



Northern Ireland
Assembly

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

WEDNESDAY, 6 JANUARY 2016

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Briege Mullan (Clerical Officer)
Ms Amy Barr (Legislative Studies & Practice Student)

Apologies: Ms Anna Lo MLA

10:02am The meeting opened in public session.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meeting on 9 December 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 9 December 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Response from the Ulster University to Committee correspondence regarding Chinese Students at the Ulster University.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Colleges NI requesting that the Committee sponsor an event launching the Colleges NI Further Education Manifesto.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to sponsor the event.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the new build at Northern Regional College.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding the Management and Leadership Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding ESOL enrolments.

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

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding European Social Fund 2014-2020 participants.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a Ministerial Statement on the Budget 2016-2017.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Minister for Employment and Learning why he is continuing to disinvest in the Further and Higher Education sectors.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the implementation of the Posted Workers Enforcement Directive.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding Knowledge Exchange Projects.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from Include Youth regarding the Aiming Higher: Project 100.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the on-going Inquiry into Special Educational Needs in Northern Ireland.

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

- Copy correspondence from the Department of Education relating to shared education in Further Education Colleges.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Response from the Queen's University Belfast regarding international student recruitment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

- Correspondence from FALNI regarding how they can move forward with their manifesto action plan.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Mr Pat Ramsey thanking the Committee Members and staff.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning giving notice of his intention to make an oral statement to the Assembly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from Queen's University Belfast to the Executive Clubs lecture on "Driving a Major Change Programme."

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

6. Forward Work Programme

- The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to 6 March 2016.
- The Committee considered a Departmental request to cancel the briefing on Programme for Government Targets on 13 January 2016.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to postpone the briefing.

7. Employment Bill – Departmental Briefing

10:09 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Dr Alan Scott, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch, Mr John McKeown, Acting Assistant Director, Strategy, European & Employment Relations Division and Ms Deirdre Walsh, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:10 am Mr Alex Easton left the meeting.

10:15 am Mr Thomas Buchanan joined the meeting.

10:28 am Ms Claire Sugden joined the meeting.

10:30 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

8. Employment Bill – Briefing from Irish Congress of Trade Unions

10:30 am The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Brian Campfield, President Irish Congress of Trade Unions and Mr Kevin Doherty, Education Officer, Northern Ireland Committee – Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Mr Phil Flanagan declared an interest as a member of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

11:03 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.

11:14 am The representatives left the meeting.

9. Employment Bill – Briefing from Law Centre NI

11:14 am The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Ms Ursula O’Hare, Assistant Director, Law Centre NI and Mr Dáire Murphy, Employment Legal Advisor, Law Centre NI.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with the model they formulated to deal with low value claims in respect of the Labour Relations Agency arbitration scheme.

Agreed: The representatives agreed to provide comment on whether it would be appropriate to include a duty of care clause in the Bill similar to the one in the Public Services Ombudsperson Bill.

12:18 am The representatives left the meeting.

10. Employment Bill – Briefing from the Labour Relations Agency

12:18 pm The representatives joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Chief Executive, Labour Relations Agency and Mr David McGrath, Director Advisory Services, Labour Relations Agency.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

12:50 pm The representatives left the meeting.

11. Employment Bill – Briefing from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Employment and Skills.

12:51 pm The representative joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Mark Huddleston, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Employment and Skills.

12:58 pm Ms Bronwyn McGahan left the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

13:09 pm The representatives left the meeting.

The Committee suspended at 13:09 pm

The Committee reconvened at 2:05 pm.

12. Employment Bill – Departmental Briefing

2:05 pm The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Dr Alan Scott, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch, Mr John McKeown, Acting Assistant Director, Strategy, European & Employment Relations Division and Ms Deirdre Walsh, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

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

- List of reasons why early conciliation cannot be provided.
- Reasons why multiple deposits are negative resolution rather than affirmative procedure.
- Can there be a seventh category of public interest in relation to financial irregularity or alternatively a catch all categories. And what are the challenges of including a catch all category.
- Provide available statistics on non-payment of Tribunal awards.

2:45 pm Mr Raymond Kelly joined the meeting.

2:50 pm The Departmental officials left the meeting.

13. Any other business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to draft an amendment to the Employment Bill to include a clause on the review at the end of year 1 and year 3 from the date of commencement.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday, 13 January 2015 at 10.00 am in The Open University, Belfast.

2:51 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr. Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

13 January 2016