

## NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

***Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board held on Thursday, 1 July 2010 at 2.00pm at  
Holiday Inn Express Antrim, Junction One Leisure Park,  
Ballymena Road, Antrim. BT41 4LL***

**Present:**

Mr P Archer	Chairman
Mr L McIvor	Chief Executive
Mr Frank Hughes	Non-Executive Director
Mr N McKinley	Non-Executive Director
Mr S Mullan	Non-Executive Director
Mr S Shields	Non- Executive Director
Prof M Hanratty	Non- Executive Director
Mrs S McCue	Director of Finance & ICT

**In Attendance:**

Mrs M Crawford	Executive Administrator
Miss K Baxter	Senior Secretary

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

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and Trust Board and explained the arrangements for receiving questions from the public. He advised that Mr Dixon, Patient & Client Council is unable to join the meeting today.

#### **1.0 Apologies**

Ms R O'Hara, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services  
Dr D McManus, Medical Director  
Mr B McNeill, Director of Operations

#### **2.0 Procedure: Declaration of potential Conflict of Interest Quorum**

No potential conflicts of interests were declared and the Board is confirmed as Quorate.

#### **3.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 29 April 2010**

Members accepted the minutes as a true and accurate record of proceedings on the proposal of Mr McKinley, seconded by Mr Hughes.

## **4.0 Matters Arising**

### **4.1 NIAS Governance Arrangements**

To be discussed under Items 10 & 11.

### **4.2 Efficiency Savings and Comprehensive Spending Review Investment**

The Chief Executive advised that efficiency savings are in place and the Trust is progressing on the basis that we receive planned investment. Additional savings have been requested for the 2010-2011 financial year, and proposals have been presented to the HSC Board.

## **5.0 Chairman's Business**

### **5.1 Senior Executive Remuneration**

The Chairman advised that he had met with the Department in relation to this matter and is still awaiting a response.

### **5.2 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman gave a brief outline of his diary commitments since the last Board meeting:

- Visited stations in the Western and Northern Divisions.
- Attended DHSSPS Leadership Walkaround Event.
- Met with Chairs from the Belfast and South Eastern Trusts.
- Carried out appraisals of Non Executive Directors.
- Attended a Trust Board meeting in relation to final accounts.
- Attended a Northern Ireland Confederation (NICON) reception for the retirement of their Director Mr Alan Gilbert.
- Attended a breakfast briefing in regard to Strategic Policy with Mr Nigel Edwards, acting Chief Executive of NHS Confederation speaking.
- Continues weekly meetings with the Chief Executive.

### **5.3 Visit to Antrim Ambulance Station**

The Board wished to extend their thanks to the staff for their warm welcome today. The facility was noted to be very good although parking was minimal. The station is very busy and has been dealing with the impact of the reconfiguration of Whiteabbey and Magherafelt. The Chairman commented that the site visits are a great opportunity for the Board to meet with staff and discuss any issues they may have.

## **6.0 Chief Executive's Business**

### **6.1 Chief Executive's Update**

The Chief Executive gave a brief outline of his activities since the last Board meeting:

- Attended the Ambulance Leadership Forum in London.
- Has been appointed a member of Ambulance Service Network (ASN) Board and will be attending regular meetings in London.
- Attended a major strategic event between Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in Cardiff where he was able to appraise others of the Trust's developments and aspirations.
- Attended the opening of Downe Hospital where the Service was commended for their assistance during this transition.
- Attended end of year Accountability Review meeting at the Department.
- Met with Chair and Chief Executive of the NHS Confederation.

The Board wished to extend their congratulations to the Chief Executive on his appointment to the ASN Board.

## **7.0 Performance Reporting as at 31 May 2010 (Draft Assurance Framework)**

This item to be dealt with after items 8 and 9.

## **8.0 Trust Delivery Plan**

This item to be dealt with after item 9.

## **9.0 2009/10 Year End account Review**

The Chief Executive referred to correspondence within the papers which had been received from the HSC Board in relation to the Trust's performance where most targets had been achieved. Performance was also discussed at the yearend Accountability Meeting with the Department and the HSC Board. This meeting was very useful and the work of staff was commended. The Trust has identified initiatives to deal with demand and emerging pressures while continuing to deliver safe high quality care.

The Board noted the good results and wished to commend the work of staff. The Chief Executive responded by saying that these targets put into context the work of all in the Service and demonstrates an exemplary response to difficult circumstances.

