



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

14 March 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

In Attendance:

Keith McBride, Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Assistant Clerk

Jonathan Lamont, Assistant Clerk

Katie Egan, Clerical Supervisor

Noel Gallagher, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2:02 pm in closed session.

The Chairperson provided an overview of the business to be considered at the meeting and the Clerk outlined the process for the consideration of Legislative Consent Motions.

The meeting moved to public session at 2:19 pm.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2024.

4. Matters Arising

Further to Community Pharmacy Northern Ireland's (CPNI) attendance at the meeting on 7 March 2024, the Committee noted an update from CPNI on engagement with the Department of Health in relation to the funding of community pharmacy services.

5. Briefing from the Minister of Health

The Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA and the following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 2:21 pm:

Jim Wilkinson, Deputy Secretary Head of Health and Care Policy Group;

Chris Matthews, Deputy Secretary, Resources and Corporate Management Group;
and

Brigitte Worth, Director of Finance.

The Minister briefed the Committee on the challenges facing the Department of Health and his priorities going forward.

The Chairperson declared an interest as currently taking a career break from her role as a Social Worker with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Minister agreed to provide further information on a number of issues.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the officials for their attendance.

6. Tobacco and Vapes Bill – Proposed Legislative Consent Motion

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 4:11 pm:

Professor Sir Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer;

Bryan Dooley, Head of Health Improvement Policy Branch; and

Karen Oldham, Health Improvement Policy Branch.

The Chief Medical Officer briefed the Committee on the proposed Legislative Consent Motion relating to Northern Ireland's inclusion in the UK Government's Tobacco and Vaping Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Chief Medical Officer and officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Institute for Public Health to brief the Committee on its work in relation to the planned Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore whether this subject was an area in which it could engage with the NI Youth Assembly.

7. SL1 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Health to make a statutory rule which provides for an inflationary uplift in the charges recovered in cases where an injured person who receives a compensation payment in respect of his injury has received hospital treatment or ambulance services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health providing additional information following the Department's finance briefing at the meeting on 29 February.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health providing detail on funding to support the cervical screening reviews in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.
- iii. The Committee noted SR 2024/30 (C.1) The Adoption and Children (2022 Act) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 which brings into operation sections of the Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.
- iv. The Committee noted a public petition titled, 'Funding the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice' was laid in the Assembly on 5 March 2024 by Phillip Brett MLA.

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Competition and Markets Authority outlining some of its work that relates to the Committee for Health's remit.
- vi. The Committee considered a request from Haemophilia NI to meet the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would consider this request.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Food Standards Agency regarding its role and remit.
- viii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly regarding meeting with the Committee for Health.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Clerk would engage with the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly to identify areas of potential engagement.

- ix. The Committee considered correspondence from the Institute of Public Health regarding the Westminster Tobacco and Vapes Bill and offering to identify opportunities to support the work of the Committee.

The Committee noted its earlier agreement that the Institute of Public Health would be invited to brief the Committee on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

- x. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding SR 2023/139 The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Powers to Act for the Protection of Public Health) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023.
- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual requesting to brief the Committee on the effects of the use of Essure, a permanent contraceptive medical device for women.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would consider this request.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted that a visit to the Marie Curie Hospice in Belfast had been arranged to take place on 11 April 2024.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 2:00 pm on Thursday, 21 March 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

21 March 2024