



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

23 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Apologies:

Colin McGrath MLA

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 2.13pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Colin McGrath MLA.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson acknowledged that the Report of the Infected Blood Inquiry had been published on Monday and the UK Government had made announcements in regards to compensation for victims and families.

The Chairperson reminded Members that Haemophilia Northern Ireland, and associated stakeholders, are scheduled to brief the Committee at the next meeting.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Budget 2024/2025 Main Estimates - Oral Evidence from the Department of Health

The following official from the Department of Health (DoH) joined the meeting at 2.14pm:

Brigitte Worth – Director of Finance, DoH;

Preeta Miller – Capital Investment Director, DoH; and

Linda Carter – Head of capital Resources Unit, DoH.

The officials briefed the Committee on Budget 2024/2025 Main Estimates.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Linda Dillon joined the meeting at 2.33pm

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to follow up with the Department on the Chairperson's letter to the Minister of 7 May 2024 for the Committee to receive detail of the Department's spending plans for Budget 2024/2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive clarity from the Department around Barnett Consequentials in relation to the Budget and receive timely updates regarding the effect of Barnett Consequentials on workforce policy.

6. Learning Disability Services – Briefing from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 3.08pm:

Nigel Chambers - Head of Learning Disability and Autism, DoH;

David Petticrew - Deputy Director, Community Care, DoH;

Ciara McKillop - Deputy Director, Community Care (Mental Health and Children), DoH; and

Maurice Leeson - Programme Manager, Partnerships, Emotional Health and Wellbeing, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Disability, DoH.

The officials briefed the Committee on learning disability 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 information on how the 'Single Point of Contact' will operate to assist families in receiving advice and information in a timely manner.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive detail on the planned next steps by the Department in relation to the closure of Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

7. Workforce Policy – Briefing from the Department of Health

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 4.18pm:

Phil Rodgers – Director of Workforce Policy, DoH;

Peter Barbour – Head of Workforce Policy Development, DoH;

Stephen Galway – Head of WPD Business Support Unit, DoH;

Rodney Raymond – Head of Workforce Strategy, DoH; and

Chris Wilkinson – Head of Pay and Employment Unit, DoH.

The officials briefed the Committee on workforce policy.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 4.52pm

Diane Dodds left the meeting at 4.58pm

Órlaithí Flynn left the meeting at 5.09pm

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive the figures on actual vacancy rates, progress on negotiations with junior doctors on pay; the cost of the pay deal for SAS doctors when this becomes available; and web links to the online up to date figures i.e. to the end March 2024.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted a Ministerial response on general practice share of spend in regards to primary care.
- ii. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Department requesting legislative changes for provision of help for health service charges and to ensure parity between Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it be copied into the Department's response to the Committee for Communities.

- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the British Medical Association Northern Ireland (BMA NI) asking that the Committee keep it informed of the response by the department to the Committee's actions following the meeting of 9 May 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and await the response from the Department.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the General Medical Council (GMC) on the numbers of doctors from the United Kingdom applying for

Certificates of Good Standing from the GMC to allow them to apply for registration with the Medical Council of Ireland.

- v. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual in regards to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

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 is scheduled to take place at 2.00pm on 30 May 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.19pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

30 May 2024