

NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board held at 1.30pm on Thursday, 26 June 2008 in the Watson Suite, The Lodge Hotel, Coleraine, BT52 1NF

Present:	Mr D Smyth OBE	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
	Mrs M Greer	Non Executive Director
In attendance:	Miss A Vitty	Corporate Manager
	Mr G Anderson	General Assistant

1.0 Apologies

Mr Seamus Mullan, Non Executive Director
Professor Mary Hanratty, Non Executive Director

2.0 Welcome and Format of the Meeting

Mr Smyth opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and Trust Board members and explained the arrangements for receiving questions from the public.

3.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 8 May 2008

The minutes were adopted as a true and accurate record of proceedings subject to amendment to Item 5.2 with the removal of the phrase 'advertisement of the' as stated by the Chairman.

They were proposed by Mrs Greer and seconded by Mr Hughes.

4.0 Matters Arising

4.1 Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority (RQIA) 2008

Members were advised, the RQIA report is not yet finalised. Mr McIvor has offered to meet with RQIA prior to the finalisation to address apparent inaccuracies relating to fleet position in particular.

4.2 Emergency Services Investment Programme (ESIP)

Members were advised that capital funding for the HPSS for the next ten years has been indicated, with the sums identified for the Trust for the next three years being; £5m; £5m and £4.5m. Business cases are being developed for Fleet, ICT, Ambulance Estate and Medical Equipment to secure approval for the Trust to spend capital.

It is estimated that approximately £90m will be required by the Trust over the 10 year programme. Indications are positive that Trust will obtain this funding and the visit of the Minister to Headquarters has helped to reinforce the need.

A capital resource allocation of £2m has been released so far for 2008-09, but is conditional upon business cases being presented. With regard to the A&E fleet if procurement is commenced by September then the Ambulances could be on the road by March 2009. This timeframe has been shared with DHSSPS and Health Boards.

This update was noted by the Board.

5.0 Chairman's Business

5.1 Visit to Coleraine Ambulance Station

Each of the Non Executive Directors commented on the visit to the local station. Mr Hughes enjoyed the visit and appreciated the forthright views of the staff. He noted that there were high mileages on the vehicles. Mrs Greer acknowledged the challenge of the targets in this area with the rural hinterland. She also recognised the pressure placed on staff who had to transfer patients to Belfast and hoped that there were sufficient vehicles to meet this demand.

The Chairman commented on the good morale and spirit of the staff and was glad to have the opportunity to hear concerns at first hand. He conveyed appreciation to Mr Gareth Tumelty, Area Manager, Northern Division for arranging the successful visit.

5.2 Freedom of the City, Armagh City and District Council

Members were reminded that Trust is to receive the freedom of Armagh City on 13 September 2008 from Armagh City and District Council.

Formalised invites will be issued by the Council closer to the date of the event.

5.3 Official Opening of Regional Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre, 14 May 2008

The official opening by the Minister was considered a success. The opportunity had been taken to present NIAS developments to the Minister, along with potential for the future. It is hoped that the visit will resonate with the Minister and that it will bring benefits in the future. The Chairman asked Mr McIvor to thank all the staff for their good work.

6.0 Performance Reporting as at 31 May 2008

Operations Directorate

OP01 - Mr McNeill took the Board through those targets relating to Operations. He indicated that performance had been maintained despite an overall increase in demand of 9%. In the Northern Board the two previous monthly increases had been 12.6% and 17.9%. Continuing to meet the demand has been challenging for NIAS. The Ministerial PfA is for NIAS to reach 62.5% at Board level by March 2009.

The Chairman asked if the Northern Board are aware of the increase in demand that NIAS is experiencing. Mr McNeill said that CGAS and the Northern Board receive these statistics and that the local Ambulance Liaison Group will also discuss them.

The Chairman stated that these targets are shared and as such each Board needs to do their part in helping achieve them.

OP02 - With regard to Fracture patient targets work is in progress. PCS are looking into helping hospitals meet the target times for the treatment of fracture patients.

