

## NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

***Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board held at 1.30pm on Thursday,  
29 June 2006 in the Function Room, The Glens Hotel, 6 Coast Road,  
Cushendall, BT44 0RN***

<b>Present:</b>	Mr D Smyth OBE	Chairman
	Mr L McIvor	Chief Executive
	Ms R O'Hara	Director of Human Resources
	Mr B McNeill	Director of Operations
	Dr D McManus	Medical Director
	Mrs S McCue	Director of Finance
	Mr F Hughes	Non Executive Director
	Professor R Perrott	Non Executive Director
	Mr S Mullan	Non Executive Director
	Mrs M Greer	Non Executive Director
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Miss A Vitty	Corporate Manager
	Mrs R Thompson	Administrative Assistant

### **1.0 Apologies**

Mrs L Gillespie, Non Executive Director.

### **2.0 Welcome and Format of the Meeting**

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and Trust Board members and commented that this was the first time the Board had come to Moyle. He further explained the arrangement for receiving questions from the public attending.

### **3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 4 May 2006**

The minutes were accepted by Trust Board members as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

### **4.0 Matters Arising**

#### **4.1 Visit of Permanent Secretary**

The Chairman advised that the Permanent Secretary had sent a message to say that he could not attend the meeting and it was noted that he would be invited to attend at a future date.

#### 4.2 **Benchmarking**

The Chief Executive advised that further to discussions at the last Trust Board meeting tabled by Mr Seamus Mullan; that he and the Director of Operations had recently visited East Anglia Ambulance Service, a rural Service consistently achieving a high standard of performance.

NIAS is continuing to work with the Department and Commissioning Group regarding a High Performance Ambulance Service, however, a benchmarking exercise was needed to identify components of performance for NIAS and thereafter, the development of an action plan to achieve same.

Members were advised that there is the prospect of having a joint visit with the DHSSPS.

#### 4.3 **Remuneration Committee**

The Chairman advised members that there had been a delay in processing the annual uplift of pay for Executive Directors for 2004/05, as guidance had been outstanding from the Department; however, this information had now been received and a meeting of the Committee took place on 27 June 2006 and that the minutes of this meeting had been approved today.

The 2005/06 salary uplift remains outstanding and it is hopeful that this will be dealt with by the next Trust Board meeting.

### 5.0 **Chairman's Business**

#### 5.1 **Visit to Ballycastle Ambulance Station**

The Chairman advised those present that the Trust Board had visited Ballycastle Ambulance Station earlier that morning. Mrs Greer thanked all the staff they had met in Ballycastle Ambulance Station who made them feel very welcome. She further commented that the accommodation was limited and issues regarding egress/access were evident.

The Chairman passed on the apologies of the Station Supervisor who had been on night duty the night before the visit and could not be present at the time of the visit.

The Chairman also drew attention to the fact that the Station Supervisor, Mr Robert Carson was coming to the end of a 30 year career with the Service. In the circumstances it was regrettable not to have had the opportunity to meet him and convey to him in person the appreciation of the Board for his lengthy service to the people of the Glens.

## **6.0 Financial Position of the Trust as at 30/05/2006**

The Director of Finance advised that Draft, Audited and Uncertified Accounts for year ended 31 March 2006 had been circulated to Trust Board members and these accounts were still subject to certification by the Department. The Chairman congratulated all who were responsible and Professor Perrott stated that it was a very creditable performance.

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

Overall mileage for the two months to 31 May 2006 showed an increase of 2% on the same period last year.

Sickness absence – total hours lost for the year 31 March 2006 represent 8.2% of contracted hours compared to 7.18% for year to March 2005. She further stated that this area of management is continuing to be reviewed and monitored.

NIAS performance against PSA targets shows an average of 52.25% for Category A calls responded to within 8 minutes.

Trust Delivery Plan – Financial Aspects are still in draft format and may be subject to change and members will be advised accordingly. The forecast for 2006-2008 showed funding made available by Boards. NIAS is still in discussions in relation to some cost pressures eg Agenda for Change, Fuel Costs and Review of Pharmacy Services. Capital Expenditure forecast for 2006/2007 is £3,688,000 and this includes £2,528,000 for replacement Ambulance Station and money allocated for Fleet and Estate.

It was noted that there had been a significant increase in absence to March 2006, however, the Director of Human Resources advised that the problem areas had been identified and was being addressed.

Benchmarking exercises have identified that NIAS has not the highest rates compared to other Ambulance Services and other services eg Police Service, where there is an early retirement age of 10 years difference which impacted on sickness/absence.

The Board unanimously accepted the Report from the Director of Finance.

## **7.0 Minutes of the Audit Committee – 03/08/2005**

Professor Ron Perrott updated members and the minutes were adopted by the Board.

## 8.0 Operations Report as at 30/05/2006

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

Chart 1 – Performance for Category A calls has increased to 54.2% for the whole of Northern Ireland. This was an improvement on April/May for the previous years of 2004/05. It was noted that Accident and Emergency activity is increasing.

Chart 2 – It was noted that this chart provides more detail for Category A performance for each Board area. North showed improved response times which were directly attributed to Mr Gary Richardson, Divisional Officer and his management teams commitment to ensuring shifts are being covered, Officers are responding directly to calls, RRV is also contributing to the improvement. West showed improvement once again which was due primarily to Northland Road coming on line in May 2006 and in the first week of operation was operating at around 76%. South also showed an improvement of 2.4% however further work is required. The increased response in this area was due largely to the introduction of the Lurgan deployment point in May 2006. Volume was low with response at around 6 minutes. East continues to perform consistently.

Chart 3 – This chart shows the Category B & C trends with a 0.3% improvement from this report.

