



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

29 January 2026

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Phillip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies:

Linda Dillon MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

In Attendance: Keith McBride, Clerk
Roisin Donnelly, Senior Assistant Clerk
Michael Doran, Senior Assistant Clerk
Shannen Lofthouse, Assistant Clerk
Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk
Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor
Caroline Devlin, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2.01pm in closed session.

1. Apologies

Linda Dillon MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

2. Chairperson's Business

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025.

4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Adult Protection Bill- Oral Briefing from Western Health and Social Care Trust.

The following representatives joined the meeting remotely at 2.30pm:

- Dr Tom Cassidy, Director of Children & Families/Executive Director of Social Work, Western Health and Social Care Trust;
- Mr Stephen McLaughlin, Assistant Director - Social Work Learning Development/Governance and Adult Safeguarding, Western Health and Social Care Trust;
- Ms Laura Coyle, Acting Head of Service (Adult Safeguarding), Western Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Mr Gavin Hamilton, Chief Social Work Information Officer, Western Health and Social Care Trust.

The representatives briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their briefing.

6. Adult Protection Bill- Oral Briefing from Patient and Client Council.

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.58pm:

- Ms Meadhbha Monaghan, CEO, Patient and Client Council; and
- Mr Peter Hutchinson, Senior Policy Impact and Influence Manager, Patient and Client Council

The representatives briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their briefing.

7. Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol- Oral Briefing from the Department.

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.42pm:

- Prof. Sir Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health; and
- Mr Gary Maxwell, Head of Health Development Policy Branch, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on Minimum Unit Pricing of Alcohol.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister to express its support for the introduction of legislation for Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol.

8. Written Briefing from the Department- Respite Services/Short Breaks.

The Committee considered a written briefing from the Department regarding Respite Services/Short Breaks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the following:

- Confirmation on how many families will be affected by the delay in opening Redwood and Lindsay House, as the Committee is concerned this represents a failure to the families on the edge of care.
- Details of who holds lead responsibility in the Department for Health for this policy area.
- A comprehensive breakdown of the funding allocated and the funding spent to date.

- Information on what the Department is doing to support the transition of children to adult services.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Community Pharmacy briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this to Community Pharmacy for information.

- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding a Stroke Action Plan update.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from ADHD Voices NI regarding a request for Committee scrutiny on ADHD Services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment and request to be copied into a response.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from Royal College of Psychiatrists regarding a follow up paper after the Winter Committee Clinic.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include this in 16 April Committee meeting pack.

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from Pharmaceutical Society NI regarding Code of Conduct, Ethics and Performance for Pharmacists.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from Youth Assembly regarding and update following first plenary.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a copy of a complaint to the Belfast Trust.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a copy of a freedom of information request to the PSNI.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from ADHD Voices with a copy of a formal complaint to the Department of Health regarding ADHD Services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request to be copied into a response from the Department to ADHD Voices.

- x. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Patient Client Council Briefing on Adult Protection Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Patient Client Council for comment.

10. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the draft forward work plan.

11. Any Other Business

The Committee welcomed the news that waiting lists were being reduced; however, it agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a breakdown of how this reduction is being achieved.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the following:

- Specifics relating to the 200,000 reduction, including a full breakdown of procedures and the number of patients treated.
- A breakdown of where the waiting lists started in April 2025 and where they are as of the end of January in each waiting list.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place in Shankill Women's Centre at 2pm on 5 February.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.26pm.

Phillip McGuigan MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

5 February 2026