

Title of Meeting	114 th Meeting of the Public Health Agency Board
Date	19 September 2019 at 1.30pm
Venue	Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

Present

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| Mr Leslie Drew | - Non-Executive Director (<i>in the Chair</i>) |
| Mr Edmond McClean | - Interim Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Operations |
| Mrs Mary Hinds | - Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals |
| Dr Stephen Bergin | - Acting Assistant Director (<i>on behalf of Dr Mairs</i>) |
| Ms Deepa Mann-Kler | - Non-Executive Director |
| Professor Nichola Rooney | - Non-Executive Director |
| Alderman Paul Porter | - Non-Executive Director |
| Mr Joseph Stewart | - Non-Executive Director |

In Attendance

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| Dr Aideen Keaney | - Director of Quality Improvement |
| Mrs Briega Quinn | - Assistant Director of Nursing |
| Mr Paul Cummings | - Director of Finance, HSCB |
| Ms Marie Roulston | - Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB |
| Mr Robert Graham | - Secretariat |

Apologies

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr Andrew Dougal | - Chair |
| Mrs Valerie Watts | - Interim Chief Executive |
| Dr Adrian Mairs | - Acting Director of Public Health |
| Alderman William Ashe | - Non-Executive Director |
| Mr John-Patrick Clayton | - Non-Executive Director |
| Ms Jenny Redman | - Boardroom Apprentice |

74/19 | Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

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| 74/19.1 | The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Mr Andrew Dougal, Mrs Valerie Watts, Dr Adrian Mairs, Alderman William Ashe, Mr John-Patrick Clayton and Ms Jenny Redman. |
| 74/19.2 | The Chair welcomed Dr Keaney to her first meeting as Director of Quality Improvement. |

75/19 Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

75/19.1 The Chair asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda. No interests were declared.

76/19 Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 15 August 2019

76/19.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15 August 2019, were approved as an accurate record of that meeting.

77/19 Item 4 – Matters Arising

67.19/11 Equality Workshop

77/19.1 Professor Rooney noted that there had been a suggestion regarding a workshop on Equality. Mr McClean said that this would be factored in as part of the schedule of workshops for 2020.

68/19.1 Commissioning Plan

77/19.2 In response to a query from the Chair re the Trust Delivery Plans, Mr Cummings advised that the first drafts of these had been received, and would be considered by the HSCB Board.

78/19 Item 5 – Chair’s Business

78/19.1 The Chair noted that this is the last Board meeting in which Mrs Hinds would be in attendance. He paid tribute to her tremendous contribution to the work of the Agency and wished her well in her retirement. Mrs Hinds thanked the Chair for his words, and said that it had been an enjoyable experience to work with the PHA Board and thanked her Executive colleagues past and present for their support, and in particular the support from Mr McClean.

78/19.2 Mr McClean said that Mrs Hinds brought a particular focus, energy and diligence to the Director of Nursing role and he hoped that the friendships she has made with PHA, and HSCB, colleagues would be maintained.

78/19.3 Alderman Porter wished Mrs Hinds well for her retirement and said that it was testament to her work that she was often called upon to help out with important issues.

79/19 Item 6 – Chief Executive’s Business

79/19.1 In the absence of the Chief Executive, Mr McClean said that he had no specific matters to update the Board on.

80/19 Item 7 – Finance Report (PHA/01/09/19)

80/19.1 Mr Cummings presented the Finance Report and said there is a slight surplus, and that this may present a challenge over the coming months. He hoped that with the recent approval of Investment Plan priorities, there will be an increase in spend over the coming months and noted that the timescales for recruiting staff means that the surplus within the management and administration budget may increase.

80/19.2 Mr Cummings said that with regard to the capital budget, there is a slight underspend but this is not a concern. He noted that there has been a slight dip in PHA's prompt payment performance, and he hoped that this would improve.

80/19.3 The Board noted the Finance Report.

81/19 Item 8 – ALB Self-Assessment (PHA/02/09/19)

81/19.1 The Chair advised that PHA is required to complete this annual self-assessment, but that there is no longer a requirement to send it to the Department. He noted that although members had had an opportunity to comment on a draft version, he said it would be preferable to arrange a workshop to complete this next year.

