

**Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the Public Health Agency  
Board held at 2.15 pm on Thursday, 17 September 2009 in the  
Public Health Agency, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS**

**PRESENT:**

Ms M McMahon	-	Chair
Ms M Hinds	-	Director of Nursing & Allied Health Professionals (deputising for Dr Rooney) left the meeting at 3.25pm
Mrs J Erskine	-	Non-Executive Director
Dr J Harbison	-	Non-Executive Director
Ms M Karp	-	Non-Executive Director
Dr J Little	-	Assistant Director Service Development & Screening (deputising for Dr Harper)
Mr T Mahaffy	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr E McClean	-	Director of Operations (deputising for Dr Rooney from minute 53/09)
Mr C Mullaghan	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr S Nicholl	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr R Orr	-	Non-Executive Director

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr P Cummings	-	Director of Finance, HSC Board (left the meeting at 2.45pm)
Mrs F McAndrew	-	Director of Social Care and Children, HSC Board
Ms M Hully	-	Chief Executive, Patient and Client Council
Dr B Cullen	-	Consultant in Public Health)
Dr T Owen	-	Consultant in Public Health) (for 53/09)
Dr F Kennedy	-	Consultant in Public Health)
Mr I Maginness	-	Public Relations Officer HSC Board
Mrs C Mohan	-	Secretariat

## **APOLOGIES:**

Dr E Rooney - Chief Executive  
Dr C Harper - Director of Public Health Medicine

## **ACTION**

### 47/09 **Chairs Business**

#### (i) **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

#### (ii) **Meeting with the Minister**

The Chair advised that she had met with the Minister to discuss efficiency savings.

Members noted that she had drawn attention to staffing projections and issues around working relationships with HSCB. The matter of PHA premises was also discussed.

#### (iii) **Connections with Local Government/ Voluntary Organisations**

The Chair informed members that she had a preliminary meeting with representatives from the Community Development Health Network.

The Chair stated that she had also met with Mr Charlie Fisher, Observatory Facilitator, Building Change Trust. The Chair explained that Mr Fisher's post had been established by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland to engage with the Community and Voluntary Sector following a period of change influenced by the Review of Public Administration.

(iv) **Workshops**

The Chair referred to requests from members to identify dates for specific workshops on aspects of PHA activities. It was agreed that Ms Hinds and Mr McClean would draw up a schedule for issue to members and discussion at a future Board Meeting.

Mr McClean

(v) **Location of Board Meetings**

The Chair felt that, in light of current pressures in the system and on Members time, it would be preferable to hold the monthly Board Meetings in Belfast for the remainder of the year.

Mr McClean

The Chair stated that consideration will be given to the format and venues for Board Meetings in 2010, to ensure that the Agency has a visibility and presence throughout the province.

Mr McClean

(vi) **Future Structures**

Ms Hinds reminded members that the consultation period for future PHA structures closes on 25 September 2009. Members noted that the date had been set to be consistent with the timescales set by the HSCB.

Members noted that a request has already been received from the BMA for an extension to the date.

Ms Hinds stated that plans are due to be published week beginning 5 October 2009

In discussion members acknowledged the importance of having sight of the final structures prior to the Board Meeting on

15 October 2009.

Following detailed discussion, it was agreed that following scrutiny, officers could circulate the draft paper in advance of the Board Meeting to give members an opportunity to identify any issues of concern. It was felt that the matter could be discussed immediately prior to the next Board Meeting, or alternatively, an exceptional Board meeting could be arranged if felt necessary.

Mr McClean

During discussion it was agreed that while the views expressed by the BMA are appreciated, there is a requirement to adhere to a strict timescale and therefore it is not possible to grant an extension to the set date.

Mr McClean

(vii) **Local Government Update**

Mr McClean outlined progress in developing health improvement pilots with local government partners. It was agreed that this would be an area of specific discussion at a workshop this autumn.

Mr McClean

48/09 **Chief Executive's Business**

(a) **Thanks**

Mrs Hinds thanked members and colleagues for their assistance during Mr Rooney's period of absence.

(b) **Workshops**

Mrs Hinds invited members to take part in a series of workshops with frontline staff as part of developing a 10 year strategy for Quality and Safety.

Mrs Hinds confirmed that 5 workshops will be held between now and the year end.

