</u> £	<u>Stock Orders</u> £	<u>Total</u> £	<u>% Total</u>
Ingredient Cost	107,772.00	24,651.00	132,423.00	69%
Dispensing Fee	46,641.00	10,718.00	57,359.00	30%
V.A.T.	1,496.00	357.00	1,853.00	1%
Total:	<u>155,909.00</u>	<u>35,726.00</u>	<u>191,635.00</u>	<u>100%</u>

(c) Visiting Rates:

	<u>Western Area</u>			<u>Whole Country</u>		
	<u>Surg.</u>	<u>Dom.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Surg.</u>	<u>Dom.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Year ended 30/9/'75:	3.88	0.83	4.71	4.29	1.19	5.48
December '75	3.84	0.80	4.64	4.26	1.24	5.50

Chief Executive Officer also gave the following particulars of the cost of the "Choice of Doctor" and "Choice of Pharmacist" Schemes as administered by the General Medical Services (Payments) Board for each of the years 1973, 1974 and 1975. These did not include arrears paid to doctors and pharmacists during 1975, nor direct payments by the Board which were set out in Page 46 of the Budget Report for 1976, of 19th March, 1976.

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
<u>Doctors:</u>			
Claims - Nos.	606,026	732,353	810,060
Fees - Cost	£603,098	£728,480	£1,248,414
Visiting Rates	5.0	4.8	4.68
Av. Cost per Claim	£1.00	£0.99	£1.54
<u>Pharmacists:</u>			
No. of Prescriptions paid for	474,623	567,763	575,022
Cost of Prescriptions	£867,016	£1,156,459	£1,536,859
Ingredient Cost			£1,142,738
Fees			379,797
V.A.T.			14,324
Av. Presc. Cost	£1.83	£2.04	£2.67
Stock Orders Cost	£232,919	£366,907	£486,649
Total Cost Medicines	£1,099,935	£1,523,366	£2,023,508
Overall Cost	£1,703,033	£2,251,846	£3,271,922
Av. No. Eligible Persons (Excluding Panels of Doctors on salary)	121,826	152,802	172,917
Av. Cost per eligible person	£13.98	£14.74	£18.92

Chief Executive Officer gave the following particulars of the percentage of the population covered by General Medical Services Cards as on 31st December, 1973, 31st December, 1974, and 31st December, 1975.

	<u>31st Dec., '73</u>	<u>31st Dec., '74</u>	<u>31st Dec., '75</u>
Galway	50.81	55.22	59.14
Mayo	57.92	64.24	67.31
Roscommon	48.26	50.96	55.26
Health Board	52.87	57.65	61.34
State	33.92	36.37	37.17

Chief Executive Officer stated he would give particulars of the number of eligible persons who availed of the service at a future meeting.

Chief Executive Officer stated he had met the Superintendent Assistance Officers and the Assistance Officers with a view to achieving uniformity in the interpretation of the guidelines for assessing full eligibility. The percentage covered by General Medical Services Cards varied between 40% in some areas to 91% in others and this discrepancy did not necessarily relate to the Poor Law Valuation of the land. When the position was more thoroughly investigated, he would bring the matter before the Board for further discussion.

In reply to Councillor E. Haverty who stated that Assistance Officers should be compelled

to reside in their areas, the Chief Executive Officer stated that the Board had not appointed any Assistance Officers since its establishment on 1st April, 1971. When the service was transferred under the Social Welfare (Supplementary Allowances) Act 1975, to the area Health Boards, the position would change.

Notices of Motion:

1. Dental Services:

"That this Health Board again calls on the Minister for Health to introduce as a matter of urgency, the necessary amending legislation to permit the employment of Dental Auxiliaries by the Health Boards".

In proposing the motion, Councillor G. Dodd referred to paragraph 32 on Page 11 of the Board's Plan for Development of Dental Services 1975 - 1985 adopted at Meeting of 7th January, 1975, and stated that the question of legislating for the employment of operating Dental Auxiliaries should now be reactivated by the Minister for Health.

2. Orthopaedic Services of Western Health Board:

In the absence of Mr. P. C. Bresnihan, who had given notice of it, the following motion was not moved:-

"That the Western Health Board advise the North Western Health Board and Minister for Health that as from 1st April, 1977, it will be unable to provide orthopaedic services for patients from Counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo".

