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Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales

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No. 18. September/October 1986

Where to find ACHCEW

On the 31st of October 1986 ACHCEW will move to temporary accommodation at this address:

The Nurses' Home,
Langton Close,
Wren Street,
London WC1X 0HD.

Do not change your mailing address. Post sent to ACHCEW's existing address will be forwarded by the Post Office. As yet, we have no telephone number for the Nurses' Home but member CHCs will be informed as soon as this is known. Negotiations for more permanent premises in central London are in progress and as soon as definite arrangements have been made member CHCs will be informed of the new address and the date of occupation which is likely to be early in the New Year, 1987.

Member CHCs and all our colleagues in the health community will appreciate that ACHCEW's services will be severely curtailed during November and December 1986 as the greater part of our information system will remain in storage or not be directly accessible until the move to permanent premises. Please bear this in mind when you contact ACHCEW and request services or information.

STOP PRESS: The new Director of ACHCEW will be Toby Harris who is presently the Deputy Director of the Electricity Consumers' Council, a former economist at the Bank of England and currently a Councillor in the London Borough of Haringey and the Chairman of the Social Services Committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. He has been a member of Islington

Community Health Council and also a member of the Executive Committee of the Patients' Association. Wyn Pockett, the Chairman of ACHCEW, in announcing the appointment said: "We are particularly fortunate at this stage in developing the voice of the consumer in the NHS in having Toby Harris as our Director. He has already played a major role in the development of consumerism in public services. He has strong links with Social Services which, we believe, should be more closely integrated with the provision of health services and he has had wide experience of projecting social concerns at the national level".

Toby Harris will take up his appointment with ACHCEW in January 1987.

High Court judgement on closure of Hampstead hospital

Over the years, CHCs have become familiar with the problems of "temporary" or "urgent" closures. In the High Court in October, Hampstead CHC challenged the decision of the DHA to proceed with such a closure without formal consultation. The CHC argued that the closure had been designated as "temporary" in order to prevent the normal consultation process from holding up the attainment of "necessary savings" required as a result of the district's budgetary shortfall. In their view, the original designation of the closure as "temporary" was incorrect. Furthermore, the budgetary difficulties had been foreseen much earlier. The judge ruled in favour of the DHA. Chris Outram, Secretary of Hampstead CHC, says:

"Hampstead CHC will be seeking clarification from the DHSS on how the judgement affects the responsibilities of DHAs and the rights of CHCs. We will doubtless be joined by many other CHCs in calling for our watchdog function to be strengthened."

Is Consumerism Catching On?

The Secretary of State was keen to have consumer opinion projected during his Primary Care Review "roadshow" which has been running parallel to the consultation on Primary Care, the Cumberledge Report on Community Nursing Services and the document on complaints procedures. ACHCEW was consulted as to how best the consumer view could be represented at the hearings which ran the risk of simply projecting the views of services providers rather than services users. We have been gratified that consumer and voluntary organisations such as the Patients' Association, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Age Concern have been involved in the hearings. We are even more gratified that CHCs, through ACHCEW, have been invited to attend no less than eight sessions with at least two more to go. The invitations to each session have arrived at ACHCEW's offices at short notice which was understandable in view of the speed with which the Secretary of State had wished to conduct the hearings, during the period when all sections of the health community have

had the opportunity to submit written responses to the consultative documents issued. Given that the invitations began to arrive, separately, at the height of the holiday season and during a period of significant change at ACHCEW, it is no secret that the CHCs and ACHCEW with their limited resources have found the logistics of fielding representative teams, armed with CHC findings and opinions, difficult to cope with. All the same, ACHCEW, on behalf of its member CHCs, has made a creditable input in sessions dealing with general medical services, inner city and rural services, and joint planning. As we go to press, CHC teams will be fielded to deal with complaints, community nursing services, prevention and health promotion, and the quality of primary care services. There will be further hearings on matters such as dental and opthalmic services. On each occasion, it has been emphasised that CHCs are concentrating on their responses to the basic consultative documents so that the views expressed by the ACHCEW teams are, essentially, provisional.

What strikes us as important is that the Secretary of State has gone to such lengths to allow adequate time for the expression of views by the representatives of users of the NHS. We link this to another significant development.

L.H.C. Review

The Association of Scottish Local Health Councils, which have been sadly deprived of adequate resources or recognition for so long, report in their Executive Committee News No. 38. September 1986 that John MacKay, the Minister for Health, met the Association on the 21st of July, 1986. The Association says: "The reception given to the Association's representatives was friendly and encouraging and the Minister appeared in the space of 18 months to have been won over to the need for a strong consumer voice in the health service. With this as a common starting point, it was possible to agree that the potential for providing such a strong consumer voice and direct input from the grass roots to the Health Service Managers, was not being realised under the present system. It was also possible to agree that the remit, structure and guidance established in 1974 for LHCs was largely to blame. This of course is something which LHCs, through the Association, have been attempting to say to successive Ministers and the Department for many years, and is the motivation for the regularly renewed request for a review of LHCs. This review has now been promised and it appears likely that an external evaluator will be retained by the Department to conduct the exercise. This should be seen as a major breakthrough as should the implicit understanding that, if the new arrangements which emerge from any review require more adequate funding than the present arrangements have allowed, then this funding will be found."

The resourcing situation of English and Welsh CHCs is notoriously unsatisfactory. By comparison, the situation of our Scottish colleagues is much worse. Attempts to negotiate sensible

arrangements were, for many years, utterly fruitless. Now, it appears that there has been a significant change of attitude in the Scottish Office and, given other developments in England and Wales, we cannot but conclude that the Government has, at long last, begun to recognise the essential contribution which the statutory representatives of consumers in the NHS have to offer.