The Chairman asked how we can impact upon response times and the Director of Operations further advised members that Doctor D T Hindle had recently visited NIAS and that SMOSS model had been rerun. This had been requested by the Commissioners. Dr Hindle indicated that with the current resource allocation, a maximum response time of 56% could be achieved. To improve, the Trust needs to focus on re-engineering ways to achieve the PFA target, to include:

- Investment;
- Continue to introduce more deployment points;
- Rapid Response plays a major role in improving response targets. Increases in RRVs are required which are managed by their own Control desk with the REMDC environment;
- Increased First Responder Initiatives with ambulances also being sent;
- Develop concept of Community Paramedics – working with GPs, networking, responding to calls.

These are important developments and which have been highlighted for some time. The Director of Operations continued to advise on the Action Plan for Improving Response Times which are underway:

- (a) Restructuring of Non-Emergency Control Centre – Command and Control;
- (b) Activation Times – call taking process, activation;

- (c) Deployment Points – continue to be worked upon and identified. Funding has been made available and we have been asked to identify twelve deployment areas for this year. Three are currently operational. We are looking at shared facilities eg NIFRS and commercial premises.

He stated that he was confident that with targeting of the areas identified and suitable investment, that we will be able to deliver the required response targets and which will address most out of standard calls. A consultation paper is presently in the public domain and he will advise members when recommendations are received.

Members were further updated on the following items.

### **Emergency Planning**

Two potential major incidents this month at Magilligan Prison and an incident involving a car and a collision with a military lorry. Patients were taken to both the Royal Victoria Hospital and Down Hospital.

### **Control Issues**

EISEC now working in both Regional Emergency Dispatch Centre and West Control.

Configuration work is ongoing for C3 application and should be completed by beginning of September.

Tactical deployment plan complete for Eastern Division.

A number of new staff have been employed at various grades in both Centres and are now operational. The clearing house has worked well, with no jobs lost and additional appointments made.

### **Fleet**

The Interim Business Case has been approved which will see an additional 20 Accident and Emergency vehicles. No progress has yet been made on PCS vehicles. 61% currently out of standard.

### **Estate Issues**

Northland Road outpost became operational on 5 May 2006. Lurgan as a new deployment point became operational from 8 June 2006. The new station in Killeel is making satisfactory progress.

The Chairman enquired as to what problems the Westlink re-development was causing the Service. The Director of Operations advised two projects in one were occurring:

- (1) Phase II Development of the Royal: An Officer is working closely with the Project Officer to decrease potential congestion, improve egress/ingress. The Royal Group of Hospitals have been very supportive opening gates etc.
- (2) Strategic Development Points.

He further advised that at the moment no major problems were occurring but it was felt that major congestion could occur from September 2006 onwards

Professor Ron Perrott requested further information regarding the developments in Carrickfergus. The Director of Operations advised that the Council had been very supportive and that presently we were operating from a temporary station and that we are continuing to work with the Land and Valuations Agency to progress.

Members duly noted.

#### **9.0 Human Resources Report as at 31/03/2006**

The Director of Human Resources advised that it had been a busy and challenging year for the Human Resources Directorate and highlighted the following areas to members:

- Employee Resourcing: 2294 applications processed; 30 short listing panels and 540 interviews. 72 appointments made.
- Attendance Management: Average total percentage time lost due to sickness was 8.2%.
- Employee Relations: Review of Recognition Agreement.
- Regional Ambulance Training Centre: Formal opening in September 2005. Achieved A\* accreditation and has had a very busy year and largely we have met targets. A very poor uptake on the Paramedic courses was noted, however, the matching process under Agenda for Change may have exacerbated the problem.
- National Training Awards: Care and Responsibility Training.
- Equality: considerable progress has been made in this area. Good Relations Training has been provided to 110 Managers including front line Supervisors and has been incorporated in Induction Training for all new staff. The Trust also embarked on a region-wide consultation exercise on its Transportation of Wheelchair Users Policy.

Mr Seamus Mullan enquired to whether changes to the Lighter Duties Policy had occurred and the Director of Human Resources advised that tighter controls were now operating and NIAS are continuing to streamline the process.

Mr Frank Hughes commented that he was very impressed with the amount of work obviously undertaken by the Human Resources Directorate which was obviously very complex, sensitive and labour intensive and that thanks should be conveyed to staff for such hard work.

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Members duly noted the report.

**10.0 Summary of Complaints/Compliments (01/04/06 to 30/05/06)**

The Director of Human Resources advised that there are currently 17 complaints ongoing and 8 compliments were received. Any backlog issues have been addressed.

The Chief Executive advised that a Complaints Review is currently underway.

Members duly noted.

**11.0 Equality Commission for Northern Ireland – Public Authority Five Year Review**

The Director of Human Resources advised members on the purpose and format of the return and reminded members that they had partaken in the Good Relations Training as part of their Training update.

Members duly endorsed and noted the content of the report.

**12.0 Minutes of the Clinical Governance Committee – 18/05/2006**

Mrs Margie Greer advised members that good progress has been made and that a wide Agenda had been covered in relation to Clinical Governance. Significant progress has been made in relation to the Pharmacy Review and we are currently awaiting a response.

The Chairman enquired as to whether any response had been received on the defibrillator failure and the Medical Director indicated that rigorous testing had been undertaken internally, externally and with the manufacturer in the USA and the equipment was found to be in full working order. Issues around battery management have been looked at – although no direct link is evident. No further reports have been received.

Mrs Margie Greer continued to advise that in general terms, it was reassuring to see robust systems in place which allowed investigation, rectification and reporting to appropriate Committees.

Issues around provisions of drug packs to St John were fully discussed.

The minutes were adopted by the Trust Board.

