



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 25 June 2026

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

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

Apologies: Órlaithí Flynn MLA
Nuala McAllister MLA
Colin McGrath MLA

In Attendance: Keith McBride (Clerk)
Michael Doran (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Shannen Lofthouse (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Aidan Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Caroline Devlin (Clerical Officer)



Northern Ireland Assembly

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Alan Chambers MLA joined the meeting at 2.02 pm.

Passing of Dr Tom Frawley

The Chairperson informed Members of the passing of Dr Tom Frawley, Chairperson of the Western Health and Social Care Trust. The Chairperson expressed sincere condolences to Dr Frawley's family, friends and colleagues.

Robinson Memorial Hospital AGM

The Chairperson advised Members that he had attended the Annual General Meeting of Robinson Memorial Hospital. He thanked the organisers for the invitation and commended the work being undertaken, particularly in relation to frailty services, care for older people and mental health support within local communities.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Ballymoney Men's Shed Visit

The Chairperson noted that he and Alan Robinson MLA had visited the Ballymoney Men's Shed that morning. He thanked those involved for facilitating the visit, with particular thanks extended to Ron Snape for facilitating the visit. The Chairperson noted the visit provided an opportunity to see first-hand the valuable work being undertaken by Men's Sheds and the positive contribution they make to local communities. Members heard about the range of activities and support available, including exercise programmes, mental health support, workshops, social engagement opportunities and wellbeing advice, all of which align with the Department's Neighbourhood Model.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health and the Department for Communities to seek information on funding available to support Men's Shed projects.

Meeting with the British Medical Association

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee met with representatives of the British Medical Association this afternoon regarding the specialty, associate specialist and specialist (SAS) doctors' strike.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department urging that meaningful and immediate negotiations with the BMA proceed without delay.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2026.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. SR 2026/121 The Public Health (Notifiable Diseases Hantavirus Diseases) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee considered SR 2026/121 The Public Health (Notifiable Diseases Hantavirus Diseases) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 that will update the relevant section of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 to make hantavirus disease a notifiable condition under the Act.

Agreed: The Committee has considered SR 2026/121 The Public Health (Notifiable Diseases Hantavirus Diseases) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 and, subject the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, had no objection to the Rule.



Northern Ireland Assembly

6. SR 2026/122 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee considered SR 2026/122 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 that will update the relevant section of the Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 to include hantavirus diseases.

Agreed: The Committee has considered SR 2026/122 The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and subject the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report, had no objection to the Rule.

7. Oral Briefing from the Department – Safe and Effective Staffing Overview

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 2.14 pm:

- Mr Phil Rodgers, Director of Workforce Policy;
- Prof Maria McIlgorm, Chief Nursing Officer;
- Ms Áine Morrison, Chief Social Work Officer;
- Mr Rodney Redmond, Head of Workforce Strategy; and



- Ms Andrea Owens, Safe and Effective Staffing Policy Lead

Danny Donnelly MLA declared an interest working as a bank nurse within the Trust.

The officials briefed the Committee on the content of the upcoming Safe and Effective Staffing legislation.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance

8. Oral Briefing from the Department – June Monitoring and Budget Priorities

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 3.27 pm:

- Mr David Keenan, Interim Finance Director;
- Ms Danielle Mallen, Head of Financial Management;
- Mr Paul Montgomery, Investment Director; and
- Ms Catherine Fitzpatrick, Head of Capital Resources

The officials briefed the Committee on the June monitoring process including the current financial position and emerging pressures within the current year.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health to advise that, in advance of the oral briefing with the Encompass team



Northern Ireland Assembly

scheduled for the following week, Members intend to raise questions regarding expenditure on the Encompass programme to date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request confirmation of the total funding being sought by Belfast Trust for repair works, including the Maternity Hospital, the Mental Health Inpatient Unit at the City Hospital, and the works being undertaken at Knockbracken.

9. Oral Briefing from the Department – Gender Services

The following officials from the Department of Health and Belfast Trust joined the meeting at 4.05 pm:

- Mr Mark McGuicken, Director of Disability and Older People, Department of Health;
- Ms Paula Tweedie, Co-Director of Hospital Care, Department of Health;
- Dr Oisin Martin, Co-Director, Mental Health and Learning Disability, Department of Health;
- Danielle McMillan, Interim Divisional Nurse, Mental Health & CAMHs Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; and
- Orla Tierney, Interim Co-Director Mental Health Services, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.



Northern Ireland Assembly

The officials briefed the Committee Gender Services, including progress on establishing the new Lifespan Gender Identity Service and the Department's work to reduce waiting lists for individuals seeking access to assessment and support.

A question and answer session followed.

Agreed: The Department agreed to provide the Committee with information on the youngest age at which a child has been prescribed puberty blockers and the youngest age at which cross-sex hormones have been prescribed.

Alan Robinson MLA left the meeting at 4.46pm.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place at 30 June at 9.30 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.56 pm as there was not a decision making quorum.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Phillip McGuigan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Health
2 July 2026