The meeting then concluded, when the Board divided into its three Standing Committees and visited the following Departments of the Hospital:-

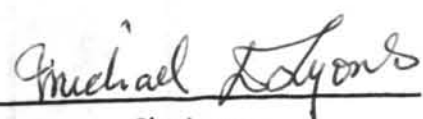
- (a) The General Hospital Care - Units 5, 6 and 9, Merlin Park Regional Hospital, accompanied by Miss E. P. Kelly, Acting Assistant Matron;
- (b) The Psychiatric and Geriatric Care Standing Committee - Units 3, 4 and 10, accompanied by Miss Mary Kelly, Acting Assistant Matron;
- (c) The Community Care Standing Committee - the Hospital Block, accompanied by Miss D. Casey, Chief Nursing Officer.

Signed:


E. Hannan,
Chief Executive Officer.

Confirmed and adopted at Meeting of Western Health Board held at 3.00 p.m. on Monday, 3rd May, 1976, in the Boardroom, Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway.

Signed:


Chairman.

Institution	No. of beds	No. of Residents 31/12/'74	No. of Adms. 1975	Discharges & Deaths for 1975	No. of Residents 31/12/'75	No. on Waiting List	Patient Days 1975	No. attending Day/Care Centre	Patient days for Day/Care 1975	Date Residents admitted to W.H.	% Occupancy
PLUNKETT HOME, BOYLE	60	59	65	66	58	-	21,223	32	3,628	-	96.9%
SACRED HEART HOME, ROSCOMMON	285	281	601	599	283	21	103,551	6	-	-	99.5%
ST. BRENDANS HOME, LOUGHREA	364	361	634	639	283	19	131,481	-	-	-	100%
MARUS MHUIRE TUAM	22	22	29	7	22	-	5,231	-	-	-	80.3%
SACRED HEART HOME CASTLEBAR	316	311	421	423	309	62	112,885	40	3,460	-	98.3%
D'ALTON HOME, CLAREMORRIS	40	40	7	7	40	28	14,600	4	196	4th Nov. 1974	100%
MACBRIDE HOME, WESTPORT	40	40	12	11 in hospital	40	13	14,399	-	-	8th July, 1974.	98.3%

Institution	No. of beds	No. of Residents 31/12/'74	No. of Adms. 1975	Discharges & Deaths for 1975	No. of Residents 31/12/'75	No. on Waiting List	Patient Days 1975	No. attending Day/Care Centre	Patient days for Day/Care 1975	Date Residents admitted to W.H.	Occupancy %
RUS BIRBHLE, ELMULLET	40	-	58	18	40	23	9,969	13	197	2nd April, 1975.	91%
DISTRICT HOSPITAL, ELMULLET	22 & 5 cots	27	763	763	27	-	7,274	-	-	-	90.5%
DISTRICT HOSPITAL, SWINFORD	35	29 & 2 babies	620	620	29 & 2 babies	2	10,623	2	5,582	-	83.1%
FEVER HOSPITAL, SWINFORD	10 & 8 cots	7	239	239	7	-	3,583	-	-	-	54.53%
BOGHERMORE TRAINING CENTRE	41	-	57	26	31	-	6,580	-	-	1st Jan. 1975.	

	St. Brigid's Hospital Ballinasloe			St. Mary's Hospital Castlebar			St. Theresa's Acute Unit, Castlebar			St. Patrick's Hospital Castlerea			Totals		
(1) Population of Catchment Area	154,546			109,525			109,525			48,196			312,267		
(2) No. in Hospital on 31/12/'74	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	851	495	1,346	416	347	763	13	9	22	188	153	341	1,468	1,004	2,472
(3) Admissions during 1975:															
(A) First Admissions	187	120	307	47	14	61	118	110	228	62	38	100	414	282	696
(B) Re-Admissions	338	349	687	50	47	97	260	201	461	177	108	285	825	705	1,530
(C) Transfers - St. Theresa's to St. Mary's	-	-	-	95	53	148	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	53	148
(D) Transfers - St. Mary's to St. Theresa's	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	7	43	-	-	-	36	7	43
(4) Total to be accounted for:	1,376	964	2,340	608	461	1,069	427	327	754	427	299	726	2,838	2,051	4,889
(5) Discharges during 1975:															
(A) Discharged Home	490	435	925	100	60	160	321	259	580	228	137	365	1,139	891	2,030
(B) Discharged to Welfare Homes	-	-	-	17	13	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	13	30
(C) Discharged to Hostels	0	5	5	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	6	6	0	13	13
(D) Discharged to other Institutions	25	8	33	9	6	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	14	48
(E) Transfers - St. Mary's to St. Theresa's	-	-	-	36	7	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	36	7	43
(F) Transfers - St. Theresa's to St. Mary's	-	-	-	-	-	-	95	53	148	-	-	-	95	53	148
(G) Died	50	32	82	22	23	45	-	-	-	13	12	25	85	67	152
Total Discharges, Transfers and Deaths:	565	480	1,045	184	111	295	416	312	728	241	155	396	1,406	1,058	2,464
(6) Remaining in Hospital on 31/12/1975:	811	484	1,295	424	350	774	11	15	26	186	144	330	1,432	993	2,425

