

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES  
AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

**DEPARTMENTAL BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 20 November 2009, in Room C3.18,  
Castle Buildings at 11:00.

Present:	Andrew McCormick	Sean Holland
	Helen Roulston	Martin Bradley
	Danny McCaughan	John Cole
	Linda Brown	Norman Morrow
	Miriam McCarthy	Michael McBride
	Sean Donaghy	Clare Baxter
	Donncha O'Carolan	

In attendance: Jonathan Bill and Anne Adair.

**1.0 Apologies and Opening Remarks**

1.1 Andrew McCormick welcomed all to the meeting. No apologies were noted.

**2.0 Minutes of Board Meeting – 16 October 2009 (DB/72/2009)**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2009 were agreed and approved for publication on the Department's website.

### **3.0 Chairman's Report**

- 3.1 A McCormick advised that he, Michael McBride and Sean Donaghy had attended a PAC hearing about Performance in the Health Service on 12 November.
- 3.2 Some staff changes have been made at Grade 5 level resulting in a reduction of numbers by one post. Linda Devlin has taken over the new Strategic Management Directorate and will attend future Departmental Board meetings.
- 3.3 John Deery will take over as Finance Director with effect from 1 February 2010. Prior to taking a career break he was Finance Director in DSD.
- 3.4 With regards to future Board papers, A McCormick advised that work is currently ongoing in the Department in relation to fee charging in the independent sector. A full paper will be brought early in 2010.
- 3.5 In relation to swine flu, Michael McBride advised that understanding of the disease has greatly increased and it is not as severe as initially feared.
- 3.6 To date there have been over 6000 deaths worldwide, including 184 in the UK and 13 in NI however, the vast majority of sufferers have experienced mild symptoms.
- 3.7 For the third successive week there has been a decrease in Out of Hours calls, GP consultations and anti-viral prescribing. M McBride also commended the effective handling of communication.

#### **4.0 Media Analysis – Ms Clare Baxter (DB/80/2009)**

- 4.1 Clare Baxter advised that the main subject for the Press Office continued to be swine flu. Weekly media briefings, which Michael McBride attends, have been set up and have helped increase media understanding of the illness.
- 4.2 In order to address negative reporting, senior officials met BBC representatives and this, along with the weekly briefings, has been helpful in promoting more positive reporting.
- 4.3 Helen Roulston asked about handling of recent RQIA reports on Child Protection. A McCormick confirmed that significant work had gone into this and advised that further RQIA reports into Unannounced Hygiene Inspections are due to be released next week.

#### **5.0 Finance Update – Mr Sean Donaghy (DB/81/2009)**

- 5.1 A McCormick referred to the recent 'Spotlight' programme regarding public finances and reported that it had been reasonably positive. C Baxter agreed to send the programme link to H Roulston and Danny McCaughan.
- 5.2 Sean Donaghy confirmed that an Executive paper on 2010/11 finances projected a Budget deficit of £200m revenue and £170m capital. It is not yet clear how this will be met. A McCormick stressed the need to commence internal planning in advance of Executive decisions.
- 5.3 S Donaghy advised that the Department's opening Budget had been £4129m with an overcommitment of £7.7m. Board members were reminded that the Department had been denied the £20m "first call" monies in the June monitoring round and that reallocations from the capital budget had had to be made to meet swine flu pressures.

- 5.4 Trusts are currently forecasting deficits of £79.5m. This figure is unprecedented and is a symptom of the scale of pressures the service is facing which include difficulties in meeting efficiency savings as well as significant increases in patient demand. To assist with easing pressures an additional £22m has been provided to Trusts for elective care which has seen a significant increase in demand. This, along with reduced superannuation costs from SCAPE, will mean the forecast deficit could be reduced to £28m.
- 5.5 Some of the Trusts' forecast savings are intended to be delivered from non-recurrent sources. Finance staff will monitor the balance between recurrent and non-recurrent as the year progresses.
- 5.6 It is now clear that it will not be possible to break even in Northern and Belfast Trusts but it is imperative that a break-even position is reached at regional level.
- 5.7 Significant reductions have been made to the capital budget because of swine flu and the overall reduction in assets.
- 5.8 Regarding efficiencies, S Donaghy advised that in 2009/10, Trusts are required to deliver £233m savings. This target is cumulative and includes the 2008/09 target of £118m. Of this, £138m is to be delivered by the Trusts with £101m to come from internal efficiency plans and £37m from RPA changes. Many efficiency savings such as vacancy control, reductions in hospitality, training etc have already been implemented in 2008/09 therefore radical changes will have to be introduced in order to meet the increased efficiency targets.
- 5.9 S Donaghy advised that Finance staff are continuing to identify all sources of funds and that the position is still tenable with no need to reduce services that will impact on PfA.

5.10 H Roulston asked if the review into the financial situation in the Northern Trust had been completed and S Donaghy confirmed that it had and that a submission is currently with the Minister. The review showed no evidence of mismanagement. S Donaghy also advised that the interim Chief Executive and Finance Director had grasped the scale of the problems in the Trust and discussions were ongoing about how best to resolve the situation.

5.11 John Cole emphasised the difficulties that budget uncertainty is creating in relation to capital projects. He advised that he will bring a capital update paper to the Departmental Board in January.

