

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Minutes of the 135<sup>th</sup> meeting of Standing Committee held at the London Voluntary Resource Centre, Holloway Road, London on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

Present:

Alan Hartley	Chair
Sally Brearley	Vice-Chair
Donald Roy	Vice-Chair
Trevor Gauntlett	Northern & Yorkshire
Cllr Ian Mason	Northern & Yorkshire
Barry Fippard	Trent
Keith Jackson	Eastern
Judith Blakeman	London
Bill Marks	City & Hackney
Celia Davies	London
Gordon Peake	South East
Christopher Hayes	South East
Alice Clarke	South West
David Spilsbury	West Midlands
Pauline Davis	West Midlands
David Mattocks	West Midlands
Cath Arnold	North West
Jane Jeffs	Wales
Graham Girvan	Honorary Treasurer
Bill Coltham	Society of CHC Staff

In attendance: Malcolm Alexander, Chye Choo, Marion Chester, Angeline Burke, Murray Benham, Ray Appleby and Sheila Dollery.

1. Introduction and Apologies

Apologies were received from Valerie Bryden, Mark Woodcock, Tommy Morgan, John Seddon and Melissa Remmington.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2002 (SC/02/57)

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2002 were **received and agreed a correct record.**

3. Minutes of Honorary Officers' Meeting held on Monday 13 January and Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2003 (SC/03/02)

The minutes of the meetings were **received.**



Re Item 10: 13<sup>th</sup> January minutes - It was **agreed** that Donald Roy's report on his meeting with the All Party Parliamentary Group on pharmaceutical services at which David Lammy had been present would be made available to those who requested a copy.

Re Item 12: 13<sup>th</sup> January minutes - It was **agreed** that advice received on PCT Professional Executive Committee (PEC) governance arrangements would be copied to all CHCs (**attached**).

4. Honorary Treasurer's Report (SC/03/03)

The Honorary Treasurer introduced the paper. Standing Committee **received** the accounts for the third quarter ended 31 December 2002.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to the Honorary Treasurer and Chye Choo for their work.

5. Director's Report

The Director introduced his Report.

A paper entitled 'Proposed ACHCEW/CPPIH Strategy for April – August' was tabled. Following a lengthy discussion during which concerns were raised about CPPIH's poor communication, it was **agreed** that the amended paper should be circulated to CHCs. **Agreed** that the role of ACHCEW during its final period would include acting as an objective scrutineer of the CPPIH and the new system of PPI.

**ACHCEW Strategy in Relation to the CPPIH – April to August 2003  
Agreed by Standing Committee, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003.**

- ◆ Press for the CPPIH to demonstrate that an effective new system of PPI will be in place by September 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 when CHCs are abolished that includes visiting, monitoring, service development and complaints support.
- ◆ Make a strong case for the new system to meet specific criteria as previously agreed by the Standing Committee and the July 2001 AGM and learns from the knowledge base and experience of CHCs.
- ◆ Audit the development of the new system from the point of view of the principles of both Neill and Nolan.
- ◆ Monitor the development of ICAS in each area to ensure that as it comes on line, that it is available to clients as a face to face service, able to provide advocacy and advice and through written and telephone contacts.
- ◆ Ensure that the requirements for the new PPI system that are on the face of the Act e.g. PF/PCT and independence of Patients' Forums are complied with.



- ◆ Take every reasonable opportunity to work jointly with the CPPIH in the period of transition.

Staff Matters The Director paid tribute to ACHCEW staff for their outstanding work. The Chief Officers and Bill Coltham on behalf of the Society of CHC Staff also expressed their appreciation of the services that ACHCEW staff had given them and their best wishes for the future.

Patients' Forums and OSCs The Department of Health had stated that Patients' Forums would mostly be established by the end of this year. OSC Guidance was expected soon and it was reported that it was likely to say that whilst Local Authorities must have health scrutiny committees, that there was no duty on them to carry out health scrutiny.

**Noted** that the draft Patients' Forum Regulations should be out for consultation in the near future and that the Commencement Order for the abolition of CHC and ACHCEW and the establishment of ICAS were also expected. **Noted** that Section 11 Regulations had just been published.