Mr Hughes enquired as to why NIAS reports on this standard. He was advised that while NIAS does not carry lead responsibility for the target it was important to identify impact on NIAS workload and resources issues.

OP03 - NIAS is falling short of meeting the target for response times on Urgent Calls and Cat B&C call performance, reflecting the priority attached to the Cat A target. NIAS recognises the need to redesign its reporting on Category A, B and C to reflect changing priorities.

OP05 - This measures the age profile of the fleet and replacement within 5 years. It has been recognized that new vehicles are required and it is hoped that NIAS will be able to have new A&E ambulances on the road by March 09.

OP06 - This measures the progress in introducing deployment points and the following updates were given:

Carrickfergus	Being fitted out
Comber	Sharing NIFRS site
	Bangor Seafront There is some question as to the ownership of the car park and North Down Borough Council and the Coastguard are resolving this.
Ballynahinch	Planning procedure being followed for site.
Irvinestown	A location has been identified. To be progressed

Finance Directorate

Mrs McCue updated members on the financial position as follows:

FN01 - NIAS met the ministerial targets in 07/08 by breaking even. There was a small surplus due to some schemes that were not finalized in the financial year. NIAS cannot retain this surplus. 80% of NIAS budget goes towards salaries.

FN02 - There is a delay at present in working towards the efficiency savings.

FN03 - NIAS does not have any surplus assets by way of lands or properties to dispose of.

FN04 - Due to staff absence in May the target for the number of invoices being paid was not met.

FN05 - The Capital Resource Limit for 07/08 was around £3m and it is anticipated that NIAS will receive a Capital Allocation of £5m for 08/09.

Mr McIvor explained that the capital allocation was given to NIAS late in the year which presents difficulties. It is hoped that NIAS can avoid this type of spending in the future.

Medical Directorate

The Medical Director updated members on the following areas:

MD01 - The extension of paramedic administered thrombolysis is being phased in across Northern Ireland over a two-year programme. RRVs will be first to provide NI coverage, followed by A&E. Further training of RRV personnel is required. Thrombolysis is being rolled out first in the West Division.

MD02 - Healthcare associated infections are identified mainly in secondary care but NIAS remains vigilant to the issue in the ambulance setting. No HAIs have been reported through 'Untoward Incidents' to date.

MD03 - RQIA have visited NIAS but the governance report has not been published yet.

MD04 - Clinical Performance indicators are in development.

MD05 - NIAS continues to progress the introduction of revised pharmacy arrangements, taking direction from HSSPS and Home Office to ensure appropriate adherence to legal requirements and governance frameworks.

MD06 - With regard to community engagement work is progressing and a workshop has been arranged for next week (w/c 30/06/08) to develop a strategy.

MD07 - Alternative responses to Category C calls are being developed and a pilot scheme put into operation. Medical triage in REMDC will be used to redirect Category C patients to other healthcare services.

Human Resources Directorate

The Human Resources Director updated members on the following areas:

HR01 - The target set is to ensure that NIAS absenteeism during 2008-09 will be 10% below the level of 2006-07. This represents a major reduction which will be a significant challenge. Ms O'Hara provided a full and comprehensive update on the programme of work underway to deliver reductions in absence, emphasizing the co-operation between departments.

Monitoring and recording absence will be benchmarked with other Ambulance Services. KPMG has produced a report on absence with NIAS input. One feature of NIAS reporting is that absence is calculated on hourly attendance rather than daily which appears to inflate the percentage.

HR staff are currently investigating reasons for absence and concentrating efforts on applying the policy to deliver the reduction. Longer-term absence is being examined closely.

HR02 - The target requiring Trusts to reduce the proportion of their admin and clerical staff to 19.5% does not present an issue for NIAS as our percentage is currently 5%.

HR03 - With regard to staff turnover the target is 2.85% and to reduce it by 5% compared to 2007-08. The turnover recently has been around 1%. However turnover will continue to be measured closely in the future.

