



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee for Health

### Minutes of Proceedings

**19 February 2026**

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

**Present:**

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

**Apologies:** Linda Dillon 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 2.03pm in closed session.

### **1. Adult Protection Bill- European Convention on Human Rights considerations.**

Htaik Win, Legal Advisor, NIA Legal Services joined the meeting at 2.03pm.

Htaik briefed the Committee on the European Convention on Human Rights considerations in relation to the Adult Protection Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the official for their briefing.

The briefing session was reported by Hansard.

### **2. Adult Protection Bill- Committee Deliberations**

Liz Marsh, Bill Clerk, NI Assembly joined the meeting at 2.17pm.

Michael Doran, Senior Assistant Clerk took Members through the Adult Protection Bill's Deliberations Summary Table.

*Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 2.43pm.*

The Committee began its informal deliberations on the Adult Protection Bill and highlighted several points that require further clarification.

Kerry Loveland-Morrison, Head of Adult Safeguarding Unit; DoH joined the meeting at 2.53pm.

The Committee agreed to request the following:

- Further legal advice regarding Article 8 European Convention of Human Rights and safeguards, especially in relation to the deprivation of liberty;
- Clearer examples from the Department of 'socio-economic factors' and how they will be interpreted within the Bill;
- An explanation of how the Department arrived at the use of the term "have regard";
- Clarification on how the Mental Capacity Act interacts with the Adult Protection Bill;
- PSNI views on the Bill regarding the definition of "harm"; and
- Reassurance on the position regarding self-harm, specifically whether adults with capacity who self-harm are excluded from the Bill's protections.

### **3. Apologies**

Linda Dillon MLA

### **4. Chairperson's Business**

The Chair expressed concerns regarding reports of a shortage of medical cement, noting that this was having an impact on delivery of joint surgery in England.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to clarify if Northern Ireland is also experiencing these shortages and how this is impacting on service delivery.

As part of Sexual Health Week, Deputy Chair Danny Donnelly highlighted he attended a Positive Life NI event earlier today, where the need for continued investment in HIV prevention and education.

## **5. Draft Minutes**

The Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meetings held on 12 February 2026.

## **6. Matters Arising**

There were no Matters Arising.

## **7. Medical Training (Prioritisation) Bill - Oral Briefing from the Department.**

The following officials joined the meeting at 3.11pm:

- Phil Rodgers, Director of Workforce Policy, DoH;
- Professor Lourda Geoghegan, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DoH; and
- Chris Wilkinson, Workforce Policy Directorate, DoH.

The Chair outlined his disappointment at the delay in laying the Legislative Consent Motion (LCM), noting that this had prevented both the Committee and the Assembly from having the opportunity to scrutinise it in a timely manner. He further noted that committees in Scotland and Wales had considered the matter several weeks earlier, and this Committee had not been given the same opportunity.

The officials briefed the Committee with on the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Bill.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

The briefing was reported by Hansard.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request statistics on the number of medical applicants, including a breakdown of UK and international applicants.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that due to the lack of sufficient time to scrutinise this legislation, it will not take a position on the LCM.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to publish the Departmental papers it had received on its webpage.

## **8. Trust Overview - Oral Briefing from Northern Health and Social Care Trust.**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 3.35pm:

- Anne O'Reilly, Chairperson, Northern Health and Social Care Trust;
- Suzanne Pullins, Chief Executive, Northern Health and Social Care Trust;
- Gillian Traub, Director of Operations, Northern Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Neil Martin, Director of Strategic Planning, Performance and ICT, DoH.

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

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

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 a written update providing clarity on the estimated £28 million backlog maintenance costs for Holywell Hospital, and to seek details on the current upkeep costs for the site.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Trust to request a written update clarifying the statistics on why patients are removed from waiting lists, including the number of re-referrals.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Trust to request figures of service activity in Whiteabbey Hospital, including confirmation of whether the site is operating at full capacity.

*Diane Dodds MLA left the meeting at 4.40pm.*

*Nuala McAllister left the meeting at 4.40pm.*

## **9. Overview of Budget and Three Year Plan - Oral Briefing from the Department.**

The following officials joined the meeting at 4.40pm:

- David Keenan, Interim Finance Director, DoH;
- Nicola Shields, Interim Head of Financial Planning, DoH;
- Paul Montgomery, Investment Director, DoH; and
- Catherine Fitzpatrick, Head of Capital Resources, DoH.

The officials briefed the Committee on the current position in relation to the 2025/26 Budget and provided an overview of the Department's proposed Budget Three Year Plan.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their briefing.

The meeting was reported by Hansard.

*Órlaithí Flynn MLA left the meeting at 5.04pm*

## **10. SL1- The Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (General) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026**

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (General) (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 12 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 12 March.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the SL1 information to Community Pharmacy to assist with its response.

#### **11. Written Briefing from the Department- Children's Social Care Services.**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the written briefing until the next Committee meeting.

#### **12. Written Briefing from the Department- Elective Care Framework Implementation.**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to defer its consideration of the written briefing until the next Committee meeting.

#### **13. Correspondence**

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

#### **14. Forward Work Programme**

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

#### **15. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

#### **16. 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 26 February.

*The meeting was adjourned at 5.18pm.*

**Phillip McGuigan MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Health**

**26 February 2026**