



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday, 27 February 2020
Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Mr Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA
Mr Alan Chambers MLA
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Apologies: None.

In Attendance: Ms Éilis Haughey (Clerk)
Ms Deirdre Farry (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10.36 am in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met with the Minister of Health and the Chief Medical Officer and agreed to add an agenda item to this week's meeting to consider a proposed statutory rule relating to Coronavirus.
- ii. The Chairperson advised Members that that he had taken part in a media interview in relation to the financial support for those affected by the infected blood issue and the Committee's efforts to obtain more information on this matter from the Department of Health.

3. **Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020.

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Stakeholder Briefing – Workforce Strategy**

The following representatives from the Allied Health Professions Federation NI (AHPF NI) joined the meeting at 10.38 am:

Mr Jonathan Bull, Chairperson, AHPF NI and a member of the British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists

Ms Leandre Archer, AHPF NI and Policy Officer for the Society of Radiographers

Mr Tom Sullivan, AHPF NI and Public Affairs and Policy Manager for the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy NI

The AHPF NI representatives briefed the Committee on workforce planning issues relating to the Allied Health Professions.

The Chairperson declared an interest as formerly being employed as a Social Worker and working within a multi-disciplinary team setting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Health providing further information on workforce issues discussed during a departmental briefing session at the Committee meeting on 30 January 2020.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 am.

The meeting resumed at 11.47 am.

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6. **Departmental Briefing – Workforce Strategy**

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.48 am:

Mr Andrew Dawson, Workforce Policy Director, Workforce Policy Division,
Department of Health

Mr Peter Barbour, Workforce Policy Division, Department of Health

Mr Stephen Galway, Workforce Policy Division, Department of Health

Mr Chris Wilkinson, Workforce Policy Division, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on the Department of Health’s Workforce Strategy.

Mr Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 11.59 am.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a number of issues raised by Members during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

7. **SL1 The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The following official joined the meeting at 12.48 pm:

Mr Nigel McMahon, Chief Environmental Health Officer, Department of Health

Mr McMahon briefed the Committee on the Department of Health’s intention to make a Statutory Rule to extend the list of notifiable diseases specified in Schedule 1 to the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, to include coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The official agreed to provide the Committee with further information on an issue raised by Members during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr McMahon for his attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

8. **SL1 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SL1 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which would apply an inflationary

uplift to the current tariff levels used for the collection of costs incurred by hospitals when treating casualties of road traffic accidents.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Department of Health and to defer consideration of the proposed Statutory Rule.

9. Correspondence

i. The Committee noted the Minister for Health's written statement to the Assembly on the publication of the RQIA's final report relating to its Review of the Governance of Outpatient Services at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

ii. The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for information on the implementation of the Autism Act 2011.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the new regional framework when it becomes available and to be kept updated on the Health and Social Care Board/Public Health Agency review of autism referral trends.

iii. The Committee considered an invitation from NILGA to attend its Caring Council conference on 27 March 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.

iv. The Committee considered an invitation from ECH Alliance to attend the NI Connected Health Ecosystem event on 26 March 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.

v. The Committee considered a request from the College of Podiatry to brief the Committee on issues affecting the podiatry profession in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

vi. The Committee considered correspondence from Family Mediation Northern Ireland requesting to brief the Committee on issues relating to family separation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

vii. The Committee considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to visit the Emergency Ambulance Control Centre and a number of ambulance stations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

viii. The Committee considered an invitation from the Mental Health Policy Group Northern Ireland to attend an informal breakfast meeting on 12 March 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should inform the Committee Office if they wished to attend the meeting.

ix. The Committee noted the February 2020 Investment Strategy NI summary report of the projects and investing activities for the Department of Health.

- x. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from an individual to the Health and Social Care Board regarding waiting times for gastroenterology and rheumatology patients.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to advise the individual about the role of the Committee and suggest they make contact with a local MLA.
- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from Hydro-ease requesting that the Committee sponsor an event it plans to deliver on emotional awareness.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members should reply directly if they wish to sponsor the event.
- xii. The Committee considered an invitation from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to the launch of its Arts and Wellbeing Strategy on 9 March 2020.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.
- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from Ulster University inviting Members to join the Maternal and Child Health Policy Research Network.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Health regarding a proposed written statement to the Assembly providing an update on the Department's response to the Coronavirus.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

The Chairperson requested that Members advise the Committee office about their availability to attend the scheduled strategic planning meeting.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed information and advice available to the general public in relation to Coronavirus.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to encourage the general public to access information and advice provided by the Public Health Agency relating to Coronavirus.

12. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, 5 March 2020, at 10.30 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.06 pm.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____