



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 10 February 2022

Meeting Location: virtual meeting

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Apologies:

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)



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Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Supervisor)

Chris McAfee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 9.34 am in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

The Chairperson informed the Committee, that under Standing Order 115 (6), Carál Ní Chuilín MLA had delegated authority to him to vote on Carál's behalf at the meeting.

2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson referred to the joint meeting held with the Committee for Education on 9 February to receive briefing from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request briefing from the Minister of Health on children's mental health services.

- ii. The Chairperson advised that a VOYPIC event to launch its report on the co-design of a series of standards for care planning and review meetings would take place in the Long Gallery on 16 February.
- iii. The Chairperson welcomed the passing of the Organ Donation Bill through its final stage in the Assembly on 9 February.
- iv. The Chairperson advised that it was Children's Mental Health Week.



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3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2022.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Briefing from the Health and Social Care Trusts

The following officials from the Health and Social Care Trusts joined the meeting by video conference at 9.46 am:

Dr Cathy Jack, Chief Executive, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;

Jennifer Welsh, Chief Executive, Northern Health and Social Care Trust;

Neil Guckian, Chief Executive, Western Health and Social Care Trust;

Melanie McClements, Director of Acute Services, Southern Health and Social Care Trust; and

Nicki Patterson, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Primary Care, Older People and Executive Director of Nursing, South Eastern Trust.

The officials briefed the Committee on current pressures in health and social care.

A question and answer session followed.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a number of issues raised.



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The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The meeting was suspended at 11.21 am and resumed at 11.30 am.

6. Hospital Parking Charges Bill – briefing from the Bill Sponsor

Aisling Reilly MLA and Catherine Kelly, Sinn Féin party support officer, joined the meeting at 11.31 am.

Ms Reilly providing briefing in response to the evidence the Committee had considered relating to the Hospital Parking Charges Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked Ms Reilly and Ms Kelly for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request briefing from RaISe on the operation of free hospital car parking in other jurisdictions.

7. Adoption and Children Bill – Briefing from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 12.19 am:

Eilis McDaniel, Director of Family and Children's Policy;

Julie Stephenson, Adoption and Children Bill Team; and

Adele Willis, Adoption and Children Bill Team.

The officials briefed the Committee on the Department's proposed amendments to the Adoption and Children Bill and the delegated powers within the Bill.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.



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The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to withdraw its opposition that Clause 143 stand part of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to have draft Bill amendments prepared to ensure the provisions in Clauses 24, 52 and 77 are subject to the draft affirmative resolution in the Assembly.

8. SL1: Family Practitioner Services Independent Appeals Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 12.58 pm:

John Millar, Principal in Transformation, Planning & Performance Group; and
Noreen Meehan, Deputy Principal, Transformation, Planning & Performance Group.

The officials briefed the Committee on a proposed statutory rule to allow an independent appeal panel to be established for Family Practitioner Services.

A question and answer session followed.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on issues raised.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

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



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Órlaithí Flynn left the meeting at 1.10 pm.

9. LCM: The Health and Care Bill – Information about payments etc. to persons in the health care sector

Andrew Dawson from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 1.12 pm and briefed the Committee on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on provisions in the Health and Care Bill in respect of information about payments etc to persons in the health care sector.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Dawson for his attendance.

The Committee noted that the Minister of Health's motion relating to the LCM would be scheduled for plenary debate in the coming weeks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish all documents relating to the Committee's consideration of the LCM on the Committee's webpage.

Colin McGrath left the meeting at 1.23 pm.

10. LCM: The Health and Care Bill – Part 3 Arm's Length Bodies Transfer of Functions Provision

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 1.25 pm:

Joan Hardy, Secondary Care Policy and Legislation; and

Dr Janice Bailie, Assistant Director, HSC R&D Division.



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The officials briefed the Committee on the Legislative Consent Memorandum on provisions in the Health and Care Bill in respect of powers to transfer or delegate functions of a relevant body to another relevant body.

A question and answer session followed.

The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on issues raised.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The Committee noted that the Minister of Health's motion relating to the LCM would be scheduled for plenary debate in the coming weeks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish all documents relating to the Committee's consideration of the LCM on the Committee's webpage.

11.LCM: Virginity Testing and Hymenoplasty – consideration of draft report

The Committee noted that the Minister of Health's motion relating to the LCM would be scheduled for plenary debate in the coming weeks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish all documents relating to the Committee's consideration of the LCM on the Committee's webpage.

12.SL1: The Pharmaceutical Services (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Committee considered a proposal by the Department of Health to make a statutory rule to make provision relating to those who can prescribe medicines and provisions relating to the supply of drugs in accordance with a pandemic treatment protocol.



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

13. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding Long Covid clinics.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of a consultation on proposed amendments to the rules for the HSC Pension Scheme and the supplementary Additional Voluntary Contribution and Injury Benefit arrangements.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the reform of stroke services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the Stroke Association and NI Chest, Heart and Stroke as these organisations had raised this matter with the Committee.

- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding Long Covid support and research in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding Long Covid in children and young people.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- vi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding health issues associated with COVID-19 vaccinations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Minister's correspondence to the individual who had raised this matter with the Committee.

- vii. The Committee noted the publication of the CJINI Report, *A Review into the operation of care and supervision units in the Northern Ireland Prison Service*.

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the management of cross-border kinship placements for children following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Justice regarding cross-border kinship care.

- x. The Committee noted the Examiner of Statutory Rules' Eleventh and Twelfth Reports of Session 2021-2022.

- xi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Under Secretary of State at the Department of Health and Social Care regarding the Health and Care Bill and the application of EU standards to goods travelling between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

- xii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from an individual to the Minister of Health regarding the treatment of a relative in a nursing home.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the individual's correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.



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- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the Disabled Student Allowance Scheme.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the individual's correspondence to the Department for the Economy for a response to the issues raised.
- xiv. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the availability of home care packages.
- xv. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the regulation of statutory mental health services.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding COVID-19 vaccinations for children and young people.
- xvii. The Committee noted the publication of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance commissioned report, *The economic case for increasing access to treatment for women with common mental health problems during the perinatal period*.
- xviii. The Committee noted the Assembly RaISe briefing paper on Covid-19 funding, allocations and spending in Northern Ireland.
- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Department of Finance's proposal to make a statutory rule under powers conferred by the Coronavirus Act 2020 relating to death certification and registration.
- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Spring Supplementary Estimates Memoranda.

Pam Cameron declared an interest as the Bill Sponsor for the Autism (Amendment) Bill in advance of considering the next two items of correspondence.



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- xxi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding potential amendments to the Autism (Amendment) Bill.
- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from the NI Adult ASD Diagnostic Forum on the Autism (Amendment) Bill.
- xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of his intention to undertake a review of children's social care services.

14. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

The Clerk provided an update on plans to hold an informal engagement event on 3 March 2022.

15. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

16. 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, 17 February 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.45 pm.



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