

**Minutes of a meeting of the Agency Board held on 30 June 2005
at 2 pm in Fern House, Antrim Area Hospital**

PRESENT:

Members

Dr H McGuigan (Chairman)
Mrs J Eve
Dr R J Atkinson
Dr J Marley
Mrs A Eggert

Officers

Dr T McMurray (Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean)
Mr T Hutchinson
Miss R Campbell
Dr A McKnight

1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members joined the Chairman in congratulating Mrs Judith Eve on being appointed a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Miss M L Roberts
Mr A Baird
Dr D Hussey

3. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 31 March 2005 copies of which had been circulated were approved, subject to the following amendment

Item 12 paragraph 3 viz, ...`now 70% female in General Practice, which had...'

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

Dealt with in the agenda.

5. **MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Members received and noted the draft minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Audit Committee.

The committee had noted the controls assurance standards on which the Agency had been recently assessed, namely: Risk Management, Governance, Financial Management and Fire Safety. Mr Hutchinson stated that considerable effort had been made in relation to achieving substantive compliance and this had been achieved in 2 of the 4 areas.

Mrs Eggert commented that this has been the first internal audit for the Agency and she congratulated staff on the level of compliance, in the circumstance which was 67% overall.

The Chief Executive advised the Board that a service level agreement was being negotiated with South and East Belfast Trust and expertise would be sought in relation to Fire Safety.

Mrs Eve informed the meeting of a Governance course which was being held on 6 September.

6. **REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL POSITION 2005/2006**

Mr Hutchinson provided a report on the Agency's financial position.

In relation to the 2004/2005 draft accounts he stated that at the end of the financial year there was a projected surplus of £32k.

He explained that there were new accounting procedures on becoming an Agency and that he was in negotiation with the auditors in relation to a few items in the accounts.

He alerted the Board to the fact that Impairments and Depreciation over this period was £415k. The building work to the new premises had cost £570k but was valued at £225k and this may be reflected as a loss in the accounts.

He also stated that the Portacabin at Annadale Avenue had a book value of £39k but had been valued at £15k by VLA. It was subsequently sold for £2k, hence a loss of £13k.

The prompt payments target had fallen from 95% last year to 89% this year. This was due to increasing workload and a staff shortage in the finance office.

While the final allocations letter had not yet been received, the 05/06 budget had been uplifted by 3% to £38.6m.

New areas of funding included extra GpR posts, and the dental GPT budget had been uplifted by £153k and funding for MMC had been agreed with the Department but an allocation letter confirming this had not yet been received.

Junior doctors salaries budget

The full year effect for junior doctors posts created in 04/05 was not funded and would lead to a deficit of £329k.

The Agency's commitment to fund doctors in difficulty at a cost of £77k would have to be found within the budget.

He suggested that until the allocation had been confirmed the Agency should hold the funding for unfilled 04/05 posts, and should not allocate any further flexible trainee places.

GP VT budget

Mr Hutchinson reported that 50 GpRs had been appointed from August 2005. A further 6 or 7 would continue from last year due to maternity or sick leave extending their training. The Agency had funding for 45.5 wte at a cost of £77.5k per GpR. Additional funding had been received for 3.5 wte based on £71k per GpR. Since the Agency had funding for only 49 such posts this would leave a projected shortfall in this budget of £109k. He also explained that considerable pressure was being put on the budget through the funding maternity and sick leave.

Dr McKnight pointed out that a reduction in the number being trained was not an option, since workforce planning suggested an increase from 50 to 75.

The Department had suggested that cost cutting measures were put in place. Some options included not paying the rise in trainer grant and discontinuing the payment of the car allowance for GpRs.

Mr Hutchinson stated that the car allowance was £5,187pa and he advised the Board that the terms and conditions for GpRs stated that it should be paid 'if a motor vehicle is necessary'. He argued that savings of £173k over an 8 month period would be made if the car allowance was not paid.

After discussion it was agreed that the car allowance would be deferred until the Agency was clearer about the budget

allocation.

The Chief Executive/Postgraduate Dean agreed to discuss this further with the BMA. Dr McKnight agreed to clarify the volume of 'out of hours' work for GpRs. It was further agreed that travel expenses might be payable for 'out of hours' work.

Study leave budget

In relation to the study leave budget Mr Hutchinson stated that if the study leave allocation was reduced to £1000 per SpR and £750 per SHO this would create a saving of £35k per annum.

