

## NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board held at 1.30pm on Thursday,  
18 January 2007 in Boardroom, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service,  
Trust Headquarters, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park,  
Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr D Smyth OBE	Chairman
	Mr L McÍvor	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
	Mrs M Greer	Non Executive Director
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Miss A Vitty	Corporate Manager
	Miss L McCarthy	PA to Chief Executive

### **1.0 Apologies**

Professor R Perrott, Non Executive Director  
Mr S Mullan, Non Executive Director  
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. He also explained the arrangements for receiving questions from the public attending. He also extended his thanks to Professor Perrott for Chairing the previous meeting.

### **3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 7 December 2006**

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

Proposed by Frank Hughes and seconded by Margie Greer.

### **4.0 Matters Arising**

None at this time.

**5.0 Chairman's Business**

**5.1 Change of Appointment: Ms Linda Brown, Deputy Permanent Secretary**

The Chairman informed all in attendance of a meeting which had taken place between himself, the Chief Executive and Ms Linda Brown, Deputy Permanent Secretary of DHSSPS (recently appointed) and advised that a useful exchange had taken place.

**6.0 Trust Delivery Plan Monitoring as at 31 December 2006**

The Chief Executive advised the meeting that in broad terms steady progress is being made towards defined targets contained with the Trust Delivery Plan. He also announced that the Regional Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre (REMDC) is now operating on a regional basis.

The Chief Executive then informed the meeting that the Regional Non-Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre (RNEDMC) will be developed through a phased implementation. A new computer control system will be integrated with the emergency control system.

**7.0 Financial Position of the Trust as at 31 December 2006**

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

The forecast for year end 31 December 2006 is that the Trust will break even.

Overall mileage up to 31 December 2006 showed an increase of 8% on the same period last year. Mr Hughes enquired if this increase was contributed to by increased fuel prices and the Director of Finance agreed this is a contributing factor.

Sickness absence – total hours lost for the month of November 2006 represents 7% of contracted hours compared to 9.48% for the month of November 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 £224,478 for the eight months to 31 November 2006.

Service Performance – Members were directed to the graph contained within the report. An average of 55.9% of Cat A calls were responded to within 8 minutes across Northern Ireland.

Review of Public Administration – the Director of Finance informed the Board that a lot of work was going into the implementation of new structures including Shared Services and the new Commission.

Members duly noted.

## **8.0 Operations Report as at 31 December 2006**

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

The charts currently show two key trends:

- (a) Our best performance to date for Cat A during November 2006 at 60.4%;
- (b) A fall during December 2006 for Cat A calls down to 54.3% which was primarily due to the high level of activity on the run-up to and during the Christmas period.

November produced the best performing month to date but was followed by a very difficult December with an increase of activity totalling 1,400. Around 550 calls were Cat A and 850 Cat B & C.

Chart 1 – Positive news is that November 2006 was our best Cat A performance to date at 60.4% which was due to a concerted effort by Operational and Control staff and for which the Director of Operations praised their efforts.

Chart 2 – Shows the trend by Board area for Cat A calls with East and West showing the best performance. North fell due to the effect of the Whiteabbey Hospital Accident & Emergency closure and no additional resources being allocated which was impacting directly on NIAS response times.

Chart 3 – shows a very pronounced downward trend in B&C activity. This was explained by the Director of Operations by the increase in 999 activity and targeting ambulances at life-threatening calls which led to less urgent B&C calls waiting. Another factor that contributed to this were GP urgent calls a number of which went out of time and therefore became Cat A.

The Director of Operations further advised that in general December 2006 was a "pressure" month. An analysis for each day showed significant peaks on 9, 16, 17 and 27 December were the days when the most calls were received. On 27 December 2006 a total of 590 calls were received both emergency and GP, 50% of which were in the Eastern Board area, an increase on last years activity. There was a sporadic burst of calls at 2.00am on 26 December 2006 (Boxing Day) during which time all ambulances were engaged in work and no ambulances were able to provide cover.

He commented that providing cover during this time presented particular challenges for Managers but that NIAS had provided a satisfactory level of cover and he expressed his thanks to all staff involved including those that had worked extra shifts in Control, Operations, PCS and RRV areas.

The Director of Operations also acknowledged the contribution of St John Ambulance over the Christmas period and advised that they had dealt with 145 calls which were all discharges but which had enabled NIAS to deal with Cat A, B & C calls. The Director of Operations informed members he has written to St Johns Ambulance expressing thanks and appreciation on behalf of NIAS for all the help given.

Members were also advised that we have also increased the Rapid Response Vehicle numbers to 9 and that they contributed 6% to Cat A response times including some transports and standing down A&E crews. The Director of Operations commented that this was very positive and that this mixed approach is the way for the future.

The Chairman also took this opportunity to ask that thanks and appreciation be passed to all NIAS staff for their help during a time of extra work.

Members were further updated on the following items.

### **Emergency Planning**

An incident in Saintfield during this period went well and no problems were reported. An airport alert called for the provision of 9 ambulances and they all attended within 21 minutes.

### **Control Issues**

The Director of Operations reported that the emergency desk at Altnagelvin has now closed and the REMDC now services all of Northern Ireland. Training continues for staff in the RNEMDC who are currently being trained in East PCS Control.

### **Fleet**

A revised fleet schedule has gone back to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) for confirmation during December 2006. NIAS has taken delivery of 20 new A&E vehicles for which training is ongoing. By the end of January 2007 these will all be fully functioning and operating through NI. There has been an introduction of 7 new PCS vehicles, 5 of which have the new bariatric stretchers installed.

### **Estate Issues**

Outposts are now starting to come online. Work continues to locate suitable sites, seek planning permission etc. particularly in Ballynahinch where the search for a site is ongoing after a number of false starts and at this time it is not known whether a suitable spot will be found by the end of year.

Members duly noted.

**9.0 Summary of Complaints/Compliments (1 November 2006 to 31 December 2006)**

Director of Human Resources directed members to the report.

The Chief Executive stated that a review is currently ongoing of the Complaints Procedure and is due to be completed by the end of January 2007.

Members duly noted.

**10.0 Health & Safety Policy Statement**

Members were directed to the report and advised that a new paragraph had been added relating to the Corporate Risk Register (Paragraph 3).

Members approved amendment.

**11.0 Freedom of Information 2000 Policy**

Members were directed to the report which has been developed in line with current legislation practices.

Members approved adoption of Policy. Addition to be made to Policy relating to "Reporting Mechanism" before issue to all staff.

**12.0 Smokefree Workplace Policy**

The Director of Human Resources introduced this Policy to the Board as a draft. This will be distributed to the relevant parties for comment and feedback will be given at the next Board meeting on 15 March 2007.

**13.0 Application of Trust Seal**

The Trust Seal has not been used since previous meeting.

**14.0 Forum for Questions**

No questions were received from the floor.

**15.0 Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**16.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Trust Board will be held on Thursday, 15 March 2007 with Venue to be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and called proceedings to a close.

Signed   
(Chairman)

Date 15/03/07