

**Minutes of the 47th Meeting of the Public Health Agency board
held on Thursday 18 October 2012 at 1:30pm,
in Public Health Agency, Conference Rooms,
2nd Floor, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8BS**

PRESENT:

Ms Mary McMahan	- Chair
Mr Edmond McClean	- Director of Operations
Councillor William Ashe	- Non-Executive Director
Mrs Julie Erskine	- Non-Executive Director
Dr Jeremy Harbison	- Non-Executive Director
Mrs Miriam Karp	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Thomas Mahaffy	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Ronnie Orr	- Non-Executive Director
Alderman Paul Porter	- Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Paul Cummings	- Director of Finance, HSCB
Mr Robert Graham	- Secretariat
Dr Janet Little	- Assistant Director, Service Development and Screening (<i>on behalf of Dr Harper</i>)
Mrs Fionnuala McAndrew	- Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Pat Cullen	- Assistant Director of Nursing
Dr Carolyn Harper	- Director of Public Health/Medical Director
Mrs Mary Hinds	- Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals
Mrs Maeve Hully	- Chief Executive, Patient Client Council
Dr Eddie Rooney	- Chief Executive

		Action
104/12	Item 1 – Apologies	
104/12.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She noted apologies from Dr Eddie Rooney, Dr Carolyn Harper, Mary Hinds, Maeve Hully and Pat Cullen, who was due to attend the meeting on behalf of Mary Hinds.	

105/12 Item 2 - Declaration of Interests

105/12.1 The Chair asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda. None were declared.

106/12 Item 3 - Chair's Business

106/12.1 The Chair proposed that agenda item 16 would be discussed after item 9 to allow Dr Janet Little to leave the meeting.

106/12.2 The Chair invited Dr Little to give the board an update on the recent e-coli outbreak. Dr Little advised the board that the Public Health Agency was investigating a major outbreak linked to a Belfast restaurant. So far, there were 30 confirmed cases and 219 probable cases of e-coli with 11 people having been hospitalised. She said a case control study was under way to establish the cause of the outbreak. Dr Little confirmed that the same restaurant had had an outbreak in August 2012 but assured the board that all appropriate measures had been taken at that time.

106/12.3 Mr McClean said that there had been significant media interest with 38 enquiries. He added that to date PHA staff had carried out 18 television interviews and had issued daily press releases. He said that an Emergency Operations Centre had been established.

106/12.4 Dr Harbison asked about the incubation time of the virus and how many of the cases could be directly linked to the restaurant. Dr Little said that it took normally 3-4 days within a range of 1-10 days to affect an individual. It would take 2-3 days to get confirmation of a result from the laboratory. She added that many of the cases could be linked to the restaurant and went on to say that there will be a primary wave of cases and in due course, a secondary wave.

106/12.5 Mr Orr acknowledged the work of PHA staff in dealing with this outbreak but expressed concern that this had been the second outbreak in the same restaurant and sought clarity on the follow up process. Dr Little assured the board that Environmental Health had investigated the original outbreak and that any issues of concern would have been followed up.

- 106/12.6 Mrs Erskine asked if PHA had issued an emergency telephone number for members of the public. Dr Little said that once the outbreak had been confirmed, PHA had written to every GP in Northern Ireland. She said that some members of the public had contacted the Duty Room.
- 106/12.7 Alderman Porter noted that PHA was not in overall control of the process but asked if PHA would see if any lessons could be learnt from how the outbreak was dealt with by all agencies. Dr Little confirmed that ongoing meetings are taking place and, at the conclusion, there will be an overall review.
- 106/12.8 The Chair updated the board on some events she had attended since the previous board meeting.
- 106/12.9 The Chair said that she attended the regional palliative end of life care launch at the Northern Ireland Hospice and believed that it was an excellent event. Mr Cummings said that there had been significant investment from the HSC Board in this project.
- 106/12.10 The Chair said that she had attended the Arthritis Care professional lecture and expressed concern at the lack of investment in areas such as prevention and causes. Dr Little advised that over £20m has been spent recently on arthritis care and that there was now a significant reduction in waiting times.
- 107/12 Item 4 - Chief Executive's Business**
- 107/12.1 In the absence of the Chief Executive, Mr McClean briefed members on various events which the Chief Executive had attended since the last PHA board meeting.
- 107/12.2 Mr McClean advised that the Chief Executive had attended a Future Search initiative which is looking at developing a 10-year vision for Belfast in addressing alcohol and drug misuse. The Chief Executive also attended an Organ Donation Event, with representatives from Sport NI and PHA, which was aimed at increasing awareness of organ donation through sport and encourage sporting fans to sign the NHS donor register.
- 107/12.3 In response to a question from Mrs Karp, Mr McClean said that the Chief Executive intended to update the board at a future meeting regarding the outcomes from the staff climate workshop.

