



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

3 October 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Liz Kimmins MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Colin McGrath MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies: None

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 2.06pm in public session.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson noted the Committee's visit that morning to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service HSC Trust Headquarters (NIAS Trust), to tour the Regional Emergency Medical Dispatch Centre (REMDC). The Chairperson thanked the NIAS Trust team for providing the Committee with the opportunity to meet with staff operating the control room and gain an understanding of their work and growing complexities through increasing demand for the service. Members also welcomed the opportunity to meet with students at the Centre and with the Hazardous Area Response Team (HART).

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson reminded Members of the informal meeting held on 10 September 2024 with family members of deceased patients of Michael Watt and advised that the Department has now confirmed with the Clerk that the Minister will meet with those family members on 29 October 2024.

The Committee reminded Members that the Committee agreed at last week's meeting to hold an informal meeting with a family member of Michael and Marjorie Cawdry, and others involved in similar situations. This will inform the Committee's work on accountability and promoting best practice.

5. General Dental Services – Oral Briefing from the Department of Health (DoH)

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.09pm:

Caroline Lappin, Chief Dental Officer DoH;

Gearóid Cassidy, Director of Primary Care, DoH; and

Michael Donaldson, Head of Dental Services in the Strategic Planning and Performance Group, (DoH).

The officials briefed the Committee on general dental services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Nuala McAllister joined the meeting at 2.58pm

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive further information on Invest to Save initiatives in dentistry, data on the Dental Access Scheme, and cost analysis reports on the delivery models across the United Kingdom, when they become available.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister on contract reform, to request that the Committee be provided with sufficient detail on a timeframe for a general dental services contract for Northern Ireland and detail of the main concerns for the Department, and how these will be addressed, whilst a contract is established.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) on reports of non-domiciled companies attending hospitality events in Northern Ireland to offer dental consultations, and promoting dental practice/interventions to be carried out overseas.

6. Review of Children's Social Care Services – Oral Briefing from the Reimagine Children's Collective

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.14pm:

Alicia Toal, Chief Executive, Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC);

Kathleen Toner, Director, The Fostering Network Northern Ireland;

Michele Janes, Head, Barnardo's Northern Ireland; and

Sheena Mc Mullan, Campaigns, Advocacy and Policy Advisor Northern Ireland, Action for Children.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives briefed the Committee on the Review of Children's Services.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Linda Dillon left the meeting at 4.06pm

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Diane Dodds left the meeting at 4.44pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive figures for the each of the last five years of the number of foster carers recruited and the number of foster carers leaving service, broken down by each Health and Social Care Trusts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive information on whether the Department is aware of, or whether there are any plans to allow, commissioning by private companies in regards to respite and residential care in children's services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to receive detail around additional funding that was provided to individual workstreams.

Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 4.46pm

Colin McGrath left the meeting at 4.46pm

7. SR 2024/162 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023

The Committee considered SR 2024/162 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 which increases charges in respect of injuries that occur on or after 1 October 2024, as set out in the Rule.

Agreed: The Committee for Health considered SR 2024/162 The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, had no objection to the Rule.

8. Draft SI The Human Medicines (Amendments relating to Naloxone and Transfers of Functions) Regulations 2024

The Committee considered the draft Statutory Instrument (SI) The Human Medicines (Amendments relating to Naloxone and Transfers of Functions) Regulations 2024.

The draft SI amends the Human Medicine Regulations 2012 (HMRs) to increase the number of services, professionals, or organisations that can supply naloxone without

a prescription, or a written instruction, and will remove remaining references in the Regulations to the now dissolved Public Health England and Health and Social Care Board. A plenary debate is expected to take place on 14 October.

Agreed: The Committee considered the Draft SI The Human Medicines (Amendments Relating to Naloxone and Transfers of Functions) Regulations 2024 and recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

9. Departmental Responsibilities for Childcare Including Children with Additional Needs – Written Briefing from the Department of Health

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department on work in relation to childcare, with a particular focus on children with additional needs.

10. Draft Hospital Reconfiguration Framework: Creating a Network for Better Outcomes – Written Briefing from the Department of Health

The Committee noted the draft reconfiguration framework entitled ‘Hospitals – Creating a Network for Better Outcomes.’

11. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted Ministerial correspondence on a cross-departmental and multi-agency plan to address Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) in Northern Ireland.
- ii. The Committee noted a Departmental response regarding the status of the Department funded Carers Fund and the future of Sure Start in Newry.
- iii. The Committee considered correspondence from: the National Autistic Society Northern Ireland and Children’s Law Centre; the Community for Behaviour Analysis, asking to meet with the Committee; and Mencap

Northern Ireland, asking to meet with the Committee. The BBCNI Spotlight programme 'I am not OK' was referred to in each correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the correspondence as part of the Committee's forward work programme.

- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NWC) on the NWC report 'Spotlight on Nursing and Midwifery.
- v. The Committee considered an invite from Queen's University Belfast (QUB) to the launch of the Centre for Public Policy and Administration (CPPA), on Friday 25 October 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members will respond on an individual basis to QUB.

- vi. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Northern Ireland Youth Assembly Health Committee to the Minister, on the issue of mental health in schools.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to convey its support for the Youth Assembly and that he meet with the Youth Assembly Health Committee.

- vii. The Committee noted an Investment Activity Report for September 2024 from Investment Strategy Northern Ireland.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual on a RQIA Inspection Report for Hillhall Home, carried out on 11 and 12 June 2024.
- ix. The Committee noted a Departmental response providing an update on hospital car parking charges currently being implemented by each Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

- x. The Committee noted a Departmental response providing further information on ADHD services, following the briefing on 19 September 2024.
- xi. The Committee considered an invitation from the Irish Football Association to the re-launch of the Irish Football Association Mental Health Programme 'Ahead of the Game', on Thursday 10 October at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Members will respond on an individual basis to the Association.

- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) on concerns over the current Reshape and Refresh management of change process within the Public Health Agency (PHA).
- xiii. The Committee noted that a copy of the Budget Sustainability Plan, and a Written Statement from the Minister of Finance, was emailed to Members that afternoon. The Plan will be considered by the Committee at a future meeting.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Health is scheduled to take place at 2.15pm on 17 October 2024, at the Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care event – NICON 2024, La Mon Hotel.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.01pm.

Liz Kimmins MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

17 October 2024