The "Disarray of Community Care"

The switch from hospital and institution-based care to care in the community is in a state of disarray and confusion, says a draft report from the Audit Commission. "It is no longer sufficient to muddle through, hoping that a community care service will emerge," declares the draft report. "The Government must rationalise its funding policies and provide short term funds to reduce the transition period, otherwise two inadequate services will be struggling along in parallel indefinitely." The final report will be ready in November but the draft speaks of confusion in roles, agencies pulling in opposite directions and, overall, a danger of the most vulnerable people being left without care and without hope. The extra cost of the two types of services would be millions of pounds and bridging finance is needed for the short term; but it appears that the short term is getting longer and longer. Where bridging money is inadequate, community care services are starved of funds. There are, quite simply, insufficient trained staff for community care. The mechanism for shifting funds is inadequate, leaving huge sums locked up in hospitals while local authorities cannot expand community services for fear of being rate-capped.

The Commission's conclusion is likely to be contentious - that there should be a new, single body responsible for assessing the needs of people in community care and prescribing how they should be met. This organisation would have control of a budget and 'buy in' all the necessary services". (Guardian 11.9.86).

Exemptions for the Police?

Hull CHC raised the matter of policemen being able to claim full reimbursement of prescription charges, pointing out that, while this might have been valid at one time, in view of the improved salary structure of the police and the fact that many ordinary people are now finding it very hard to meet increased prescription charges, surely it was time this anomaly was stopped. ACHCEW enquired what the position was from the Home Office and the reply was that as the police had been provided with free medical treatment before the introduction of the NHS, part of their terms of service now included reimbursement of all prescription charges, dental charges and charges for any appliances. They only have to pay for spectacles as NHS glasses were no longer available to them..... How about firemen then, ambulance drivers, Health and Safety officers, teachers, etc? And certainly how about nurses?

Where are the leaflets?

Why are the DHSS leaflets setting out information about entitlement to free treatment in such short supply asks North West Herts CHC? Until the end of July these leaflets were on display in Post Offices. With the publication of updated versions in July, the old ones disappeared and only the prescription charges leaflet seemed to be available. If such leaflets are no longer available in Post Offices will this mean those seeking information on dental charges will have to visit dentists, opticians, hospitals, for information about fares, ante-natal clinics for those on free milk and vitamins, etc.? The new DHSS poster in Harpenden Post Office did apparently point out that these leaflets were available (although with what was considered by the CHC to be a misleading heading - "On a Low Income"?), but the leaflets themselves were not actually there. However, the Post Office in St. Albans was showing a video for a private medical insurance scheme showing people how to jump the waiting list!

Access to Records

The Departments of General Practice, Obstetrics, Community Medicine and the Midwifery School at St. Thomas' Hospital in London have conducted a randomised study to assess the effects of allowing mothers to retain their own maternity case notes throughout pregnancy. The mothers' attitudes were very positive; notes were read with interest and the contents were not a cause of anxiety. No mother forgot to bring her notes to the hospital and mothers with notes were far less likely to miss clinic appointments. Administrative problems with the new scheme were few. While the reactions of the professionals were initially ambivalent, most were in favour of the scheme. The study found no reason at all why mothers should not care for their own case notes. As the mothers were drawn from a very deprived inner city area it was felt this system would work anywhere. (The Lancet 16.8.86).

NAHA has conducted a survey of the difficulties health authorities are experiencing in recruiting junior doctors. 77 out of the 88 HAs who replied said they had too few SHO's. 30 authorities reported cancellation of clinics and operating sessions. 13 HAs have started recruiting in EEC countries. Philip Hunt hopes that the Government's consultation document "Hospital Medical Staffing - achieving a balance" will lead to an eradication of the problems.

Maternity Emergency is a new campaign launched by the Maternity Alliance in defence of Britain's maternity rights. Over the next few months they will be building towards a mass rally at Central Hall, Westminster on April 6th. This marks the day of abolition of the maternity grant. For further information

contact: Lyn Durward, c/o Maternity Alliance, 59/61 Camden High Street, London NW1 7JL. Tel: (01) 388 6337.

Answers on a postcard please

How do you re-open a ward in a hospital that has been closed down? This question is puzzling Alan Mathewson, Chairman of Wandsworth CHC. In December, Wandsworth DHA proposed closing all 54 beds at St. James' Hospital and the CHC formally objected. The matter went to Barney Hayhoe who wrote to the Chairman of the CHC saying he had approved closure of these beds. However, in the final paragraph of his letter he has asked the DHA to monitor the effects of bed closures and if necessary "be prepared to re-open a ward". Alan Mathewson asked how the DHA could re-open a ward when it was planning to close the whole hospital. He has also written to the DHA asking how they interpret this request.

PARLIAMENTARY NEWS

Private residential homes for the elderly

Conservative MP for Leicester East, Peter Bruinvels, intends to introduce a private member's Bill this autumn to curb the increase in private residential homes for the elderly. The Bill, if enacted, would introduce maximum and minimum charges; stipulate a minimum number of beds; require the "authorities" to carry out more frequent checks and impose new penalties for failing to meet acceptable standards.
(Doctor 4.9.86).

Hansard.

On the 2nd July 1986, col. 576. Ms. Harman asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will indicate for each Community Health Council the sex of the holder of the office of chairman; (2) if he will list for each Community Health Council the number of members; and of these, how many in each case are women?

Mr. Hayhoe: I regret that the information requested is not held centrally.

AROUND THE CHCS

Pamela Asquith, Secretary of Eastbourne CHC has written to all Secretaries in the South East Thames Region drawing their attention to a paper from the Institute of Cancer Research on Skoal Bandits. She said that Secretaries should write to their MPs with particular reference to the Private Member's Bill, which received its third reading on April 18 1986, to ban the sale of Skoal Bandits to people under 16 years old.

South Birmingham CHC has received money from the Kings' Fund to carry out research into hospitals and bereavement. They aim to survey current procedures in health authorities in the light of the recent circular. Where they find good or innovative practices, they will follow up the survey with visits and interviews. Out of this the CHC hopes to produce a Code of Good Practice and will lobby for its implementation. Anyone who would like to give their experiences or views should contact South Birmingham CHC. ACHCEW is also collecting this information centrally.

