



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Thursday, 4 June 2020  
Room 30, Parliament Buildings**

**Present:** Mr Colm Gildernew (Chairperson)  
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA\*  
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA  
Mr Alan Chambers MLA  
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA\*  
Mr Colin McGrath MLA\*  
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA\*

**Apologies:** Mr Alex Easton MLA

**In Attendance:** Ms Éilis Haughey (Clerk)  
Mr Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)

*\*These Members attended the meeting via telephone conferencing.*

*The meeting commenced at 10.44 am in public session.*

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's business.

**3. Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2020.

**4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**5. COVID-19 Disease Response – Briefing from the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland**

The Commissioner and officials from the Office of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland (COPNI) joined the meeting via telephone conferencing at 10.46 am.

Mr Eddie Lynch, Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland

Ms Evelyn Hoy, Chief Executive, COPNI

Ms Emer Boyle, Head of Legal and Policy Advice, COPNI

The Commissioner briefed the Committee on the impact of COVID-19 on older people in Northern Ireland.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms Hoy agreed to provide the Committee with further information on an issue raised during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Commissioner and COPNI officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.56 am.*

*The meeting resumed at 12.19 pm.*

**6. SR 2020/57 The Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/57 The Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which make temporary modifications to the principal Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty) Regulations in the case of the widespread unavailability of the health and social care workforce due to a pandemic emergency.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had reported a breach of the 21-day rule in respect of this statutory rule but was content that the Department had provided a satisfactory reason for the breach.

Mr Tomas Adell, Head of Mental Health and Capacity Unit, Department of Health, joined the meeting at 12.22 pm to answer Members' questions on the rule and agreed to provide the Committee with further information on an issue raised during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Adell for his attendance.

*Agreed:* That the Committee for Health has considered SR 2020/57 The Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule.

The question and answer session was reported by Hansard.

## **7. SR 2020/60 The Establishment and Agencies (Fitness of Workers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020/60 The Establishment and Agencies (Fitness of Workers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which give effect to temporary changes to pre-employment vetting policy for health and social care roles.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had reported a breach of the 21 day rule in respect of this statutory rule but was content that the Department had provided a satisfactory reason for the breach.

*Agreed:* That the Committee for Health has considered SR 2020/60 The Establishment and Agencies (Fitness of Workers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule.

*Mr Colin McGrath left the meeting at 12.38 pm.*

*The meeting was suspended at 12.38 pm.*

*The meeting resumed at 12.43 pm.*

*The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 9.*

## **8. Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill - Consideration of Draft Report**

The Committee considered a draft report reflecting its deliberations on the Domestic Abuse and Family Proceedings Bill.

Two amendments were proposed to the section of the report on clauses 8 and 9.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed it was content with the proposed amendments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the amended report should be circulated to Members by email for final approval.

*Ms Paula Bradshaw left the meeting at 12.46 pm.*

*The Committee moved to agenda item 8.*

## **9. Legislative Consent Memorandum: The Medicines and Medical Devices Bill**

Officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting via telephone conferencing at 12.47 pm.

Ms Cathy Harrison, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Department of Health

Mr Craig Allen, Head of Medicines Policy, Department of Health

Ms Harrison briefed the Committee on the Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill introduced in Westminster.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Hamilton and Mr Allen for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a draft report reflecting the Committee's deliberations would be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the Legislative Consent Memorandum in relation to the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill, until the next meeting.

## **10. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted, pending further budget scrutiny, a response from the Minister of Health to the Committee's request for additional information on the budget.
- ii. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health to the Committee's request for information on the proposed Graduate Entry Medical School at Ulster University's Magee campus.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health responding to a proposal for the provision of free urgent use sanitary products for NHS shift staff.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request further information on the decision made in relation to this matter.

- iv. The Committee noted, pending further scrutiny of Brexit-related matters, the Institute for Government publication 'Implementing Brexit: the Northern Ireland Protocol'.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education advising that it has written to the Department of Health and Department of Education seeking information relating to the recently published Mental Health Action Plan.
- vi. The Committee noted, pending further scrutiny of waiting times, the OECD Health Policy Studies Report on Waiting Times for Health Services.
- vii. The Committee noted the Investment Strategy NI, May 2020 Investing Activity Report for the Department of Health.
- viii. The Committee noted, pending further scrutiny of mental health issues, a copy of correspondence from an individual to the Minister of Health regarding the remit of a future Mental Health Champion.

- ix. The Committee noted the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Eleventh Report of Session 2019 – 2020. The Examiner's report included the following statutory rules which the Committee considered at previous meetings and agreed it had no objection to, subject to the Examiner's Report:
- SR 2020/46 The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Order 2020
  - SR 2020/82 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
  - SR 2020/84 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
  - SR 2020/86 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020
- x. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding potential breaches of lockdown regulations in the Causeway Coast and Glens area.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to respond to the individual to provide advice on the bodies responsible for the enforcement of the relevant regulations.
- xi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the NI Neurological Charities Alliance to the Minister of Health, regarding the impact of measures relating to the COVID-19 response, on individuals living with neurological conditions.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Health Agency and RQIA providing information on the number of hospital admissions from care homes, due to COVID-19.
- Agreed:* The Committee agreed to seek further clarification in relation to this matter.
- xiii. The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health to issues raised during the COVID-19 disease response briefing session at the committee meeting on 20 May 2020.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health providing further information in relation to SL1 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.
- xv. The Committee noted a briefing paper from Pivotal Public Policy Forum NI, 'Covid-19 in Northern Ireland – Moving out of lockdown' examining the key learning from other countries.
- xvi. The Committee noted a briefing paper from Positive Life, on HIV in Northern Ireland and its work with service users in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

The Committee discussed its working arrangements during the summer recess period.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that meetings should continue to be held during July but would not be scheduled for August unless it was considered necessary.

**12. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next committee meeting was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 11 June 2020 at 10.30 am in the Senate Chamber.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.37 pm.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chairperson*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_