



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday, 18 January 2022

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Apologies:

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

In Attendance:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Ellen Wilson (Clerical Officer)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 12.47 pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Chairperson informed the Committee, that under Standing Order 115 (6), Deputy Chairperson, Pam Cameron had delegated authority to Deborah Erskine to vote on her behalf at the meeting.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 3.

2. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health on actions being taken to improve access to GP services.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising that engagement with affected patients and family members in advance of the publication Independent Neurology Inquiry report would be a matter for the Independent Neurology Inquiry Panel.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing an update on the neurology recall of patients and reviews.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing information requested by the Committee on the review of services for vulnerable people detained in prison and the work of the Iveagh Centre.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of the launch of the public consultation on Advance Care Planning for Adults (aged 18 years and over) in Northern Ireland.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of a targeted consultation on proposed amendments to the Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.
- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health responding to issues raised by Strabane District Caring Services in relation to the pressures faced by domiciliary care within the Western HSCT.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to Strabane District Caring Services.

- viii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the interval of time between the administration of the first and second doses of Covid-19 vaccines.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding access to public health information for people with sensory disabilities.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing a copy of the joint HSCB/PHA Regional Mental Health Crisis Service Implementation Plan for 2021-31.
- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding District Community Sisters banding.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing information requested by the Committee relating to travel restriction regulations.
- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the Financial Support Scheme for dentists.
- xiv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the progression of Legislative Consent Motions relating to virginity testing and hymenoplasty.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule briefing from the Department of Health in relation to this matter.

- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding incidences of verbal and physical abuse and aggression against nursing staff in community settings.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing monthly data on CAMHS waiting times and an update on work being undertaken to address this.
- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) (2016 Act) (Commencement No. 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the criteria applied to agency workers in relation to the HSC recognition payment.
- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding care home charging and the provision of domiciliary care packages.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing a response to the Independent SAGE report, 'A Better Way To Go: towards a Zero COVID UK'.

xxi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding capacity within CAMHS.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Education Committee.

xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the special recognition payments and workforce planning.

xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding access to information for people with sensory impairment.

xxiv. The Committee noted the NI Chamber of Commerce and Invest NI report, 'Brexit: One Year On'.

xxv. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding Long COVID in children and young people.

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

xxvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure regarding access to information for people with sensory impairments.

xxvii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Western HSCT responding to issues raised by Strabane District Caring Services in relation to the pressures faced by domiciliary care.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to Strabane District Caring Services.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- xxviii. The Committee considered correspondence from the British Dental Association regarding difficulties in registering for NHS dental care.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence from BDA to the Department of Health for comment.
- xxix. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from an individual to the Minister of Health regarding the rationale for the adoption of the COVID status certification scheme.
- xxx. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding the closure of the Valley Nursing Home in Clogher.
- xxxi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Minister of State for Health regarding regulations relating to the levels of lead in certain foodstuffs.
- xxxii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Health) regarding the Westminster Health and Care Bill.
- xxxiii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Department of Finance to the Committee for Finance regarding amendments to the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.
- xxxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Draft Budget for 2022-25.
- xxxv. The Committee noted correspondence from Community Foundation regarding the Carers' Support Fund.
- xxxvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Office of Manpower Economics regarding the NHS Pay Review Body and the equality screening of the 3% pay offer.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for its views on this matter.

xxxvii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Southern HSCT bereavement support.

xxxviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health advising of the launch of a public consultation on the Human Medicines Regulations 2021 relating to patient group directions.

xxxix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding a targeted consultation on proposed amendments to the Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

xl. The Committee considered correspondence from Disability Action regarding the impact of Covid-19 on deaf and disabled people.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to give further consideration to scheduling briefing on this issue when considering its forward work programme.

xli. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding its consultation on proposed amendments to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012: Patient Group Directions as a result of the closure of the Health and Social Care Board.

xlii. The Committee noted the Safeguarding Board NI Annual Report 2021.

xliii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Law Society for Northern Ireland regarding the Department of Health and Department of Justice Private Family Law Early Resolution Action Plan.

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



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- xliv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Education regarding access to information for people with sensory impairments.
- xlv. The Committee considered correspondence from the NI Ambulance Service providing information relating to serious adverse incidents.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information about the cause of delayed response times and the other workforce issues.
- xlvi. The Committee noted the Strategic Investment Board December 2021 report for the Department of Health.
- xlvii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding mental health and learning disabilities.
- xlviii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding ethical COVID-19 vaccine access and approval.
- xlix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding COVID-19 outbreaks and deaths in care homes.
- I. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding GP phone line issues.
- li. The Committee noted correspondence from Ashbrook Care Home regarding the care home income guarantee scheme.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.
- lii. The Committee noted correspondence from Families Involved NI regarding the Adult Protection Bill.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Department of Health for comment.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- liii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the publication of the consultation on proposed amendments to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012: Patient Group Directions as a result of the closure of the Health and Social Care Board.
- liv. The Committee noted correspondence from the General Medical Council regarding GMC's evidence session to the Committee and clarification of the timeline in relation to when GMC was made aware of the concerns about Michael Watt.

The Committee returned to agenda item 2.

The meeting moved into closed session at 12.55 pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín joined the meeting at 12.55 pm.

3. Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill – Deliberations

Bill Clerks, Denise Morgan and Dr Kathryn Aiken joined the meeting at 12.55 pm.

The Committee continued its consideration of the written and oral evidence it had received on the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill.

The Bill Clerks briefed the Committee on a number of amendments they had been asked to prepare in relation to the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Bill Clerks to prepare a number of further draft amendments to the Bill.

The Chairperson thanked the Bill Clerks for their attendance.

The Committee noted correspondence from the PSNI regarding police deployments in response to protests at abortion services clinics.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust on costs associated with security measures at clinics and relocation of EMA services.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Alan Chambers left the meeting at 1.58 pm.

Paula Bradley left the meeting at 1.59 pm.

4. Forward Work Programme

The Clerk provided an update on the Committee's legislative work programme for January and February 2022.

Colin McGrath left the meeting at 2.01 pm.

5. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 9.30 am on Thursday, 20 January 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.03 pm.

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