(c) **Swine Flu**

Dr Little advised members that she had attended the meeting in Dr Harper's place as she was at the meeting of the Regional Swine Flu preparedness meeting.

Dr Little reminded members of planning and developments in relation to Swine Flu to date, noting that planning has been going on for a period of over 4 years.

Members noted that the UK has been stockpiling equipment and antivirals and advised that a national contract for the vaccine has been secured.

Dr Little stated that the vaccine will be licenced for identified groups by the end of October 2009.

Dr Little outlined details of the various processes being undertaken to deal with any potential surge in the virus over the winter period.

Dr Little highlighted the importance of ensuring that A&E Departments and GPs are in a position to manage the situation.

In conclusion, Dr Little noted that while much work has been done, there is still a lot to do and confirmed that the entire Health and Social Care family will be involved in dealing with this matter.

During discussion members agreed that it would be of value to assess how Australia had been affected by the virus during its winter.

Dr Little

Mr McClean stated in relation to the public information campaign, there is a high level of coordination on a four country basis.

49/09 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 20 August 2009**

- (a) Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2009 as an accurate record and the minutes were duly signed by the Chair.

50/09 **Matters Arising from 20 August 2009**

- (a) Mr McClean confirmed that he has provided members with a comprehensive list of contact details for recent appointments.

Mr McClean

51/09 **Financial Report. (Paper No: PHA/02/09)**

- (a) Members received and noted the contents of Paper No: PHA/02/09.

Mr Cummings advised that the report summarises the PHA budget and actual expenditure position at 31 July 2009.

Mr Cummings stated that an updated allocation letter had been received from DHSSPS following the previous meeting of the Board, which had taken £10.2m back, as a change to the commissioning plan.

Mr Cummings advised that the commissioning and administration expenditure for the 4 months ended 31 July 2009 indicates an underspend, which has largely arisen due to the reprofiling of

budgets, and vacant posts, after offsetting 2009/10 advised efficiency savings.

Members noted that work is still ongoing in relation to developing new staffing structures and therefore any underspend cannot be taken as a trend at this stage.

52/09 **Corporate Plan Update**

Mr McClean informed members of further work undertaken in relation to the development of the Corporate Plan and that a number of members had agreed to meet Mr McClean and Ms Taylor on 29 September to consider a further draft.

In discussion it was agreed that this is a valuable piece of work and noted that a series of conversations will now take place with Board members.

53/09 **Screening Programme. (Paper No: PHA/01/09)**

- (a) Members noted the contents of Paper No: PHA/01/09 which had been provided to Members with their papers in advance of the meeting.

Dr Little introduced Dr Tracy Owen, Dr Bernadette Cullen and Dr Fiona Kennedy, Consultants in Public Health, who joined the meeting and provided a Power point presentation on Population Screening Programmes in Northern Ireland.

Dr Owen informed members that she leads on Cancer Programmes for Breast, Cervical and Bowel Screening and provided a detailed analysis of developments in these areas.

Dr Cullen referred to her involvement in Vascular Programmes, Diabetic Retinopathy and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm and provided a comprehensive presentation on work in these areas.

Dr Fiona Kennedy, responsible for Newborn and Antenatal Screening Programmes referred to the benefits of programmes in relation to Newborn Blood Spot and Hearing screening and Antenatal Infections and Foetal Anomaly Ultrasound.

In the course of the presentations, aims, objectives and challenges were identified for each programme. Information on uptake and improvements in outcomes were also referred to.

All presenters referred to the opportunities for improvement to the services, particularly in relation to issues around Quality Assurance and Electronic Linkages.

During discussion members acknowledged developments made and improvements seen in outcome for all areas of screening. The difficulties experienced in relation to uptake of some programmes was also discussed and Members noted that the reasons why people fail to attend screening programmes are quite complex.

In discussion it was agreed that it would be of value to devote resources to endeavouring to understand the reasons for non attendance.

Members agreed that the presentations had been of great value and felt that it could be worthwhile to have further



consideration of this subject, possibly at a Workshop, in the future.

54/09 **Any Other Business**

(a) **Events**

A number of members outlined events they are attending relevant to the Public Health Agency.

It was agreed Mr McClean to develop proposals for a system which would coordinate member representation at key events and conferences.

Mr McClean

**Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 15 October 2009 with the proviso that an exceptional meeting may be arranged in advance if required.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair) Date: \_\_\_\_\_