

NORTHERN IRELAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

*Minutes of a Meeting of Trust Board/AGM held on Thursday, 20 September 2012
at 1.30pm at the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Headquarters,
Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast. BT8 8SG*

Present:

Mr P Archer	Chairman
Mr L McIvor	Chief Executive
Mr N McKinley	Non-Executive Director
Ms A Paisley	Non-Executive Director
Prof M Hanratty	Non-Executive Director
Mrs S McCue	Director of Finance & ICT
Dr D McManus	Medical Director
Mr B McNeill	Director of Operations
Ms R O'Hara	Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services

In Attendance:

Mrs M Crawford	Executive Administrator
Miss K Baxter	Senior Secretary

Welcome and Format of the Meeting

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public and Trust Board and advised that the Annual General Meeting would be incorporated within the public Board meeting as before. He advised of the sad passing of Mr Shields, Non Executive Director on 4 August 2012 and added that his valuable contribution to the Board would be missed and asked everyone to stand for a minute's silence. He had also written a letter of condolence to Mrs Shields.

1.0 Apologies

None.

2.0 Procedure: Declaration of potential Conflict of Interest Quorum

No potential conflicts of interest were declared and the Board was confirmed as Quorate.

Suspension of Standing Orders

The Chairman suspended Standing Orders to allow the Annual General Meeting to take place.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3.0

i. Presentation of Annual Accounts 2011/12

The Finance Director presented the Annual Accounts by giving a presentation which summed up the financial performance for the past year.

ii. Presentation of Annual Report 2011/12

The Chief Executive presented the Annual Report outlining the activity for the past year and the challenges for the years ahead.

iii. Question & Answer Session

A member of staff who attended raised the question of Agenda for Change advising that it was difficult to obtain information about any progress and expressed his frustration at the length of time it is taking. The Chief Executive responded by saying that it was important to hear from staff and shared his frustration at the length of time it is taking to conclude the process. He added that ongoing communication will be maintained and requested the Director of HR to arrange this.

Action: Director of HR to arrange for issue of communications update to staff.

The member of staff also requested information in relation to the recent leak to the media regarding a new role of Paramedic Assistant and whether this will impact on the role of the Emergency Medical Technician. He added that he really enjoyed his job and hoped that he would have a future within the ambulance service. The Chief Executive responded by saying that the Trust was required to make significant savings and proposals were being developed. The Chief Executive highlighted that while roles may change and at this time no approval has been received from HSCB for this development the ambulance service continues to invest in the development of its personnel and would continue to seek to maximise the contribution of ambulance staff to deliver care to patients.

The Non Executive Directors advised that they appreciate the site visits to the various stations before Board meetings throughout the year as it gives an opportunity to talk directly to frontline staff. The enthusiasm of staff is always evident

The Chairman congratulated the Chief Executive and his team for an excellent year's result under very difficult and challenging circumstances and requested that his thanks be passed on to all staff for their work and dedication.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING CONCLUDED

Reinstate Standing Orders

The Chairman advised that the business of the public meeting would now continue.

4.0 Minutes of the Previous Meeting of the Trust Board held on 19 July 2012

Members accepted the minutes as a true reflection of discussions held on the proposal of Prof Hanratty seconded by Ms Paisley.

5.0 Matters Arising

5.1 Quality 2020: A 10 Year Strategy to Protect & Improve Quality in Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland

It was advised that this item was withdrawn again from the agenda due to the non-availability of the DHSSPS representative. It was advised that the official launch is due to take place in October 2012. The Board were disappointed that they have not had the opportunity to hear the presentation.

Action: Chairman to write to DHSSPS in relation to this matter.

5.2 Recent Media Stories

The Chief Executive advised that he reviewed the article in question and advised that it was factually correct and he could not therefore challenge this story. In relation to the second article, it was considered that there was a genuine factual mistake by the press which had been retracted in later bulletins. The Trust does not wish to pursue the matter as it may cause further upset to the family concerned.

The Board were advised of a recent article in the Irish News in relation to the Trust's use of St John Ambulance and the Chief Executive has written to the Editor in this regard. He added that the Trust continues to review papers to seek out positive news stories and will defend the Trust's position where appropriate.

5.3 Trend Analysis on Recruitment

The Director of HR presented the paper which was requested by the Board at the June 2012 meeting. This follows a request from a Non Executive Director for increased monitoring and analysis of potential barriers to appointment for the gender and religious affiliation groups which appear to be under represented in the appointment made. She added that all policies and procedures meet the legislation and all selection panels are mixed in respect of gender and religion.

The following point was raised by the Board.

- As there appeared to be a consistent trend over the last six years has HR looked at why some groups are more successful than others?
- The Board were advised that the Trust submits a detailed report to the Equality Commission every three years and up to now no action has been requested by them. It was suggested that the information could be broken down further if required.

Action: Further analysis to be presented to Board.

6.0 Chairman's Business

6.1 Chairman's Update

The Chairman gave a brief outline of his diary commitments since the last Board meeting. He advised that he is expecting to know the outcome of the recent competition for two Non Executive Directors in the near future.

