



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

02 May 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies:

Nuala McAllister MLA

In Attendance:

Keith McBride, Clerk

Roisin Donnelly, Assistant Clerk

Jonathan Lamont, Assistant Clerk

Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk

Noel Gallagher, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 1.58pm in public session.

1. Ministerial Briefing – Budget 2024/25

The Minister of Health Robin Swann MLA and the following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 2.00pm:

Chris Matthews - Resource & Corporate Management Group;

Dr Tomas Adel – Elective Care & Cancer Policy Director;

Brigitte Worth – Resource & Corporate Management Group; and

Linda Carter – Resource & Corporate Management Group.

The Minister briefed the Committee on the Budget for 2024/2025

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and officials for their attendance.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of its Invest to Save Initiatives and the Department's Savings Plans. The Committee also requested early sight of the Department's detailed budget plans.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Nuala McAllister MLA.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Committee considered the recent informal meeting with Mesh Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update from the Department of Health on issues raised by Mesh Ireland and the implementation of the Cumberlege Review recommendations.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2024.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee reflected on the informal Strategic Planning event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health and the Health Trusts regarding issues raised by Safe Families.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the report on the Westminster LCM on Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

6. Department of Health Proposed Legislative Programme - Written Briefing

The Committee noted the Department of Health's proposed legislation for this mandate.

7. Public Health Bill - Oral Briefing from Departmental Officials

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 2.56pm:

Carol Picton-Lynas – Head of Health Protection Legislation Branch;

Chris Matthews – Director of Emergency Resilience and Protecting Health
Directorate

Dr Jillian Johnston – Senior Medical Officer

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.

8. SL1: Amendments to the Human Medicines Regulations - Oral Briefing from Departmental Officials

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 3.27pm:

Caroline Lappin - Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health;

Chris Garland - Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer, Department of Health;

Fiona Kirkpatrick - Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer, Department of Health;
and

Karen Simpson - Head of Medicines Legislation Unit, Department of Health

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

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

9. SL1 Original pack dispensing and the supply of medicines containing Sodium Valproate - Oral Briefing from Departmental Officials

The following officials from the Department of Health briefed the Committee:

Caroline Lappin - Chief Dental Officer, Department of Health;

Chris Garland - Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer, Department of Health;

Fiona Kirkpatrick - Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer, Department of Health;
and

Karen Simpson - Head of Medicines Legislation Unit, Department of Health

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 it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

10. SL1: Optical Charges and Payments Regulations

The Committee considered a proposal from the Department of Health to increase the value of optical vouchers to certain patients, depending on their financial circumstances.

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

11. SR 2024/56 The Recovery of Health Services Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024/56 The Recovery of Health Services Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) which increases the amount

of compensation payment charges in cases where an injured person is in receipt of hospital or ambulance services.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2024/56 The Recovery of Health Services Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) and had no objection to the Rule.

12. Strategic Planning Committee Report

The Committee considered the Strategic Planning Committee Report following its planning day on 25 April 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its list of priorities.

13. Correspondence

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Minister of Health regarding the funding model review of Children's Hospice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update following the Department's next meeting with the NI Children's Hospice on 9 May 2024.

- ii. The Committee considered the response from the Minister of Health regarding the Marie Curie Hospice.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this response to Marie Curie.

- iii. The Committee considered the response from the Minister of Health regarding the Northern Ireland Children's Health Coalition.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an update following the Minister's meeting with the Children's Health Coalition at the end of May.

- iv. The Committee considered the response from the Minister of Health regarding the Hospital Car Parking Charges.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department provides regular progress updates on the introduction of the system.

v. The Committee noted the response from the Minister of Health regarding funding for Rainbow Lodge.

vi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Minister of Health regarding Serious Adverse Incidents (SAI) across all Trusts relating to cervical cancer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek information from the Department of Health and Public Health Agency on their cervical smear advertising campaign. The Committee also agreed to request details of the PHA's planned campaigns over the next year.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Western Health and Social Care Trust to provide further information on the peak in SAI figures.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information on whether there are any SAIs coming out of the review of the Southern Trust and to request an update following completion of the external review.

vii. The Committee considered correspondence from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust regarding patients' families and carers attending emergency departments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note for now, and consider when responses are received from the other Trusts.

viii. The Committee considered correspondence from Houses of Oireachtas Joint Committee on Health regarding north south health services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to the Clerk contacting the Joint Committee to establish proposed dates for a meeting.

ix. The Committee noted the tenth report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

- x. The Committee considered the correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding with Registered Childminders branch of Unite the Union.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to provide an update on its review of the childminder-to-child ratios.
- xi. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding a written submission from Diverse Youth NI.
- xii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding SEN policy updates.
Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health to request what actions it is taking to ensure an integrated service. The Committee also agreed to request further information from the Department in relation to the provision of school nurses across Trusts and the role of classroom assistants in providing medical support to pupils.
- xiii. The Committee noted the correspondence from Re-Gen NI.
- xiv. The Committee considered the correspondence from Allied Health Professionals Federation NI requesting to brief the Committee.
Agreed: The Committee agreed the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would consider this request.
- xv. The Committee considered correspondence from SOAS requesting to meet with the Committee.
Agreed: The Committee agreed the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson would consider this request.
- xvi. The Committee noted the correspondence from Versus Arthritis regarding the Waiting Well event.
- xvii. The Committee noted the correspondence from Cancer Research UK regarding its work.

- xviii. The Committee considered the correspondence from Youth Assembly for Northern Ireland regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill roundtable event and an invite to the next plenary.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Members would consider the invite and reply directly.

- xix. The Committee noted correspondence from Children in Northern Ireland regarding the letter to the Minister for Health.

- xx. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People regarding his priorities.

- xxi. The Committee deferred the correspondence from Haemophilia NI regarding the Victims and Prisoners Bill – Infected Blood Compensation Scheme LCM.

- xxii. The Committee considered the correspondence from New Script for Mental Health regarding regulation of mental health services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward this correspondence to the Department of Health for comment.

- xxiii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health regarding recommendations from the Paediatric Waiting Times report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this correspondence when addressing its priorities.

- xxiv. The Committee considered the invitation from Northern Ireland Cancer Registry to its 30th anniversary event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members would contact NICR directly regarding the event.

- xxv. The Committee noted the April Investing Activity Report from Strategic Investment Board.

- xxvi. The Committee considered the request from an individual to bring a number of families to brief the Committee on a number of health issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider this correspondence when addressing its priorities.

- xxvii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding a Northern Health and Social Care Trust judicial review.

Agreed: As per correspondence item xxii.

14. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.

15. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

16. 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 9 May 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.05pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

02 May 2024