He further suggested that if the Agency were to have central control of the SHO study leave budget further cost savings could be made and better management of the budget could be put in place.

There was also a need to examine the administrative allocation to Trusts as costs savings could be made. In the interim to freeze this allocation to trusts would create a saving of £7k.

Operational budget

In relation to the operational budget he stated that the allocation had been increased by 3% although there had been an increase in administrative salaries of 3.225% which was an increased cost of £7k.

The following items would have to be funded:

GP Appraisal –33k
Dental session –8k
Associate Dean salary–39k
Website cost-30k

He suggested that based on last year's expenditure, other cost savings could be made eg

- a reduction in the amount spent on hotel accommodation (120K in 04/05).
- savings in the medical audit budget.
- Reviewing operational expenditure to identify potential savings.

He further pointed out that a mistake had been made in the allocation of the Dental GPT budget as the projected budget was £257k but the allocation had been £417k showing a surplus of

£166k. Dr Marley suggested that the surplus in the dental GPT budget should be discussed with the Postgraduate Dental Dean.

7. **REPORT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE/POSTGRADUATE DEAN**

The Chief Executive reported that 229 posts had been identified for the Foundation Programme, with 14 programmes of training. These had been submitted to the Specialist Training Authority for approval.

A bid had been submitted to the DHSSPS for 7million over a 3 year period. 800k had been allocated for the current year.

A bid had also been submitted for 8.75 administrative posts, and the deanery had received funding for 2 of these. One post would be used for the national recruitment process and the other post would be for the study leave budget for one year and then would revert to the administration of the foundation programme.

He also informed the members that 20 posts had been allocated to General Practice placements.

8. **REPORT FROM POSTGRADUATE DENTAL DEAN**

On behalf of the Postgraduate Dental Dean the Chief Executive advised the Board about difficulties the Agency was experiencing in the recruitment to Advisers posts. It was agreed that the Agency should not reduce the essential criteria for these.

Mr Hutchinson asked why the Agency should continue to fund courses for dentists in Northern Ireland who did not have NHS patients. **It was agreed to refer this matter to Dr Hussey and to discuss the issue at the next meeting.**

9. **REPORT FROM DIRECTOR OF POSTGRADUATE GENERAL PRACTICE EDUCATION**

Dr McKnight stated that although 20 placements for MMC was a good start she would hope that more posts would be allocated to General Practice. She expressed concern that the funding did not include the costs of the organisation of the placements.

She also added that from 2007 it would be mandatory for GP training to be increased to 18 months in practice with 18 months in hospital training. This would have obvious cost implications for the Agency. She was also concerned about the physical

resources at GP surgeries in accommodating an increasing number of trainees.

The GP Department was involved in the quality assurance of GP Appraisal, and negotiations were continuing with the Department on the appointment and/or employment of GP Appraisers. This could not be done without additional resources.

She expressed concern that the implementation of the new GP Educators pay-scale was still awaited. She stated that a business case had been made a year ago and that letters of resignation would be received if this was not sorted out.

10. **REPORT ON ORGANISATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

10. **Agenda for Change**

1

Members received and noted a paper on the preparation and implementation of Agenda for Change.

Miss Campbell reported that a project group had now been established. She sought the Board's approval of the project structure and the support of the Board in relation to the programme to implement Agenda for Change. She stated that there had been considerable difficulty in having two sets of terms and conditions of employment for administrative staff and that this was the ideal time to harmonise the terms and conditions of Agency staff.

It was noted that there were resourcing issues for the Agency in releasing staff in the dental and finance departments for this work.

The Board supported the Agenda for Change proposal and Miss Campbell agreed to provide a report on progress to the next meeting.

10. **Appointment of Chief Executive as Accountable Officer**

2

It was noted that the Chief Executive had now been appointed as accountable officer for the Agency.

10. **Committee Structure**

3

Members received and noted the proposed committee structure for the Agency, and approved the establishment of the Postgraduate Forum, the Training Programme Directors Committee, the Foundation School Board, the Foundation

Programme Directors Committee and the Health and Safety Committee. It was suggested that the Agency could approach the public appointments committee in relation to obtaining lay representation on the committees. It was also agreed to obtain a representative from a purchaser of services.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business.

.12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will take place on 1 September 2005, in the Boardroom, Beechill House Belfast.