HR05 - There is an action plan for providing Pediatric Education for Pre-hospital patients (PEPP). This has been delayed at the present. The Medical Director is reviewing the way PEPP is provided but this is over and above what is required by the Department. Paramedics are receiving refresher courses.

HR06 - The small numbers of complaints and compliments in relation to the number of calls responded to means that it is better to report the number of these rather than the percentage.

The Chairman observed that a useful measure is the number of complaints / compliments per 1000 calls. This helps to indicate the scale and put it in context with the overall picture.

The Complaints System in the Health Service is being revised and the impact on NIAS will be considered.

HR07 - It was noted that Freedom of Information requests received can generate a disproportionate amount of work.

Mr McIvor reminded the Board that these reports would be subject to change throughout the year. If there are any significant changes or issues arise the Board will be kept informed.

7.0 Trust Delivery Plan 2008-11

The Trust Delivery Plan 2008-11 is with the Department at present for their review.

Mr McIvor advised that the Trust had received approval from DHSSPS to proceed with implementation of efficiency savings and Comprehensive Spend Review (CSR) proposals. The requirement to deliver efficiencies remained absolute, and consultation had commenced with staff-side.

8.0 Human Resources Directorate Report – 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008

A full report of Human Resources activity from April 2007 to March 2008 was presented for noting by the Board, and Ms O Hara drew member's attention to key areas of interest.

Mrs Greer stated that she was impressed by the work that had been carried out by the Human Resources Directorate over the year as evidenced in this report.

The Board was happy to note this report.

9.0 Standing Orders

Certain amendments were discussed at the last Board meeting and have been included in this draft for adoption. Amendments were made to Sections 3.9, 4.5.1, 4.5.3, 4.5.4, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3.

The Chairman asked that one point be considered before adoption and referred to 5.1.3. He proposed specifying that a contractor may carry out a function 'in full or in part'.

The Board accepted these changes, adopted the Standing Orders and agreed to apply them from this meeting onwards.

10.0 Minutes of the Risk Management Committee, 6 March 2008

The correct date of the last Risk Management Committee was noted and changed on the minutes.

The Risk Register is being administered by Mr Tom McGarey and the Corporate and Local Risk Registers are being further developed.

Mr Hughes requested that his mobile phone be activated as he was expected to answer calls in his role under the Whistleblower policy.

There was some discussion of Section 5.2 which related to concerns about the time spent on providing evidence for the Controls Assurance Standards. It was recognised that there was significant work involved but that the Trust had to maintain these standards, and the efforts of staff were appreciated.

With regard to Item 7.0 in the Risk Management Committee minutes it was noted that the Trust now has representation on the Procurement Group for Medical Equipment.

The Board accepted the Risk Management Committee minutes.

11.0 Minutes of Audit Committee held on 14 February 2008

The Audit Committee meets four or five times each year and members were advised these February minutes are the last ones published.

As a result of the timeframes around closure of the NIAS accounts at the end of the financial year there is a narrow window of opportunity to meet and report on financial issues. Audit Committee is reviewing the timelines of Committee reporting and presentation of minutes.

With regard to the Internal Audit process, the Trust in line with other Health and Social Care Trusts contracts the Beeches to carry this service out. If the Trust sought to have accounts audited by a commercial organisation the cost would likely be considerably higher.

The Board accepted the Audit Committee minutes.

12.0 Policies (for Approval)

None presented.

13.0 Application of Trust Seal

None made.

14.0 Forum for Questions

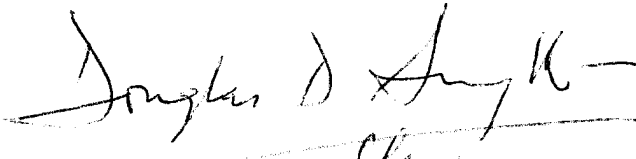
No questions were tabled for the Board.

15.0 Any Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed and the meeting was called to a close.

16.0 Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Trust Board will be held on Tuesday, 16 September 2008 in NIAS Headquarters followed by the Annual General Meeting.

Signed : 
Chairman