Hastings CHC has been battling with its DHA over the question of statistics on waiting lists. The CHC finds it difficult to reconcile the figure issued quarterly by SETRHA and the DHA's own Out Patient Waiting Time return which is issued as quarterly guidance to GPs. In a detailed breakdown of figures submitted to the DHA, Hastings CHC points out that there appears to be a considerable increase in waiting times over the period 31 December 1984 to 31 December 1985.

Replies from the DHA have been unhelpful. They say:
"We were actually unaware that Region published information which is routinely submitted from District on a quarterly basis. However, it appears that the Medical Records Department did not verify that the information sent to Region was the same as that used locally. In fact the information given to Region was faulty and should be disregarded." And what about actually acting to cut down waiting times? Well - "this is, of course, an operational matter". The position in Hastings, says the CHC, is apparently not a matter of concern to the DHA, although one orthopaedic surgeon has publicly stated that there is a "scandal" in his department while women needing a routine gynaecological appointment have to wait
50/60 weeks

Is it not time, asks Hastings, for united action by CHCs on waiting lists?

Wakefield CHC says that following ACHCEW's adoption of the revised Patient's Charter, the whole Charter was included in the CHC's July newsletter. As a result, BBC Radio Leeds invited Secretary, Lesley Pattenson, to give a short talk on their mid-morning show and this aroused so much interest that she was invited back the following week to do an hour's phone-in on the subject. People were particularly interested in access to medical records. A consultant from St. James' Hospital, Leeds, was invited to put the opposing view. During the subsequent discussion a phone-in telephone vote was conducted in which 70% of those who voted wanted right of access to their own medical records.

The Vale of Glamorgan CHC is asking people in its district to fill in a questionnaire on primary care so that it can make the

fullest possible response to the Government's discussion paper. "We want a second opinion", says the CHC, "Yours".

Barnsley CHC has received a reply from the previous Health Minister, Barney Hayhoe, in answer to a question put to him at the AGM regarding fire regulations in private homes. The Minister felt there should be no difficulty in Fire Officers inspecting residential homes after registration because the 1964 Residential Homes Regulations require the person registered to consult the fire officer from time to time. However, if there is any reluctance on the part of the person registered to allow voluntary inspection, the 1984 Registered Homes Act confers a right of entry and inspection on any person authorised by the registration authority.

Wandsworth CHC is trying to help the Wandsworth Black Elderly Project gather information on the need for Afro-Caribbean meals-on-wheels and the information will be used to press for such a service in the Borough. The staple diet needs to be one that a person feels comfortable with and this basic fact is true for people from many different cultures and, in a multi-cultural society, it is important that all staple diets are available to those who want them.

Treatment for Victims of Serious Assault

An extract from Barnsley CHC Annual Report:-

"One particularly distressing complaint concerned a young woman who was the victim of a serious physical assault, and who received subsequent treatment for her injuries at the Barnsley District General Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department.

"Although the complaint was dealt with thoroughly and fairly by the hospital's normal complaints machinery, the Secretary of the CHC was left with the lingering doubt that, whilst the young woman's physical injuries had been adequately treated, the psychological scars left by such a vicious attack had not received the same degree of attention. This was no particular reflection on the Accident and Emergency Department in Barnsley, since the Secretary believed that the same situation probably appertained throughout the country.

"The CHC made a request to the Health Authority that it consider formulating a policy for the treatment of the victims of serious physical assault, to ensure that all aspects of care, psychological as well as physical, be taken into consideration. The Health Authority responded positively to this request and set out to establish whether other districts had a policy upon which a local policy in this matter could be based. As the Secretary of the CHC had suspected, however, it turned out that none of the neighbouring authorities had such a policy.

"The matter was therefore raised at the next meeting of the

Regional Accident and Emergency Advisory Committee, at which it was agreed that guidelines on the management of such patients should be established. To establish these guidelines, consultation is currently taking place with the Casualty Surgeons' Association, the police, and the British Medical Association.

"The CHC is grateful for the positive and helpful response from the Health Authority. It hopes that, in the not too distant future, the victims of serious physical assault will receive attention and treatment to alleviate not only their physical injuries, but also the psychological effects that such an attack causes."

Liverpool Central & Southern CHC has written to us about accompanying patients to independent clinical reviews:

"Following the experience of Angela Alder at West Essex CHC I was concerned that a similar situation may arise over a complainant submitted for review in this district.

"In April the complainant confirmed that she wished me to accompany her to the interview and I passed on this request to the Regional Medical Officer. He replied quoting the Circular:

"'The meeting between the two independent consultants and the complainant should be in the nature of a medical consultation,' and that 'the complainant should, if she wished, be accompanied by a relative or personal friend'; but his letter was helpful in that, if the complainant and I felt strongly that I should be allowed to attend, it offered to ask the independent consultants whether they had any objection.

"I replied that we felt strongly that I should attend but that I would be there to offer the complainant support and provide her with advice - not to act as an advocate; I also said that if the independent consultants objected, the complainant, in the last resort, would take someone else along with her. The Regional Medical Officer wrote to the Consultant, in May, copying the letter. There had been no reply by 10th July, but the Regional Medical Officer kept us informed by letter of the reasons for delay. On 23rd July he wrote saying that the consultants 'are prepared to accept your presence at the Independent Professional Review in your capacity as a friend of the complainant.'

"We are still awaiting the date of the interview, but it does appear that in this case a flexible interpretation of the regulations has been used."

..And CHC Staffing

"Following the advice of DHSS Ministers, this CHC submitted a request for additional staff to Mersey Regional Health Authority. The response was in the negative which did not really surprise us

but cost a considerable amount of hard-pressed CHC staff resources to elicit.

"In December 1985 the Secretary submitted a 4 page case for increasing staffing levels above the present two full-time. It outlined the historical build-up of demand from the public since 1977, when the CHC moved to shop-front premises in the city centre, to 1985 when the office had to be closed every afternoon and the telephone answering machine engaged so that staff could keep pace with normal CHC paperwork.

