



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

12 February 2026

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

Present: Phillip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)
Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Alan Chambers MLA
Linda Dillon MLA
Diane Dodds MLA
Órlaithí Flynn MLA
Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies: Nuala McAllister MLA
Colin McGrath MLA

In Attendance: Keith McBride, Clerk
Roisin Donnelly, Senior Assistant Clerk
Michael Doran, Senior Assistant Clerk
Shannen Lofthouse, Assistant Clerk
Angela McParland, Assistant Clerk
Jonathan Lamont, Clerical Supervisor

The meeting commenced at 2.01pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Nuala McAllister MLA

Colin McGrath MLA

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chair advised that officials had offered to brief the Committee informally on the neighbourhood model.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to organise an informal briefing to discuss the neighbourhood model.

The Chair also highlighted concerns about the availability of medicines in pharmacies, noting the issue of shortages in the supply of some drugs.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting an assessment of this issue ahead of the Committee's briefing with Community Pharmacy NI.

A Member raised the issue of the Cass Assessment Report for Gender Identity Services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to seek his view on the Cass Assessment Report ahead of officials briefing the Committee on 26 February.

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meetings held on 5 February 2026.

4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Adult Protection Bill - Oral Briefing from Interim Adult Protection Board

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.11pm:

- Dr Ciara McKillop, Interim Director, Community Care, SPPG, Department of Health; and
- Mr David Petticrew, Co-Director, Community Care, SPPG, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 2.22pm.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

6. Adult Protection Bill- Oral Briefing from the Department

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.46pm:

- Ms Kerry Loveland-Morrison, Head of Adult Safeguarding Unit;
- Mr Mark McGuicken, Director of Disability and Older People; and

- Ms Áine Morrison, Chief Social Work Officer.

The officials briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

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

- Confirmation of the salary figures for the Chair and Members of the Adult Safeguarding Board;
- Confirmation of which individuals hold Board Member positions as part of their substantive roles;
- Information on the planned implementation timeframes for the processes;
- Details of the clauses that the Minister is going to amend for the next Committee meeting on 19 February.
- The full text of the amendments the Minister is proposing in advance of Committee meeting on 26 February.

7. Closed Session- Oral Briefing from Bill Clerk

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 3.36pm.

Liz Marsh, Bill Clerk, Northern Ireland Assembly joined the meeting at 3.36pm

Liz briefed the Committee on the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked Liz for the briefing.

8. Trust Overview - Oral Briefing from Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

The Committee moved to public session at 3.59pm.

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.59pm:

- Mr Steve Spoerry, Chief Executive, Southern Health and Social Care Trust;
- Eileen Mullan, Chair, Southern Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Elaine Wilson, Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics.

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

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Órlaithí Flynn MLA left the meeting at 4.41pm.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their briefing.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

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

- An update on how the lost cytology samples are being addressed, including what went wrong and how the process is being tightened to prevent a recurrence;
- A breakdown of violence-against-staff figures across all sites within the Trust; and
- Further information and detail of the savings made in connection to Encompass.

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

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note receipt of the SL1 and proposed statutory rule and that these will be published on the Assembly website and social media as part of the call for views on the proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the SL1 will be scheduled for consideration at the meeting on 5 March and will write to the Department to inform them of this decision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a briefing from officials is not necessary at this stage.

10. SL1- The Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations 2026.

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Human Medicines (Amendment) Regulations 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note receipt of the SL1 and proposed statutory rule and that these will be published on the Assembly website and social media as part of the call for views on the proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the SL1 will be scheduled for consideration at the meeting on 5 March and will write to the Department to inform them of this decision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from officials on the proposed rule on 5 March.

11. Written Briefing from the Department- Progress on Implementation Review of Emergency General Surgery at SWAH.

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Progress on Implementation Review of Emergency General Surgery at SWAH.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the update to SOAS for information.

12. Correspondence

i. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding an Update on Palliative and End of Life Care Scoping Exercise.

ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Sarcoma UK.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to Sarcoma UK for information.

iii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding correspondence from the Hospice Alliance Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Hospice Alliance for information.

iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Gambling with Lives.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to Gambling with Lives for information.

v. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Diabetes UK

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to Diabetes UK for information.

vi. The Committee considered a response from the Department regarding urgent inequality in access to abiraterone.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the individual.

vii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Community Pharmacy Briefing on 15 December.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note ahead of the Community Pharmacy oral briefing on 26 February.

viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding changing places in hospitals.

ix. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding Hospital Car Parking.

x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding a Palliative Care Hub.

xi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Southern Health and Social Care Trust cervical smear testing.

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

- A detailed timeline setting out when and how the Department will address this issue to ensure that such an incident does not recur;
- An explanation of the circumstances that resulted in the test results going missing; and
- Evidence of the measures that will be implemented to prevent similar incidents from occurring within this or any other Trust.

xii. The Committee noted a response from the Department to the Committee for Justice regarding Provision of Secure Accommodation.

xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Arthritis UK.

Agreed: The Committee agreed forward to Arthritis UK for information.

xiv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Neurology services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Neurological Charities Alliance.

xv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Social Care Work Forum Justification document for the Introduction of the Real Living Wage.

xvi. The Committee considered a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the Department regarding the Provision of Secure Accommodation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request to be copied into a response from the Department.

xvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance Outturn and Forecast Outturn.

xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from Pivotal regarding Two Years of the Restored Northern Ireland Executive.

xix. The Committee considered correspondence from The Burn Pit Lounge requesting to submit evidence on reducing the cost of medical cannabis.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to include The Burn Pit Lounge and Members in the next Committee Clinic.

xx. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding a National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA) presentation.

xxi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Business office regarding Access to General Practice in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a briefing from Royal College of General Practice on practices acting as community interest companies.

xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Nursing and Midwifery Council regarding the Nursing and Midwifery Spotlight Report 2025.

xxiii. The Committee considered correspondence from B Positive regarding childhood cancer care and family support in NI.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite B Positive to the next Committee Clinic.

xxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from BMA NI regarding an update on Northern Ireland General Practitioners Committee's negotiations with the Department.

- xxv. The Committee considered correspondence from Pharmaceutical Society NI regarding a Proposed SR and amendment to 1994 Regulations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to await the SL1 and inform the Pharmaceutical Society of the new SR process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to Community Pharmacy NI for comment.

- xxvi. The Committee noted correspondence from Pharmaceutical Society NI regarding the PSA Report 2025 and a request for an informal meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting.

- xxvii. The Committee considered correspondence from British Polio Fellowship regarding an invite to Polio Survivor Event on 2 March 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed Members would respond to the invitation directly.

- xxviii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the NI HSC Youth Board.

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

- xxix. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding the failure of statutory duty under Section 5 Disabled Persons (NI) Act 1989.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Western Health and Social Care Trust for comment.

- xxx. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding Adult ADHD Commissioning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a written briefing from the Department on Adult ADHD Services and request whether it is a priority for the Department to provide a regional diagnosis programme for adults.

- xxxi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding concerns raised with treatment provided by Royal Victoria Hospital.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider further with written briefing on Serious Adverse Incident Procedure on 19 March.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information in relation to: the overall number of SAI reviews; the longest time that a review has been ongoing; the average length of time that a review takes; and the cost of review cases including legal costs.

- xxxii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual with a copy of an email to the Minister regarding patient safety governance failures.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request to be copied into a response.

13. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the forward work plan.

14. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

15. 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 19 February.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.33pm.

Phillip McGuigan MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

19 February 2026