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES - IN PATIENT SERVICES - YEAR 1975.

Particulars	Area centred on St. Brigid's Ballinasloe	Area centred on St. Mary's Castlebar.	Area centred on St. Patrick's Castlerea	Area centred on Unit at Galway Regional Hospital	Totals
No. in Hospital on 31/12/1974	1,346	785	341	Nil	2,472
Admissions during 1975	994	847	385	-	2,226
Discharges Home during 1975	925	740	365	-	2,030
Deaths during 1975	82	45	25	-	152
Discharges to Hostels Welfare Homes and other Institutions during 1975	38	47	6	-	91
Remaining in Psychiatric Hospitals on 31/12/1975	1,295	800	330	-	2,425

PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

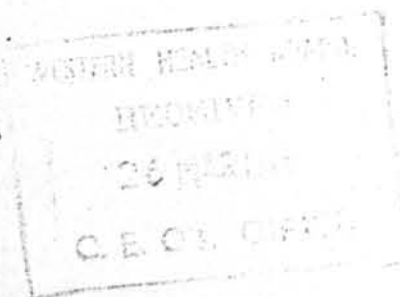
CLASSIFICATION OF PATIENTS RESIDENT IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS ON 31/12/1975:

	Psychiatric - Short Stay	Psychiatric -Medium/Long	Mentally Handicapped	Physically Incapacitated	Social Cases	Totals
St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe	118	744	212	165	56	1,295
St. Mary's Hospital Castlebar	50	506	167	-	51	774
St. Theresa's Unit Castlebar	26	-	-	-	-	26
St. Patrick's Hospital Castlerea	24	202	78	1	25	330
Psychiatric Unit Regional Hospital Galway	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total:	218	1,452	457	166	132	2,425



Comhairle na n-Ospidéal

52 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2. Telephone 763474/762284

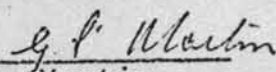


24, March, 1976.


Dear Mr. Hannan,

I enclose, for your information, a copy of a policy statement by the Comhairle on applications for consultant appointments during 1976. The statement is being circulated to the Chief Executive Officer of each health board and to each voluntary hospital.

Yours sincerely,


G.P. Martin,
Chief Officer.

Mr. E. Hannan,
Chief Executive Officer,
Western Health Board,
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,
GALWAY.



Comhairle na n-Ospidéal

52 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2. Telephone 763474/762284

POLICY STATEMENT ON APPLICATIONS FOR CONSULTANT APPOINTMENTS DURING 1976.

The main executive function of the Comhairle under Section 41 of the Health Act, 1970 is to regulate consultant and other prescribed appointments in hospitals providing services under the Health Acts. The exercise of this function does not involve the Comhairle in the financial management of hospitals. Nor is the Comhairle directly involved in the allocation of financial resources to fund consultant appointments or the sometimes expensive supporting staff and other facilities consequent on the making of a consultant appointment. The main considerations influencing decisions on applications for new or replacement consultant posts relate to the medical needs of the situation, the patient workload and the proper structuring of consultant posts (including the environment in which the consultant will function). When the Comhairle's approval to an application has been received, the hospital authority concerned must then decide, subject to the approval of the Department of Health in most cases, on whether the appointment can be proceeded with on financial grounds.

