



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

20 June 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Linda Dillon MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Diane Dodds MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies:

Alan Chambers MLA

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 2.07pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alan Chambers MLA and Colin McGrath MLA.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2024.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. SR 2024/116 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Member Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024/116 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Member Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 which introduces changes to the member contribution structure for members of the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme and will uplift a banding structure in line with the 2023/24 Agenda for Change pay award.

Agreed: The Committee for Health has considered SR 2024/116 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Member Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the Rule.

6. SR 2024/117 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024/117 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 which will: introduce changes to the member contribution structure; make changes to abatement provisions for special class status members; and make minor amendments regarding partial retirement and consequential amendments relating to the removal of the Lifetime Allowance by the Finance Act 2024.

Agreed: The Committee for Health has considered SR 2024/117 The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objection to the Rule.

7. SL1 The Period Products (Department of Health Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Health to make a statutory rule that will specify the Health and Social Care Trusts as public bodies that must ensure period products are obtainable free of charge as per the requirement in

Section 2(2)(a) of the Period Products (Free Provision) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 which refers to hospital premises.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive: clarity on the premises the duty will apply to, particularly in relation to the Ambulance Trust; detail on the financial implications; further information on the position in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; the views of the bodies consulted with; and a copy of the draft regulations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to await a response from the Department on the above before giving any further consideration to the merits of the policy.

8. The Role of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) – Oral Briefing by RQIA

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.12pm:

Ms Christine Collins MBE, Chairperson, RQIA; and

Ms Brieghe Donaghy, Chief Executive, RQIA.

The officials briefed the Committee on the role of RQIA.

Alan Robinson joined the meeting at 2.16pm

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The Committee noted correspondence from: the British Dental Association (BDA) on dental tourism and events being held in hotels in and around Belfast; and Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) on its campaign 'New Script for Mental Health' and transparency around mental health regulation.

Agreed: The Committee recognised the work of Geraldine O'Hagan, recently deceased, for residents and outpatients of Muckamore Abbey Hospital and their families.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive an update on the Review of cases of the deceased patients of the former neurologist Michael Watt.

9. The Role of Health Professionals in Healthcare Transformation and Modernisation – Oral Briefing by the Allied Health Professions Federation Northern Ireland

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.32pm:

Ms Cora Regan, Co-Chair of the Allied Health Professions Federation Northern Ireland and National Officer of the Society of Radiographers;

Ruth Sedgewick, Head of Northern Ireland Office, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists;

Cliona McCarney, Policy and Public Affairs Lead Northern Ireland, Royal College of Occupational Therapists;

Tom Sullivan, Policy and Public Affairs Manager Northern Ireland, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy; and

Dr Anne Monaghan, Policy and Public Affairs Officer Northern Ireland, Royal College of Podiatry.

The representatives briefed the Committee on the role of health professionals in healthcare transformation and modernisation.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 4.01pm

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive an update on: the Department's discussions with the Department for the Economy on apprenticeships within the healthcare sector and in particular for health professionals; and the overall health professionals workforce review.

10. Domiciliary Care – Oral Briefing by the Department of Health

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.21pm:

Mr Mark McGuicken, Director of Disability and Older People;

Colin Dunlop, Head of Physical and Sensory Disability Unit and Elderly and Community Care Unit; and

Ciara McKillop, Deputy Director of Older People, Children with Disabilities Partnerships and Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS).

The officials briefed the Committee on Domiciliary Care.

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 further information on the Innovation Report.

11. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Services – Written Briefing by Department of Health

The Committee considered a Departmental written briefing on Addiction Services.

Linda Dillon left the meeting at 5.05pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral briefing with the Department following recess.

12. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted Ministerial correspondence providing an update around regulations for Healthcare International Arrangements.
- ii. The Committee noted a Ministerial response on mitigation steps the Department is taking to prevent social work students leaving to study elsewhere, whether because of financial hardship or there not being enough student places available in Northern Ireland.
- iii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Education on its policy on school nurses and the guidance provided to Health and Social Care Trusts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive information on the issue.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance on the Public Sector Transformation Board.
- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Justice seeking a concurrent meeting on the Adult Protection Bill when introduced.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk will liaise with the Clerk to the Committee for Justice on the matter.

- vi. The Committee considered correspondence from Mesh Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive information on what consideration the Department has given to the pathway to treatment by the Scottish Government.

- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual concerning the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

viii. The Committee noted the most recent Examiner of Statutory Rules Report.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

14. Any Other Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee of a recent Day of Action by Community Pharmacy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive confirmation of the Minister's intention to meet with Community Pharmacy as a matter of urgency.

The Chairperson advised the Committee of a St Luke's drive-through blood centre no longer functioning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for an update on the facility.

15. 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 27 June 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.10pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

27 June 2024