



ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS
FOR ENGLAND & WALES

ACHCEW Staff and Services
1ST APRIL - 31ST AUGUST 2003

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to update you on the current situation over the budget and the staffing arrangements for the period beginning April 1st 2003.

On February 28th David Mowat from the DoH confirmed ACHCEW's budget for the final period at £148,090 - this is substantially less than ACHCEW would receive from CHCs in a normal year. Based on this sum the following positions have been agreed by the Honorary Officers.

1) Director

My role will be to provide strategic and operational management to the Association and to its staff and to support the Honorary Officer and Standing Committee. I will attempt to support the needs of CHCs during transition and in particular their role in sustaining public involvement work. Maintaining an effective relationship with the Department, the CPPIH and other key national bodies will also be a key role for the period. I will also ensure the implementation of ACHCEW's own exit strategy.

2) Administrator – Chye Choo

Chye will ensure that ACHCEW is administered effectively so that ACHCEW can continue to service the needs of CHCs and support the Standing Committee and Honorary Officer. She will be responsible for a wide range of tasks associated with ACHCEW's own abolition, these will include winding up the association, closing contracts, finances, dilapidations, and disposal of resources.

Should ACHCEW decide to hold a one day conference in July Chye will be responsible for the arrangements.

Other key functions for this period will include:

- Ensuring that the process of audit and closure of the Association's finances is fully supported and informed.
- Continuing responsibility for payment of bills, salaries, expenses.
- Employment and personnel issues.

3) Administrative Assistant – Sheila Dollery

Sheila will be responsible for providing clerical, telephone, reception and other administrative support to ACHCEW. She will have a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of ACHCEW's very small team and in enabling us to maintain links with CHCs.

4) Legal Services – Marion Chester

Marion will ensure that ACHCEW maintains its expert legal service for CHCs in England and Wales and that the expertise developed by ACHCEW in the field of legal support and advice remains accessible and the service effective until abolition.

The modified role of Legal Services will include the following functions;

- The provision of legal advice to CHCs in England and Wales and to pilot ICAS services run by CHCs.
- The provision of more general information to CHCs.
- Providing analysis of the implications for patients of legislation and public consultations on health policy, Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments.
- Providing an information service for CHCs that assists them to meet their obligations to the public and patients during the period when experienced staff will be drained away from CHCs to the new structures and other jobs.
- Working in collaboration with the Commission to ensure that there is an effective hand over of expertise and expert sources of information prior to abolition of ACHCEW.
- Identification and production of written material which will be of assistance to CHCs and to the new bodies in carrying out their functions.

5) Communications

It is essential that ACHCEW's voice continues to be heard on major health and public involvement policy issues. Therefore if money becomes available from CHCs we shall use it for a communications post to provide the following roles:

- ◆ To provide a full press office service to the organisation including; production and distribution of press releases and statements, and 'front line' media liaison including an out of hours service.
- ◆ To maintain the ability of ACHCEW to communicate effectively with CHCs so that they feel well supported prior to abolition.
- ◆ Ensuring that partner organisations continue to be informed of ACHCEW's views.
- ◆ Identifying and lobbying key individuals in the new structures.
- ◆ Providing regular updates for CHCs

- ◆ Ensuring that parliamentarians continue to be well-briefed on issues affecting CHCs and Patient and Public Involvement.
- ◆ Providing an effective means of 'showcasing' information about public involvement and participation so that exemplary models of good practice can be demonstrated to those who will be active in the new system.
- ◆ Maintaining and developing the ACHCEW website as a public resource for access to key ACHCEW documents on the NHS and health care in partnership with other organisations.

I would be very happy to discuss any issues related to ACHCEW services with you and to hear from you about your particular needs over the next few months. Clearly ACHCEW will be a very much smaller organisation and will not be able to provide the excellent services that we have been very proud to provide to CHCs for many years. However, we will do everything possible to support CHCs in any way we can.

Malcolm Alexander
Director

3/3/03