



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

18 September 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present: Philip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)
Diane Dodds MLA
Nuala McAllister MLA
Colin McGrath MLA

Joining Remotely: Danny Donnelly MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Linda Dillon MLA
Órlaithí Flynn MLA
Alan Robinson MLA

Apologies: Alan Chambers 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 2.07pm in public session.

1. Apologies

Alan Chambers MLA

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chair informed members that there will be an event on 22 September at 11am in Long Gallery. It will be an opportunity for members to download the MyCare app and hear more about the system.

The Chair informed the Committee he attended a Royal College of GPs event on GPs and healthcare workers mental health.

The Chair informed the Committee he has requested that officials from the Department and Southern Trust attend the Committee session next week to give a briefing on the failure of the IT system within the Southern Trust.

3. Draft Minutes

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Departmental briefing – Caleb’s Cause NI

The Chair noted that he met with Alma White from Caleb’s Cause in an informal meeting before the Committee session this afternoon.

The following officials joined the meeting at 2.10pm:

- Nigel Chambers, Head of Learning, Disability and Autism, Department of Health
- Tracey Sproule, Social Care Commissioning Lead for Children’s Disability, Department of Health
- Caroline McGonigle, Social Care Commissioning Lead for Lead for Learning Disability, Department of Health

The officials briefed the Committee on its work in relation to transitioning of Post-19 Special Educational Needs pupils.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Colin McGrath MLA joined the meeting at 2.29pm

Órlaithí Flynn MLA joined the meeting remotely at 2.51pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward correspondence received from Caleb’s Cause for comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive further detail of the two pilots that officials informed Members about, including information on the timeline for the pilots, how they will be evaluated and rolled out.

6. Departmental briefing – Inquiries Implementation Programme Management Board (INI, HRDI, UI and IBI)

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.27pm:

- Dr Patricia Donnelly, Chair of Inquiries Implementation Programme Management Board Assurance Sub-Group, Department of Health
- Brian O’Hagan, HSC Leadership Centre & PPI Advisor, Department of Health

- Robbie Davis, Director Healthcare Inquiries Oversight Directorate, Department of Health
- Kieran McAteer, Director of Quality, Safety and Improvement, Department of Health
- Michael O'Neill, Head of Independent Medical Examiner, Service Policy Branch

The officials briefed the Committee on the work of the Inquiries Implementation Programme Management Board.

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.

Linda Dillon MLA left the meeting at 3.50pm.

Agreed: The Department to provide up to date information on the implementation of IHRD recommendation 30.

7. SL1 – The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee considered the SL1 – The Recovery of Health Service Charges (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the merits of the policy and that the Department make the Statutory Rule.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the Change or Withdrawal of Services – Guidance on Roles and Responsibilities.

- ii. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the UK-wide consultation on amending Human Medicines Regulations 2012.
- iii. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department of Health regarding the Advance Care Planning Task and Finish Group.
- iv. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Committee for Economy regarding the branding of baby formula.
- v. The Committee considered the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Neurological Charities Alliance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Northern Ireland Neurological Charities Alliance to the next Committee Clinic.

- vi. The Committee considered the correspondence from The Fostering Network regarding the summary of consultation responses to the draft Fostering Standards.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence from The Fostering Network to the Department of Health for comment.

- vii. The Committee noted the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Marine Taskforce regarding nature-based solutions to support the Climate Action Plan and wider health benefits.
- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from Ladies with Letters regarding an event at Parliament Buildings.
- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from Neurology Action regarding the recall of neurology patients.
- x. The Committee noted correspondence from Protective Mothers regarding systemic failures.
- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

- xii. The Committee considered from the Department regarding RVH Maternity System Decision Independent Review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Belfast Trust to provide further information on the decision that was made, to provide a timetable for taking the work forward and information on the cost and where the liability lies.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to take place at in Room 29 at 2.00pm on 25 September 2025.

The Committee moved to a closed session at 4.56pm.

11. Access to Palliative Care Inquiry

The Clerk gave Members an overview of the Committee's draft Report and recommendations. There was discussion in relation to the timeline and the launch of the Report.

12. Forward Work Plan and Committee Strategic Planning

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the Committee's Forward Work Programme and Strategic Planning for the year ahead.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Committee's Strategic Priorities and the Forward Work Programme.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.11pm.

Phillip McGuigan MLA

Chairperson, Committee for Health

25 September 2025