- 107/12.4 Mr McClean advised that the Chief Executive went to the launch of a book on the stories of families bereaved through suicide hosted by the Niamh Louise foundation.
- 108/12 Item 5 - Minutes of the PHA board Meeting held on 20 September 2012**
- 108/12.1 Members agreed the minutes of the PHA board meeting held on 20 September 2012 as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 109/12 Item 6 – Matters Arising**
- 109/12.1 The Chair noted that there were no matters arising.
- 110/12 Item 7 – Finance
PHA Financial Performance Report (PHA 01/10/12)**
- 110/12.1 Mr Cummings presented the finance report for the period up to 31 August 2012 and said that the projected end of year surplus had increased to £10.2m but he was confident that this would be reduced. He proposed that members consider the PEMS report before raising questions.
- 111/12 Item 8 – Programme Expenditure Monitoring System (PEMS) Report (PHA 02/10/12)**
- 111/12.1 Mr McClean advised that the underspend had reduced between August and September and added that a workshop with all budget holders had taken place where all projected expenditure had been analysed. He explained that there were still concerns about delayed receipts of invoices from community and voluntary sector organisations. He said that another issue for PHA was the impact of the new government arrangements for advertising. He assured the board that the Chief Executive is monitoring the financial situation on a weekly basis.
- 111/12.2 Alderman Porter asked if the PHA intend to hand money back to DHSSPS. Mr McClean said that at this stage no need to hand back money had been identified and that PHA was continuing to implement appropriate and worthwhile areas for programme expenditure.

- 111/12.3 Mrs Erskine asked about the £1m underspend in advertising and if it formed part of the overall £3.38m projected underspend. Mr McClean explained that significant effort was being put into preparing campaign planning, however, with approvals yet to be resolved, he was cautious about having several campaigns ongoing concurrently and added that some campaigns are time critical.
- 111/12.4 Dr Harbison asked if the board would receive a separate finance report on the Programme for Government (PfG) initiatives. Mr McClean explained that at a previous meeting an outline of the suggested proposals had been presented but he would undertake to bring a further update to the board.
- 111/12.5 Alderman Ashe suggested a more rigorous follow up with organisations which do not issue invoices. Mr Cummings suggested that it may be a governance issue within these organisations.
- 111/12.6 Alderman Porter asked if PHA monitors the performance of the staff who are responsible for dealing with these organisations. Mr McClean assured the board that staff are following up with these organisations on a risk-based approach.
- 111/12.7 The Chair brought the discussion to a close and noted that there was still further work to be undertaken in this area. Members noted the finance report and the PEMS report.
- 112/12 Item 9 – PHA Response to DHSSPS Consultation “Fit and Well – Changing Lives – A Ten Year Public Health Strategic Framework for Northern Ireland 2012-2022” (PHA 03/10/12)**
- 112/12.1 Dr Little advised that the Fit and Well consultation response reflected the comments made by members at the recent board workshop and the range of views within the PHA. Members raised queries about the wording in some of the responses and Dr Little noted these comments and undertook to make the amendments required.
- 112/12.2 Mr Mahaffy said that while he was supportive of the consultation, he queried the position of the PHA within the framework. Dr Little said that at a recent DHSSPS presentation on the consultation, it was clear that the PHA would lead the implementation.

Mr
McClean

Alderman Porter added that PHA should seek to strengthen its working relationships with local government when implementing this strategy.

112/12.3 Subject to the proposed amendments, the board **APPROVED** the consultation response.

113/12 Item 16 - HSCB/PHA Annual Report on Safety & Quality Alerts (PHA 10/10/12)

113/12.1 Dr Little advised that this report is prepared for the HSC Board and the PHA to outline the work undertaken during 2011/12 on the implementation of safety and quality alerts. She said that robust procedures had been put in place during the year to track progress and ensure that alerts are appropriately acted upon.

113/12.2 Mrs Karp asked about the purpose of the paper and queried if it was solely focused on the process. Mrs Erskine thought the report should be presented to the PHA Governance and Audit Committee. Mr McClean said that this report is also brought to the board of the HSC Board but noted that its role is different to that of the PHA. Dr Little said that the board were asked to approve that there is an adequate process in place for the dissemination of alerts. It was agreed that further clarity should be obtained.

113/12.3 Dr Harbison noted that five alerts had been issued during 2011/12 and queried this reduced number. Dr Little explained that due to changes in process, it was more customary for the HSC Board to issue letters regarding quality and safety thus reducing the number of alerts issued by DHSSPS.

113/12.4 Subject to obtaining clarity at the next meeting on the purpose of the report and the role of the board, the board **APPROVED** the annual report on safety and quality alerts.

J Little

113/12.5 At this point, Dr Little left the meeting.

