

DRAFT

NOTES OF MEETING AT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, QUARRY HOUSE, 4TH SEPTEMBER 2002

PRESENT: Rob Thompson; Lesley Hilton; Eileen Exeter; Peter Walsh; Graham Girvan.

TIMETABLE

- All agreed that ideally, it would be best to abolish CHCs and ACHCEW all at the same time PROVIDED that, at least all the PCT Patients' Forums have been established and that ideally, that would be 31/03/03. However, DoH not ruling out some CHCs being abolished later than others.
- Department of Health would like 31/03/02 for target for abolition of ACHCEW even if CHCs not abolished then.
- Peter Walsh and Graham Girvan stressed strong preference for one common date for abolition of all CHCs in England and ACHCEW, set at a realistic date when PCT Patients' Forums can realistically be established.
- Agreed that ACHCEW would, if it continued after 31/03/03, have to be scaled down considerably. Peter Walsh and Graham Girvan pointed out that this could be with a skeleton staff, or even just with Standing Committee and Honorary Officers.
- Department of Health agreed that if CHCs continue after 31/03/03, they will need advice and information service (including legal service). Different options could be considered for this, including, if CPPIH agreed, 'housing' this service with CPPIH. Their preference is for ACHCEW itself not to continue after 31/03/03.
- Peter Walsh and Graham Girvan agreed to put these issues before Honorary Officers, and then as part of a proposed plan to Standing Committee, and to write to Rob with ACHCEW's view.
- The DoH hoped to be able to agree a mutually acceptable plan between the Department of Health and ACHCEW, rather than have to put the differing points of view to the Secretary of State for a decision (who might consider abolition before 31/03/03 to be a preferable option!).
- Department of Health agreed to advise ACHCEW of the process that would be followed regarding arriving at a 'commencement order' for abolition.

LEASE AT EARLSMEAD HOUSE

- Current leases are extended to 31/03/03 with option to extend one or more further if required.

- ACHCEW seeking NHS Estates advice about likely dilapidation charges and seeking (with Lesley Hilton) an agreement with landlords as what this will be.

AUDIT

- Upon abolition, financial records need to be boxed and transported to the Department (contact: Eileen Exeter).
- Department of Health will ask Audit Commission to contact ACHCEW to discuss what can/should be done prior to abolition date with regard to audit.
- ACHCEW and Department of Health to seek legal advice about liabilities of ACHCEW upon which there may be a claim after abolition (eg. who would be liable to make good any such liability).

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION HELD BY ACHCEW

- Department of Health is happy for ACHCEW to determine the best home for these resources post-ACHCEW.
- ACHCEW will liaise with CPPIH and others about what will be kept and by whom.

FINANCIAL ASSETS

- Any reserves remaining after ACHCEW being abolished to be transferred to the Department of Health. Department might re-channel such funds to CPPIH or CHCs if they still exist or retain a fund to meet unforeseen liabilities incurred by ACHCEW.

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

- ACHCEW to seek advice from NHS Estates about how to dispose of equipment/furniture. Special care needs to be taken as regards IT equipment (and protocols exist within CHC network).
- ACHCEW to keep DoH informed of how it plans to deal with this within the guidance provided by NHS Estates.

ACHCEW'S DRAFT REDUNDANCY STRATEGY

- It was suggested the section on 'Early Redundancy' could be more carefully worded eg. "Consideration will be given to requests from staff to be made redundant earlier".

GENERAL

- Peter Walsh and Graham Girvan reassured DoH that sound management arrangements for ACHCEW would be put in place before Director's departure and that ACHCEW will continue with a challenging work programme which went well beyond planning for transition and abolition.
- Rob Thompson confirmed that the 'local co-operatives' referred to in the job description for 4 project manager posts meant the same as the 'change management groups' discussed at the TAB.
- Negotiations still taking place about funding – Rob Thompson expects announcement by late October.
- Expert legal advice being sought about issue of TUPE/staff transfer. News expected in next two weeks.
- Eileen Exeter apologised for not having written confirming DoH acceptance that ACHCEW staff employed by ACHCEW. Agreed to write this week.

