



Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 30 September 2021

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Colm Gildernew MLA (Chairperson)

Gerry Carroll MLA

Alan Chambers MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Cara Hunter MLA

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

In Attendance:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Officer)



In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 9.02 am in public session.

The Committee agree to move to agenda item 6.

6. Health and Social Care Bill – Consideration and Approval of the Committee Report

The Committee considered the final draft report on the Health and Social Care Bill.

Title Page, Committee Powers and Membership and Table of Contents

The Committee considered the Title Page, Committee Powers and Membership, and Table of Contents as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Title Page, Committee Powers and Membership, and Table of Contents.

Executive Summary

The Committee considered the Executive Summary of the report as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Executive Summary.



Introduction

The Committee considered the Introduction and Committee Approach section of the report (paragraphs 1 to 15) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Introduction section of the report.

Consideration of the Bill

The Committee considered the Consideration of the Bill section of the report (paragraphs 16 to 134) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Consideration of the Bill section of the report.

Regulatory Making Powers in the Bill

The Committee considered the Regulatory Making Powers in the Bill section of the report (paragraphs 135 to 139) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Regulatory Making Powers in the Bill section of the report.

Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill

The Committee considered the Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill section of the report (paragraphs 140 to 159) as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Clause by Clause Consideration of the Bill Section of the report.

Appendices

The Committee considered the Appendices section of the report.



Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content that the Appendices be included in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to approve the Minutes of Proceedings of this meeting for inclusion in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the Report on the Health and Social Care Bill to be published and issued to all MLAs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that an electronic copy of the Bill report should be sent to all organisations who provided evidence to the Committee on the Bill.

The consideration and approval of the Committee report session was reported by Hansard.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 2.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised Members that he had attended a panel event hosted by Brain Injuries Matter on Acquired Brain Injury.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 23 and 28 September 2021.



5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 9.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this correspondence further during its deliberations on the Bill.

- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the timescale for the introduction of the Adult Protection Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for further information on the prioritisation of primary legislation in the next mandate.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health providing an update on the progress of the Neurology Cohort 3 Patient Recall and the RQIA Expert Review of Records of Deceased Patients of Dr Watts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a written briefing from the Independent Neurology Inquiry on progress and the timeline for publishing the Inquiry report, and to schedule an oral briefing from the Inquiry Chair.



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- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance advising that it has asked the Departments to share their 3 year budgets with their Committees early in each financial year prior to the Budget (No.2) Bill debates.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health and to request early sight of the 3-year budget as set out by the Committee for Finance.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding the confidentiality and information sharing of services provided to children and young people and the capacity of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding Monthly Spending forecast and outturn for August 2021.

- vii. The Committee noted the ISNI Investing Department of Health Activity Report for September 2021.

- viii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding Unique Circumstances Funding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health and request further information on NDNA funding for unique circumstances.

- ix. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the availability of information on the source of COVID-19 infection and transmission.



Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.

- x. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding Pregabalin abuse in the community.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.

- xi. The Committee considered correspondence from PPE Global Solutions Ltd. regarding COVID-19 testing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.

- xii. The Committee noted the correspondence from British Dental Association delays in recognition payments being issued to independent dental contractors and dental teams.

- xiii. The Committee noted further correspondence from an individual regarding Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and Patient Client Council.

- xiv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding the provisions of the Health and Social Care Bill, introduced in Westminster, requiring the legislative consent of the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Department of Health on the provisions of the Bill that require legislative consent.

- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health in relation to suspended admissions to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health in relation to pressures on Health and Social Care staff.



- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health in relation to COVID-19 Indemnity Arrangement October 2021, Military Assistance for Civilian Authorities (MACA) Employer Liability.
- xviii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People to the Department of Health, in relation to Proposals for a New Regional Service Delivery Model for Separated and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.

Gerry Carroll joined the meeting at 9.11 am.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

Jonathan Buckley joined the meeting at 9.13 am

The Committee returned to agenda item 1.

1. Ministerial Briefing

The Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA, joined the meeting at 9.15 am. The Minister provided an update on the Department of Health's priorities and activities.

Professor Sir Michael McBride, Chief Medical Officer, joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.47 am.

Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 9.18 am



Cara Hunter joined the meeting at 9.22 am

A question and answer session followed.

Due to technical issues, the meeting was suspended at 9.32 am and resumed at 9.35 am.

The Minister agreed to provide further information on a number of issues raised.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and the Chief Medical Officer for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The meeting was suspended at 10.57 am and resumed at 11.06 am.

The Committee returned to agenda item 7.

7. Departmental briefing: October Monitoring

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.08 am:

Brigitte Worth, Director of Finance;

Preeti Miller, Head of Capital Planning, Infrastructure and Investment;

Dr Tomas Adell, Director of Transformation; and

Annette Palmer, Head of Financial Management Unit.

The officials briefed the Committee on the October monitoring round.

A question and answer session followed.

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



The Chairperson thanked the officials for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

8. Adoption and Children Bill - Departmental briefing on principles of the Bill

The following officials joined the meeting by video conference at 11.59 am:

Julie Stephenson, Head of Adoption and Children Bill Team;

Frances Nicholson, Social Services Officer.;

Liz Marsh, Member of Adoption and Children Team; and

Pamela Mallon, Member of Adoption and Children Team.

The officials briefed the Committee on the principles of the Adoption and Children Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

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

The Chairperson thanked the officials for attending.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Alan Chambers left the meeting at 12.45 pm.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.



11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 7 October 2021 at 9.30 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.51 pm.

Colm Gildernew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Health