



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Health

## Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 13 May 2021

**Meeting Location:** virtual meeting

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Cara Hunter MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)



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The meeting commenced at 9.30 am in open session.

### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

*The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 5.*

### **2. Mental Health Awareness Week: Briefing from the Minister of Health**

Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA joined the meeting at 9.30 am and was accompanied by the following Department of Health officials:

Dr Tomas Adell, Head of Mental Health and Capacity Unit; and

Peter Toogood, Director of Mental Health.

The Minister of Health briefed the Committee on issues relating to the provision of mental health care.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*The Chairperson declared an interest as formerly being employed as a social worker and working with crisis response teams.*

*The Minister of Health left the meeting at 10.26 am.*

The question and answer session continued with the departmental officials.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for attending the meeting.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

*The meeting was suspended at 10.59 am and resumed at 11.12 am.*



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### 3. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson provided an update on the Committee's activities to highlight mental health awareness week, including engagement with the Mental Health Policy Group and an informal meeting with a number of young people facilitated by VOYPIC, NICCY and Youth Action.
- ii. The Chairperson drew attention to a series of online events organised by the Alzheimer's Society to mark Dementia Action Week from 17 to 23 May.
- iii. The Chairperson referred to the private members' debate on autism that took place on 11 May and the Deputy Chairperson provided an update on her Private Members' Bill on Autism.
- iv. The Chairperson welcomed the correspondence from the Minister of Health on the outcome of his Department's consultation on proposals to extend modifications to children's social care legislation and advising of his decision not to proceed with the proposed extension.

### 4. Draft Minutes

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2021.

### 5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



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**6. Mental Health Awareness Week: Briefing from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Interim Mental Health Champion**

Koulla Yiasouma, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People, and Siobhan O'Neill, Interim Mental Health Champion joined the meeting at 11.19 am.

The Commissioner and the Interim Mental Health Champion briefed the Committee on issues relating to the mental health of children and young people.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Jonathan Buckley left the meeting at 12.30 pm.*

The Chairperson thanked Koulla Yiasouma and Siobhan O'Neill for attending the meeting.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

**7. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing the outcome of his consultation on proposals to extend modifications to children's social care legislation and advising of his decision not to proceed with the proposed extension.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the scrutiny of regulations relating to the easing of coronavirus restrictions.
- iii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing further information requested by Members on coronavirus restriction regulations.



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- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of his support for the inclusion of end of life and bereavement care within the Programme for Government.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Construction Employers Federation on the Strategic Investment Board Call for Evidence on a new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- vi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding quarantine guidance for people travelling to Northern Ireland from within the common travel area and the impact on those wishing to visit relatives in nursing homes.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance sharing a RaSe paper to assist Committee scrutiny of the NI Protocol and other EU exit matter.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the Committee's request for briefing on proposed new commissioning structures in support of its consideration of the Health and Social Care Bill.
- ix. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health providing further information requested by the Committee in relation to the Department's work on the rebuilding of health and social care services.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Department of Health on the composition of the rebuilding service working groups and sub-groups.



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- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Alzheimer's Society regarding a series of online events to mark Dementia Action Week and requesting to brief the Committee.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Food Standards Agency providing an update on consideration of the Provisional Common Framework on Food and Feed Safety and Hygiene and the Provisional Common Framework on Nutrition Labelling, Composition and Standards.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual requesting to meet the Committee in relation to the mother and baby institutions.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Chairperson would write to the individual to outline the Committee's role and ongoing work on this issue.

### 8. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to include briefing from CHASNI (Care Home Advice and Support Northern Ireland) in its forward work programme.

The Clerk provided an update on the response to the Committee's call to evidence on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill and confirmed that the consideration of the written evidence received was scheduled for the next meeting.

### 9. Any Other Business

The Chairperson reminded Members that an informal meeting with representatives of 123GP was arranged for 14 May as part of the Committee's activities to highlight mental health awareness week.



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#### **10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 20 May 2021.

*The meeting was adjourned at 12.59 pm.*

**Colm Gildernew MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Health**