



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

ROOM 29 PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Phil Flanagan 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 Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)
Ms Amy Barr (Legislative Studies & Practice Student)

Apologies: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr William Irwin MLA

10:03 am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that he met with a representative of the Open University on Wednesday 16 September 2015.
- The Chairperson advised Members that he met with representatives of Queen's University Belfast on Wednesday 23 September 2015.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the joint supported learning showcase event for Belfast Metropolitan College and North West Regional College has been rescheduled to 2 February 2016.
- The Chairperson advised Members that the Colleges NI showcase event has been rescheduled to 3 November 2015.

10:06 am Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting.

- The Chairperson welcomed Ms Amy Barr, Legislative Studies & Practice Student to the Committee.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 23 September were agreed.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 23 September 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Departmental response providing indicators and standards for quality assessment of the Steps 2 Success Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental consultation on the Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the consultation.

- Ministerial response to correspondence from Mr A Bullar regarding concerns over the Steps 2 Success Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Department for Employment and Learning regarding the impact of changes to GCSE grading.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from Queen's University Belfast to a debate on Northern Ireland and the EU Referendum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Colleges NI to its Pre-Conference Dinner.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

- The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to 9 December 2015.
- The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to Loaf Café and Bakery run by the NOW Project as part of its Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities.

7. Departmental Briefing - Statutory Annual Leave Entitlement - Review of Economic Conditions.

10:08 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr John McKeown, Acting Assistant Director, Strategy, European & Employment Relations Division, Mr Bobby Clulow, Senior Principal Economist and Ms Margaret O'Hare, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch.

10:16 am Ms Claire Sugden joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:30 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

8. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - Pathways to Success-European Social Fund Update

10:31 am The research officer joined the meeting.

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

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the research paper to the Department for comment, particularly in regard to the questions posed by the paper.

10:39 am The research officer left the meeting.

10:40am Ms Anna Lo left the meeting.

The Committee was suspended at 10:40 am.

The Committee resumed at 10:48 am.

9. Departmental Briefing - Pathways to Success

10:49 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colin Jack, Director of Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mr Tony Wilson, Director of Policy and Research, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion and Mrs Harriet Ferguson, Head of NEETS Strategy and Policy.

10:59 am Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with the following information:

- The number of meetings held each year of the Ministerial Subgroup on Children and Young People.
- Updated figures on young people not in employment, education or training by constituency and council area.
- Further details on Table 1 on the Evaluation of Pathways to Success NI: Final Report.
- Details of the 3 objectives in the Pathways to Success strategy not yet achieved.
- A paper on how the Department will refocus the delivery mechanisms to remove inequalities in rural areas.
- Whether a limit was imposed on the number of places employers could offer young people under the Youth Employment Scheme.
- A summary table of employment resulting from participation in Pathways Programmes, showing net and gross employment.

12:06 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

10. Any other business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive a briefing from The NEETs Forum.

Agreed: Mr Phil Flanagan agreed to provide the Committee with questions forwarded to him by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

11. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday, 7 October 2015 at 10.00 am in the Law Library, Queen's University Belfast.

12:07 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

7 October 2015