"It also provided comparative data on public demand at similar city-centre CHC offices in other parts of the country. This was admittedly of limited value because not all such CHCs collect such data, and those that do, record it in a different way. Nevertheless, it was quantitative evidence that Liverpool Central and Southern CHC did experience a very heavy demand for help from the public."

"It provided details of the many Health Authority Committees and Sub-Groups to which the CHC is invited to nominate a representative, and the difficulties in expecting great commitment of time from voluntary sector and local authority CHC members, in a city under financial siege. There was also mention of the extra workload resulting from our new relationship with the FPC. This, plus an interview between the CHC Chairperson, Secretary and a senior officer of the Regional Health Authority, brought this final response:-

"'It is not possible at the present time to allocate growth monies to the work of CHCs and given the range of activities moving funds from one CHC to another would not create the 'headroom' necessary for an uplift in staffing levels. Opportunities for short-term attachments, temporary appointments at a time of peak activities might be usefully explored.'"

INFORMATION WANTED

Medicals for School Leavers.

North Tees CHC writes:

"North Tees District Health Authority have a policy which conforms with the 1977 NHS Act requiring them to provide medical inspections. The aforementioned information is normally set out on Form SM(i), which after completion are sent to the Department of Health & Social Security for the compilation of statistics relating to school health surveillance.

"Earlier this year we discovered by chance that the School Health Service had discontinued examining school leavers, concentrating their efforts on the surveillance of incoming pupils. We were told this was due to a shortage of medical manpower, but feel that insufficient thought had been given to alternative ways of

ensuring that children receive medicals prior to leaving school. Members of the CHC argued that in an area of high unemployment it was unlikely that school leavers would receive the medicals normally provided by the traditional industries which are now either in decline or defunct in the North Tees area."

Are the similar problems or solutions in other districts?
Replies to North Tees CHC, copy to ACHCEW.

Cambridge CHC has published a report on waiting times and general functions at the Accident and Emergency Department of Addenbrook's Hospital. The results were encouraging although, as always there is room for improvement.

Rhymney Valley CHC has been conducting a year long survey of Maternity Services in Rhymney Valley. Could any member CHC advise the Secretary, Colin Hobbs, where or whom he could approach to undertake the analysis. Tel: Hengoed (0443) 812290.

Airedale Community Health Council is concerned that the first consultation of patients attending the Gynaecological Clinic takes place when they are on the couch ready for examination.

Does this happen in your Health District?

Information, in writing please, to John Godward, Secretary of Airedale CHC, The Health Centre, Chapel Road, Steeton, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 6NU.

Manchester North CHC is seeking information on Resource Centres for the Elderly. The Health Authority has accepted the CHC's suggestion made in a recent Consultation exercise on services for the Elderly throughout the District to look at the possibility of developing Resource Centres in North Manchester and the CHC is concerned that they develop the best possible models.

Should these Resource Centres be purely for advice and information or should they contain other services not necessarily solely for the Elderly? Should they contain a number of Respite Beds? Should they provide screening? Experiences of other CHCs which have these Resource Centres in their Districts and any suggestions would be welcome.

Manchester North CHC would also like copies of any surveys that other CHCs have done on visiting, in particular, from the relatives viewpoint. Evidence suggests that there is a great deal of stress on relatives which is added to the lack of information about the patient's condition and restrictive practices on access. Manchester North CHC is specifically interested in such surveys done on Adult Acute wards as there seems

no shortage of surveys for childrens' wards.

Huntingdon CHC would be grateful for any copies of policies concerning the provision of incontinence aids to those NHS patients living in private residential homes. The problems of non-provision in its Health District has been raised by several relatives. Any comments to Huntingdon please.

Portsmouth & Hants CHC asks if any CHC receives separate figures for "Deaths" and "Discharges" from its DHA? For some time the CHC has been trying to get its DHA to provide a breakdown showing these figure separately and the only result has been the "annoyance" of the District General Manager who says that the method of statistical collection for DHSS purposes does not allow such a division to be made.

Plymouth CHC asks if any CHCs have produced reports or surveys on standards of nursing care? If so, Plymouth CHC would be grateful for copies.

CHC REPORTS & SURVEYS

Opening up mental health services in Islington - a community prepares for hospital closure. Islington CHC and Islington MIND collaborated on this latest report in the Good Practices in Mental Health series. It is a completely revised version of a previous edition. As with most of this series, the report provides an admirable review of "community facilities" for mental health. Available from: Islington CHC. Price: £1.50 (inc. p & p).

Waltham Forest District CHC has published a report based on a survey concerning Carers. The survey was quite small and sought to establish what services the carers wanted to help them in their task. A strong theme which emerges is the need for financial help and, quite likely, financial advice. Available from the CHC.

A Woman's Guide to Health in Barnet. Directory of local organistions working in the field of Women's Health. Well produced guide to facilities available, as well as national and local support and self-help groups. Cost £1. for postage and any donations from Barnet CHC.

Lack of communication between staff and patients is one of the main causes of dissatisfaction says a report by the West Surrey and N.E. Hampshire CHC. This follows a survey of outpatients

attending the ophthalmology departments at Farnham and Frimley Park Hospitals carried out over one week. "The majority of those who felt that they had waited a long time were given no indication as to why or how much longer they might have to wait", says Secretary Alan Baldwin. The report urges the DHA to positively encourage staff to keep patients informed as to why delays are occurring and possible length of waiting time; also to look at the whole system of appointments at Frimley Park where, in some cases, there were more patients waiting than seats available. It was not, however, all doom and gloom. There were many tributes to the staff.

Out patients' Views on Hospital Services is available from the CHC.

Trafford CHC has completed a survey of mothers' experiences of delivery at local hospitals, especially in relation to contacts with medical personnel. The signs were that efforts were being made to make mothers' experience of childbirth more positive and the survey showed that 85% of those surveyed were highly satisfied. When asked about the consideration shown for their feelings by midwives and doctors, midwives were rated higher. Virtually all mothers stressed the sympathetic and individual nature of care and the efforts made by the staff to explain all procedures and involve them in decisions. Alarm was expressed, however, at the obvious pressure on beds, staff and supplies that cuts were causing.

