

MINUTES OF ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS STEERING GROUP MEETING HELD ON 6TH OCTOBER 2004 AT 10AM IN CEDAR VILLA, TYRONE & FERMANAGH HOSPITAL

Present:

Jenny Irvine (Chair) – Trust Non-Executive Director
Dr Diana Cody, Trust Medical Director (Acting)
Margaret Kelly, Chief Nurse, WHSSB
Jayne Fox, N.I. N.I.CSCG Support Team
Anne O'Brien, N.I. CSCG Support Team

In Attendance:

Rebecca McLean, Group Administrator

Apologies

Howard Arthur, G.B. Clinical Governance Support Team

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting held on the 2nd and 3rd August 2004, were tabled, discussed and agreed.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Briefing of SMT and Trust Staff

Dr Cody tabled the activities summary paper that had previously been circulated to all members. Dr Cody advised the group that during her brief to the Senior Management Team (SMT) on the 5th August, some members expressed their concern at using Lucy's case as a case study. Likewise, when Dr Cody met with Dr O'Donohoe, he advised that he would be willing to participate in the exercise, but would have reservations over using the case. Mrs Irvine stated that the meeting with staff on the 3rd September had been very positive and it provided staff with the opportunity to 'offload' issues and queries. It was acknowledged that these members of staff had never been given the opportunity to discuss their issues.

2.2 Letter received from Crawford family

Dr Cody advised the group that Mr Mullan, Trust Chairman, had received a letter from the Crawford family on the 1st September. Mrs Irvine and Dr Cody had received a copy of this prior to the CSCG Committee meeting which was held on the 16th September. Mrs Irvine dictated some paragraphs from the letter which related specifically to the activities of the RCA steering group. The context of the letter revealed that the family were extremely upset by the letter that Mrs Irvine had sent on behalf of the RCA steering group, on the 3rd August. The letter had also stipulated that the family did not wish their daughter's name to be used in any document, review or letter.

ACTION: Later in the meeting it was agreed that Mrs Irvine should, on behalf of the steering group, hand write a letter to the family. The letter would apologise for the insensitivity of the first letter from the steering group.

2.3 Communication Issue

The group discussed the underlying issue of communication both with the family and the media. Ms O'Brien stated that it would be her view not to liaise with the family or the media, until the findings of the RCA were completed. Likewise Mrs Kelly stated that she had concerns about the Trust communicating with the press in relation to

issues relating to the work of the group, for example the press statement that had been distributed to the press from the Trust on 1st October regarding the referral of Dr Jarlath O'Donohoe Consultant Paediatrician from the General Medical Council (GMC), to its Professional Conduct Committee.

It was agreed that the steering group should be aware of all communication and needed to link with the Trust to gain continuity. All members agreed that the RCA steering group should oversee any communication being distributed to the media or family, both from the Trust and the group which related to any issues surrounding the work of the group.

ACTION: Ms O'Brien, given her background in P.R, would draft a communication strategy that would be shared with the Trust and would detail the expectations of the steering group of how the Trust should manage future communication.

2.3 Assistance of Communication Expert

The group discussed how other Trusts within Northern Ireland have invested in advice from external communication experts, during similar situations. It was agreed that it was inappropriate for the steering group's chair and administrator to be contacted by the press for comments and statements. Members agreed that it would be reasonable to consider employing a communication expert who could advise the group during the dissemination of the final findings/reporting process.

3. Development Programme Update

3.1 Process to be used

Mrs Irvine had previously advised all group members that she, Mrs Kelly and Dr Cody had reservations of the process that would be used. It had been mutually agreed prior to the meeting that the training programme would not use Lucy's case as a training tool. Dr Cody and Mrs Irvine explained their thinking: Participants would be trained in the methodology of RCA, which would be facilitated by Ms Norwood. Following this general training, a selection of staff would then carry out an in depth RCA of Lucy's case.

Ms O'Brien asked whether the RCA would focus on the corporate issues of the case, rather than the clinical issues, as stated in the initial Terms of Reference. Dr Cody confirmed that focus would be on corporate issues, i.e. complaints handling, communication issues etc.

3.2 Change in process and independence of group

Ms O'Brien stated that this proposed process would not work, as it would not be independent if a selection of staff were picked to review other colleagues. Given the media interest in the process, it was agreed that the group should consider this issue carefully and keep in mind that potentially a Public Inquiry may review the work of the group.

Mrs Irvine stated that she had advised Mr Mullan, Trust Chairman of her concern of chairing the steering group, given that the public perception would not see a Non-Executive Director as independent. She offered Mrs O'Brien the opportunity to chair the group and asked for her opinion on the matter. It was agreed that Mrs Irvine should continue to chair the steering group.

After further discussion it was agreed that the first two days of the programme (9th and 10th November) would involve using Lucy's case study. The steering group reviewed the list of participants who had agreed to attend, and selected individuals who should attend on these days. The remaining participants would then participate in the development programme using other case studies.

Summary of Process:

- 9th and 10th November = RCA Development programme involving staff involved in Lucy's case and using Lucy's case study.
- 11th and 12th and 15th and 16th November = Other participants to use other case studies during development programme.
- 15th December = 1st group to meet and feedback action plan to Trust
- 16th December = 2nd and 3rd groups to meet and confirm their action plan.
- February = RCA findings/report to be presented to CSCG Committee.

Support for staff was discussed and it was agreed that all participants should be offered support through occupational health.

It was also agreed that the nursing staff involved in the case would be made aware of the change in process. This would also include members of staff that were on sick leave.

ACTIONS:

- Mrs McLean to advise those selected to attend on the 9th and 10th November, and co-ordinate all consequent arrangements.
- Dr Cody to meet with Dr Burges, Occupational Health to discuss arrangements for staff support.
- Mrs McLean to co-ordinate via Mrs Esther Millar, Woman and Children's Services, a meeting with all members of nursing staff involved in case and Mrs Irvine, Dr Cody and Mrs Kelly on 25th October.

4. Dedicated Officer for RCA ground work

Mrs Irvine stated that she had advised Mr Mullan of the work commitments of steering group members and had suggested that a dedicated officer would be appointed to carry out some of the ground work, i.e. information gathering. It was agreed that this person should preferably be of a senior level and external to the Trust.

ACTION: Dr Cody to contact Mr Seamus Wade of Westcare Business Services to propose that he would assist the steering group with their work.

5. Attitudes to Safety Questionnaire

Ms Fox advised Mrs Irvine that she had drafted the questionnaire and would welcome any additional comments. This would be distributed to participants on the first day and again on the second day of training.

ACTION: Mrs Irvine to advise Ms Fox of any amendments.

The meeting closed at approx 12pm.