



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 25 November 2021

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

In Attendance:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Supervisor)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Ellen Wilson (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 9.32 am in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

The Chairperson informed the Committee that Carál Ní Chuilín MLA would join the meeting later and that under Standing Order 115 (6), Ms Ní Chuilín had delegated authority to him to vote on her behalf at the meeting in her absence.

2. Chairperson's Business

- i. The Chairperson provided an update on a meeting he held with RNIB.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update from the Department of Health on how it is supporting people with sensory disabilities to access public health information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask all of the Executive Departments to consider how they communicate with, and provide access to information, to people with sensory disabilities.

- ii. The Chairperson referred to the Minister of Health's work from home advice.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Thursday committee meetings should be held fully virtually going forward.

- iii. The Chairperson referred to the announcement of a support package of funding for domiciliary care and the wider social care sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for further detail on the support package.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask for briefing from the Department of Health on the support package and wider issues relating to domiciliary and social care.

- iv. The Chairperson advised that it was Carers' Rights Day on 25 November 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health how it plans to recognise and support carers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the views of Carers NI on this matter.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 18 and 23 November 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

5. Adoption and Children Bill – Evidence from Barnardos NI, Family Care Adoption Services and Family Routes

The following representatives from Barnardos NI, Family Care Adoption Services and Family Routes joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.42 am:

Helen Browne, Assistant Head of Fostering, Barnardos NI;

Maggie McSorley, Chief Executive Officer, Family Care Adoption Services;
Barnardos NI;

Lynda Wilson, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Family Routes; and

Roxanne Small, Project Co-ordinator of the TESSA Service, Family Routes.

The representatives briefed the Committee on the Adoption and Children Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Carál Ní Chuilín joined the meeting at 10.48 am.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of his intention to table an amendment to the Adoption and Children Bill which will introduce a statutory duty to compel institutions (statutory and non-statutory) to preserve and not destroy records relating to Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and other related institutions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health regarding its consideration of cross-border kinship adoptions and current arrangements and support for overseas adoptions.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Paula Bradley advised that she is considering an amendment to the Bill relating to the removal of the defence of reasonable chastisement for the consideration of the Committee.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 and resumed at 11.00 am.

6. The Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill – Briefing from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.00 am:

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

The officials briefed the Committee on the Department's response to the issues raised in evidence on the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health responding to evidence to the issues raised in evidence on the Organ and Tissue Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill.

The Chairperson advised that the Committee would begin its informal deliberation of the Bill at the meeting on 2 December and requested that Members provide any suggested amendments to the Clerk in advance.



Northern Ireland Assembly

7. The Autism (Amendment) Bill – Briefing from the Bill Sponsor

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11.38 am:

Pam Cameron MLA, Chairperson of the APG on Autism and Bill Sponsor;

Kerry Boyd, Chief Executive, Autism NI;

Kelly Maxwell, Director of Family Support, Autism NI; and

Dr Arlene Cassidy, Special Advisor (Policy and Research), Autism NI.

The Chairperson declared an interest as formerly being employed as a social worker.

Ms Cameron providing briefing on the issues raised in evidence on the Autism (Amendment) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the Ms Cameron and the representatives from Autism NI for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson advised that the Committee would begin its informal deliberation of the Bill at the meeting on 2 December and requested that Members provide any suggested amendments to the Clerk in advance.

8. Hospital Parking Charges Bill

The Committee considered its management of the committee stage of the Hospital Parking Charges Bill.

The Committee noted the RaISe Bill Paper on the Hospital Parking Charges Bill.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- Agreed:** The Committee agreed the call for evidence for the Bill and a three-week period for receipt of written submissions.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to advise the Clerk of additions to the stakeholder list of organisations that would be invited to provide a written submission.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request an extension to the Committee Stage of the Bill to the end of February.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish papers relating to its consideration of the Bill on its webpage.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to refer the Bill to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for delegated powers advice.
- Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek further information on similar schemes that are in effect in Scotland and Wales.

9. SR 2021/293 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation), (Amendment No. 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered correspondence from the Department of Health responding to issues raised by Members at last week's meeting on SR 2021/293 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation), (Amendment No. 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

- Agreed:** The Committee considered SR 2021/293 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation), (Amendment No. 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and agreed it had no objection to the Rule.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

10. Draft SR: The Smoke-Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered Draft SR: The Smoke-Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which: extend the existing smoke-free legislation by setting out the circumstances when private vehicles are smoke-free; allow the use of fixed penalty notices for offences in relation to smoke free private vehicles; and designates both the PSNI and district councils as enforcement authorities for all smoke free vehicles.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further detail from the Department of Health on the provisions of Draft SR: The Smoke-Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: The Committee considered Draft SR: The Smoke-Free (Private Vehicles) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

11. Draft SR: The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered Draft SR: The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which makes it an offence to sell nicotine inhaling products to persons aged under 18 and for an adult to purchase nicotine inhaling products on behalf of a person aged under 18.

Agreed: The Committee considered Draft SR: The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

12. Draft SR: The Tobacco Retailer (Fixed Penalty) (Amount) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered Draft SR: The Tobacco Retailer (Fixed Penalty) (Amount) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which allows for the inclusion of amounts of fixed penalties for offences relating to the sale or proxy purchase of nicotine containing products.

Agreed: The Committee considered Draft SR: The Tobacco Retailer (Fixed Penalty) (Amount) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

The meeting was suspended at 12.24 pm and resumed at 12.47 pm.

Present:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Deborah Erskine MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA



Northern Ireland
Assembly

13.SL1: Coronavirus Act (Extension of Powers to Act for the Protection of Public Health (Northern Ireland) Order 2021

Richard Duffin, Health Protection Branch 3, Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 12.45 pm.

The official briefed the Committee on the proposed extension of powers in the Coronavirus Act.

A question and answer session followed.

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

The Chairperson thanked the official for his attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

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

14. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health providing further information on the continuing healthcare policy.
- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the COVID-19 statistics dashboard.
- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the rationale and evidence for decisions made in relation to coronavirus regulations.

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



Northern Ireland
Assembly

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Clerk of the Youth Assembly regarding the establishment of Youth Assembly Committees.
- v. The Committee considered correspondence from Strabane and District Caring Services regarding the current state of domiciliary care services within the Western Trust.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health and the Western Health and Social Care Trust for a response to the issues raised.
- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Patient and Client Council seeking views on its draft Statement of Strategic Intent 2022-2025.
- vii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland to the Minister of State, Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG regarding the provision of medicines to Northern Ireland.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for a response to the issues raised.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from Community Pharmacy NI regarding the Health and Social Care Board's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment public consultation.
- ix. The Committee noted the RNIB Need to Talk Newsletter for November 2021.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from the PHA's Regional Personal and Public Involvement Forum to the Minister of Health regarding communication over the COVID-19 period.
- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the Services Remobilising Pathway.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health and the Patient and Client Council for a response to the issues raised.

- xii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding age appropriate care for teenagers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of Health, Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for a response to the issues raised.

- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding COVID-19 Vaccine data.

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

- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the General Medical Council providing a copy of its response to the Department of Health's consultation on the Duty of Candour and Being Open Framework.

15. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

Members highlighted a number of issues to be scheduled in the forward work programme.

16. Any Other Business

There was no other business.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

17. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 12.45 pm on Tuesday, 30 November 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.29 pm.

Colm Gildernew MLA, Chairperson, Committee for Health