



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**Thursday, 5 March 2020
Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Mr Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Bradley MLA
Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA
Mr Gerry Carroll MLA
Mr Alan Chambers MLA
Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Ms Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Apologies: None.

In Attendance: Ms Éilis Haughey (Clerk)
Ms Deirdre Farry (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10.33 am in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson advised Members that he and the Deputy Chairperson had met with the Minister of Health and the Deputy Chief Medical Officer in advance of the Minister's statement to the Assembly on Monday regarding the emergence of Coronavirus.
- ii. The Chairperson advised Members that he had attended two events at which the issue of adverse childhood experiences was discussed, one hosted by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and the other by the Safeguarding Board.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add the consideration of adverse childhood experiences to its Forward Work Programme.

iii. The Chairperson advised Members that he had taken part in a number of media interviews in relation to Coronavirus.

3. **Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020.

4. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Departmental Briefing – Reform of Adult Social Care and ‘Power to People’ Report**

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.36 am:

Mr Sean Holland, Chief Social Worker, Department of Health

Ms Jackie McIlroy, Deputy Chief Social Worker, Department of Health

Mr Mark Lee, Director, Mental Health, Disability and Older People, Department of Health

The Chairperson declared an interest as formerly being employed as a Social Worker and currently taking a career break.

The officials briefed the Committee on the reform of adult social care in Northern Ireland and the ‘Power to People’ report.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a number of issues raised by Members during the question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The meeting was suspended at 11.49 am.

The meeting resumed at 12.01 pm.

6. **Departmental Briefing – Recommendations of the O’Hara Report into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths**

The following officials joined the meeting at 12.02 pm:

Mr Conrad Kirkwood, Chairperson, Serious Adverse Incidents Workstream, Department of Health

Ms Donna Ruddy, Chairperson, RQIA Remit Sub-Group, Department of Health

Mr David Best, Chairperson, Death Certification Workstream, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on the Hyponatraemia Implementation Programme to address the recommendations arising from the O'Hara Report of the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia Related Deaths.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms Órlaithí Flynn left the meeting at 12.28 pm.

Mr Alan Chambers left the meeting at 12.29pm.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

7. SR 2020/17 The Mental Capacity (Research) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020/17 The Mental Capacity (Research) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which have been laid to substitute SR 2019/193 The Mental Capacity (Research) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and provide a specific list of those who can act as appropriate bodies for the purpose of approving research under the Mental Capacity Act 2016.

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health to the Committee's request for further information on the proposed Rule.

Agreed: That the Committee for Health has considered SR 2020/17 The Mental Capacity (Research) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and had no objection to the Rule.

8. SR 2020/19 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee had considered SR 2020/19 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 at its meeting on 20 February 2020, and agreed that it had no objection to the Rule subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had no issues to raise with the technical elements of the Statutory Rule.

9. SL1 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SL1 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 which would

ensure that hospital treatment for Coronavirus disease is provided to any visitor to Northern Ireland without charge.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

10. SR 2020/23 The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020/23 The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2020 which would extend the list of notifiable diseases specified in Schedule 1 to the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, to include coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

Mr Alan Chambers rejoined the meeting at 12.48 pm.

Agreed: That the Committee for Health has considered SR2020/23 The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, had no objection to the Rule.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Minister for Health to his Executive colleagues regarding Coronavirus.
- ii. The Committee noted the Minister for Health's Urgent Written Statement to the Assembly regarding his Department's response to the emergence of Coronavirus.
- iii. The Committee considered a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for information on the safety and viability of rural fire services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health to be kept informed of the progress of the review of the Service Delivery Model with regard to NIFRS service provision.

- iv. The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for further information relating to SR 2019/62 Health and Personal Social Services (Superannuation) and Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2019 concerning health and social care pensions.
- v. The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for further information on IVF treatment; and agreed to allow a period for consideration before seeking further information on the timeline for implementation.
- vi. The Committee considered the Department of Health's second progress report on the implementation of the Autism Strategy 2013-2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk would prepare a draft letter to the Department of Health requesting information on the Autism Strategy, for consideration by the Committee at the next meeting.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Health regarding the planned meeting between senior Department of Health officials and those affected by the Neurology Recall.

viii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister for Health providing further information requested by the Committee relating to elective care waiting times.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the Department that it will seek a further breakdown of the figures provided at the next budget briefing session.

ix. The Committee noted a response from the Minister for Health to the Committee's request for further information relating to SR 2017/200 The Healthy Start Scheme and Day Food Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

x. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Minister for Health to the BirthWise charity regarding plans to commence a review of Maternity and Neonatal Services.

xi. The Committee noted a copy of the Minister for Health's Urgent Oral Statement to the Assembly on the Department's response to the emergence of Coronavirus.

xii. The Committee noted a press release regarding the Ciclovía Belfast 2020 traffic free cycling event which will take place on 29 March 2020.

xiii. The Committee noted a copy of the NCB scoping review report relating to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework for Children and Young People.

xiv. The Committee considered a request from Hernia Mesh Awareness NI to meet with the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

xv. The Committee considered an invitation from Northern Ireland Practice and Educational Council to attend its annual conference celebrating the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should respond to the invitation directly.

xvi. Correspondence from the Royal College of General Practitioners NI regarding difficulties for doctors from the Republic of Ireland in getting their training and qualifications recognised in Northern Ireland, was noted by the Committee pending further scrutiny of Brexit-related matters.

xvii. The Committee noted HM Government's report, 'The Future Relationship with the EU, The UK's Approach to Negotiations'.

xviii. The Committee noted the Examiner of Statutory Rules' third report of session 2019-2020.

xix. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the budget process.

xx. The Committee considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care to attend its 2020 Conference on 30 April to 1 May 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members should inform the Committee Office if they wished to attend.

xxi. The Committee considered a request from a Cancer Support Group to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the request as part of its Forward Work Programme.

- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Health advising that the UK Department of Health and Social Care has recently launched a UK-wide consultation on proposals to amend the Branded Health Service Medicines (Costs) Regulations 2018.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

14. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be on Thursday, 12 March 2020, at 10.30 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.53 pm.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____