



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

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

**WEDNESDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2015**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

Present: Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)

Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Ms Anna Lo MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan 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 Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Alex Easton MLA  
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA

*10:09 am The meeting opened in public session.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

- The Chairperson advised Members that the Open University has requested that the Committee sponsor a winter reception in Parliament Buildings.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to host the event on 7 December 2015?

## **3. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2015**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meeting on 30 September were agreed.

## **4. Matters arising**

The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 30 September 2015.

## **5. Correspondence**

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing the Department for Employment and Learning's Investment Activity Report for September 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Patient and Client Council declining the Committee's invitation to brief the Committee.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with the Bamford Monitoring Group following the publication of its soon to be published report.

- Minister for Employment and Learning statement to the Northern Ireland Assembly on the Launch of the Consultation on the Disability Employment Strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the statement.

- Correspondence from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions regarding questions raised with Committee Members during an informal meeting.

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

- Correspondence from the Chairperson's Liaison Group providing a note of the key issues considered at its meeting on 29 September 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from The Waterways College regarding the reopening of the Lagan Navigation and The Waterways College.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister providing a report by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) on the UN Human Rights Committee report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its submission to the UK's 5<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report on compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from Solace NI regarding the attendance of its Members at Committee meetings to provide briefing.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding the Careers Advisory Forum and the Aiming Higher Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from the Minister to attend the EY Data & Analytics Academy Graduation

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Ministerial response to issues raised by Wade Training regarding the Steps 2 Success programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence providing an update on Steps 2 Success programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities inviting a member of the Committee to meet with it on 21 October 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and Disability Action to a My Journey, My Voice Exhibition in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings on 2 November 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) to an Energy Policy Summit in securing renewable investment for Northern Ireland in the Stormont Hotel, Belfast on 13 October 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from Collaboration NI to a Whole of Government approaches Event in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings on 11 November 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a joint briefing from DEL and DE on 19 October 2015 to take evidence on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill and the possibility of bringing forward an amendment to increase the “Stateminting” age to 21 or 25 years old for individuals who may require it.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Ulster University UCU on 14 October 2015 regarding a current dispute with management.

- The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme to 9 December 2015.

## **7. Briefing from Queen’s University Belfast**

*10:16 am The representatives joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Professor Patrick Johnston, President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Tony Gallagher, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Mr James O’Kane, Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*11:29 am The representatives left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Employment and Learning to ascertain what action he has taken regarding the UK Government current policy on international students and immigration.

*11:30 am Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.*

## **8. Briefing from Queen's University Belfast Student's Union - Student Finance and Student Fees**

*11:31 am The representatives joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms Caoimhe McNeill, President, Queen's University Belfast Students Union, Ms Chloe Patterson, Welfare Officer, Queen's University Belfast Students Union and Mr Matthew Carson, Student, Queen's University Belfast.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with statistics on the number of students accessing the food bank.

*12:16 am The representatives left the meeting.*

## **9. Committee Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities - MENCAP Briefing**

*12:17 am The representatives joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Mr Liam Burns, Head of Employment and Personal Development, Ms Rebecca Brogan, Mencap client and Ms Denise Sweeney, Locality Manager

*12:20 am Mr Phil Flanagan joined the meeting.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with their thoughts on which Department the issue of Special Educational Need should come under given the pending Departmental reorganisation.

*12:31 am Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.*

*12:37 pm The representatives left the meeting.*

## **10. Any other business**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Include Youth Employability Mentoring Project shadowing day will be on Tuesday 20 October 2015 and asked Members to confirm that they are willing to have a student shadow them for the day.

## **11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday, 14 October 2015 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, Stranmillis University College.

*12:38 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.*

**Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA**

**Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning**

**14 October 2015**