Available from the CHC.

A report of a survey into ante-natal and neo-natal care by Eastbourne CHC appears to be something of a microcosm of current views on this subject. There is unstinting praise for health visitors, community nurses and midwives with "not a single complaint" against them. Yet, when it comes to hospital treatment women seemed far less happy about some aspects of their confinement even though none had the confidence to complain either at the time or afterwards. Complaints included handling of inductions, "high tech" when it did not appear to be necessary, being left alone and unattended on a drip after a confinement and lack of communication with doctors.

Available from the CHC.

The experience of London CHCs is that even where health authority Equal Opportunites Policies exist, little progress has been made in bringing such paper policy to life. The experience of NHS patients who are women, or from an ethnic minority group, who are disabled or gay would be significantly improved if all HAS had properly implemented these policies. This is the central point of a report The Effects on Patient Care of NHS Employment Policies on Disability, Race and Gender, published by GLACHC.

The report says that, while organisations such as the London Association of Community Relations Councils have done excellent

work in highlighting discrimination against black people in terms of employment, there is no equivalent pressure on behalf of women, people with disabilities or gay people. The report looks in detail at what a full and properly implemented equal opportunities programme would mean for NHS users. In it, Joan McGlennon, the disabled Secretary of Croydon CHC, describes the physical barriers and barriers of prejudice that exist for disabled people working for, or using, the NHS. Joan tells a story of an occupational therapist she met when she was Secretary of North Surrey CHC who was conducting a survey into the needs of the younger disabled. The therapist "literally fell on me saying how marvellous it was for me to be having a day out and what a pretty dress I had on. She completely ignored the CHC members who were with me. They nearly tore her apart. They told her I had, in fact, made all the arrangements for the visit and driven quite a few of them there but I don't think it made any impact. Quite frightening when you consider that she was in charge of a rehabilitation unit".

Other contributors include Marie Lewis of City and Hackney CHC highlighting the role of that CHC in pressing for equal opportunities, and Caroline Langridge, then Secretary of Wandsworth CHC, on the detailed position of women employees in the NHS.

The report is available from GLACHC, c/o Islington CHC, Manor Garden Centre, 9 Manor Gardens, London N7 6LA. Price £1.50.

Guide around mental health services in Northumberland.

Northumberland CHC. This is a thorough and well produced guide which serves as a companion to Northumberland's recent handbook on mental handicap services.

Health care in Brent: a workers & users enquiry. This report by Brent CHC is the outcome of four workshops held over the last year and constitutes the Council's annual report for the period. It covers pensioners' health, women's health, child health and environmental health. Brent has followed its own tradition of issuing annual reports in an unconventional format. This is an angry document, which sets local issues very firmly in a national context. Most importantly of all, it is an attempt to involve "workers and users" in an annual review of services.

Catering and the introduction of cook/chill in Plymouth Health District. This report brings together all Plymouth CHC's visits to hospital catering departments over a ten-month period. As similar cook/chill schemes are being introduced elsewhere in the country, quite a few CHCs could find this a useful document.

PUBLICATIONS

Handbook for CHC Members, by Chris Ham and published by the University of Bristol School for Advanced Urban Studies. Essential reading and reference for all CHC staff and members. This is the 4th edition and it has a much-improved layout. Price £4.35. per copy. 5 copies for £17 (inc. postage).

After Stillbirth and Neonatal Death - What Happens Next?

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS). A reference book for health professionals and parents to cover the legal and practical aspects of a baby's death. Available from: SANDS, Argyle House, 29/31 Euston Road, London NW1 2SDE. Price: Up to 10 copies - £2.00 per copy, over 10 copies £1.50 per copy. Both include two copies of the companion leaflet for parents. Pack of 5 companion leaflets for parents at £2.00.

Infertility Services in the NHS: What's going on? This is a report prepared for Frank Dobson MP. All but 30 health authorities replied to the questionnaire. A detailed breakdown is given of services offered, waiting times etc. Write to: Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SW17.

Cervical Cancer and Screening in Great Britain - A Report of the British Medical Association. This is an invaluable short guide to the facts and the issues. Their recommendations include: 3 year screening intervals; a dual approach to screening - (a) population screening directed at the younger woman and carrying over into middle age (b) targetted screening for reluctant and 'high risk' groups; and a note for CHCs -

"Community Health Councils and Voluntary Groups, as well as professional workers, such as GPs and Health Visitors, need to develop strategies aimed at increasing response in the targeted group."

Copies available from BMA Provision Division Reports, BMA Library - £3.00 to non-members including p. & p.

Finding Our Own Solutions: Women's Experience of Mental Health Care. MIND. Investigation of women's experience of mental health care and describes 'women-centred projects and services which have grown out of our dissatisfaction with conventional psychiatric wisdom'. Price £2.95 from MIND Publications Mail Order Service, 4th Floor, 24/32 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD.

"Behind the Screen. Cervical Cancer - Are Women Dying Needlessly? How do we screen? Prevent?" Published by the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs. Price £2.50. Obtainable from ASTMS, 79 Camden Road, London NW1 9ES.

W.H.O. Targets for Health for All - 2000. We wonder if all CHCs have access to a copy of this document which deals with the European regional strategy of the WHO. Its themes include equity, health promotion, the participating community, multisectoral co-operation, primary health care and international co-operation. CHCs are locked into what is going on in their districts. All of us need a coherent and informed vision of the future of health and health services. Obtainable from HM. Stationery Office 49 High Holborn, London WC1V 6HB. Cover price Swiss francs. 20 - check sterling price with HMSO.

Special Report. Anti-depressants - First Choice...or last Resort? MIND.

'MIND believes that people have the right and the responsibility to make an informed decision on whether or not to accept the treatment their doctor suggest, and this special report has been prepared for people suffering from depression, their relatives and their advisers.'

Gives full information about the drugs that doctors often prescribe.