## **8.0 Trust Delivery Plan (TDP)**

The TDP was presented to the Board as a draft document pending consideration by the HSC Board and approval by the Department. The document has also been shared in confidence with Trade Unions. Unison has requested a meeting which the Trust is happy to facilitate. The plan is in line with guidance provided by the Department. It shows what NIAS has achieved, the challenges ahead and reflects the Trust's Priorities for Action. The Trust will continue to align operational structures to allow the Trust to deliver objectives. It was advised that bids for funds should be easier when dealing with 1 Board where previously the Trust had to work with 4 Boards. Additional savings have been requested, with 2% savings required within payroll. Proposals have been made and the Trust will continue to focus resources on those most in need. The Trust is currently awaiting written confirmation from the Department in relation to further investment and is working on the basis that these funds are still available.

The Board expressed their concern at the requirement for further savings and hoped that the savings can be achieved without the loss of jobs. The Chief Executive responded by advising that the latest proposals should be delivered without risk to current employees, however if the situation changes he will report back to the Board and will commence discussions with Trade Unions in line with requirements.

The issue of Agenda for Change (AFC) was raised in relation to the element of risk attached for the remaining posts to be formally banded. The Director of Finance advised that there is no outcome at present for the remaining posts which have gone to full job evaluation. The Trust continues to work in partnership with Unions and is following due process. She further advised that the Trust's auditors have confirmed the Trust's financial position is based on reasonable assumptions at this time.

The Board agreed that the TDP is a good succinct document which has covered all aspects of the Trust's service and outlines the challenges ahead. The TDP was approved on the proposal of Mr Hughes seconded by Prof Hanratty.

## **7.0 Performance Reporting as at 31 May 2010 (Draft Assurance Framework)**

The Chief Executive introduced the new Assurance Framework advising that it is very different from the previous method of reporting performance. He hoped that this will be a showcase for the Trust's activity. The document will also incorporate assessment of risk against the delivery of objectives. The document is still being developed and further changes will be required. He wished to give the Board an opportunity to consider and shape the document. The document was discussed in some detail with the following highlighted.

- Contents page – Ministerial actions highlighted in red with Trust actions in blue.
- Incorporates the roles and objectives of the Department.
- Populated with data normally reported.
- Reports on matters of interest to the Board.

- Reflects the work of NIAS within the 7 key themes of Ministerial priorities.
- Aligns with other Trusts.

Consideration is to be given to the following:

- Highlight areas where NIAS has sole responsibility.
- Performance to be summarised in a single table.
- Refine colour coding – measures of performance.
- Emergency Preparedness – identify due date for completion.
- Cat A Response – develop and show graphically.

The Board welcomed the Assurance Framework stating that the information provided is clearer and it is easier to identify principle risks. They considered that the document would contribute significantly to shaping the agenda for both the Audit and Assurance Committees. It was agreed that a workshop would be arranged for the Board to consider the 6 Governance Principles and how the agenda for Committees should capture these and establish a programme for the year ahead. The Chairman and Chief Executive will meet initially to plan a workshop to follow.

The Chief Executive presented a summary of performance as follows:

- Cat A response is down in April and May 2010. This is due to the impact of Year 3 efficiency savings which came into effect in April 2010. He advised that the Control team need time to adjust to the changes in resources. There has also been the additional impact of closures at Whiteabbey and Mid Ulster, the situation is being managed hour by hour and it is hoped that it can be sustained. He added that the performance for June has improved at 73%. The Chief Executive is to work closely with the Director of Operations in an effort to deliver targets.
- Cat A&B – currently at 94.5%.
- Cat C – 99.7%

The Medical Director and Director of Operations are to review GP urgent calls; with the need to identify clinical urgency and need. It was advised that further reconfiguration of A&E will result in longer journey times which will impact on response times. Some discussion took place regarding the type of calls received at the Control Centre, approximate figures are as follows:

- 120,000 - 999 calls
- 40,000 – Cat A – potentially life threatening calls
- 50 – 60,000 - Cat B calls – urgent but not life threatening
- 20 – 30,000 - Cat C calls – non urgent

The Board noted that the Western and Southern Divisions appear to have the lowest response times. The Chief Executive advised that this is not just the fact that these have large rural areas but that other factors affect responses such as; availability of specialist clinical services, road networks, signage and GIS mapping (provided by OSNI) which is not always as up to date as in urban areas.

It was confirmed that a tactical deployment plan operates which seeks to deploy resources to where there is the greatest likelihood of incidents occurring. The Board noted that performance in the Northern Division has improved recently and the Chief Executive advised that more resources have been invested in this area which has helped to improve response times.

The issue of First Responders was raised and the Chief Executive appraised the Board of work undertaken in this area and potential issues with further development.

The Chief Executive advised that the target for absenteeism is unlikely to be achieved. The HSC Board and the Permanent Secretary have been advised. He stated that NIAS is very different to other NI Health Trusts with such a high concentration of front-line staff and welcomed suggestions on additional measures to improve attendance which might be applied.