81/19.2 Professor Rooney said that the response stating that the PHA Board is working to a full complement should not be rated "green" in keeping with the guidance as there has been an Interim Chief Executive since October 2016. Members said that this is no reflection on the individual in post, but that it is not good practice to operate with an Interim Chief Executive. Mr Stewart said that the response should be rated "amber". Mr Cummings asked if the action is rated "amber", what action could PHA take to resolve the issue?

81/19.3 Mr McClean acknowledged that it is not ideal for any ALB to have interim senior positions for very extended periods, but that the Department had initiated the arrangement and was content with its operation. Mr Cummings said that this situation is not unique to PHA and that the South Eastern Trust had an Interim Chief Executive. Mr Stewart said that as a policy, this is not good practice and he expressed concern that the Board has been unable to influence this matter for 3 years. Ms Mann-Kler suggested that the PHA Board should forward its concerns on this issue. The Chair said that the Board Chair has raised this matter at Accountability Review meetings. Alderman Porter added that the wellbeing of the current post holder also needs to be taken into consideration given that the Interim Chief Executive is also Chief Executive of HSCB. It was agreed that a form of words reflecting the concerns raised by Board members should be drafted for inclusion in the document and that the PHA Chair and Board Chair continue to make representations at Accountability Review meetings.

- 81/19.4 The Board **APPROVED** the ALB Self-Assessment.
- 82/19 Item 9 – Director of Public Health Annual Report (PHA/03/09/19)**
- 82/19.1 Dr Bergin informed members that the theme of the 2018 Director of Public Health Report is “public health in partnership”. He said that the Report contains inputs from across a wide range of areas.
- 82/19.2 The Chair said that the diagram which shows the different factors affecting health outcomes was very powerful. Ms Mann-Kler said that the diagrams showing the differences in life expectancy in the most and least deprived areas were equally powerful. She told members that she had attended an event in London where a tool had been developed which showed people what they would look like in 5/10 years’ time, and this had a powerful outcome on people.
- 82/19.3 The Chair noted that within the overview section there are many clear and important public health messages and that these need to be communicated. He asked how this Report and its messages are disseminated. Mr McClean said that elements of the Report will be shared via social media, where suitable. He highlighted the THRIVE initiative and said that it is not always what PHA does that makes a difference, but rather that PHA can be a catalyst.
- 82/19.4 Mr Stewart said that the Report was excellent as it showed the key messages in a format that is easy to understand. He added that as part of PHA’s strategic direction, it should be focusing on the 40% of people’s health outcomes which concern socio-economic factors. Alderman Porter cautioned against PHA skewing its funding as this may not have a positive impact.
- 82/19.5 Professor Rooney said that the Report was excellent but sought additional information on the outcomes of research across different services.
- 82/19.6 Ms Mann-Kler asked about opioid substitute therapy. Mrs Quinn acknowledged that as part of the legacy of the Troubles, there is an issue with regard to benzodiazepines, but she said that work is ongoing with addiction nurses to look at this area.
- 82/19.7 The Board noted the Director of Public Health Annual Report.
- 83/19 Item 10 – Presentation on Outcomes and Impacts of HSC R&D Funding (PHA/04/09/19)**
- 83/19.1 Dr Janice Bailie joined the meeting for this item. She said that following the presentation she delivered to the Board in December, she wished to come back and give members more information about the impact of R&D funding.

- 83/19.2 Dr Bailie gave an overview of the breakdown of HSC R&D spend, as well as a profile of the spend. She advised that following a review in 2012, it was shown that for every £1 of HSC R&D funding, there was a fourfold return in leveraged funds for support of R&D in health and social care. She moved on to give an overview of ResearchFish and how it captures the outputs of R&D funding.
- 83/19.3 Dr Bailie highlighted key achievements before moving on to show members some case studies in the areas of familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) which showed how the work of R&D has had a real impact on people's lives. She advised that the Dementia Care Programme, which was also subject to review, saw another 12.5 research posts and £1.5m of grants received. She also told members about a new test which helps to reduce the amount of time taken to diagnose meningitis.
- 83/19.4 Dr Bailie gave members an overview of the CHITIN Project which runs until 2022 and will see 11 cross-border healthcare intervention trials (HITs). She informed members that there is now an HSC R&D Strategy for Personal and Public Involvement (PPI).
- 83/19.5 The Chair thanked Dr Bailie for her presentation and said that it was very informative. Alderman Porter asked if R&D works with the private sector to ensure that any additional benefits gained by the private sectors are returned to the HSC. Dr Bailie explained that there are different models in terms of how that is managed, for example intellectual property rights are licensed and any monies recovered are used for further investments in research.
- 83/19.6 Mr Stewart said that the presentation was very comprehensive, but he asked how this linked with PHA's strategic direction and its operational objectives. Mr McClean said that this is a good point, but he explained that the R&D function within PHA is the R&D function for the whole HSC and its priorities reflected the priorities of both the PHA and the wider HSC.
- 83/19.7 Ms Mann-Kler said that the presentation delivered a complex area of work in a simple way, and she asked how R&D determines its priorities. Dr Bailie said that R&D work would partnership with the Dementia Strategy Group and with the two main universities to see what it can do in Northern Ireland. She added that there would also be instances where research proposals would be brought to R&D and these could be reviewed in terms of priority.
- 83/19.8 The Chair asked about the impact of EU Exit. Dr Bailie said that the UK Government has guaranteed that any commitments until 2022 will be honoured. She said that a new PEACE+ initiative is being developed and this will still be open to Northern Ireland. She acknowledged that there were some uncertainties in the event of a "No Deal" scenario.

- 83/19.9 The Chair thanked Dr Bailie for her presentation.
- 84/19 Item 11 – Sexually Transmitted Infection Surveillance in Northern Ireland 2019 (PHA/05/09/19)**
- 84/19.1 Dr Neil Irvine joined the meeting for this item. He introduced the Report and said in summary that diagnoses of STIs has gone up by 6% as a result of increases in the number of cases of gonorrhoea and syphilis, particularly in the group of men who have sex with other men (MSM). He noted that the increased rates may be due to increased levels of testing. He added that gonorrhoea is now becoming resistant to one of the two antibiotics prescribed to fight it, but that the one remaining antibiotic continues to be 100% effective in Northern Ireland. Dr Irvine noted that there has been a decline in the number of cases of genital warts which he said is as a result of the HPV vaccination programme. Going forward, he said that it is recommended that PHA continues to promote safe sex messages.
- 84/19.2 The Chair asked whether it was intended to run another campaign. Dr Irvine advised that the previous campaign had been run quite recently and there were no plans to re-run it at the moment. The Chair asked whether the materials from the campaign could be used on social media. Mr McClean said that for this particular campaign area, social media can often be the best method of engaging people on key messages.
- 84/19.3 Alderman Porter noted that PHA's campaign budget has been cut, but yet STIs are on the increase and he asked if there was a connection. Dr Irvine said that communicating messages is important, but it is also important to ensure there is provision of services, and that there has been an increase in the number of people getting tested.
- 84/19.4 Ms Mann-Kler said that the report is retrospective and asked if there are any early indicators of trends in 2019, and if there will be soon be a tipping point. Dr Irvine agreed that the increase is a concern, and early indications are that the increase is continuing, particularly among gay and bisexual men, but again this may be due to the increased levels of testing. Ms Mann-Kler asked if this is due to change in behaviours and Dr Irvine acknowledged that there is an increase in unsafe sex so more education is needed.
- 84/19.5 Professor Rooney asked how the data in Northern Ireland compares with other parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Dr Irvine said that the trends are generally increasing, but he noted that the percentage changes in Northern Ireland may seem greater because the numbers are smaller.
- 84/19.6 Mr McClean noted that Dr Irvine will soon be retiring and he thanked him for his work with the PHA and in particular in the area of sexual health surveillance. The Chair, on behalf of the Board, wished Dr Irvine well for his retirement.

85/19 Item 12 – Update on EU Exit

85/19.1 Mr McClean updated members on issues relating to EU Exit.

86/19 Item 13 – Any Other Business

86/19.1 Mrs Hinds advised members that there is an event taking place on the evening of 30 September regarding SAIs and engagement with families. She agreed to forward details to Non-Executives should they wish to attend.

87/19 Item 14 – Details of Next Meeting

Thursday 17 October 2019 at 1:30pm

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

Signed by Chair:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ann Douglas".

Date: 17 October 2019