



Subject:	Motion: Funding for Palliative and End-of-Life Care – Response from Minister of Health
Date:	19th February, 2021
Reporting Officer:	John Walsh, City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a response from the Minister of Health to a motion on Funding for Palliative and End-of-Life Care which was passed by the Council at its meeting on 7th December.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is requested to consider the response and to take such action thereon as may be determined.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>At the Council meeting on 7th December, the following motion, which was proposed by Councillor Whyte and seconded by Councillor Lyons, was passed:</p> <p>“This Council recognises that hospice care is a vitally important part of our care system; considers it necessary that people approaching the end of life, their families and carers get the right care and support where and when they need it; notes that hospice staff deserve recognition for the world-class medical care and emotional support they provide, not just to patients but also to their families; and looks forward to the hospice movement going from strength to strength in years to come.</p> ”

Accordingly, the Council agrees to write to the Minister of Health, Robin Swann MLA, calling upon him to ensure fair and transparent funding in line with demand, and continued high quality palliative and end-of-life care.”

- 3.2 A response has been received from the Minister of Health, a copy of which is attached.
- 3.3 The Minister highlights the valued service which hospices in Northern Ireland provide in caring for and supporting people living with palliative and end-of-life care and those who are important to them. Department of Health officials and their colleagues in the Health and Social Care Board work closely with hospices and are aware of the both the contribution which they make and the challenges they face.
- 3.4 The Minister, in recognising the financial pressures which hospices are facing, points out that Covid-19 has had an impact across the community and voluntary sector and refers to similar issues across other areas and organisations, where there are also increasing demands for services and associated financial pressures.
- 3.5 He explains that the Health and Social Care Board has Service Level Agreements in place with each of the hospice providers in Northern Ireland for both inpatient and community based services. Separate arrangements are also in place with Health and Social Care Trusts for hospice night services, as required. The Marie Curie charity also provides a regional out-of-hours service.
- 3.6 In terms of funding, the Minister states that guidance which was put in place by the Department of Health in 2004 introduced 50/50 funding for agreed adult inpatient hospice services, with effect from 2004/05, and 50% funding for agreed adult community services, with effect from 2005/06. Those arrangements provide for the funding of agreed commissioned services, not a hospice’s total running costs.
- 3.8 He points out that children’s hospice services are funded differently to adult services, with separate commissioning and funding arrangements in place for children’s palliative care and hospice services. In addition to core funding for children’s services, the Department of Health agreed, following the closure of the Horizon West children’s hospice, to fund on a 50/50 basis an additional bed in the NI Children’s Hospice at Horizon House for three years from 2018/19.
- 3.9 Since 2018, a Paediatric and Life Limited Service has also been commissioned from the NI Children’s Hospice. That service provides a specialist nursing role to support children, families and clinicians in recognising and managing end-of-life needs, as well as access to a dedicated bed in the NI Children’s Hospice or in the child’s home. Funding of £186,000 for the service was made initially through Confidence and Supply transformation funding. The Department of Health has extended that funding for a further year to ensure the continued delivery of the service by the NI Children’s Hospice.
- 3.10 The Minister goes on to state that, in recognition of the challenges being faced by hospices during the current pandemic, the Health and Social Care Board, with the agreement of his Department, has put in place arrangements to support hospices’ cash flow. Those arrangements apply also to contracts between hospices and Health and Social Care Trusts.

<p>3.11</p> <p>3.12</p> <p>3.13</p>	<p>The Health and Social Care Board has also worked closely with hospices around the availability of Personal Protection Equipment, fit testing and access to sanitising equipment and to keep them informed of the broader system approach to responding to Covid-19.</p> <p>The Minister welcomes also the additional funding which has been made available to hospices in recognition of the restrictions on fundraising opportunities and retail, as a result of Covid-19, and refers to £6.75m and £7.3m which was allocated to local hospices and the Cancer Fund for Children in May and October, 2020 respectively.</p> <p>He explains that the Health and Social Care Board has recently completed a review of adult hospice funding, which identified a total funding shortfall of £867,360 between the 2019/20 funding provided to hospices, when compared against benchmarked costs assessed as part of the review process. That additional funding has been made available to hospices and has been backdated to April, 2019. In October, 2020, the Health and Social Care Board also approved a 4% uplift for 2020/21 to the value of its core contract Service Level Agreements held with hospices in Northern Ireland. The Minister believes that, given that the current funding arrangements date back to 2004, it would be appropriate to review those arrangements in light of the changing context and demographics for palliative care and trusts that hospices engage in this process.</p> <p>The Minister concludes by stating that the New Decade New Approach deal includes a commitment to increase investment on palliative and end-of-life care to fully implement service improvements, including enhancing the contribution of hospices, and to increase support for palliative perinatal care. Investment to meet the New Decade New Approach commitment has been captured within his Department's bids for additional funding in the Department of Finance Budget 2021-22 exercise.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Document Attached</p>
	<p>Response from Minister of Health</p>