

**COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES  
AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013  
Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings**

**Present:** Ms Maeve McLaughlin MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA  
Mr Mickey Brady MLA  
Mr Sam Gardiner MLA  
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA  
Mr David McIlveen MLA  
Mr Fearghal McKinney MLA

**Apologies:** Ms Pam Brown MLA  
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA  
Mr Jim Wells MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

**In Attendance:** Dr Kathryn Aiken (Clerk)  
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Ms Leanne Johnston (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)

*The meeting commenced at 2.08 p.m. in open session.*

**1. Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Pam Brown MLA, Gordon Dunne MLA and Jim Wells MLA.

**2. European Union cross border health directive & overseas visitor policy.**

*Mr David McIlveen joined the meeting at 2.10 p.m.*

The Committee noted further correspondence from the Law Centre NI and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in relation to the Department's overseas visitors policy.

The Committee *agreed* that it was content with the Department's policy proposals in terms of how it intends to implement EU Directive 2011/24 – access to cross border health care.

The Committee noted that the draft Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 do not contain provisions to entitle failed asylum seekers to free primary healthcare. The Committee *agreed* to write to the Department to seek a commitment that it will examine this issue further within a specified timescale, and through engagement with the relevant stakeholders.

Question: That the Committee recommends to the Department that section 9 of the draft Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 be amended to provide free secondary healthcare services for all failed asylum seekers.

Proposer: Ms Maeve McLaughlin

The Committee divided: Ayes 4; Noes 3.

**Ayes**

Mr Mickey Brady  
Mr Kieran McCarthy  
Mr Fearghal McKinney  
Ms Maeve McLaughlin

**Noes**

Mr Roy Beggs  
Mr Sam Gardiner  
Mr David McIlveen

Question accordingly agreed to.

**3. Draft minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013.**

The minutes of the Committee meeting on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013 were *agreed*.

**4. Chairperson's Business.**

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister in relation to the Mental Capacity Bill and *agreed* to schedule an evidence session with Departmental officials on this issue in the New Year.

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister about his intention to table a Legislative Consent Motion in relation to the standardised packaging of tobacco

products and *agreed* to schedule a briefing with Departmental officials at the first meeting in January. The Committee also *agreed* to seek a written and/or oral briefing from HMRC on the issue.

The Committee noted that a summary of the responses to the consultation on the Termination of Pregnancy Guidance has been published on the Department's website and *agreed* to schedule a briefing with Departmental officials on this issue in the New Year.

The Committee noted media reports on the issue of adoption by unmarried couples, including same sex couples, and *agreed* to write to the Department to request confirmation of the policy position on this issue.

**5. Evidence session on the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland.**

The Committee took evidence from:

Mrs Kathleen Marshall	Chair, Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland
Ms Sheila Taylor	Chief Executive, NWG Network
Mr Glenn Houston	Chief Executive, RQIA
Mr Seán Holland	Deputy Secretary, Social Services Policy Group, DHSSPS

*Mr David McIlveen declared an interest as a member of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.*

A question and answer session ensued. The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for attending.

**6. Evidence session with the Safeguarding Board Northern Ireland (SBNI) on its Thematic Review into Child Sexual Exploitation.**

The Committee took evidence from:

Mr Hugh Connor	Chair, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
Ms Sharon Beattie	Director of Operations, Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
Mr Seán Holland	Deputy Secretary, Social Services Policy Group, DHSSPS

A question and answer session ensued. The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for attending.

**7. Review of Waiting Times.**

The Committee *agreed* the terms of reference, methodology and timetable for its Review of Waiting Times.

The agreed terms of reference are:

“To assess the effectiveness of the Department’s current approach to reducing waiting times for elective care, and to identify effective approaches to reducing waiting times which have been used in other countries/regions which could be applied in Northern Ireland”.

The Committee *agreed* to write to the Department to ask for information on its current and planned approach to reducing waiting times for elective care, and to ask for its assessment on introducing a Referral to Treatment Time (RTT) measurement for Northern Ireland.

**8. Proposed Statutory Rule. The General Ophthalmic Services (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.**

The Committee considered The General Ophthalmic Services (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and *agreed* that it was content for the Department to prepare the statutory rule.

**9. Proposed Statutory Rule. The General Dental Services (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.**

*Mr Roy Beggs declared an interest that a member of his family is a dentist.*

The Committee considered The General Dental Services (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 and *agreed* that it was content for the Department to prepare the statutory rule.

**10. Forward Work Programme.**

The Committee *agreed* to discuss the Forward Work Programme at a planning meeting on 15 January 2014.

**11. Report on informal meetings held on 27 November 2013.**

The Committee *agreed* to write to the Department in relation to the “Health for All” and “Early Intervention” action plans in relation to the One Plan for Derry/Londonderry.

The Committee *agreed* to write to the Department to seek contact points within the HSC Trusts for use by the Northern Ireland Cardiac Patients Forum.

The Committee *agreed* to discuss the possibility of a visit to the Colin Early Intervention Group as part of its Forward Work Programme.

**12. Matters arising.**

The Committee noted a response from the Minister in relation to the Independent Living Fund.

The Committee noted a response from the Health and Social Care Board in relation to the Card Before You Leave Scheme and *agreed* to forward the letter to the Belfast Mental Health Rights Participation Group.

**13. Correspondence.**

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

The Committee noted a letter from the Minister in relation to a consultation on the Pharmacy (Indemnity Arrangements) Regulations.

The Committee noted correspondence from Save the Mid.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Withers regarding cancer treatments.

**14. Any Other Business.**

No other business was discussed.

**15. Date, time and place of next meeting.**

The next Committee meeting will be on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014 at 2.00pm in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

**16. Evidence session on January Monitoring.**

The Committee took evidence from:

Ms Julie Thompson Deputy Secretary, Resources & Performance Management Group

Ms Catherine Daly Deputy Secretary, Healthcare Policy Group

Mr Seán Holland Deputy Secretary, Social Services Policy Group

A question and answer session ensued. The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for attending.

*Mr David McIlveen left the meeting at 4.56 p.m.*

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 5.03 p.m.*

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

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