



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Health

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 17 June 2021

**Meeting Location:** virtual meeting

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Colm Gildernew MLA  
Paula Bradshaw MLA  
Jonathan Buckley MLA  
Gerry Carroll MLA  
Alan Chambers MLA  
Órlaithí Flynn MLA  
Cara Hunter MLA  
Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Keith McBride (Clerk)  
Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)  
Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)  
Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)  
Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 9.23 am in open session

### 1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

### 2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson thanked Members for their contributions to the Committee motion on Carers' Support, which was debated in the Assembly on Tuesday 15 June.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request information on the work it is undertaking on providing a carers' recognition grant.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department, to ask how long the Department's review into day care centres will take to complete, what is involved in the review, and how long it will take to reinstate services.

- ii. The Chairperson raised the matter of the payment of fees for optometry and dentistry, and how the current payment process may impact those in receipt of Universal Credit.

- iii. The Chairperson referred to comments made in relation to the Minister of Health at a recent function in the Europa Hotel.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Health, to indicate the Committee's ongoing support for him in his role.



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### **3. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising

*Mr Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 9.32 am.*

### **5. Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill - Briefing from Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists**

The following representatives joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.28 am:

Dr Carolyn Bailie, Chair of NI Committee, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; and

Dr John Manderson, Fetal Medicines Consultant, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The representatives briefed the Committee on their organisations' submissions on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

*Mr Gerry Carroll left the meeting at 10:38 am.*



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### **6. Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill - Briefing from Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Christian Action Research & Education, Both Lives Matter and Evangelical Alliance NI**

The following representatives joined the meeting by video-conference at 10:38 am:

Miss Karen Jardine, Public Affairs Officer, Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

Ms Grace Cahoon, Parent, Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

Mr Stephen Lowry, Parent, Presbyterian Church in Ireland;

Ms Sarah Pike, Early Human Life Policy Officer, CARE NI;

Ms Dawn McEvoy, Co-founder, Both Lives Matter; and

Mr David Smyth, Head of Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland.

The representatives briefed the Committee on their organisations' submissions on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

*The Committee agree to move to agenda item 10.*

### **10. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the British Society for Immunology's report 'The ageing immune system and COVID-19'.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the targeted public health response to the identification of the Delta variant in Kilkeel.



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**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Department seeking an urgent written update on actions being taken by the Department to prevent further transmission of the Delta variant.

iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health and Minister of Justice regarding the establishment of Regional Care and Justice Campus for children and young people.

iv. The Committee considered correspondence from RQIA regarding progress on its neurology work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from RQIA on the matter.

v. The Committee considered correspondence from Committee on Administration of Justice regarding COVID-19 regulations and the right to protest.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health and Department of Justice for comment.

vi. The Committee noted the 'Home is Where We Start From' report from Home Start NI.

vii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from Department of Health and Social Care, to the Chair of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland Sub-Committee, regarding issues raised in relation to Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/382 concerning food hygiene, food allergen management, food redistribution and food safety.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Food Standards Agency for comment.



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viii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Cabinet Office to the Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee, updating the Committee on cross-cutting issues in relation to the Common Frameworks, including the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, and the UK Internal Market Act.

ix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual to the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding the misappropriation of funds in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

x. The Committee considered correspondence from Stroke Association regarding an Assembly Motion on stroke services.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence, and that Members would reply individually.

xi. The Committee considered a response from the Chief Executives of the Health and Social Care Trusts to the Committee's invitation to give evidence on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Clerk would schedule a briefing from the Trusts and the Department of Health on the Bill.

xii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual recognising the work of GPs and their staff.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department to note.



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- xiii. The Committee noted the report of the Northern Ireland Abortion and Contraception Taskforce on Sexual and Reproductive Health in Northern Ireland.
- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from Northern Ireland Abortion and Contraception Taskforce regarding information on research on abortion reversal.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the managed isolation programme for Northern Ireland.
- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health in relation to the EU Medical Devices Regulations.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Department of Health on the matter.
- xviii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the Republic of Ireland Reimbursement Scheme.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Department of Health on the matter.
- xix. The Committee noted the 42<sup>nd</sup> report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.
- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Speaker of the Assembly, advising that a public petition titled 'Support for Unpaid Carers in Northern Ireland', had been laid in the Assembly on 7 June 2021, by Kellie Armstrong MLA.



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### **11. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme

### **12. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

*The meeting was suspended at 11.36 am and resumed at 1.04 pm.*

#### **Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Cara Hunter MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

*The Committee returned to agenda item 7.*

### **7. Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill - Briefing from Down's Syndrome Research Foundation and Don't Screen Us Out**

The following representatives joined the meeting by video-conference at 1.04 pm:

Dr Elizabeth Corcoran, Chair of Trustees, Down's Syndrome Research Foundation UK; and

Ms Lynn Murray, Don't Screen Us Out.





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The representatives briefed the Committee on their organisations' submissions on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

*Mr Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 1.19 pm.*

**8. SR 2021/151 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 6) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The following official from the Department for the Economy joined the meeting by video-conference at 1.26 pm:

Claire Hulbert, Tourism Liaison & Policy Branch.

The official briefed the Committee on SR 2021/151.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the official for attending.

The session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee considered SR 2021/151 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 6) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which ends the table service requirement for unlicensed premises such as cafes and permits food to be ordered at a buffet or carvery.

**Agreed:** The official agreed to provide the Committee with further information on issues raised.



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**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2021/151 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 6) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021, and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

**9. SR 2021/154 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The following official from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 1.43 pm:

Debra Sharpe, International Travel Lead.

The official briefed the Committee on SR 2021/154.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session. The Chairperson thanked the representative for attending.

The session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee considered SR 2021/154 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which added Afghanistan, Bahrain, Costa Rica, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Trinidad and Tobago to the Red List of countries in Schedule 1 of the principal regulations; omitted Portugal from the Green List of countries at Schedule 2; included a reference to the relevant regulations regarding people who are exempt in Schedule 4; and corrected other typographical errors.

**Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2021/154 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 4) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021, and agreed it had no objection to the Rule.



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### **13. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place on 24 June 2021 at 9.30 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.50 pm.

**Colm Gildernew MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Health>**