From: MIND, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED.

Meeting the Needs of Older People: Some Practice Guidelines
Age Concern. Guidelines for GPs on how to provide cost effective services and high quality care to an ageing population. This document follows on from their recent policy paper on General Practitioners and the Needs of Older People.

This is a clear and high quality report, which is essential reading for anyone interested in care in the community. And what CHC can afford not to be?

Both available from: Age Concern, Bernard Sunley House, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 3LL. Tel: (01) 640 5431.

Ernst & Whinney Report on Nursing Homes for the Elderly.

Available from Ernst & Whinney, 1 Lambeth Palace Road, London SE1 7EU.

The Institute of Health Service Management, British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing have jointly published a report Public Expenditure on the NHS - Recent Trends and Future Problems. Commissioned from the Centre for Health Economics at York University, it reaffirms the contention made in an earlier report that the NHS needs an increase in funding in the order of 2% per annum - excluding provision for pay and price inflation and capital expenditure.

Limited numbers are available free from: IHSM, 75 Portland Place, London W1N 4AN.

Young People & Heroin - An examination of heroin use in Northern England is a report published by the Health Education Council. It does not make particularly optimistic reading because of the scarcity of resources and lack of collaboration and communication between all the different agencies involved. Available from: HEC, 78 New Oxford Street, London WC1.

Care in the Community - an S.D.P. Policy document has some interesting points to make but wastes time knocking the policies of everybody else. Under "Consumers' Rights" we tried to find a mention of CHCs but did not succeed. Available free from 4 Cowley Street, London SW1P 3NB.

Self Help and the Patient is the tenth edition of the Directory of National Organisations concerned with Diseases and Handicaps. Essential reference and is available from the Patients' Association, Room 33, 18 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0HR. Price £2.95. Post free.

Caring for the Carers is an information pack from the National Council of Carers giving a whole range of information including updated benefits. Available from the National Council at 29 Chilworth Mews, London W2 3RG.

Radical Community Medicine. The current issue carries a leading article by Fedelma Winkler, Secretary of Hackney CHC, explaining how CHCs can increase user power. It is available from 14 Spring Crescent, Portswood, Southampton. Price £2. The editors point out that contributions of up to 2,000 words are always welcome, including papers, news, comments, letters and items for the information and network section.

Better Management, Better Health is published by the NHS Training Authority and looks at better management in the NHS and might well be open to criticism from CHCs because it is so bright and glossy but lacks practical detail. The summary (in full colour) comes free. The full report costs £6 from the Authority at St. Bartholomew's Court, 18 Christmas Street, Bristol BS1 5BT.

Strengthening the Role of Health Authority Members by Chris Ham is based on research carried out between 1981 and 1985 with two aims - to attempt to analyse how the role of DHA members developed in the period in and around the 1982 re-organisation and how information and understanding gained in that research was used to help the contributions of DHA members. Available from King's Fund Publishing Office, 2 St. Andrew's Place, London NW1. Price £2.80.

All Change - a Consumer Study of Public Transport & Handicap in Greater London. Over 7% of Londoners - at least 465,000 people - are handicapped in their use of public transport. They are further handicapped by low incomes, social isolation and poor design of public transport facilities. We would all agree that there is enormous room for improvement in public transport everywhere for everyone.
Available from GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. Price £6. plus 15p. postage.

The Young Disabled Adult is a report from the Royal College of Physicians on the use of Residential Homes and Hospital Units for the age group 16-64. Like all such reports at the moment it draws attention to glaring deficiencies in community services and calls for additional Government funding.
Available from the Royal College at 11 St. Andrew's Place, London NW1.

Action Research with Informal Carers of Elderly People - a study of local services and current issues would seem to be every useful to CHCs. Available from the HEC at the usual address.

Roof, Shelter's Housing Magazine, carried a report which says that children living in bed and breakfast "hotels" face serious health risks but are being refused care by GPs. A survey conducted by the Health Visitors Association and Shelter shows that these children are more vulnerable to accidents and disease because of their cramped and insanitary conditions. They have been burned by kettles, fires and boiling liquids where families have been forced to cook in bedrooms while there are constant infections due to overcrowding and shared washing facilities. Hotel children suffer more from vomiting, diarrhoea, chest complaints and scabies than other children. Full details of this survey will be published in the November issue of Health Visitor, available from HVA, 36 Eccleston Square, London SW1.

You Can't Catch AIDS by... is the name of a new training video for health and social services professionals. Each one costs £23 and is available from the Royal Society of Medicine Services, 1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE.

In areas of high unemployment, health visitors are coming under increasing pressure to provide financial and welfare rights advice for unemployed people and some are even providing free food samples. These findings are the result of a survey commissioned by the HEC and carried out by social scientists at the South Bank Polytechnic, which looks into the impact of unemployment on the workloads of health and social services professionals.

Unemployment and Health: What Role for Health and Social Services? is available from the HEC, at 78 New Oxford Street, London WC1.

The number of under-age drinkers is increasing and they are starting younger. A recent survey published by the HEC shows that 80% of men and 70% of women between the ages of 18 and 24 said they had started drinking below the age of 18. 15% admitted driving over the legal limit. To counter this attitude the HEC has produced a booklet That's the Limit, Beliefs About Alcohol and the booklet can be obtained free from the Health Education Council.

The Royal College of Nursing has produced the first ever framework for developing standards of care in psychiatric nursing. It hopes the document will open up the whole debate about standards in the speciality. Standards of Care in Psychiatric Nursing Practice is available free from RCN headquarters, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1M 0AB.

Nearly one in four fourth year school children questioned in a recent survey admitted sniffing glue or trying other forms of solvent abuse. It appears boys do it more often than girls and learn about it from their friends rather than the media. The National Campaign against Solvent Abuse questioned 4,000 pupils in 28 schools in London and the Home Counties. Copies can be obtained from Box S13, 245a Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 and the Campaign's confidential help line is on (01) 733-7330.