5.12 Members of the Board noted the position on finance and efficiencies and agreed that urgent internal planning processes would be required in order to address these issues.

**6.0 New Process for Endorsing NICE Guidelines as applicable to NI – Dr Jim Livingstone (DB/82/2009)**

**7.0 Private Dentistry – Mr Donncha O’Carolan/Mr Billy Baird (DB/83/2009)**

**8.0 Performance against PfA Targets – Mr Dean Sullivan (DB/84/2009)**

8.1 A McCormick welcomed D Sullivan to the meeting.

8.2 D Sullivan advised that of the 94 PfA targets for 2009/10, the majority are rated green with six rated amber and fourteen rated red.

8.3 Targets rated red include HCAI, inpatient/day case treatment, diagnostic tests, AHPs, fractures, cancer, A&E, donor transplant, children on the child protection register, mental health assessment and treatment and pre-operative assessment with breaches across all Trusts but with particular problems in Northern and Belfast Trusts.

- 8.4 These breaches are partly due to further increases in demand. Some targets are now unlikely to be met, even with additional funding. A McCormick advised that an escalation strategy including fortnightly monitoring, had been implemented in the Belfast Trust to attempt to address problems, with the Board having just completed an analysis into problems in the Trust.
- 8.5 Members of the Board noted with concern the current position and also recognised the enormous amount of work being done and strong attempts by organisations to address problems.
- 9.0 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Monitoring of 2009-11 Corporate Business Planning – Mr Dean Sullivan (DB/85/2009)**
- 9.1 D Sullivan reminded the Board that the Business Plan had been approved by them in April and had had Ministerial endorsement in September.
- 9.2 Performance in the majority of the 47 approved tasks has been strong with seven rated red (see paragraph 9.6 below). The most serious issue has been the delay in mental health and mental capacity legislation.
- 9.3 For the first time, the performance report has been based on Group accountability meetings rather than solely written reports.
- 9.4 The next report will be brought to the January Board and planning for next year will commence with a meeting on 26 January.
- 9.5 H Roulston asked if a new Investing for Health Strategy would be brought forward in 2010. M McBride advised that consultants had now been appointed and the review was under way. An updated paper will go to the Board in April 2010.

- 9.6 D Sullivan noted an error in two of the figures in the table in Paragraph 7. At Goal 1.2, two tasks are 'on track for achievement' and two face 'foreseen delay'. In consequence, the columns 4 and 5 totals change to '28' and '7' respectively, and paragraph 10 is amended to begin "Of the 35 tasks scheduled for future completion, 28 are on track for achievement as planned. On the RAG system, four of the remaining seven are flagged RED...".
- 9.7 Members of the Board noted the position on performance.
- 10.0 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Monitoring of 2009-10 Corporate Risk Register – Mr Dean Sullivan (DB886/2009)**
- 10.1 D Sullivan advised that there were three suggested changes to the Risk Register.
- 10.2 HEIG has suggested a change to the wording of Risk 7 to "failure to retain and secure adequate resources". M Bradley noted that the wording in Annexe 1 has been changed to "failure to maintain and secure adequate resources". D Sullivan agreed to amend this.
- 10.3 CMO Group has suggested splitting Risk 8 into the two elements of the Departmental efforts to maintain business continuity and responding effectively to disruptive public health and safety threats. The business continuity element can be removed from the Departmental Risk Register and managed by the Group.
- 10.4 HEIG has suggested a change to the wording of Risk 11 to "failure to plan and secure sufficient resources to ensure that..." as John Cole has stated concerns around the Group's ability to deliver within current financial constraints. D Sullivan suggested that the wording should not be changed as the risk remains, regardless of the economic climate. It was agreed that this should be discussed further internally.

10.5 Members of the Board noted the changes to Risks 7 and 8 and noted the challenges of delivering within limited resources.

A McCormick thanked D Sullivan for attending.

## **11.0 AOB**

11.1 N Morrow advised that the Pharmaceutical Inspection and Investigation Team had been involved in an international initiative aimed at identifying sales of illegal and counterfeit medicines online. Interpol has published the initial results and of 750 websites identified one of which was based in NI. A press release will be issued on Monday to highlight the issue.

11.2 The team has also been working collaboratively with the Counter Terrorist Officers of the Police Service of Northern Ireland allied to an information campaign alerting practitioners on the need for vigilance relative to the supply of certain chemicals and medicines used as precursors in manufacture of illicit drugs (e.g. crack cocaine) and explosives.

11.3 D O'Carolan referred to the introduction of additional dental services as approved by the Board in 2008 and advised that the first two practices have now opened, in Derry and Enniskillen. The remaining practices will be open by April/May 2010.

## **11.0 Business for Next Meeting**

11.1 It was agreed that, subject to internal discussions, the December meeting of the Departmental Board may be cancelled. Items for the next meeting to be advised to the Secretariat and approved by the Chair.

## FOI Statement

The following redaction has been applied to the record above:

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Redaction/Exemption Applied</b>
6 – New Process for Endorsing NICE Guidelines as applicable to NI	S35 – Policy in development
7 – Private Dentistry	S35 – Policy in development