



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 9 September 2021

Meeting Location: Virtual meeting (Senate Chamber)

Present:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Cara Hunter MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

In Attendance:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 9.35 am in public session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson advised that 5th to 11th September is Migraine Awareness week and that events to raise awareness on Blood Cancer would take place throughout the month of September.
- ii. The Chairperson updated the Committee on a round table event that he had attended on HPV related cancers.
- iii. The Chairperson provided an update on a meeting that he had attended on global access to COVID-19 vaccines.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 8 July, 29 July and 19 August 2021.



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4. Matters Arising

- i. Mr Carroll raised the subject of the recent pay offer for health workers, which was referred to in the Health Department briefing to the Committee at the meeting on 19 August, and proposed that the Committee take a position to oppose the pay offer and write to the Minister on this matter.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider Mr Carroll's proposal at the next meeting.

- ii. Ms Ní Chuilín raised the subject of the Department's work relating to Belfast Trust's recall of neurology patients.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an urgent written update from the Department of Health on its ongoing work relating to this matter.

- iii. Ms Bradshaw raised the current situation in relation to COVID-19 within the community and the strategy to manage the response to COVID-19 going forward.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek urgent briefing from the Health Minister, Chief Medical Officer and Public Health Agency officials on the response to COVID-19 pressures.

5. Health and Social Care Bill: Department of Health Briefing

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.48 am:

Martina Moore, Director of Organisational Change:

Allan Chapman, Organisational Change Directorate; and

Vincent Ramirez, Organisational Change Directorate.



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The officials briefed the Committee on the Department's response to issues raised by the Committee on the Health and Social Care Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

Alan Chambers left the meeting at 10.23 am.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.34 am.

Assembly Bill Clerks, Aoibheann Baker and Claire McCanny joined the meeting at 10.34 am.

The Committee discussed the Department's response to the Committee's suggested amendments of the Health and Social Care Bill.

Órlaithí Flynn joined the meeting at 10.43 am.

Jonathan Buckley joined the meeting at 10.52 am.

Pam Cameron joined the meeting at 11.02 am.

The Chairperson thanked the Bill Clerks for attending the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 11.07 am and resumed at 11.12 am in public session.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore in further detail with the Department of Health a number of amendments relating to: facilitating the continuation of LCGs in the absence of new commissioning structures being in place, the introduction of reporting requirements to ensure transparency and accountability; and the expansion of secondary legislation powers in relation to the role of the Assembly on future commissioning arrangements and structures.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an additional meeting next week, if required, to discuss the Department's response.

The Chairperson advised that as a consequence of the Assembly recall at 12.00 pm it would not be possible to consider all scheduled items of business.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to postpone its consideration of statutory rules and that agreement relating to the listed items of correspondence in the meeting papers would be sought via email.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Clerk updated the Committee on its forward work programme priorities for September.

The Clerk advised Members that a request had been received to hold a joint meeting with the Education Committee to hear from the Education Minister, Health Minister and Chief Medical Officer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Health Committee Clerk would work with the Clerk of the Education Committee to identify a suitable date for a joint meeting.



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7. Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill: Department of Health Briefing

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.14 am:

Ryan Wilson, Director of Secondary Care; and
Ian Plunkett, Head of Organ Donation Bill Team.

The officials briefed the Committee on the principles of the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee noted a departmental briefing paper on the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department publish its response to the outcome of its consultation on the Bill before the second stage debate in plenary.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.



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9. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 9.30 am on Thursday 16 September 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.55 am.

Colm Gildernew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Health