

<b>Title of Meeting</b>	117 <sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Public Health Agency Board
<b>Date</b>	5 December 2019 at 1.30pm
<b>Venue</b>	Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

**Present**

Mr Andrew Dougal	- Chair
Mrs Valerie Watts	- Interim Chief Executive
Mr Edmond McClean	- Interim Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Operations
Mrs Briege Quinn	- Interim Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals
Mr Leslie Drew	- Non-Executive Director
Professor Nichola Rooney	- Non-Executive Director
Alderman Paul Porter	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Joseph Stewart	- Non-Executive Director

**In Attendance**

Dr Brid Farrell	- Assistant Director of Public Health
Dr Aideen Keaney	- Director of Quality Improvement
Ms Marie Roulston	- Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB
Ms Wendy Thompson	- Assistant Director of Finance, HSCB
Mr Robert Graham	- Secretariat
Ms Jenny Redman	- Boardroom Apprentice

**Apologies**

Alderman William Ashe	- Non-Executive Director
Mr John-Patrick Clayton	- Non-Executive Director
Ms Deepa Mann-Kler	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Paul Cummings	- Director of Finance, HSCB

**117/19 | Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies**

117/19.1 | The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Alderman William Ashe, Mr John-Patrick Clayton, Ms Deepa Mann-Kler and Mr Paul Cummings.

**118/19 | Item 2 – Declaration of Interests**

118/19.1 | The Chair asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items

on the agenda. No interests were declared.

**119/19 Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 21 November 2019**

119/19.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 21 November 2019, were approved as an accurate record of that meeting, subject to one amendment, the addition of the sentence, “Mr Clayton declared an interest, as UNISON was a trade union that would be undertaking industrial action.” in paragraph 108/19.3.

**120/19 Item 4 – Matters Arising**

120/19.1 There were no matters arising.

**121/19 Item 5 – Chair’s Business**

121/19.1 The Chair advised members that two dates have been identified for further workshops with Anne McMurray, and he asked members to put these in their diaries, and that further details will follow.

121/19.2 The Chair drew members’ attention to a recent article about workplace health, and he said that it would be interesting to look at its findings in conjunction with the results of the HSC staff survey.

**122/19 Item 6 – Chief Executive’s Business**

*Prior to the commencement of the Chief Executive’s Business, representatives of PPR (Participation and the Protection of Rights) participated in a demonstration and then left the meeting.*

122/19.1 The Interim Chief Executive began by saying that the PHA will look at any relevant recommendations coming out of the recently published report on health funding in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster.

122/19.2 The Interim Chief Executive informed members that the Permanent Secretary had issued a letter to all staff giving an update on the closure of HSCB, which is now anticipated to happen on 31 March 2022. She said that in light of this delay, there will be work undertaken to look at a future planning/commissioning model.

122/19.3 The Interim Chief Executive advised that HSC Silver Command arrangements are now in place due to the current industrial action. She said that the Department of Health has requested daily SITREPs, and that the Transformation Implementation Group (TIG) meeting earlier this week was entirely dedicated to the industrial action. She added that the Permanent Secretary will be meeting with the Secretary of State, and that HSC Trust Chief Executives have expressed concerns regarding patient safety if proposed strikes go ahead.

- 122/19.4 The Interim Chief Executive confirmed that Mr Rodney Morton will take up post as Director of Nursing in early January 2020 and she thanked Mrs Quinn for her work in filling this role on an interim basis. She also updated members of the recruitment of the Director of Public Health.
- 122/19.5 The Interim Chief Executive informed members that the PHA's Corporate and Public Affairs team won a Gold Award at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Pride Awards, in collaboration with the Health and Social Care Board. She said that the award was presented for the Stay Well this Winter programme, which aims to empower people to look after themselves over the colder months.
- 122/19.6 The Interim Chief Executive thanked the Board for all of their support during 2019.
- 122/19.7 Alderman Porter asked about the impact of the industrial action and the ability to retain staff. Mr McClean explained that the issue of pay and terms and conditions affects all staff on Agenda for Change contracts.
- 122/19.8 Alderman Porter said that although there is no Assembly in place, he asked whether PHA was looking at issues around the shortfall in HSC funding. The Interim Chief Executive explained that PHA's remit is about encouraging individuals to lead healthy lives, and the prevention agenda. Dr Farrell agreed and gave the example that 40% of cancers can be prevented and it is about getting those messages out. In terms of the industrial action, she said that all staff work under national contracts. She added that in terms of retaining trained staff, Northern Ireland possesses many areas of excellence and good practice, so there is a need to try to recruit and then retain the best and brightest staff rather than to lose them to other places paying higher salaries. She agreed that the focus for PHA is on the prevention agenda.
- 122/19.9 Professor Rooney asked if staff in PHA were going on strike. The Interim Chief Executive that this may be the case. Mrs Quinn said that the RCN has advised PHA of the numbers of staff who are eligible to strike, and so issues are being worked through on a week to week basis.
- 122/19.10 The Interim Chief Executive expressed her support for the HSC Trust Chief Executives who are facing serious issues. Dr Farrell assured members that any patients who are "red flag" referrals will not be affected by the strike action.
- 122/19.11 Professor Rooney felt that this period of industrial action represents a tipping point, and that for as long as the HSC continues to look after the public, it should look after its staff, and she paid tribute to the staff.
- 123/19 Item 7 – Finance Report (PHA/01/12/19)**
- 123/19.1 Ms Thompson presented the Finance Report for the period up to 31 October, and said that the surplus has reduced from £1.3m to £0.9m.

