



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

6 November 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

Present:

- Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Alan Chambers MLA
- Diane Dodds MLA
- Órlaithí Flynn MLA
- Nuala McAllister MLA
- Philip McGuigan MLA
- Colin McGrath MLA
- Alan Robinson MLA.

Apologies: Linda Dillon MLA

In Attendance: Keith McBride, Clerk
Shannen Lofthouse, Assistant Clerk
Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk
Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor
Noel Gallagher, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 2.05pm in public session.

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

1. Apologies

Linda Dillon MLA

2. Chairperson's Business

The Deputy Chairperson noted his attendance at the Stroke Action event on Tuesday, 4th November. The event provided valuable insight into the work of the Thrombectomy Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital and effectively demonstrated the need for funding a 24-hour Thrombectomy service.

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025.

4. Matters Arising

The Deputy Chairperson highlighted the publication of the Written Ministerial Statement of three cervical screening reports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to schedule an urgent oral briefing with the Public Health Agency and the Southern Trust on the Reports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an informal session with those that have been affected by this issue.

5. Oral Briefing – Mental Health Champion

The following representatives joined the meeting at 2.13pm:

- Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Mental Health Champion; and
- Dr Nicole Bond, Research Officer, Mental Health Champion; and
- Mr Peter Cash, Senior Policy and Research Officer, Mental Health Champion.

The representatives briefed the Committee in relation to mental health services in Northern Ireland.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 3.05pm.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the representatives for their briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to return to the issue, with a further update to be provided in February.

6. Adult Protection Bill- Oral Briefing from Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.30pm:

- Ms Alyson Kilpatrick, Chief Commissioner, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; and
- Dr Colin Caughey, Director of Policy, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; and

- Dr Ivanka Antova, Policy and Research Officer, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

The representatives briefed the Committee in relation to the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked the representatives for their briefing.

7. Adult Protection Bill- Oral Briefing from RalSe

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Sinead Murphy and Grainne Crealey, RalSe Researchers at Northern Ireland Assembly at 4.12pm.

Sinead and Grainne briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill and raised several key points for Committee consideration.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked both Sinead and Grainne for their briefing.

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

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Violence and Aggression Against HSC Staff.

9. Hospital Car Parking- Written Briefing from the Department

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Hospital Car Parking.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an oral evidence session in relation to Hospital Car Parking.

10. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding an SL5 - Statistics of scientific procedures on living animals report.
- ii. The Committee considered a copy of a response from the Department regarding gender healthcare services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further at 13 November briefing with the Department.

- iii. The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department regarding My Care and Encompass.
- iv. The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department regarding sensory rooms in hospitals.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Cubbie for information.

- v. The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department regarding the IHRD Inquiry Liaison Group.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the individual thanking them for engaging with the Committee and welcoming ongoing engagement with the Committee in the future.

- vi. The Committee noted a copy of a response from the Department regarding Investing in Children's Social Services.
- vii. The Committee considered a copy of a response from the Department regarding Protective Mothers NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Protective Mothers NI for information.

- viii. The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding non-surgical cosmetic procedures.
- ix. The Committee considered a response from the Department regarding Calebs Cause.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Calebs Cause for information.

- x. The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Winter Preparedness.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding an update on Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups LCM.
- xii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding the Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022- First Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request details of any work that has not yet progressed and any work that has not yet commenced in relation to the Act.

- xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health and Department for Communities regarding an invite to an event in Parliament Buildings on 10 November 2025.

- xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding the Constitution and European Union Relations.
- xv. The Committee noted correspondence from Evangelical Alliance NI regarding an invitation to an event.
- xvi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Minister of Health regarding a report on the Health Needs of Children with Complex Needs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Health Committee be copied into the Department's response to the Education Committee.

- xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding the Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill.
- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from Protective Mothers NI regarding the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
- xix. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the December Monitoring Round.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further detail of the Department's bids.

- xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding Analysis of 2025/2026 Outturn and Forecast Outturn.
- xxi. The Committee considered correspondence from Sarcoma UK regarding a request to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to add Sarcoma UK to the Committee Clinic list.

- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from NSPCC regarding the Take 5 Seconds Campaign.
- xxiii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding concerns with the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further at Western Health and Social Care Trust briefing on 27 November.

- xxiv. The Committee noted Correspondence from an individual regarding the consideration of FGM as a misogyny hate crime in Northern Ireland.
- xxv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding RQIA and Safeguarding and Governance.
- xxvi. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding the poverty of young care home residents.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Department for comment.

- xxvii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a request to brief the Committee.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered a draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

12. Any Other Business

The Committee noted that it will visit the South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) on 27 November 2025 and agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the un-commissioned theatres at SWAH to inform the visit. The Committee agreed that the update should include details on the timeframes for funding and staffing, as well as the work to be carried out.

13. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place in Room 29 at 2.00pm on 13 November.

Phillip McGuigan MLA left the meeting at 4.35pm

The Committee moved into closed session at 4.39pm

14. Closed Session- Adult Protection Bill Briefing from Bill Clerk.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Liz Marsh, Bill Office Clerk to the meeting at 4.40pm.

The Bill Clerk provided the Committee with a briefing on the legislative process.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Liz for the briefing.

Órlaithí Flynn MLA left the meeting at 4.48pm

15. Closed session- Committee Inquiry: Access to Palliative Care Services- Consideration of Report.

The Clerk provided Members with an overview of the Committee's Report and its recommendations. Members discussed the timeline for the Report, including its scheduled launch on 2nd December.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.59pm.

Danny Donnelly MLA

Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Health

13 November 2025