



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee for Health

### Minutes of Proceedings

**12 March 2026**

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

**Present:**

- Phillip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)
- Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Alan Chambers MLA
- Diane Dodds MLA
- Linda Dillon MLA
- Órlaithí Flynn MLA
- Nuala McAllister MLA
- Alan Robinson MLA

**Apologies:** 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  
Caroline Devlin, Clerical Officer.

The meeting commenced at 2.01pm in public session.

### **1. Apologies**

Colin McGrath MLA.

### **2. Chairperson's Business**

Members were advised that, as agreed at the meeting on Tuesday, the Safe Staffing Oral Briefing originally scheduled for today will be deferred to a later date.

Members were advised that the Committee undertook a visit to Craigavon Hospital earlier today to review the palliative care 'last days' template.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the staff who facilitated the visit to thank them for their time.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meetings held on 3 and 5 March 2026.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

#### **5. SL1 - The Pharmaceutical Society NI (General) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2026.**

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.04pm.

- Mr Canice Ward, CEO, Pharmaceutical Society NI; and
- Mr David McCann, Head of Regulatory Strategy, Pharmaceutical Society NI.

The officials briefed the Committee on the SL1.

The Committee considered the SL1- The Pharmaceutical Society NI (General) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2026.

*Órlaithí Flynn MLA joined the meeting at 2.05pm.*

*Diane Dodds MLA joined the meeting at 2.08pm.*

*Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 2.17pm.*

Danny Donnelly MLA declared an interest as Chair of the All Party Group on Community Pharmacy.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish citizen space responses on Committee's webpage.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the proposed rule to next week's meeting to allow consideration of correspondence from the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care.

#### **6. Written Briefing from the Department – Transformation Agenda.**

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding the Transformation Agenda.

## **7. Written Briefing from the Department (SPPG)- Commissioning within Committee's Strategic Priorities.**

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Commissioning within Committee's Strategic Priorities.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the Palliative End of Life Care information to the Hospice Alliance for information.

## **8. Written Briefing from the Department – Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) Procedure.**

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) Procedure.

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

- Clarification on the role of the SPPG and whether there is independent oversight of SAIs;
- Information on the average waiting times for concluding investigations;
- Further clarification on how average investigation times are monitored and how independent oversight is assured.

## **9. Correspondence**

- i. The Committee considered a response from the Department regarding the Right Care, Right Person Model.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward to the Committee for Justice for information.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to include Right Care, Right person as a key topic for Committee roundtable event on 4 June 2026 with the Mental Health Champion.

- ii. The Committee considered a response from the Department with a copy of a reply to an individual regarding record integrity, data obstruction and patient safety governance.

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

- iii. The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the further delay of the Maternity Hospital.
- iv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department regarding Cancer and Paediatric Waiting Lists.
- v. The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Flu and Anti-Viral Prescribing.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust regarding issues raised at Trust Overview Briefing.
- vii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice to the Department regarding Non Commencement of Clause 7 - Justice Bill.

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

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding a report into Child Criminal Exploitation.

- ix. The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office with a copy of a letter to the Health Minister following a briefing from the Commissioner for Survivors of Institutional Childhood Abuse.

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

- x. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding an invitation to the Launch of Delivering Care Refresh Policy Framework on 24 March.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members are to confirm as soon as possible with the Clerk on their availability to attend.

- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lord Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding the Tobacco and Vapes Bill.

- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care regarding their Performance Review of the General Optical Council 2024/25.

- xiii. The Committee considered correspondence from UK Lung Cancer Coalition NI Blueprint for Lung Cancer Report.

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

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment, requesting that the response include detail on the work underway to develop a plan, the anticipated timeline for

screening, and the potential for saving lives and achieving long-term cost savings.

- xiv. The Committee considered correspondence from British Polio Fellowship regarding calls for action.

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

- xv. The Committee considered correspondence from Competition and Market Authority regarding the launch of a review into private dentistry.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members are to register for the event on an individual basis.

- xvi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Northern Ireland Survivor Council regarding an Expert Insights event on 30 April.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members would respond directly.

- xvii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Institute of Healthcare Engineering and Estates Management regarding an invite to conference on 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members would respond directly.

- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a judicial review.

- xix. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding safeguarding failures.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward to the Department and five Trusts for comment.

- xx. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding changing places at hospitals.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward to the Department and five Trusts for comment.

- xxi. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding data requests and a complaint to Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

- xxii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding senior grading structures in Health and Social Care.

- xxiii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding systematic data integrity failure.

- xxiv. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding neurology recall patients.

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

## **10. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was advised that the Chair and the Interim Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) will brief Members at the meeting next week. This session will conclude the Committee's current series of briefings from Health and Social Care Trusts.

The Chair noted that the Minister is scheduled to attend on 26 March to provide a briefing on the governance arrangements of the Trusts.

The Committee considered recent engagement between the Chair, the Clerk, and the Save Our Acute Services (SOAS). The Committee agreed to the following actions:

- To write to the Public Health Agency seeking comment on patient outcomes, with specific reference to mortality within the Western Trust.
- To share the Department's written briefing on the Elective Care Framework, which was considered at the Committee meeting on 26 February, with SOAS.
- To write to the Department requesting that the background paper for the oral briefing on the Elective Care Framework, scheduled for 23 April, include a breakdown of elective activity by hospital and by speciality.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted the forward work plan.

## **11. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to move to closed session.

The Committee moved to closed session at 3.05pm.

## **12. Closed Session- Committee Deliberations on the Adult Protection Bill.**

The Committee resumed its informal deliberations of the Adult Protection Bill.

The Committee discussed the clauses and agreed to seek further information from the Department on the following:

- **Clause 43-** An assessment of adding dementia inpatient units and learning disability inpatient units to the list at Clause 43(1).
- **Clause 46-** An assessment of an amendment to Clause 46(6)(e) to include a family member/next of kin among those RQIA may interview during a CCTV inspection.
- **Clause 46-** The view on introducing a requirement for RQIA to publish anonymised CCTV inspection and enforcement statistics, either on the face of the Bill or via regulations.
- **Clause 49-** Examples of circumstances where a person may be considered an adult at risk while retaining capacity.

## **13. 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 March.

*The meeting was adjourned at 4.24pm.*

**Phillip McGuigan MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Health**

**19 March 2026**