7.0 Chief Executive's Business

7.1 Chief Executive's Update

The Chief Executive gave a brief outline of some of his activities since the last Board meeting:

- Attended a demonstration by 'Connecting for Health' in relation to Directory of Services which underpins '111' system. The value and importance of this system was clearly demonstrated and NIAS has the technology to support this development.
- Met with the NHS Pay Review Body who spent the day at NIAS HQ meeting with various staff groups. They fed back comments to the Senior Team highlighting the delay in AFC and asked if there were any steps they could take to expedite the matter. This is their first visit to Northern Ireland.
- Met with Trade Unions regarding Transforming your Care (TYC) and the Trust Delivery Plan. The Joint Negotiating Forum is to consider the issue further.
- Attended a workshop on Transforming your Care where it was highlighted that NIAS is the only regional Trust.
- Attended Connected for Health Eco System Event where it was demonstrated how developments could be used by NIAS and how we can improve. This will be shared with Mr Compton, HSCB. It was clearly shown that through Health Care numbers we can access information on patients which will support staff to provide the appropriate care.

The following questions/issues were raised:

- Is there a commitment by the Department to introduce the '111' service and what is the process?
- This is recommendation '93' of TYC and each recommendation required a response. NIAS has responded and the comments have been taken on board. Policy direction will be required for each recommendation.
- Are there still seven Out of Hours providers?
- Yes. NIAS has recently responded to a consultation on GP Out of Hours where a number of concerns were identified ie reduction in the number of centres will impact on ambulance services. The Trust has highlighted that NIAS is a regional service with the technical support available.
- Has the work on the Directory of Services begun?
- The work has not started and no such request has been made.

8.0 Assurance Framework as at 31 July 2012

Medical

The Medical Director presented his report in some detail advising that it is in a different format from that presented previously and will be developed further. It is linked to the Strategic Aims and Corporate Plan and is presented in this way to provide assurance to the Board. The following comments/issues were raised.

- Do all staff coming through the RATC get updated on the protocols for appropriate non transportation of diabetic patients?
- Substantial training is not required and the memo and guidance clarifies the position for staff.
- The 'treat and refer' protocols for the management of falls were raised?
- A pilot is being introduced in the Southern Trust and it is hoped that this will reduce morbidity and mortality in the elderly and will ultimately reduce the number of patients being transported to hospital.

Operations

The Director of Operations updated members on his report and advised that there is a current recruitment for paramedics which will hopefully reduce the Trust's reliance on overtime. The following comments/issues were raised:

- How widely will the Trust advertise the position of paramedics?
- The advert will go out nationally, however the Trust has 'Paramedics in Training' who are about to complete their two year course who will hopefully fill some of the current vacancies.
- The issue of the Erne site was raised.
- Some positive meetings have been held which will hopefully push the business case through. Moving to the proposed new site is still the best option for NIAS.
- Has there been improvement in the delays at A&E departments?
Monitoring is ongoing with some improvement noted at the Ulster Hospital. The Trust is awaiting the definition of turnaround times.

Finance

The Director of Finance updated members on her report advising that work has been carried out with the Chief Executive to develop each Director's report with links to the Strategic Aims from the Corporate Plan. The finance report is primarily about Strategic Aim 2: *To Achieve Best Outcomes for Patients using all Resources while Ensuring High Quality Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Probity*. She added that it would be remiss of her not to mention the contribution which the Finance and ICT department make to Strategic Aim 1 which is helping to evidence that we are '*delivering a safe, high quality service*' by analysing and presenting information. The Information Team within NIAS produce the clinical performance indicators and access the system to provide all performance /activity reports for the Operations directorate. The following comments/issues were raised:

- Are there still capacity issues within the Finance department, and if so, what remedial action is being taken?

- Staff within the Finance department are contributing to the BSTP programme which has given additional pressure for the departments of both HR and Finance. This issue has been raised as a risk as no further resources are available and it has been noted on the Risk Register. It was added that attempts have been made to modify the programme to accommodate staff and core business.

Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services updated members on her report advising that there was an error in the absence figures and the correct cumulative figure is 6.74%.

9.0 Proposed Trust Board & Committee Dates 2013

Members were advised that the schedule for Board meetings has been moved to the last Thursday of every other month on the suggestion of Internal Audit to provide the opportunity to report the most up to date financial information.

Prof Hanratty noted the date for January 2013 and advised that she would not be able to attend and asked for the date to be changed. After some discussion it was agreed that the date for January 2013 should be changed to 24 January 2013.

The Board enquired if a workshop for the Board was planned for 2013. The Chief Executive is happy to facilitate and will liaise with the Chairman to progress.

Action: Chief Executive and Chairman to arrange workshop for the Board.

10.0 Items for Approval

10.1 Whistle Blowing Policy

This policy was issued to the Board and some comments were received in relation to the role of the Local Government Comptroller. After some discussion it was agreed that clarification is to be sought from the DHSSPS regarding the role of the Local Government Comptroller. The Board also sought assurance that all staff will be informed about the updated procedure for Whistleblowing. It was advised that the policy will be issued to staff with payslips. The policy was approved on the proposal of Mr McKinley and seconded by Prof Hanratty subject to the clarification of the role of the Local Government Comptroller.

11.0 Items for Noting

11.1 NIAS Annual Report on Equality Schemes

Noted.

11.2 Assurance & Accountability Arrangements for Arms length Bodies – Business Planning for 2013-14

Noted.

12.0 Application of Trust Seal

The Trust Seal has not been used since the last Trust Board meeting.

13.0 FORUM FOR QUESTIONS

No questions received from the floor.

14.0 Any Other Business

14.1 Media Attention

The Board were advised that there has been some anxiety around the ambulance response to a recent stabbing incident. The Trust is happy to engage with the family but will not be doing so through the media.

Date, Time and Venue of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Trust Board will be held on Thursday, 15 November 2012 in the Eastern Division. Venue to be confirmed.

The Chairman thanked those present for attending and called proceedings to a close.

Signed: _____

Date: _____
Chairman