The Director of Finance detailed Finance performance highlighting the following:

- Ensure financial stability and the effective use of resources – the Board were advised that the financial challenge facing the Trust at present is unprecedented. She advised that based on current assumptions the Trust is predicting a breakeven position at the end of May 2010. She added that assumptions and risks could change which would cause the Trust not to achieve financial breakeven.

The Board were concerned and asked if confirmation of investment is expected soon. The Director of Finance responded saying that the HSC Board have been advised that the Trust is operating on the basis of receiving this funding. If the funding is not received other measures will be required.

- Information Requests – The Board requested that outstanding requests are shown and a legend is required for abbreviations.
- Invoices paid within 30 days – Currently at 91.42%, work is ongoing in this area which continues to be monitored closely.
- Infrastructure Investment – A4 status reported. The recurrent fleet replacement business case is currently with the Department for approval.

The Board commented on the compliments received which show the Service at its best. It demonstrates the dedication and professionalism of NIAS staff.

The Board formally approved the Assurance Framework and wished to commend the work of the Executive Team in producing this new reporting document.

**Action:** Meeting to be arranged to discuss how the Assurance Framework can shape the Agendas of Committees with a view to establishing a programme for the year. The Chairman and Chief Executive are to meet initially with a workshop to follow.

## **10.0 Review of Governance - Standing Orders, Standing Financial Instructions & Scheme of Delegation**

It was agreed to deal with Items 10 & 11 together. The Standing Orders were discussed in some detail with the following comments received:

Page 21 – for consistency it was agreed that a sentence should be added to the Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee in regard to how frequent the Committee should meet.

Page 89, 24.1.3 – The Director of Information Technology, should read as “Director of Finance”.

The Terms of Reference for all Committees were approved.

The Chairman thanked the Board for their input into the new governance arrangements and the revision of the Standing Orders and Terms of Reference for the Committees. The Board considered that the outcome will be a more cohesive Board.

The Chairman advised that the new structure becomes effective from today and he outlined the membership of each Committee.

Assurance Committee	Prof Hanratty, Chair Mr Hughes Chair of Audit Committee (Mr McKinley)
Audit Committee	Mr Mullan, Chair (until 21/07/10) Mr McKinley, Chair (from 22/07/10) Mr Shields Chair of Assurance Committee (Prof Hanratty)
Remuneration Committee	Mr Archer, Chair Mr Hughes Mr Shields

Subject to the minor amendments noted to the Standing Orders all documents were approved on the proposal of Mr Hughes seconded by Mr McKinley.

## **11.0 Terms of Reference**

**11.1 Assurance Committee** – Approved by Trust Board

**11.2 Audit Committee** – Approved by Trust Board

**11.3 Remuneration Committee** – Approved by Trust Board

## **12.0 Policies/Procedures**

### **12.1 Policy and Procedure for the Purchase, Management and Disposal of Medical Devices, Equipment and Supplies**

The Chair of the Assurance Committee recommended approval of the Policy. The Board queried whether the purchase of goods through the Central Procurement Department (CPU) of BSO was the most cost-effective way to purchase goods. The Director of Finance stated that as a member of the Procurement Board she can advise that CPU is monitored closely on how it performs. She stated that the procurement decision takes into consideration a range of issues – Value for Money throughout the life of the product, performance against specification etc. The Director of Finance also advised that procurement processes needed to be enacted in compliance with NIAS's Standing Financial Instructions and Scheme of Delegation. Given the importance of balancing these factors in a structured manner it is an expectation of the DHSSPS that procurement is influenced by the Centre of Procurement Excellence.

The Director of Finance to rewrite paragraph 2.4 on Page 2 to clarify funding source.

Subject to this minor amendment the Policy was approved on the proposal of Mr Shields and Mr Mullan.

**Action:** Director of Finance to rewrite paragraph 2.4.

## **13.0 For Noting**

### **13.1 Minutes of Clinical Governance Committee held on 25 February 2010**

Noted.

### **13.2 Minutes of Risk Management Committee held on 25 February 2010**

Noted.

### **13.3 Minutes of Audit Committee held 20 May 2010**

Noted.

## **14.0 Application of Trust Seal**

The Trust Seal has not been used since the last Trust Board meeting.

**15.0 FORUM FOR QUESTIONS**

No questions received from the floor.

**16.0 Any Other Business**

The Chairman advised that Mr Mullan completes his service with the Trust on the 21 July 2010 and wished to thank him on behalf of the Board for his input over the past 8 years. A token of appreciation was presented at a private meeting of the Board.

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

The next meeting of the Trust Board will be held on **Thursday, 23 September 2010** at Trust Headquarters followed by the Annual General Meeting.

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

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairman**