



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday, 9 December 2021

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

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Keith McBride (Clerk)

Roisin Donnelly (Assistant Clerk)

Deirdre Farry (Assistant Clerk)

Brendan Miskelly (Clerical Supervisor)



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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 needed to leave the meeting early and that, under Standing Order 115 (6), she had delegated authority to him to vote on her behalf at the meeting in her absence.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's business.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 2 and 7 December 2021.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.



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5. Adoption and Children Bill – Evidence from NSPCC and NI Commissioner for Children and Young People

The following representatives from NSPCC and NICCY joined the meeting by video-conference at 9.34 am:

Koulla Yiasouma, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People; and
Natalie Whelehan, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, NSPCC.

Gerry Carroll and Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 9.37 am.

The Chairperson declared an interest as formerly being employed as a social worker and currently taking a career break.

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

A question and answer session followed.

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

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for its views on potential amendments to the Bill in relation to the definition of harm and for an update on the progress of the foster care regulations.

The meeting was suspended at 10:55 am and resumed at 11.07 am.



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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

6. Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill – Evidence from the Health and Social Care Trusts

The following officials from the Health and Social Care Trusts joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.07 am:

Heather Jackson, Interim Director, Trauma, Orthopaedics, Rehab, Dental, ENT, Obstetrics, and Sexual Health, Belfast HSCT;

Colin McMullan, Co-Director Maternity, Dental, ENT, Gynaecology and Sexual Health Services, Belfast HSCT;

Dr Siobhan Kirk, Associate Specialist in Gynaecology/Clinical Lead Sexual & Reproductive Health, Belfast HSCT;

Claire Galloway, Head of SARC and Sexual Health Services, Northern Trust;

Caroline Keown, Assistant Director for Integrated Maternity and Women's Health, Southern HSCT;



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Kieran Quinn, Interim Assistant Director, Women & Acute Child Health, South Eastern HSCT;

Maureen Miller, Head of Midwifery and Gynaecology, Western HSCT; and

Hilary Campbell, Lead Nurse for Public Health, Western HSCT.

The representatives providing briefing to the Committee in relation to the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Trust representatives agreed to provide the Committee with further information relating to the costs associated with the relocation of EMA services and the provision of security measures at Trust premises.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for further information relating to the regulation of Stanton Healthcare Belfast; to ask how the Department plans to address the issues of protests outside Trust properties in advance of the progress of the Bill; and to highlight that EMA services are not currently being provided in the Western Health and Social Care Trust due to staff absence.

The Committee agreed to move to the Travel Regulations and return to SR 315 later in the meeting.



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7. SR 2021/301 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Carol Picton-Lynas, Head of International Travel Regulations Department of Health joined the meeting by video-conference at 11.57 am: and briefed the Committee on four travel restrictions regulations.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the official for attending.

The briefing session was report by Hansard.

The Committee considered SR 2021/301 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which makes a number of amendments to the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/301 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and had no objection to the Rule.

8. SR 2021/312 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/312 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which: adds a number of countries to the Red list of countries; amends the self-isolation requirements relating to red list countries; and prevents aircraft and



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ships from red list countries arriving in Northern Ireland except in limited circumstances.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/312 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 9) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and had no objection to the Rule.

9. SR 2021 313 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/313 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which: amends the red list of countries; and prevents aircraft and ships from those countries arriving in Northern Ireland except in limited circumstances.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/313 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (2021 Consolidation) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and had no objection to the Rule.

10. SR 2021/316 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021/316 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which: amends the testing requirements relating to red list arrivals to Northern Ireland; amends the self-isolation requirements for non-red list arrivals; and updates the information that must be provided to passengers travelling to Northern Ireland.



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Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/316 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel, Operator Liability and Information to Passengers) (Amendment No. 10) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and had no objection to the Rule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health and the Executive Office for further information on self-isolation requirements and covid-recovery certificates.

The meeting was suspended at 12.21 pm and resumed at 12.32 pm in closed session.

11. The Autism (Amendment) Bill – Deliberations

The Deputy Chairperson declared her interest as being the Bill Sponsor for the Autism Bill.

Bill Clerks, Dr Kathryn Aiken and Phil Pateman joined the meeting at 12.32 pm.

The Committee continued its deliberations on the Autism (Amendment) Bill.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health to n raised in relation to the Autism Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it wished to make a number of recommendations within its report in relation to: the Department of Health's role to consult on the Autism Strategy; training for educational professionals and HSC staff; support provided; how the strategy addresses the needs of under-represented and under-served groups; funding reports; the role of the Reviewer to consult with people with lived experience; and reporting arrangements.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Bill Clerks to prepare draft amendments to provide for: how the Department will address waiting lists; clarity around what is meant by early intervention; clarity in relation to supported living/housing; the requirement for a cross-departmental



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approach; consistency of practice across education services; gender inclusion; the independence of the Autism Reviewer.

The Chairperson thanked the Bill Clerks for their attendance.

The meeting moved to public session at 2.00 pm.

Órlaithí Flynn left the meeting at 2.00 pm.

12. SR 2021/315 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 19) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Elaine Colgan, Head of Health Protection Branch 2, Department of Health, joined the meeting by video-conference at 2:02 pm and answered questions from Members on SR 2021/315 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 19) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

The Committee considered SR 2021/315 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 19) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 which introduces provisions regarding the requirement to show proof of COVID-status Certification to gain entry into relevant settings.

The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health on issues raised by Members on this statutory rule at the meeting on 2 December 2021.

Pam Cameron and Gerry Carroll noted their concerns in relation the COVID-status Certification rules.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021/315 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 (Amendment No. 19) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.



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The Committee agreed to consider and agree actions in relation to correspondence by email.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed defer consideration of its Forward Work Programme until the meeting on 14 December 2021.

14. Any Other Business

- i. Deborah Erskine raised the issue of data collection on the number of GP surgery contacts, including phone call appointments and the number of face-to-face appointments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department provide regular information on the number of GP surgery contacts and that the Department consider regularly publishing this information.

- ii. Gerry Carroll raised the issue of COVID related financial assistance for dentists and the calculation of payments to dentists returning from maternity leave.

Mr Carroll declared his interest as having a relative who is a dentist.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department of Health for an update in relation to this matter.



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15. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health was scheduled to take place at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, 14 December 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 2.34 pm.

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