Women are failing to get the right advice and treatment on health problems says Women's Health Concern. Its annual report reveals some of the casualties of the poor health advice being given to women because too many doctors still ignore the physical and mental symptoms of menopausal and premenstrual problems. The organisation also accuses the media of offering unbalanced health stories from self-styled "experts" who know little about the subject. Copies of the report can be obtained by sending a large S.A.E. to Women's Health Concern, Ground Floor, 17 Earl's Terrace, London W8 6LP.

New research by the Spastics Society shows that disabled people are discriminated against by employers. The society sent out two types of letter applying for secretarial jobs (152 in all). Both letters offered similar qualifications and experience but one said the writer was disabled. 90 able bodied people received positive responses while only 55 disabled people did so. An Equal Chance for Disabled People? is available from Campaigns Department, Spastic Society, Park Crescent, London W1. Price £1.50.

Asian Health. Coronary heart disease is a major cause of premature disability and death among men and women in Britain - but the rate among British Asians has been found to be

particularly high.

A report prepared by the Coronary Prevention Group in conjunction with the Confederation of Indian Organisations explores possible reasons. Smoking, unsuitable diet, high blood pressure and diabetes are all risk factors, but do not seem to apply to Asians more than anyone else. More worrying is the stress that many suffer when they attempt to settle in this country and find themselves in an alien and hostile society.

Coronary Heart Disease & Asians in Britain is available, price £1.50 from Confederation of Indian Organisations, 5-5a Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1. Tel (01) 928 9889.

Community Care. "Ten or twenty years ago we had very little idea of what people with mental handicaps thought about how and where they lived... Luckily things are changing now."

So says the introduction to one of four new booklets in a series on community-based services produced by the Campaign for People with Mental Handicaps (CMH). The booklet proves the point by letting mentally handicapped people speak for themselves on subjects such as suitable housing, social integration and community living.

For instance, few of them would swap the community with all its potential problems for a return to hospital. The hospital has come to symbolise difference and indignity; the community equals normality and respect.

Other booklets explore staffing and staff training for residential services, neighbourhood networks and housing. Talking Points are available, price 75p. each inc post or four for £2.50 inc. post, from CMH Publications, 5 Kentings, Comberton, Cambs CB3 7DT.

Alcohol Abuse. Action on Alcohol Abuse (Triple A) has set out its current "action plan" in a new booklet. Its first object is to make information on the effects of alcohol widely available to all sections of the public, through education campaigns. Second, it will be encouraging the understanding and assistance of casualties of alcohol abuse and their families. Thirdly, Triple A is demanding greater government control over the availability of alcohol. "Up to now government policy, where it has existed, has focused on the first two of these approaches while totally ignoring the third," says the booklet.

An Agenda for Action on Alcohol 1986 is available, free, from Triple A, Livingstone House, 11 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DL. Tel: (01) 222 3454.

AIDS: A Guide to Survival by Peter Tatchell is an attempt to give at least some hope to sufferers from this disease and their

friends and families not by offering a miracle cure - which it cannot - but by explaining how some of the techniques being used by cancer patients can help AIDS victims live a better and longer life. Tatchell's research appears to show that those who just give up when faced with what they have contracted, after being told it is a "hopeless" disease and that they are terminally ill, die quite quickly. On the other hand patients who have practised the visualisation techniques used by some doctors with cancer patients, plus the wholefood high nutrition diets, exercises and life style also recommended, seem to have remained immune from infections for longer and lived happier and more productive lives. He has written the book, he says, to help get across the message that a reasonable life is still possible even if the disease is, at present, incurable. The book is published by GMP Publishers Ltd. PO Box 247, 15 Overbury Road, London N.15. Price £3.50.

The Best of Health. This is the Labour Party's policy document on the NHS. It suggests radical changes in General Practice. GPs should be salaried, have to produce Annual Reports, required to produce Practice Statements giving details of what they can offer and their specialities, and there should be a thorough overhaul of the deputising services. Practice lists should be reduced from 2,000 to 1,700 to give GPs more time to practice preventive medicine and FPCs should be brought under the umbrella of the DHAs, the system which operates in Scotland. There is much in this report with which CHCs might well agree - although the BMA does not - but where does our role come in? You might well ask. Among the welter of rhetoric about greater consultation and participation, CHCs receive only one purely technical mention. The document is available from the Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT. Price £1.

Where's the ambulance? An estimated 3,000 people in London are losing long-awaited hospital appointments each week. Delays and cancellations by the London Ambulance Service are to blame, according to a joint investigation by Age Concern Greater London, the Greater London Association for Disabled People and the Royal National Institute for the Blind, says New Society (5.9.86). The report Not one day goes by without a cry for help free with SAE from AGL, 54 Knatchbull Road, London SE5, claims that disabled patients eventually stop making routine appointments altogether. Few can afford alternative transport such as taxis, and others are too frightened to complain. Ray Whitney claimed the delays were a temporary phenomenon; in July the Department of Health and Social Security said the situation had improved. But the investigation does not support this view.

Drugs of choice: a report on drug formularies used in NHS hospitals by Helen Ridley. Published by Social Audit and based on a survey of DHAs, this report concludes that hospitals which

operate restricted drug formularies improve the quality of prescribing and reduce the cost of health care. The pharmaceutical industry, as well as some doctors, oppose the introduction of formularies or other restrictions on prescribing. This report offers detailed criticism of their arguments. Write to: Social Audit, PO Box 111, London NW1 8XG. Price: £7.50 (or £2.50 each if ordered in multiples of ten).

Pursuing quality. How good are your local services for people with mental handicap? This is the fourth in a series of handbooks produced by the Independent Development Council for People with Mental Handicap. It sets out to "define in more detail what we mean by quality and to suggest realistic ways of building quality assurance into the way local services are run." The emphasis is on "outcomes" for the client - such as increasing independence and choice, or diminishing social isolation. This is an extremely useful publication. Copies from: IDC, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Price: £2.50.

