



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for Health

## Minutes of Proceedings

**19 September 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Nuala McAllister MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

**Apologies:**

Colin McGrath MLA

**In Attendance:**

Keith McBride, Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Assistant Clerk

Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk

Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor

Stephen McGlennon, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2.05pm in public session.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Colin McGrath MLA.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that World Alzheimer's Month takes place every September and that World Alzheimer's Day is on 21 September each year. The Chairperson informed Members that the All-Party Group on Dementia had met the day before and it was noted that there is a series of upcoming events and further information can be found through the Alzheimer's Society.

The Chairperson stated that there had been an expectation by General Practitioners (GPs) that funding for the GP Indemnity Scheme would be ring fenced but there is now concern that this is not the case.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to receive clarity on the matter and request that the Minister meet with representative bodies, such as the British Medical Association (BMA), on this issue as a matter of urgency.

The Chairperson stated that there was increasing public interest in the current Consultation on the Public Health Bill. The Committee acknowledged that Members were being contacted by members of the public who were concerned about certain parts of the draft Bill. Members stated that they were also receiving reports from members of the public that the consultation questionnaire is not easy to access and the consultation questions unduly complex.

Members stated that they were also concerned that the Department was not providing adequate information to the public on the consultation process and the next stages for the draft Bill, including that the draft Bill will go to the Assembly for consideration following the Department's Consultation.

The Chairperson asked the Clerk to provide a short brief on the process for consideration of a draft Bill in order to help reassure members of the public that proper consideration will be given to all parts of the draft Bill.

The Clerk provided a short brief on the process for consideration of a draft Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to outline the concerns raised by Members and to ask the Department to consider how it can engage better with the public on this consultation.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. ADHD Services – Oral Briefing from the Department of Health**

The following officials from the Department of Health (DoH) joined the meeting at 2.24pm:

Maurice Leeson, Programme Manager, Emotional Health and Wellbeing, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Disability and Partnerships, DoH;

Martina McCafferty, Mental Health Lead, DoH; and

Paul Millar, Social Care Commissioning Lead for Emotional Health and CAMHS, DoH.

*Alan Robinson joined the meeting at 2.27pm*

The officials briefed the Committee on ADHD services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the following: the timeline for completion of the research and analysis that is to be commissioned; what services are commissioned in other parts of the UK and RoI in relation to adult services; and further information from officials in Primary Care branch on shortage of medicine supplies and worldwide supply issues.

*Linda Dillon left the meeting at 3.19pm*

## **6. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee noted a copy of the Department of Health Annual Progress Report for 2023/24.
- ii. The Committee noted a Departmental response in regards to follow up information from the Transformation update briefing held on 27 June 2024.
- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office on the draft Programme for Government 2024 – 2027 Consultation.

**Agreed:** The Committee will consider a response to the Executive Committee.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing a copy of a Memorandum of Reply to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Report 'Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland'.
- v. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing a Budget 2025 – 2026 timeline, Budget Commissioning Templates and scrutiny of Budgeting for the Programme for Government.
- vi. The Committee noted a Report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on Coverage of the Department of Health.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding the case of a deceased patient of Michael Watt.
- viii. The Committee considered an invite to a Caleb's Cause NI event to be held in the Long Gallery on 18 November 2024.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members would respond on an individual basis to the invitation.

## **7. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

The meeting moved into closed session at 3.19pm.

## **8. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee considered, as part of the strategic priority on 'Accountability and Promoting Best Practice' of the Committee, next steps on the issue of duty of candour.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange a series of formal and informal meetings on duty of candour.

The Committee considered a paper on terms of reference and approach for its Inquiry on Access to Palliative Care in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed terms of reference and approach for its Inquiry on Access to Palliative Care in Northern Ireland.

*Linda Dillon returned to the meeting at 3.23pm*

*Alan Chambers left the meeting at 3.38pm*

*Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 3.44pm*

## **9. 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 26 September 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.00pm.

**Liz Kimmins MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Health**

**26 September 2024**