

NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board held at 1.30pm on Thursday,
7 December 2006 in Boardroom, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service,
Trust Headquarters, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park,
Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG**

Present:

Professor R Perrott	Non Executive Director, Acting Chairman
Mr L McIvor	Chief Executive
Mr B McNeill	Director of Operations
Dr D McManus	Medical Director
Mrs S McCue	Director of Finance
Ms R O'Hara	Director of Human Resources
Mr F Hughes	Non Executive Director
Mr S Mullan	Non Executive Director
Mrs L Gillespie	Non Executive Director
Mrs M Greer	Non Executive Director

In Attendance:

Miss A Vitty	Corporate Manager
Mrs M Crawford	PA to Chief Executive

1.0 Apologies

Mr D Smyth OBE, Chairman.

2.0 Welcome and Format of the Meeting

The Acting Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and Trust Board members. He further advised that due to the sudden illness of Mr Douglas Smyth, who would be acting as the Chair for the meeting. He also explained the arrangements for receiving questions from the public attending.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 21 September 2006

Trust Board members accepted the minutes as a true and accurate record of proceedings subject to the following amendments.

Item 7.0. Para 2, should read: There is a 12.3% increase in August 2006 compared with August 2005.

4.0 Matters Arising

4.1 Benchmarking

The Chief Executive advised that he is due to meet with the Department regarding a programme of visits to UK Ambulance Services.

Members duly noted.

4.2 Contingency Plans

The Director of Finance advised members that at present contingency plans are not required and the Trust should breakeven with a small shortfall.

5.0 Chairman's Business

5.1 Freedom of the City – Lisburn City Council

It was stated that the date for the conferment of the Freedom of the City has been rescheduled to Saturday, 12 May 2007.

5.2 Care & Responsibility National Training Award

Members were informed that the Trust has been awarded a National Training Award for Care and Responsibility. This was a joint Award in conjunction with Honestas. This had been a joint response and approach to enable staff to protect not only themselves but also their patients in difficult situations.

Board members expressed their pride in the service receiving this award and wished this message to be conveyed to staff. The work of Board members was also acknowledged.

5.3 Visit to REMDC

Members would like to convey their thanks to staff for their warm welcome earlier today. They were very impressed with layout and function of the new Control Centre. They spoke with some staff members who expressed their pleasure with the new environment. The advances in technology were also acknowledged and members commented on the air of calm within the Regional Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre.

6.0 Trust Delivery Plan Monitoring as at 30/09/2006

The Chief Executive advised that no formal approval has been received from the Department in respect of the Trust Delivery Plan. A meeting with Department to discuss progress has taken place and they are broadly content with the current situation. Some delays are being experienced in relation to digital mapping.

Mr Mullan inquired if any progress has been made in relation to cleaning materials. It was reported that some trials have taken place, however some of the products tested were very expensive. These trials are ongoing.

It was noted that some amendments are required to the report.

7.0 Financial Position of the Trust as at 31/10/06

The Director of Finance referred members to the report and advised on some key areas:

The Trust is currently forecasting a breakeven position at year-end despite a shortfall in funds of £53k.

Overall mileage for the seven months to 31 October 2006 showed an increase of 7.76% on the same period last year. Accident and Emergency activity is up significantly on same period last year.

Sickness absence – total hours lost for the month of September 2006 represents 8.66% of contracted hours compared to 8.58% for the month of September 2005. It was further noted that a lot of work is ongoing in this area with regular meetings taking place with Managers.

Legal Claims and Fees – These costs continue to be monitored and stand at £174,246 for the seven months to 31 October 2006.

Service Performance – Members were directed to the new graph contained within the report. An average of 52.5% of Cat A calls responded to within 8 minutes across Northern Ireland.

Projected Capital Expenditure 2006/07 – This area is closely monitored and all areas should be fulfilled by year-end.

Members duly noted.

8.0 Operations Report as at 31/10/2006

The Director of Operations directed members to Charts 1, 2 and 3 of the report and was advised as follows.

