



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Public Accounts Committee

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Thursday, 25 April 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 21, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Daniel McCrossan, MLA (Chairperson)

Cheryl Brownlee, MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Cathal Boylan, MLA

Diane Forsyth, MLA

Colm Gildernew, MLA

David Honeyford, MLA

John Stewart, MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Pádraig Delargy, MLA

**Apologies:**

Tom Buchanan, MLA

**In Attendance:** Lucia Wilson (Committee Clerk)  
Kirsten McClelland (Assistant Committee Clerk)  
Karen Barry (Clerical Supervisor)  
Barbara Daly (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.08 pm in closed session

The Chairperson advised members of the requirement to declare interests in any items of business on the agenda, and discussed the substantive items of business to be considered.

The meeting moved into public session at 2.12 pm.

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tom Buchanan, MLA.

### **2. Draft minutes**

**Agreed:** The draft minutes of the meeting on 18 April 2024 were agreed.

### **3. Matters Arising**

PAC received a copy of a letter from the Minister for Finance to the Audit Committee, thanking the Audit Committee for their work in preparing draft budgets for the NIAO and other non-departmental bodies.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to note the correspondence.

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

No Chairperson's business was raised.

## **5. Declaration of Interests**

The Chairperson reminded members of their requirement to register their interests under Standing Order 69(5).

Colm Gildernew declared an interest due to his previous role in Trust Mental Health Services and Crisis Services.

Pádraig Delargy declared an interest as Chair of the All-Party Working Group on Mental Health.

Cahal Boylan declared an interest as Chair of the All-Party Working Group on Autism.

Cheryl Brownlee declared an interest as Treasurer of the All-Party Working Group on Autism.

## **6. Correspondence**

A letter was received on 23 April from Mental Health Champion Professor Siobhan O'Neill and Dr Nicole Bond providing further information for the Inquiry into Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland following the briefing session held on 18 April. The Clerk has shared this correspondence with the Northern Ireland Audit Office to inform the final PAC report.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to note the correspondence and share with Northern Ireland Audit Office for consideration in the final PAC report into Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland.

## **7. Inquiry on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland: Evidence Session – Department of Health and Treasury Officer of Accounts.**

The following officials from the Department of Health joined the meeting at 2.17 pm

Mr Peter May, Permanent Secretary;

Mr Peter Toogood, Deputy Secretary, Social Care and Public Health Policy Group;

Mr Brendan Whittle, Director of Community Care, Strategic Planning and Performance Group;

Dr Petra Corr, Director of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Community Wellbeing Services, Northern Health and Social Care Trust;

The following officials also joined the meeting;

Mr Stuart Stevenson, Treasury Officer of Accounts;

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Committee heard evidence from the Officials.

Pádraig Delargy left the meeting at 4.39 pm

The Chairperson thanked Mr May, Mr Toogood, Mr Whittle, Dr Corr and Mr Stevenson for attending.

Officials left the meeting at 4.53 pm.

The meeting moved into closed session at 4.53 pm.

## **8. Inquiry on Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland – Discussions with NIAO following evidence session.**

The following NIAO Officials joined the meeting;

Ms Dorinnia Carville, Comptroller and Auditor General, NI

Mr Roger McCance, Audit Manager, NIAO

Mr Kyle Bingham, Assembly Support Officer, NIAO

Mr Damien Prenter, Senior Auditor, NIAO

Ms Nikita White, Auditor, NIAO

Members discussed the evidence provided by officials and agreed the issues to be included in the published report.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health Permanent Secretary, Peter May to follow up on issues discussed during evidence.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was briefed on the draft Forward Work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed its forward work programme.

## **10. Any Other Business**

## **11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The Chairperson thanked officials for their attendance and advised members that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, at 2.00 pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.16 pm.

**Daniel McCrossan MLA**

**Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee**

**25 April 2024**