The Department of Health has drawn the attention of the Comhairle to the factors underlying the fixing of allocations for non-capital health expenditure for 1976 as expressed in letters issued in January 1976 to all health boards and voluntary hospitals. During a general discussion on these factors, Comhairle representatives were informed that approximately 25 additional consultant posts which had been approved by the Comhairle could not be proceeded with in the immediate future due to the necessity to maintain basic staff complement levels as they stand at present and to the severe limitations on additional expenditure in the current economic situation. This number of additional appointments represents about two-thirds of the total additional (as opposed to replacement) consultant appointments which might be expected in any period of one year based on experience during the first term of office of the Comhairle. It is clear therefore that if the Comhairle were to proceed, as heretofore, in reaching decisions on specific applications for extra consultant staff as and when submitted by hospital authorities, a lengthy period must elapse before the necessary finance can be made available for the filling of the posts. The Comhairle considers that, because of the many factors which must be taken into consideration in reaching a decision on a consultant appointment, such decisions should only be taken in the context of the latest up-to-date information covering both the local and national circumstances at the time. For this reason, it is felt that it would be undesirable for the Comhairle to reach decisions in the knowledge that posts cannot be filled for some time due to the financial situation.

In its First Report published in December last, the Comhairle indicated its intention of adopting a more active and positive approach to the task of regulating consultant appointments including encouraging the formulation of proposals for new consultant appointments in particular areas or in certain specialties where these might be necessary or desirable. Such

positive action, however, can only be pursued in the context of a consultant manpower policy for the country as a whole. The evolution of such a policy is a difficult and complex planning exercise involving study of a wide range of specialties and consultation with many interests at national and local level. Considerable time and effort would have to be devoted to this task to ensure a reasonable policy which would be realistic in its objectives and generally acceptable to all concerned. The Comhairle considers that the period of restraint on development which must be faced in the immediate future, presents a unique opportunity to engage in detailed planning for the longer term. The Comhairle intends to concentrate heavily on the formulation of consultant manpower policy during the course of this year.

In view of the foregoing, the Comhairle has decided to categorise applications for consultant appointments which have already been submitted or will be received during 1976 as follows:-

Category 1 - Replacement Consultant Appointments:

The Department has requested health boards and voluntary hospitals to ensure, when service budget details are being drawn up, that adequate provision is made to support throughout the whole of 1976, basic staff complement levels as they stand at present. The Comhairle will continue to process and reach decisions on applications for the appointment of replacement consultant staff as expeditiously as possible. Hospital authorities are requested to submit such applications to the Comhairle with as much advance notice as is possible and, if practicable, as soon as they become aware of a retirement or resignation.

Category 11 - Additional Consultant Appointments in Special Circumstances:

The Comhairle intends to carefully examine all applications for additional consultant appointments submitted with a view to identifying those which are very urgent because of special circumstances. For example, in some instances, there might be considerable economic advantages in proceeding with an additional consultant appointment where this would obviate the necessity for incurring heavy expenditure on work being sent outside the hospital or health board area. Applications, which in the Comhairle's opinion, fit into this "special" category will be processed and decisions taken without delay. In submitting applications to the Comhairle, hospital authorities are advised to draw attention to any factors which they feel might be relevant in this respect. However, it must be stressed that the Comhairle must retain the right to decide on whether any special circumstances which may be advanced would justify placing an appointment in this special category. It is appreciated that subsequent to such posts being approved by the Comhairle, difficulties may arise in view of the restraints already adverted to.

Category 111 - Additional Consultant Appointments:

It is expected that the great majority of applications for additional consultant appointments will fit into this category. The Comhairle intends to investigate and process applications of this sort to the point of ensuring that all the necessary information is available to enable a decision to be made and that the post is structured in a satisfactory manner. This investigation will involve a broader approach than has been adopted in the past by the Comhairle including requesting health boards and voluntary hospitals to indicate their policy on a build-up of services over the next few years and their local priorities. To the extent that it is appropriate and feasible for them to do so, members of the Comhairle would hope to hold discussions locally on such issues and to familiarise themselves with the hospital facilities available to support the consultant appointments envisaged. While applications for additional appointments will be examined in this way, the Comhairle intends to hold over decisions on these until towards the end of 1976. This procedure will give the Comhairle a clear indication of the pattern of demand and enable national priorities to be considered in the context of a consultant manpower policy which, it is hoped, will have been evolved by then. It is also hoped that, by then, some indication will be available as to the financial situation for 1977.

MARCH, 1976.