Urgent activity has seen a 1% increase. PCS activity had seen a decrease during the summer, which was expected.

Chart 1 – A slight decrease in response was noted which may be due to over triaging.

Chart 2 – It was reported that the impact of the Westlink is starting hit services, which is reflected in the statistics. SHSSB has seen an improvement in response times due to a combination of work in Control and the Lurgan Ambulance Station.

Chart 3 – Cat B & C calls are below the 90% target which is also due to prioritising calls and pressures from GP out of hours etc

Members were further updated on the following items.

Emergency Planning

A gas leak was reported in the Broadway/Westlink area of Belfast, however services were not disrupted.

Control Issues

Members were advised that final part of reconfiguration is scheduled for 10 December 2006 with A&E Control for West moving to the new Control Centre.

Work is also continuing on the implementation of Digital Trunk Radio and this remains on schedule for April 2007. It was commented that this is a huge step in communications for NIAS.

Fleet

11 A&E Vehicles have been delivered and we are one week ahead of the agreed production schedule. Staff training is required before placing vehicles into operational duties. It was further advised that new ambulances will be allocated to all Divisions.

Members raised the question on mileage on vehicles and were advised that the Department set mileages for out of standard.

Estate Issues

Building work has been completed and Kilkeel is now operational.

2 Out-Posts are operational from early December 2006 at Forster Green and Warrenpoint.

Changes at Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster will impact on NIAS and more resources will be required. It was reported that NHSSB are supportive of NIAS proposals for additional resources.

Members duly noted.

9.0 Human Resources Report as at 01/04/06 to 30/09/06

Director of Human Resources directed members to the report and was happy to answer any questions. Some discussion ensued with members congratulating the Director on the content of the report.

10.0 Summary of Complaints/Compliments (01-09-06 to 31-10-06)

Members were advised that there are 2 ongoing complaints and 4 compliments received, samples of which are contained within the report. Members were advised that response times continue to be monitored closely.

The Director of Human Resources wished to thank the Medical Director and Director of Operations for their work in clearing the backlog of complaints. The Chief Executive also wished to acknowledge the work of the Corporate Manager who has been dealing with complaints in the absence of a Complaints Officer.

Members duly noted the report.

11.0 Minutes of Clinical Governance Committee held on 21/11/06

Mrs Greer referred members to the minutes and highlighted the following areas:

Pharmacy Review – It was reported that £80k was required to fund. No commitment from the Commissioners has been received.

Paramedic Profiles – It was noted that data shows practices of Paramedics and where development is required. It was also considered useful as it clearly shows where improvements can be made.

Clinical Protocols – Additional pressures from changes at Whiteabbey is impacting on NIAS. The Medical Director reported that patients will be in NIAS care longer and there may be potential implications operationally. Staff are fully aware of the position of the Trust.

Members duly adopted the minutes.

12.0 Terms of Reference – Clinical Governance Committee

Chief Executive informed members that the Terms of Reference have been reviewed through the Risk Management Steering Group. He further advised that the Terms of Reference had to be changed due to the changes in structure. The Terms of Reference were endorsed by Mr Mullan and seconded by Mrs Gillespie.

13.0 Terms of Reference – Risk Management Committee

The Terms of Reference for Risk Management Committee were endorsed by Mr Hughes and seconded by Mr Mullan.

14.0 Risk Management Strategy

The Chief Executive advised that a review took place of the Risk Management Strategy. It was agreed that Non-Executive representation was required on the Risk Management Committee. Mrs Gillespie asked whether the Remuneration Committee should link to this, however after some discussion it was agreed that this would not be the case at this time.

The Strategy was proposed for adoption by Mr Hughes and seconded by Mrs Gillespie.

15.0 Application of Trust Seal

The Trust Seal was used on one occasion for the agreement on an extension to the lease at Carrickfergus.

16.0 Forum for Questions

No questions were received from the floor.

17.0 Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

17.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Trust Board will be held on the 18 January 2007 at NIAS Headquarters.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and called proceedings to a close wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas.

Signed R. Perrott
(Chairman)

Date 13/1/07