



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Sammy Douglas MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Mr Alastair Ross MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Noreen Hayward (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David McClarty MLA

10:00 am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairpersons Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that submissions to the Committee Inquiry in Post School Special Educational Need Provision have been received.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish all submissions to the Inquiry on the Committee website.

10:03 am Mr Alastair Ross MLA joined the meeting.

- The Committee considered a request by NIACRO to host a Justice Seminar event on 6 May in Room 115, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to host the event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to visit Foyleview Special School, Derry/Londonderry as part of the Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need in Northern Ireland.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 12 March 2014.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the University and Colleges Union regarding the proposed industrial action at Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Barnardo's and NICEM including their 'Believe in Children' Report and a Policy and Practice Briefing Paper.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

- Department for Education response regarding the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance in Northern Ireland Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister's Inquiry into the Barroso Taskforce.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward it to the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister for information.

- Departmental response regarding the Queen's University Belfast and the Student' Union.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response regarding the Labour Market mobility package.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and write to the Department for Social Development requesting information.

- Correspondence from the new Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast thanking the Committee for its letter of congratulations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from The Open University confirming the Chairperson's attendance at the Degree Ceremony.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding the Investment Strategy Project Delivery Portal.

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

- Response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to Committee correspondence regarding tackling the Gender Pay Gap.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from staff at South West College highlighting issues of concern.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Public Accounts Committee.

- Correspondence from the GL Education Group providing additional information following its informal meeting with the Chairperson of the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Students' Orange Society regarding issues of concern at the University of Ulster.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and any interested Members would meet informally with representatives of the Students' Orange Society.

- Correspondence from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland highlighting the work it carries out with young people not in education, training or employment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Queen's University Belfast regarding the success of Mr Aidan Hughes at the International Law School Mediation Tournament.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and send a letter of congratulations to Mr Aidan Hughes.

- Committee for Education response regarding the hosting of the Belfast Rotary Club's Technology Tournament.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Department for Education regarding the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Inquiry and the Terms of Reference for the Review of Careers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding its policies and procedures to reduce sickness absence within the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning to the Assembly Speaker notifying him of his intention to make an Oral Statement on the Review of Careers in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding how the Department intends to address the gender imbalance in STEM subjects.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the green economy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Invitation from the Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts to the launch of its new Centre on 1 May 2014 at Duncairn Gardens, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from WEA regarding the International Learning Times Conference - Promoting the European Union Agenda for Adult Learning on 12-14 May 2014 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the NOW organisation to attend the Money for Life Challenge Final on 9 April 2014 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Committee for OFMDFM for the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson to attend a launch event for a delegation from the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to mark the occasion of the Enlarged Presidency on 3 April in the Member's Dining Room, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 23 April 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a Ministerial Briefing on the Structures to Deliver Success for its meeting on 9 April 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland in its forward work programme.

7. Subordinate Legislation

Agreed: That the Committee for Employment and Learning has considered SR 2014 - 87 The Education (Student Loans) (Repayment) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and has no objection to the rule.

8. Committee Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities - Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service

10:12 am The researcher 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.

10:21 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Researcher agreed to provide clarification on the age breakdown of the numbers of learning disabled persons in the Belfast Trust.

Agreed: The Researcher agreed to provide a statistical paper on the figures for people with Special Educational Needs.

Agreed: The Researcher agreed to provide a comparison to services for people with Special Educational Need in areas in the UK.

10:33 am Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.

Agreed: The Researcher agreed to provide information on the Special Educational Need provision in the Republic of Ireland.

10:43 am The researcher left the meeting.

9. Departmental Briefing - Update on the Review of Initial Teacher Education Infrastructure

10:44 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mrs Nuala Kerr, Director of Higher Education and Mrs Carol McCabe, Head of Quality and Initial Teacher Education Branch.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Departmental officials agreed to provide further information on a range of issues including:

- a breakdown of schools locations that responded to the consultation,
- whether the possibility of having the Review being carried out jointly with the Department of Education had been discussed,
- a copy of all submissions to the Review.

10:47 am Mr Fra McCann re-joined the meeting.

10:50 am Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that he provide a copy of the International Panel's Options Paper ahead of publication and that he briefs the Committee on the options prior to making any decisions.

Agreed; The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the Hansard of the briefing to the expert panel for information.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the Chair of the Expert Panel to appear before the Committee.

11:19 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

10. Departmental Briefing on the Work and Families Bill

11:20 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division and Dr Alan Scott, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11:39 am Mr Sammy Douglas left the meeting.

11:47 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

11:47 am Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.

The Committee considered a list of organisations to write to requesting written submissions on the Work and Families Bill when it is at Committee Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the list of organisations.

The Committee considered a draft signposting advertisement and a draft press release on the Work and Families Bill when it is at Committee Stage.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a draft signposting advert and a draft press release and that they are issued when the Bill comes to Committee at Committee Stage.

The Committee moved to agenda item 12.

11. Any other business

None.

The Committee moved to agenda item 11.

12. Briefing from NISRA on the Quarterly Labour Market Statistics

11:51 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Dr James Gillan, Head of Economic Statistics Branch, Department of Finance and Personnel and Dr Tracy Power, Deputy Director Analytical Services, Department for Employment and Learning.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:09 pm Mr Sammy Douglas re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide statistics on the over 45's in the Labour Force Survey.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide a breakdown by geographical area of those people who have went abroad.

12:25 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

13. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 9 April 2014 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

12:25 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

9 April 2014