ICAS It was felt that the arrangements for establishing ICAS were confused. They could not be established until Patients' Forums were in place. It was **noted** that many of the 95 (321 staff) ICAS pilots would be extended until the end of August 2003 and that an additional £2m had been allocated by the DoH for this purpose. The Department of Health had indicated that ICAS would be established as soon as CHCs closed and it was felt that there was some confusion as to what form they would take. Concern was expressed about the transfer of confidential patient's complaints to ICAS services.

CPPIH The Director reported that he was waiting for a reply from Nigel Crisp concerning a statement in a recent Chief Executive Bulletin regarding the transfer of civil servants to the CPPIH.

It was felt essential that CHCs should retain their dignity, integrity, neutrality and even-handedness during the period of transition despite the lack of response from the CPPIH to questions raised with them concerning the development of the new PPI system.

Members expressed concern about the voluntary sector model, which the CPPIH intended to use to establish Patients' Forums and the gap between the abolition of CHCs and the establishment of the new system. Marion Chester gave her opinion that it would be unlawful for the CPPIH to transfer this function to the voluntary sector. **Agreed** to express ACHCEW's concerns to the CPPIH, the DH and through the parliamentary process.

Concerns were also expressed about governance arrangements in the CPPIH, demonstrated by their failure to consult and their failure to take



decisions in public about their work programme and the establishment of the new PPI system.

Wales **Noted** that the Director had written to David Mowat (DH) requesting clarification about the formal procedure for separating the Welsh and English components of ACHCEW.

Exit Strategy The Director reported that a draft exit strategy had been prepared and was being discussed with staff.

Funding of Communications Post **Noted** that funds had been requested from CHCs to support this post. Agreed that in the absence of adequate resources for the DH that it was appropriate to fund the post in this manner for the next financial year.

The Director's Report was **received**.

6. AGM 2003

After much discussion on the four options available, a motion was put by Judith Blakeman (London) and seconded by Jane Jeffs (Welsh Association of CHCs) to hold a Special General Meeting in July 2003 and at that meeting to suspend Standing Orders and thereby obviating the need for an election of Honorary Officers. A celebration of CHCs/ACHCEWs achievements would be held after the SGM. **Noted** that Honorary Officers would receive a final honorarium for July and August 2003.

'The Standing Committee agrees to hold a Special General Meeting (SGM) of the Association to take a motion to suspend Standing Orders and to accept the accounts of the Association. The Standing Committee moves that the SGM shall be followed by a celebration event.'

**The motion was agreed nem con.**

7. Foundation Trusts (FTs) **Noted** that FTs would have no Patients' Forums but would be subject to Section 11 duties. It was felt that the 1960 Public Bodies Access To Meetings Act would not cover public access to FT Board Meetings. It was Agreed that close links between Patients' Councils and the proposed Stakeholder Councils (SCs) would be good practice and noted that SCs would be vulnerable to dominance by pressure groups and special interest groups. Agreed that the Director would draw up a paper on FTs for Honorary Officers to consider. **Noted** that Donald Roy had presented evidence on FTs to the Health Select Committee on behalf of ACHCEW.



8. Matters raised by member CHCs and Regional Associations

No matters had been raised.

9. Wales Update

A paper was tabled and introduced by Jane Jeffs of the Welsh Association of CHCs. The Welsh AGM and annual conference will be held on 22/23 May. Standing Committee members were welcome to attend but would have to pay their own expenses. The paper was **noted**.

Jane Jeffs asked for the thanks and gratitude of Welsh CHCs for ACHCEW work to be recorded and agreed to continue to work closely with ACHCEW until abolition of English CHCs and ACHCEW.

The Chair thanked the Welsh CHCs for their continuing support of English CHCs

10. Matters Arising from the previous meeting

No matters were raised.

11. Future dates for Standing Committee

Wednesday, 7 May 2003

12. Any other business

On behalf of the Honorary Officers, the Chairman expressed thanks to the staff of ACHCEW for their tremendous dedication. Jane Jeffs of the Welsh Association also expressed her thanks to all ACHCEW staff for being very helpful and said that they would be missed.

**End/MA/21/3/03**