- She added that some budget realignment has taken place, and that the continued forecast is for a break-even position.
- 123/19.2 Ms Thompson advised members that the PHA had now received correspondence from the Department of Health asking for the potential surrender of non-recurrent funds to assist with wider HSC pressures. She said that PHA had identified potentially £400k-£500k. With regard to Transformation funding, Ms Thompson said that the Department has requested that all organisations advise of any slippage by tomorrow, but that the level of slippage in PHA is very small. She added that if a pay award is agreed, PHA will be required to fund the first 1%.
- 123/19.3 Mr Drew sought assurance that PHA will achieve a break even position. Ms Thompson said that she was confident that this would be the case. Mr Drew asked about the request for PHA funds to help the wider HSC pressures. Ms Thompson explained that this would be non-recurrent, but she added that there is a residual deficit in the wider HSC and that this funding will simply allow the system to break even this year. She stressed that to date, no funding has been taken from any organisation.
- 123/19.4 Mr Stewart asked where the £400k-£500k was coming from, and how it was prioritised. Ms Thompson said that the money will come from the surplus originating in the in PHA's management and administration budget. Mr McClean explained that at this stage of the year PHA will not be able to commence some planned work in the area of mental health so this funding could be utilised. He added that earlier in the year, PHA had contacted a range of third sector organisations and the aim had been to find increased activity levels where there are identified increases in demand likely. He said that at this stage wider HSC pressures will take precedence.
- 123/19.5 Mr Stewart sought assurance the funding in the campaigns budget will be fully utilised before the year end. He said that if this were not going to be the case, that this funding should be used in other areas. Mr McClean assured Mr Stewart that programme budgets are broadly on track, and that the campaign budget specifically will be spent and that tremendous efforts were being made by the small campaigns team in the PHA to achieve this.
- 123/19.6 Professor Rooney questioned whether it was right to hand back funding that could potentially have been used for the implementation of Protect Life 2. Mr McClean said that PHA has had little choice, but he reiterated that at this point, the money has not been returned to the Department. Professor Rooney said that in England, 13% of the health budget is allocated to mental health, but in Northern Ireland it is between 5% and 8%. She added that the community and voluntary sector is expected to carry out a lot of the work, and that PHA is one of its main sources of funding.
- 123/19.7 Alderman Porter said that he did not have any issue with funds being

returned if they were required elsewhere. He expressed concern that if PHA continues to not be able to fully utilise its budget, then it could lose some of its funding. The Interim Chief Executive said that as the Accounting Officer, she is responsible for ensuring that all funds are utilised properly and that there is an audit trail.

123/19.8 Ms Roulston advised that through Transformation funding, there has been work on the Zero Suicide initiative, which links to Protect Life 2.

123/19.9 Members noted the Finance Report.

**124/19 Item 8 – Joint PHA/HSCB and BSO Annual Report on Emergency Preparedness 2018/2019 (PHA/02/12/19)**

*Ms Mary Carey attended the meeting for this item.*

124/19.1 Ms Carey presented the joint report which she advised has been submitted to the Department of Health alongside the Trust reports. She said that the main issues emanating from the Report are around training, particularly in the event of a chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear event. She highlighted issues around EU Exit preparedness, and issues around the compensation for staff on Agenda for Change terms and condition who voluntarily assist with Emergency Operating Centres (EOCs) when required.

124/19.2 Mr Drew noted that this report had been presented to the Governance and Audit Committee, and he reiterated his concern about the level of the training budget. He said he was reassured that there are robust emergency planning arrangements in place.

124/19.3 Members noted the joint PHA/HSCB and BSO Annual Report on Emergency Preparedness 2018/19.

**125/19 Item 9 – Any Other Business**

125/19.1 There was no other business.

**126/19 Item 10 – Details of Next Meeting**

*Thursday 23 January 2020 at 1:30pm*

*Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS*

Signed by Chair:



Date: 23 January 2020