



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 10 April 2025

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Diane Forsythe, MLA

Tom Buchanan, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA (Temporary Chairperson)

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Apologies: Daniel McCrossan, MLA

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA

Colin Crawford, MLA

In Attendance: Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)
Marion Johnson (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting opened in public session at 2.11 pm.

Colm Gildernew, MLA was nominated by Diane Forsythe, MLA to take the Chair of the Committee in the absence of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

Cathal Boylan, MLA seconded this nomination.

Agreed: Members agreed that Colm Gildernew, MLA take the Chair for the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Daniel McCrossan, MLA, Cheryl Brownlee, MLA and Colin Crawford, MLA.

2. Draft minutes

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 3 April 2025 were agreed.

3. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson reminded members of their requirement to register their interests under Standing Order 69(5).

Diane Forsythe MLA declared an interest as Chair of the All Party Group on Voluntary and Community Services in relation to Agenda Item 7.

4. Chairperson's Business

5. Matters Arising

6. Correspondence

Members noted a letter from the British Medical Association regarding evidence to the inquiry into Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed to defer consideration of the letter to Agenda item 9, following the update on the inquiry.

Members noted an update to the MOR on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland from Peter May, Accounting Officer, Department of Health.

Agreed: Members agreed to defer consideration of the update to 15 May 2025.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department of Health to seek an update on recommendations due for completion in March 2025.

7. Inquiry into Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland: Evidence Session

The following witnesses and officials joined the meeting at 2.16 pm:

Emma Purdon, Director of Communities and Family Services, Extern;

Patricia Devlin, Programme Manager, Criminal Justice Services, Extern;

Fiona Greene, Chief Executive, NIACRO;

Rachel Long, Director of Operations, NIACRO;

Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts, Department of Finance; and

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NIAO.

Members heard evidence on reducing adult reoffending in Northern Ireland.

The Chair thanked the witnesses and Officials for attending. Witnesses left the meeting at 3.33 pm

The meeting moved into closed session at 3.34 pm.

8. Inquiry into Reducing Adult Reoffending in Northern Ireland: Discussion following Evidence Session

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.34 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Conor McGeown, Audit Manager, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Paul Turley, Senior Auditor, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Members discussed the evidence heard.

Diane Forsythe, MLA left the meeting at 3.47 pm.

Witnesses left the meeting at 3.47 pm.

9. Inquiry into Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland: Update

The Clerk provided an update to members regarding analysis of the data gathered through the Citizen Space survey.

Agreed: Members agreed to proposals for the analysis and reporting on the data.

Members agreed that additional time will need to be factored in to allow for this analysis to be completed and that the publication date for Access to GPs would need to be amended to reflect this.

Members noted a response to its letter to Peter May, Accounting Officer, Department of Health following the recent Departmental evidence session.

Agreed: Members agreed to share the letter with the Northern Ireland Audit Office for inclusion in the final report.

Members noted a letter from a member of the public to be included in evidence to the inquiry.

Agreed: Members agreed to share the letter with the Northern Ireland Audit Office for inclusion in the final report.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider a draft response to the BMA at its next meeting.

10. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Members agreed the draft forward work programme.

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.07 pm:

Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General;

Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, Northern Ireland Audit Office;

Members received a briefing on the NIAO report into Health and Social Care Imaging Services in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members agreed to retain primacy over the report pending further consideration of future inquiries.

11. Any Other Business

12. Date, Time, and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the Senate Chamber on Thursday 1 May 2025 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.39 pm.

Daniel McCrossan

Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee

1 May 2025