

**Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Public Health Agency held at 9.15am on Wednesday, 1 April 2009 in the Ann Brown Room, Farset International, 466 Springfield Road, Belfast, BT12 7DW**

**PRESENT:**

Ms Mary McMahon - Chair  
Dr Eddie Rooney - Chief Executive  
Dr Carolyn Harper - Director of Public Health/ Medical Director  
Ms Mary Hinds - Director of Nursing & Allied Health Professionals  
Mr Ed McClean - Director of Operations

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs P Crossan  
Ms M McCloskey - Finance & Administration Services Manager

**APOLOGY**

An apology for absence was received from Mrs Fionnuala McAndrew, Director of Social Care, Health and Social Care Board.

**01/09 Chair's Business**

**(i) Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all to the first public meeting of the Public Health Agency board.

The Chair stated that, following the reorganisation of Northern Ireland's Health and Social Services, as part of the Review of Public Administration, four new Health and Social Care bodies are operational from today.

The Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Wellbeing, which will be known by its working title Public Health Agency,

is responsible for: health protection; health and social wellbeing improvement – including addressing existing health inequalities; public health input to commissioning (including screening) and HSC research and development.

The Chair stated that the Public Health Agency would drive the public health and social wellbeing agenda in particular – hence its strap line *“Improving Your Health and Wellbeing”* – not just with health and social care but with local government, other statutory organisations and community and voluntary sectors. It will be equally vital to reach out and establish links with the community.

The Chair introduced the four Executive Board Directors:  
Dr Eddie Rooney, Chief Executive;  
Mr Ed McClean, Director of Operations;  
Dr Carolyn Harper, Director of Public Health/Medical Director;  
and  
Ms Mary Hinds, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals.

The Chair stated that she hoped an announcement would be made in the near future about the appointment of 7 Non-Executive Directors.

The Chair further stated that Mrs Fionnuala McAndrew, Director of Social Care, Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), as well as a representative of the Patient and Client Council (PCC) would attend future meetings. She noted that Dr Harper, Director of Public Health/Medical Director and Ms Hinds, Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals would attend HSCB Board meetings.

The Public Health Agency will meet on the third Thursday of each month, with all meetings held in public. It is intended to hold alternate meetings outside Belfast in venues across the province. The schedule of Public Health Agency Board meetings for the 2009/10 year will be considered at the next meeting.

**(ii) Purpose of Meeting**

The Chair stated that the main purpose of today's meeting was to signal the arrival of the Public Health Agency and, as such, the meeting was likely to be brief as members will deal solely with "internal" business, setting the operational framework for the Public Health Agency and how business will be conducted.

**02/09 Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions of the Public Health Agency (Paper No: PHA/01/09)**

Members received, for approval, Paper No: PHA/01/09 "Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions of the Public Health Agency".

In presenting Paper No: PHA/01/09, Dr Rooney, Chief Executive, stated that Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions provide a comprehensive business framework for the running of the Public Health Agency, and would fulfil the dual role of protecting the Agency's interests as well as those of staff carrying out work on behalf of the Agency. Dr Rooney further stated that whilst it will become a familiar document to Non Executives, Executives and all members of staff, it is also a "living" document, evolving over time, and its shape will be determined by the Public Health Agency Board to reflect changes within the organisation.

Dr Rooney stated that the Agency was committed to conducting its business and meetings as publicly and openly as possible and would encourage people to contribute to discussions about the Agency's priorities and actions. Dr Rooney referred to the Chair's earlier remarks about holding meetings outside Belfast which, he felt, reflected the Agency's interests throughout the Province.

Dr Rooney highlighted a number of technical points and referred to an addendum to Paragraph 5.2.13. "Quorum". This was necessitated by the requirement to have the first meeting on 1 April 2009, as well as the fact that Non Executive Director appointments had not yet been announced. He explained that for the purposes of the first three Agency

meetings the Chair would be counted as a member of the Board for the quorum, if necessary.

