Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Health

Minutes of Proceedings

Thursday 12 November 2026

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

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

Present by Video or Teleconference:
Linda Dillon MLA
Nuala McAllister MLA

Apologies: Órlaithí Flynn MLA

In Attendance: Keith McBride (Clerk)

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Michael Doran (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Shannen Lofthouse (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Jonathan Lamont (Clerical Supervisor)
Carla Hamill (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.02 pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson noted the National Deaf Children's Society Event in Parliament Buildings that took place this week.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health seeking an update on the recommendations from the recent National Deaf Children's Society report.

The Chairperson welcomed the announcement regarding GP contracts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on funding, implementation and outcomes.

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3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2026.

Nuala McAllister MLA joined the meeting at 2.07 pm.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence from Action for Muckamore in relation to recommendation 105 of the Muckamore Abbey Hospital Inquiry Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the Bill Clerk draft an amendment in relation to recommendation 105 for further consideration.

5. SR 2026/XX The Feed and Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations)

The Committee considered SR 2026/XX The Feed and Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 that will amend existing delegated legislation regarding food and animal feed safety and standards to enhance consumer protections and clarity.

Agreed: The Committee has considered SR 2026/xx The Feed and Food (Miscellaneous Amendments and Revocations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report recommended that it be approved by the Assembly.

6. Oral Briefing from the Department – Elective Care Framework

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

- Prof Mark Taylor, Regional Clinical Director of Elective Care;
- Ms Lisa McWilliams, Director of Acute Planning and Performance; and
- Ms Joanne Elliott, Interim Director of Elective Care and Cancer Policy Directorate.

Linda Dillon MLA joined the meeting at 2.14 pm.

Officials briefed the Committee with an update on the Elective Care Framework and waiting lists.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Department agreed to provide further information on a number of issues discussed.

7. Legislative Consent Motion – UK Health Bill

Mr Vincent Ramirez, Head of Infected Blood and Urology Services Inquiries Oversight, Department of Health joined the meeting at 4.05 pm.

Mr Ramirez briefed the Committee on the forthcoming UK Health Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Ramirez for his attendance.

8. Oral Briefing – Children's Health and Social Care Services Review

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 4.12 pm:

- Ms Eilís McDaniel, Social Care Reform Director;
- Ms Catherine Cassidy, Co-Director of Children's Services, SPPG;
- Ms Natasha Duddy, Together for Families Programme Manager; and
- Ms Shona Graham, Children's Lead, Social Care Reform.

Officials briefed the Committee with an update on the Children's Health and Social Care Services Review.

A question and answer session followed.

Diane Dodds MLA left the meeting at 4.28pm.

Nuala McAllister MLA left the meeting at 4.39 pm.

Colin McGrath MLA left the meeting at 4.50 pm.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on issues discussed and to request regular updates on the Together for Families programme.

9. Written Briefing from the Department – Cancer Strategy

The Committee noted a written briefing from the Department regarding the Cancer Strategy.

10. Correspondence

i. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding care settings and emergency preparedness.

ii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Health regarding the proposed relocation of Extern.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Extern for information.

iii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Health regarding funding and delays relating to the Haematology Unit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward to the Belfast Trust for comment.

iv. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding breast assessment capacity and waiting times.

v. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding the regional service for pectus deformities.

vi. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Health regarding NICCY's Rights Without Borders initiative.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to NICCY for information.

vii. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Health regarding PANS and PANDAS services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to the individual concerned for information.

viii. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding the Health and Social Care (Staffing) Bill.

ix. The Committee noted a response from the Department of Health regarding Encompass queries.

x. The Committee noted correspondence from the Department of Health regarding a consultation on adoption records.

xi. The Committee considered correspondence from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust requesting a meeting with the Chair in relation to provide an update.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Chair should schedule a briefing with Committee in Common.

xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Business Office regarding the CJI Adult Safeguarding Report.

xiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Finance Committee regarding Visual Artists Ireland.

xiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Executive Office Committee regarding the Age Discrimination (Goods, Facilities and Services) Bill.

xv. The Committee noted a submission from the Public Accounts Committee regarding the Northern Ireland Audit Office Review of Prescribing.

xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Business Office regarding Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals Northern Ireland 2025.

xvii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Education Committee enclosing correspondence to the Department of Health regarding SEND.

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

xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Business Office regarding the Hospital Parking Charges Act (Northern Ireland) 2026.

xix. The Committee considered correspondence from Action for Muckamore regarding implementation of the Mongan and Sutherland resettlement review.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department and Health and Social Care Trusts and request sight of the action plans relating to the recommendations.

xx. The Committee noted correspondence from All Women NI enclosing a copy of correspondence to the Department of Health regarding Bring Her Back.

xxi. The Committee considered a response from the Department of Justice regarding the Michael Watt Coronial Investigations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Neurology Justice Collective for information.

xxii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority regarding the provision of short break services by IncredABLE.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to IncredABLE for information.

xxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Love Needs No Words Project seeking formal Committee scrutiny.

xxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council regarding its paper on the retention and use of income.

xxv. The Committee noted correspondence from Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland regarding adult safeguarding in Northern Ireland's criminal justice system.

xxvi. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department for Communities regarding positive DLA payments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to B-Positive for information.

xxvii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Food Standards Agency regarding legislative updates.

xxviii. The Committee noted a number of items of correspondence from an individual regarding a procedural concerns.

xxix. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual requesting a review of the Western Trust.

xxx. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual requesting a review of Western Trust children's services.

xxxi. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual requesting Committee scrutiny in relation to a RQIA review.

xxxii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding Smart Dental Care data exposure.

xxxiii. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a Western Health and Social Care Trust complaint.

xxxiv. The Committee noted correspondence from an individual regarding a request for independent scrutiny.

xxxv. The Committee noted correspondence form an individual regarding action plans for the recommendations of the Muckamore Inquiry.

Linda Dillon MLA left the meeting at 4.58 pm.

The Committee lost quorum at 4.58 pm. The meeting was adjourned at 4.58 pm.

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Phillip McGuigan MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Health
19 November 2026