



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

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

WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present:** Mr Robin Swann MLA (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 Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA

10:07am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - European Commission Legislative Work Programme

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 8.

10:08 am The Researcher joined the meeting.

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

10:13 am Mr Sammy Douglas joined the meeting.

10:13 am Mr Alastair Ross joined the meeting

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The researcher agreed to provide the Committee with further information.

10:20 am The Researcher left the meeting.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 2.

- The Committee noted the death of Mr David McClarty MLA and that the Chairperson had written to his family on behalf of the Committee to offer its condolences.
- The Committee considered an offer from Departmental officials to brief the Committee on the Work and Families Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to meet informally today to receive a briefing on the Work and Families Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Bill to the Examiner of Statutory Rules on 13 May.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the consultation period for the Committee stage of the Bill will be for 6 weeks.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2014

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 3.

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 9 April 2014 were agreed.

5. Matters arising

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 4.

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 9 April 2014.

6. Correspondence

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 5.

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Student Orange Society regarding concerns it raised relating to the University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from an individual regarding student loan repayments.

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

- Correspondence from the Department for Social Development regarding the European Commission Work Programme 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding the appointment of the Independent Panel for the Review of Careers in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response regarding the Investment Strategy Project Delivery Portal.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Committee for Finance and Personnel for information.

- Correspondence from Triangle Housing Association offering to host a visit to its Progression to Employment Service for people with Learning Disabilities in Ballymena as part of the Committee's Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a visit in its forward work programme.

- Correspondence from Synergy Training NI regarding the procurement of the Steps 2 Success Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule an informal meeting into its forward work programme and to forward the correspondence to the Department for comment.

- Correspondence from an individual regarding redundancy payments being made to Mivan employees.

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

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding transport barriers faced by people with learning disabilities entering further education.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a breakdown of the numbers of rurally based young people with learning difficulties experiencing transport related barriers to accessing further education, by council area and constituency.

- Departmental response regarding the training of coded welders in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a copy of the report on Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Services Skills Needs when available.

- Departmental response regarding the number of agency workers in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing the Department for Employment and Learning's Investing Activity Report for April 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence requesting that the briefings on the Review of Youth Training and the United Youth Programme are rescheduled.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and reschedule the briefings in its forward work programme.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the Review of the Teacher Training Infrastructure.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Compass Advocacy Network thanking the Committee for scheduling a visit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence requesting an update on Departmental consultations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from National Energy Action Northern Ireland providing further information from the 'Fuel Poverty to Achieving Affordable Warmth' event.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel providing information on the In Year Monitoring Rounds 2014 - 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and schedule Departmental briefings accordingly.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on Departmental Savings Plans position at March 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding Future European Union Structural Fund Programmes.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- European Union Memorandum regarding a report on the Application by Member States of Directive 2008/104/EC on Temporary Agency Work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Memorandum.

- Invitation from the Post 19 Campaign to its conference on alternative post 19 provision for young people with severe learning difficulties, on 14 May 2014 at the Island Hall, Lisburn Civic Centre, Lisburn.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation and, given that the conference is on a Committee meeting day, that a member of the Committee staff will attend the conference and provide information to the Committee.

- Invitation from the Department to attend the Apprenticeship of the Year Awards on 14 May 2014 in Hillsborough Castle.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Skill Exchange UK to attend the launch of Skill Exchange NI on 8 May 2014 in Ulster Bank, Donegal Square East, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland European Regional Forum to attend a Master Class on *Erasmus +, the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport* on 20 May in Malone House, Barnetts Demense, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

10:23 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

- Invitation from InterTradeIreland All-Island Innovation Programme to attend a lecture and series of Master Classes on innovation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Northern Ireland Assembly and Business Trust to attend a briefing on the importance of Europe on 13 May 2014 in Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from NISCA to attend its Spring Conference on 28 May 2014 in the Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding the Review of Careers Education in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on Statistics on People with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and to include in the Committee inquiry report.

- Queen's University Belfast Press Release regarding a student's success in being named Undergraduate for the year in the Mathematics, Economics and Finance category.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the individual and the University congratulating them on the award.

- Queen's University Belfast invitation to Annual Volunteering Excellency Awards on Monday 9th June 2014 in the Great Hall.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 6.

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 2 July 2014.

8. Subordinate Legislation

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 7.

Agreed: That the Committee for Employment and Learning has considered SR 2014 - 116 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and has no objection to the rule.

9. Departmental Briefing - Update on Departmental European Policy Developments including the European Social Fund 2014 – 2020

10:27 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colin Jack, Director of Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mrs Patricia McVeigh, Head of European Policy Branch and Mrs Briega Rainey, ESF Future Funding.

10:32 am Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.

10:35 am Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the EU Commission Office requesting that the Committee Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson are invited to attend the upcoming meeting between the Department of Employment and Learning and EU Commissioner Andor during the Commissioner's visit to Belfast.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide information on the learning points from engagement with national agencies on EU matters.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with information on the figures for the drawdown of Research Funding by the individual Universities and colleges and if any of the institutions haven't drawn down funding the reasons why not.

10:59 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

10. Briefing from Colleges NI on Youth Training

11:00 am The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Gerard Campbell, Chief Executive Colleges NI, Mr Brian Doran, Chief Executive, Southern Regional College, Mr Justin Edwards, Assistant CEO and Director Curriculum, Belfast Metropolitan College and Ms Karen Lennon, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Colleges NI.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11:11 am Mr Fra McCann re-joined the meeting.

Agreed: The representatives agreed to provide information on all the Colleges' Matrix Accreditation.

11. Briefing from Colleges NI on the Review of Apprenticeships

The Committee was briefed by the representatives on the Review of Apprenticeships.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

11:59 am Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting.

12:04 pm The representatives left the meeting.

12. Any other business

None.

13. Date, time and place of next meeting

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 28 May 2014 at 10.00 am in the Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena.

12:04 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

28 May 2014