Referring to Section 3.4 'Schemes of Delegation', Dr Rooney reported that a paper had been tabled "Interim Schedule of Delegated Authority" which was required in order to ensure business continuity and financial governance in the short term, until the staffing structure for the Public Health Agency across all locations was more developed. Dr Rooney noted that this was based on the existing authorised signatories from each of the legacy organisations, with the caveat that approval of amounts greater than £2,000 should be notified to the relevant Director. He added that it was the intention to review the schedule at an early date, and the amended document would be brought to a future Public Health Agency board meeting.

After consideration, Members AGREED the Interim Schedule of Delegated Authority, which was duly signed by Dr Rooney, Chief Executive. Members formally noted that the interim arrangements will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and final arrangements will be brought for approval to a future Public Health Agency Meeting.

Dr Rooney referred to Section 4 Board Committees and stated that two Board Committees will be established: Governance and Audit Committee and; Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee. Members noted that details of the remit, constitution and conduct of business were included in Appendices 4 & 5 of Standing Orders. Membership of both committees will be subject to Board approval.

Dr Rooney drew attention to Section 6 – Code of Conduct and Code of Accountability and stated that all Board Members were required to declare interests which are relevant and material to the Agency. Letters will be issued to all Members following this meeting, asking them to detail their respective interests and these will be brought to a following Board Meeting.

After consideration, Members AGREED the Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions, which were duly formally signed by the Chair and Chief Executive.

**03/09 Bank Mandates for the Public Health Agency**

Mr McClean, Director of Operations, advised that the Chair and Chief Executive are required to sign application forms to set up bank mandates for Public Health Agency business. The Chair and Chief Executive formally signed the application forms.

Mr McClean explained that a further four Mandates had to be signed by the Chair which would provide for chequebook facilities for staff outside Belfast, if so required. The four Mandates were formally signed by the Chair. Mr McClean concluded by stating that Ms McCloskey, Finance & Administration Manager, would deposit these directly with the Bank of Ireland, thereby completing the establishment of financial arrangements for the Public Health Agency.

**04/09 Statement of Assurance on Transfer of Human Resource Policies (Paper No: PHA/02/09)**

Members received, for noting, Paper No: PHA/02/09 "Statement of Assurance on Transfer of Human Resource Policies".

In presenting Paper No: PHA/02/09, Mr McClean, Director of Operations, stated that staff had been mapped to the Public Health Agency from the four HSS Boards, Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland and NI Healthcare associated Infection Surveillance Centre as well as a number of HSC Trusts. He reported that whilst the Business Services Organisation will work with the other phase two organisations over coming months to review, harmonise and, where appropriate, standardise Human Resource (HR) policies and procedures, during the interim period staff will continue to be subject to the HR policies from their legacy organisations. Directors appointed from outside the HSC sector or DHSSPS will be subject to either the legacy Eastern Health & Social Services Board or Health Promotion Agency HR policies, during this interim period.

After consideration, Members formally noted the interim arrangements.

**05/09 Any Other Business**

**(i) Induction Day for Non-Executive Directors of new HSC Organisations**

The Chair reported that DHSSPS had indicated that a generic induction day would be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May for all Non-Executive Directors of new HSC organisations. Members noted that this arrangement had not yet been confirmed.

**(ii) Ministerial Event**

The Chair noted that, subsequent to this meeting, the Minister will host an event to mark the establishment of the four new HSC bodies which will be attended by Chairs, Chief Executives and Directors of these bodies.

**(iii) Second Meeting of the Public Health Agency Board**

Mr McClean reported on business which will require to be transacted at the next Public Health Agency board meeting. This will include consideration of the final minutes of the legacy organisations which will have a bearing on the functions, powers and duties of the Public Health Agency. Mr McClean noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 16 April 2009 and suggested that, in light of the fact that Non Executive Directors have not yet been appointed and the nature of the business for consideration, it would be prudent to reschedule the meeting to 23 April 2009.

After consideration, Members AGREED that the next meeting of the Public Health Agency will be held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

The second meeting of the Public Health Agency will be held at 10.30am on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 in the Boardroom, Public Health Agency, Ormeau Avenue Unit, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS

