



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 22 APRIL 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Noreen Hayward (Clerical Officer)
Mrs Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:03 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised the Committee that he met the Minister on Monday 20 April 2015 with the Deputy Chairperson and the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment prior to the Ministerial statement on Economic Inactivity.
- The Chairperson advised the Committee that he and a number of Members met with a delegation from the Bytes Project regarding the cessation of core funding from the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister regarding this issue.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 25 March 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 25 March 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from Anna Lo MLA regarding scheduling a briefing from NICEM on its Voices for Change Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the forward work programme.

- Correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the progress of the Disability Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the Voices of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to VOYPIC for information.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the Civil Service Voluntary Exit Scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on the European Social Fund Funding Application Process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence requesting further information on the European Legislative Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on the European Social Fund Funding Applications appeals process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence,

- Response from Colleges NI to Committee correspondence regarding the Action on Hearing Loss briefing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and include it in the Committee Inquiry Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the response to Action on Hearing Loss for information.

- Response from NISRA to Committee request for further information following the briefing on the Labour Force Survey.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Include Youth regarding the Departmental decision to end Pathways to Success Education Maintenance Allowance Funding.

10:08 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.

10:09 am Mr Sydney Anderson joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment and raise this matter with the Minister at the briefing on 29 April 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a list of the projects that have had funding removed.

- Correspondence from the Examiner of Statutory Rules providing a copy of his 13th Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing a copy of its Report into Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on Comparison of Work Poverty in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the briefing paper.

- Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing the Department for Employment and Learning Procurement Activity Report for March 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Audit Office providing a copy of the Report on Conflicts of Interest: NIAO Good Practise Guide.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group detailing the key issues of the meeting on 14 April 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the Research Evaluation framework 2014 results.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the Access to Success - Widening Participation in Higher Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Ministerial correspondence providing notice of his intention to make an oral statement in the Northern Ireland Assembly on Enabling Success.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from The Bytes Project regarding Youth Council Northern Ireland Core Funding.

Agreed: This matter was dealt with in Chairpersons Business.

- Correspondence from Bryson Care regarding Educational Maintenance Allowance Funding.

Agreed: This Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from Queen's University Belfast to 'Sterling, Punt, Euro Currency Choices in Ireland Past and Present'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Department for Employment and Learning to an Opportunities for Unemployment Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Belfast Metropolitan College to the Supported Learning Celebration of Achievement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust to a Women in Leadership Seminar.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Stranmillis University College to its Music@Stran 2015 Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Mr Ferghal McKinney MLA to the UK and Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Regulators Event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Mr Alban Maginness MLA to the NIACRO Justice Series Seminar 2015-2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

- The Committee agreed to reschedule the Ministerial Briefing on the European Social to its meeting on Wednesday 29 April 2015.
- The Committee agreed to reschedule the meeting and visit on 29 April 2015 at Stranmillis University College to Wednesday 24 June 2015.
- A revised copy of the Forward Work Programme will be issued to Members.

7. SL1 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

10:13 am Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

10:14 am Ms Claire Sugden joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting if the annual inflationary increase will also be reflected in student maintenance grants and loans.

8. SL1 The Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposal.

9. SR 2015-213 Time Off to Attend Adoption Appointments (Prospective Adopters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Agreed: That the Committee for Employment and Learning has considered SR 2015 - 213 Time Off to Attend Adoption Appointments (Prospective Adopters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, and subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report has no objection to the rule.

10:16 am Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.

10. Departmental Briefing - European Policy Developments

10:17 am The Departmental official joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mrs Patricia McVeigh, Head of European Policy Branch.

10:19 am Mr Fra McCann re-joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:27 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

11. Departmental Briefing Economic Inactivity - Draft Strategy

10:28 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Yvonne Croskery, Director of Youth Policy and Strategy Division and Mr Rory Muldrew, Economic Inactivity Strategy Team.

10:34 am Mr David Hilditch re-joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with details of projects specifically aimed at lone parents.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with details of engagement with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister and the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding childcare support in respect of the Economic Inactivity Strategy.

11:31 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

12. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - Special Educational Needs Bill

11:32 am The researcher joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Researcher, Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Information Service,

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Researcher agreed to carry out a financial analysis of costs involved in extending the provision of Special Educational Need to young people over the age of 19.

Agreed: The Clerk agreed to speak to the Bill Office regarding the potential for tabling an amendment to the Bill.

11:47 am The researcher left the meeting.

13. Any other business

None

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 29 April 2015 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

11:47 am The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

29April 2015