Trident or Health? Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons. ~~This report juxtaposes a review of the financial problems of the~~ NHS and estimates of the cost of replacing Polaris with Trident. The authors judge the Government's priorities for expenditure to be both irrational and immoral. Copies from: MCANW, 3 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NT.

Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation & Representation) Act 1986. Handbook for Voluntary Organisations.

Published jointly by RADAR and MIND.

An explanatory guide to the Act. It aims to give voluntary organisations ideas on how to implement the Act successfully. Price 15p. per copy if collected from RADAR, otherwise 25p. per copy. For further information contact: RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 8AB... Tel: (01) 637 5400. For large orders - above 25 - contact the Publication Officer at RADAR.

Royal National Institute for the Blind

The RNIB are monitoring the prices of spectacles. They would be interested to hear from any CHCs which have experienced problems in their health districts with the new voucher scheme, in hospitals as well as in opticians' surgeries.

More information: contact Hugh Lawrence, RNIB Parliamentary Officer, on the telephone (01) 636 1153.

RNIB now has a 'Development Officer, health services' Ann Hare-Brown, who is concerned with the overall welfare of visual handicapped people in the health service. She will be increasing the awareness of those working with people with sight problems and is currently collecting information on self-help groups for visually handicapped people. Contact: Ann Hare-Brown,

Development Officer, RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1.
Tel: (01) 388 1266.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Day Conference on Democracy & the NHS on the 15th November 1986 in London, organised by Health Rights, 147 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XF. Tel: (01) 633 9377. Contact: Madeleine Halliday.

HEALTH CONCERN is running two seminars to be held at the Policy Studies Institute, 100 Park Village East, London NW1.
Identifying Needs on Tuesday 18th November and A Fair Share of What we Have: Alternatives to RAWP on Thursday 4th December. Both seminars from 2.30.p.m. - 4.30.p.m. Contact: Christine Hogg, tel: (01) 226 5522.

The Institute of Health Services Management is holding a day conference, Cost-Effective Patient Care on 13th November in London at the Royal Lancaster Hotel. Contact: Maureen Dixon at IHSM, 27 Portland Place, London W1N 4AN. Tel: (01) 580 5041.

Better Health for Women - a National Conference for Women involved in Well Woman Centres and Campaigns, Women's Advocacy Schemes and Women's Health Information and Advice Services. Organised by The National Community Health Resource, the Harlow Well Women Clinic Campaign and a planning group are organising the above conference to be held on 28th and 29th November 1986 at Harlow Town Hall, Harlow, Essex. Contact, Jan Smithies, CHIRU, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU. Tel: (01) 636 4066.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF HEALTH are running a series of conferences during November. Drug Abuse in Manchester at the Grand Hotel on Wednesday the 26 November. Care of the Cancer Patient on Thursday 27th November in Manchester. Hospitalisation of Children on Friday 28th November at 2.0.p.m. at the Bland Sutton Lecture Theatre, Middlesex Hospital in London. Admission charge of £4.00 for non-RSH members. Holistic Approach To Childbirth on Tuesday 11th November at 2.0.p.m. in the Lecture Theatre 3, University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff. £4.00 for admission. Irradiation of Food - What is it all about? on Wednesday 26th November at 6.30.p.m. at the Grand Hotel, Manchester. £4.00 admission for non-RSH members.

Coping with mental illness in the elderly on Wednesday 26th November at 2.0.p.m. in the Lecture Theatre 2, South Academic Block, Southampton General Hospital, Southampton. The Disabled Living Foundation on Tuesday 9th December at 6.00.p.m. at the Disabled Living Foundation, 380-4 Harrow Road, London. £4.00 admission.

Contact: Conference Department, Royal Society of Health, R.S.H. House, 38a St. George's Drive, London SW1. Tel: (01) 630 0121.

Biological Effects of Ionising Radiation on the 24/25 November.
The fee is now £90.00 and anyone interested in attending this conference should contact: Dr. Gari Donn, 26 Hawkenbury Way, Lewes, East Sussex. Tel: 0273 473096.

HEALTH PROMOTION/EDUCATION

Television Advertising/Children's programmes

Members of Cardiff CHC have written to the Health Advisory Committee for Wales expressing concern about the 'proliferation of advertising of cigarettes and alcohol during and between programmes for children'. Apparently, the advertisements have a very similar flavour to the HEC anti-smoking characters. They suggest that this matter should be taken up with the Advertising Standards Authority by the Welsh Health Education Advisory Committee and the Health Education Council.

LATE ENTRIES

Citizen Advocacy: Including the Excluded. Contact: Amanda Forrest, Sheffield Advocacy Project, 14/18 West Bar Green, Sheffield, S1 2DA. Tel: 0742 739397. Price £5.00 each. Bulk orders - £21.00 per 5 copies.

Should we, could we, and how? 11th. November 1986. A day conference on mammographic screening for breast cancer. 9.0.a.m. to 5.0.p.m. at the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St. Andrews Place, Regents Park, London NW1. Price £30 including coffee, lunch & tea. Contact: Administrative Officer, Marie Curie Memorial Foundation, Institute of Oncology, 28 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8QG. Tel: (01) 235 1323.

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Page 7: Norwich CHC. Tel: 0603 624610.

Page 8: Hounslow & Spelthorne CHC. Tel: 0784 259548.

Page 8: East Herts CHC. Secretary: Peter Coleman.

Page 10: Bromley CHC. Secretary: Barbara Allen.

Page 17: Salford CHC. New temporary address: c/o Salford Health Authority, Room 800, Peel House, Albert Street, Eccles, M30 0NJ. Tel: (061) 789 0474.

**The Health Education Council's
Young People's Programme supports
projects in personal,
social and health education for
primary and secondary
schools, further education, the
youth service and
the Youth Training Scheme.**

Projects are currently developing:

**STUDENT MATERIALS
TEACHER MATERIALS
TRAINING MATERIALS
IN-SERVICE COURSES**



**For further details, please
contact the Assistant Director, (Schools/Further Education),
THE HEALTH EDUCATION COUNCIL,
78 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1AH**