114/12 Item 10 – Governance & Audit Committee meeting (PHA 04/10/12)

114/12.1 Mrs Erskine informed the board that the Governance and Audit Committee had met on 11 October and that many of the papers

discussed will be considered at this board meeting. She noted that two representatives from DHSSPS had attended the meeting as observers.

115/12 Item 11 – PHA Mid Year Assurance Statement (PHA 05/10/12)

115/12.1 Mr McClean presented the Mid Year Assurance Statement for approval by the board. He explained that the document reflected the key issues brought to the board over the previous six months and drew members' attention to the section on significant internal control problems.

115/12.2 Mr Cummings advised that the Business Services Transformation Programme (BSTP) is referenced in the HSC Board's Statement and after discussion it was agreed that the wording used by the HSC Board should appear in the PHA Statement.

115/12.3 Dr Harbison asked about the continuing issues with the interruption of ICT services. Mr McClean indicated that there were issues which still required to be resolved but acknowledged that BSO had been taking significant steps to improve the situation.

115/12.4 Mr Orr asked if these ongoing issues would affect the proposed electronic single patient record. Mr Cummings explained that the single patient record is currently supported within the existing systems.

115/12.5 Mr Mahaffy sought further information on the comments regarding value for money on contracts. Mr McClean explained that PHA has contracts in place with community and voluntary bodies which Internal Audit noted had not been reviewed for a significant period of time. He said that PHA was working to resolve the issues highlighted by Internal Audit and would bring regular progress reports to the board.

115/12.6 Subject to an insertion with reference to BSTP, the board **APPROVED** the Mid Year Assurance Statement.

Mr
McClean

116/12 Item 12 – PHA Assurance Framework (PHA 06/10/12)

116/12.1 Mr McClean told the board that the PHA Assurance Framework had been updated and drew members' attention to the schedules

within the document which outline the reports which are required to be brought through AMT to the board and its committees. He added that the approved framework will be forwarded to DHSSPS.

116/12.2 Members **APPROVED** the PHA Assurance Framework.

117/12 Item 13 – PHA Gifts and Hospitality Policy (PHA 07/10/12)

117/12.1 Mr McClean advised that the Gifts and Hospitality Policy had been amended in light of the Bribery Act. He said that the Policy was a standard policy across all HSC organisations and that staff training would be organised.

117/12.2 Alderman Porter asked about the role of the board in overseeing the implementation of the policy. Mr McClean acknowledged that staff may be trained but it may be difficult to be assured that staff are fully compliant. Mr Cummings felt that there were good systems in place as internal audit can be asked to undertake work in this area and provide an assurance to the Governance and Audit Committee and the board.

117/12.3 Mrs Erskine added that the Governance and Audit Committee will be reviewing the Gifts and Hospitality register.

117/12.4 Members **APPROVED** the Gifts and Hospitality policy.

118/12 Item 14 – PHA IT Security Policies (PHA 08/10/12)

118/12.1 Mr McClean advised members that the Governance and Audit Committee had considered the full suite of IT Security Policies and these were policies being implemented across the HSC. Mrs Erskine added that the policies had also been considered at the Information Governance Steering Group.

118/12.2 Members noted the PHA IT security policies.

119/12 Item 15 - Memorandum of Understanding between DHSSPS, PHA and SBNI (PHA 09/10/12)

119/12.1 Mr McClean explained that following the last board meeting, it was important for members to see the final memorandum of understanding (MOU) between DHSSPS, PHA and the

Safeguarding Board (SBNI) as it laid out the roles and responsibilities of each body and the arrangements for working together.

119/12.2 Mrs Karp said that there was a concern about the reputation of PHA if a major issue arose with SBNI. Mr McClean acknowledged the point but noted that the MOU made the accountability of SBNI to DHSSPS very clear. He added that it was important that there was a good relationship between the Chief Executive of PHA, the SBNI Chair and DHSSPS.

119/12.3 Mr Orr noted the reference to media handling and the need to avoid conflicts of interest. Mr McClean said that PHA was working with SBNI on this issue but noted that SBNI can seek support directly from DHSSPS, or elsewhere, if required.

119/12.4 Members noted the MOU between DHSSPS, PHA and SBNI.

120/12 Item 17 – Any Other Business

120/12.1 The Chair advised that following the two half-day workshops with the board, she would be working with Mr McClean to develop an action plan which would be brought to the board in December.

120/12.2 Alderman Paul Porter requested that consideration be given by the Chief Executive to the Social Investment Fund plan which is due to be published in January 2013.

121/12 Item 18 - Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

Date: **Thursday 15 November 2012**

Time: 1:30pm

Venue: Public Health Agency

Conference Rooms

2nd Floor

12-22 Linenhall Street

Belfast

BT2 8BS

Signed by Chair: My W. Beck

Date: 15/11/12