



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 27 MAY 2015

RAMADA PLAZA HOTEL, BELFAST

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)

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

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

Apologies: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)

The meeting opened in public session at 10:07 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that the informal meeting with the new Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People took place on Wednesday 20 May 2015.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee event for young people with Special Educational Needs took place on Thursday 21 May 2015.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the annual Belfast Metropolitan College Fashion Show took place on Friday 22 May 2015.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 20 May were agreed.

10:09 am Mr Sydney Anderson joined the meeting.

10:09 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 20 May 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding the Law Centre (NI) Paper on Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding projects that were losing funding due to budget cuts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Queen's University Belfast response to Committee correspondence regarding the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Ulster University response to Committee correspondence regarding the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsperson Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

10:10 am Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting.

10:17 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

- Correspondence from Women's Tec regarding European Social Fund funding.
- Correspondence from the NOW Project regarding outstanding monies from the European Social Fund.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for information and comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a sectoral and geographical spread, by either council area or constituency, of all funded projects for both ESF funding periods.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting details on how many groups have not received outstanding payments from the European Social Fund under the previous programme, how much money is outstanding for each group and an explanation of the reason for the delay in the provision of the monies outstanding including what is being done to resolve the problems with vouching.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting details of how many groups in rural areas have lost out in funding to urban groups offering provision in the rural areas.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting how will gaps that have opened in community provision, as a result of projects not receiving funding, be filled by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Departmental officials regarding an update on the European Social Fund on Wednesday 1 July 2015.

- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Officer providing the EU Matters Newsletter Issue 5.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding holiday pay reflecting non-guaranteed overtime.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Invitation from the NOW Project to the opening of Loaf Café and Bakery.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

- The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to 1 July 2015.

7. Committee Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Difficulties – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership Briefing

10:23 am The representative joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Aidan Murray, Assistant Director for Mental Health and Older People, Health and Social Care Board.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit in its forward work programme to Lisburn Adult Resource Centre.

Agreed: The representative agreed to provide the Committee with a breakdown of the percentage of money spent on learning disabilities.

Agreed: The representative agreed to provide the Committee with details on the budget for day care provision.

Agreed: The representative agreed to provide the Committee with details of the additional money required each year to develop the programme.

11:29 am Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule briefings from the Community and Voluntary Sector and Not for Profit Organisations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange a visit to a social enterprise as part of its on-going inquiry.

11:43 am The representative left the meeting.

11:44 am Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.

8. Briefing from Kinship Care Northern Ireland

11:44 am The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Jacqueline Williamson, Chairperson, Kinship Care Northern Ireland and Ms Leona McMenamin, Service Manager, Kinship Care Northern Ireland.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a research paper on Kinship Care good practice in other jurisdictions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Hansard to the Department requesting its views on bringing forward legislation for kinship carers.

11:58 am Mr Sydney Anderson re-joined the meeting.

12:00 pm The representatives left the meeting

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:01 pm Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.

9. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service – The Living Wage in the Public and Private Sectors in Northern Ireland

12:01pm The research officer joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Assembly Research and Information Service.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:12 pm Mr David Hilditch re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The researcher agreed to provide a further paper on this issue.

12:20 pm The research officer left the meeting.

10. Any other business

- Departmental correspondence providing a summary of Departmental provision for individuals in Northern Ireland

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

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 3 June 2015 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

12:23 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

3 June 2015