



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

5 February 2026

Meeting Location: Shankill Women's Centre

Present:

Phillip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)

Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Alan Chambers MLA

Linda Dillon MLA

Diane Dodds MLA

Órlaithí Flynn MLA

Nuala McAllister MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies:

None.

In Attendance: Keith McBride, Clerk
Roisin Donnelly, Senior Assistant Clerk
Shannen Lofthouse, Assistant Clerk
Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk
Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor
Caroline Devlin, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2.01pm in public session.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meetings held on 27 and 29 January 2026.

4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Shankill Shared Women's Centre

Dr Betty Carlisle MBE, CEO, Shankill Shared Women's Centre joined the meeting at 2.03pm.

Dr Carlisle provided the Committee with an overview of the Shankill Shared Women's Centre, followed by a video illustrating the development of the new centre in recent years.

Linda Dillon joined the meeting at 2.14pm.

Nuala McAllister joined the meeting at 2.22pm.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Carlisle for her presentation and for hosting the Committee at the Centre. The Chairperson commended the Shankill Shared Women's Centre on the support it provides to women in the community.

6. Community Care and Patient Flow in Hospitals - Oral Briefing from the Permanent Secretary.

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.25pm:

- Mr Mike Farrar, Permanent Secretary, Department of Health;
- Ms Tracey McCaig, Interim Chief Operating Officer Strategic Planning & Performance Group, Department of Health; and
- Mr Peter Toogood, Deputy Secretary, Social Services Policy Group, Department of Health.

The officials briefed the Committee on Community Care and Patient Flow in Hospitals.

Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 2.40pm.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

Órlaithí Flynn MLA left the meeting at 3.56pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting further information on work in relation to Self-Directed Support.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a suitable date for the Permanent Secretary to brief the Committee on the Neighbourhood Model.

7. Trust Overview - Oral Briefing from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.11pm:

- Ms Jennifer Welsh, Chief Executive, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust;
- Mr Alastair Campbell, Director of Performance, Planning and Informatics, Department of Health;
- Ms Paula Cahalan, Director of Child Health, & NISTAR, Maternity, Dental, Gynae & Sexual Health Services, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Ms Kerry-lee Weatherall, Interim Director of Children's Community Services, Children's Social Care Services Reform Programme.

The officials briefed the Committee with an overview of the trust.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Trust to request the following:

- A detailed briefing from the Chief Executive and the Director of Infrastructure regarding the Maternity Hospital;
- A response outlining the additional costs and the projected timeframe for the Children's Hospital;
- Information on water safety issues within the Maternity Hospital, including the actions being taken to address the problem;
- Further information regarding the timeline for haematology work;
- Further information concerning the current deficit within the Trust;
- Clarification on access to, and availability of patient files, including confirmation of the correct legal processes;
- An outline of the procedure followed when a looked-after child comes into contact with the Youth Justice Agency;

- The number of patients that were waiting on the urgent endometriosis list; and
- An updated graph on Delayed Transfers of Care (DTA) relating to hospital discharges.

8. Written Briefing from the Department - Violence and Aggression Towards Staff

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Violence and Aggression Towards Staff and that further questions had been asked in previous weeks.

9. Written Briefing from the Department- Justice Bill Part 2 (Children)

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Justice Bill Part 2 (Children).

10.SL1 - The Health and Social Care Pension Scheme (Member Contributions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee considered the Department of Health's proposal to amend the Health and Social Care Pension Scheme contribution tier thresholds to reflect the recent 2025/26 pay award.

The Chair advised Members that there had been no responses to the Committee's call for views on the proposed rule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the merits of the proposal and that the Department make the rule.

11. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the listed correspondence until the next Committee meeting.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the forward work plan.

13. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place in Room 29 at 2pm on 12 February.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.31pm.

Phillip McGuigan MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

12 February 2026