



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

16 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Diane Dodds MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Apologies:

None

In Attendance:

Keith McBride, Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Assistant Clerk

Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk

Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor

Noel Gallagher, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

Nuala McAllister joined the meeting at 2.02pm

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2024.

Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 2.03pm

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Adult Protection Bill - Oral Evidence from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health (DoH) joined the meeting at 2.03pm:

Mark McGuicken – Director of Disability, DoH; and

Kerry Loveland-Morrison – Head of Adult Safeguarding Unit, DoH.

The officials briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it will seek legal advice during its consideration of the draft Bill if the draft legislation does not include provision on the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) but rather enabling powers to bring forward secondary legislation on the use of CCTV.

6. Maternity Services – Briefing from the Royal College of Midwives (RCM)

The following representatives from the Royal College of Midwives joined the meeting at 2.47pm:

Karen Murray, Director for Northern Ireland, RCM; and

Stuart Bonar, Public Affairs Advisor, RCM.

The representatives briefed the Committee on maternity services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 3.07pm

Diane Dodds joined the meeting at 3.31pm

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Alan Chambers left the meeting at 3.52pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive an update on the Department's plans to engage with the maternity services workforce in regards to the Childcare Strategy and to ensure representation from all of the professions across the health service in the development of the Childcare Strategy.

7. Maternity Services – Briefing from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 3.53pm:

Caroline Keown – Chief Midwifery Officer, DoH;

Maria McIlgorm – Chief Nursing Officer, DoH; and

Jim Wilkinson – Deputy Secretary, Healthcare Policy Group, DoH.

Alan Chambers returned to the meeting at 3.56pm

The officials briefed the Committee on maternity services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive figures regarding any increases in homebirths and requests for homebirths in the Causeway area.

Alan Chambers left the meeting at 4.46pm

8. Draft SI 2024 No.0000 The Human Medicines (Amendments relating to Registered Dental Hygienists, Registered Dental Therapists and Registered Pharmacy Technicians) Regulations 2024

The Committee considered Draft SI 2024/0000 The Human Medicines (Amendments relating to Registered Dental Hygienists, Registered Dental Therapists and Registered Pharmacy Technicians) Regulations 2024.

Agreed: The Committee considered Draft SI 2024/0000 The Human Medicines (Amendments relating to Registered Dental Hygienists, Registered Dental Therapists and Registered Pharmacy Technicians) Regulations 2024 and recommends that it be approved by the Assembly.

9. SL1 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Member Contribution) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Health to make a statutory rule to allow implementation of the new member contribution structure for 2023/2024 to the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

10. SL1 The Health and Social Care Pension Schemes (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal to make a statutory rule that will introduce changes to the member contribution structure, changes to abatement provisions for special class status members who return to work, and minor amendments regarding partial retirement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance on initial discussions between the Department of Health and the General Registrar's Office to bring forward a Baby Loss Certificate scheme, following commitment by the Minister of Health and Minister of Finance for a scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive an update once next steps are determined.

- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding scrutiny of the Executive Budget for 2024/2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk forward all relevant Official Reports (Hansards) and a summary of the information it has requested on spending plans by the Department for Budget 2024/2025 to the Committee for Finance.

Alan Chambers returned to the meeting at 4.52pm

- iii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from Barnardo's Northern Ireland to the Committee for Education on 'Time 4 Me' primary school counselling service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive an update.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from Ofcom on a Consultation on the Protection of Children which sets out clear expectations on regulated user-to-user and search service providers on how to comply with the children's duties under the Online Safety Act 2023.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from MWAdvocate on behalf of the Children's Health Coalition to work with the Committee on the issue of commissioning of services for children.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider as part of its strategic priorities.

- vi. The Committee noted Institute of Public Health papers 'The Tobacco and Vapes Bill – creating a smoke-free generation in Northern Ireland', 'Briefing on the prohibition of single-use vapes in Northern Ireland – health perspectives', 'A review of systematic reviews on the health effects of e-cigarette use in children and adolescents', 'Vaping amongst Children and Young people in Wales Incident Response Group' and factsheet 'Generational Endgame Policies'.
- vii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual in regards to findings of a judicial review concerning the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the matter further at the briefing by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) on 20 June 2024.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health is scheduled to take place at 2.00pm on 23 May 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.55pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

23 May 2024