



# Northern Ireland Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**THURSDAY 26 June 2014**  
**Room 29, Parliament Buildings**

Present: Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Jim Allister MLA  
Ms Paula Bradley MLA  
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA  
Mr Michael Copeland MLA  
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA  
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA  
Mr Sammy Wilson MLA

In Attendance: Dr Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stephen Todd (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)

Apologies: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA

The Deputy Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 10.04am.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were as noted above.

#### **2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meetings held on 19 June were agreed.

#### **3. Chairperson's Business**

There was no Chairperson's Business.

#### **4. Matters Arising**

4.1 *Agreed:* The Committee agreed to hold a meeting in closed session following the regular meeting on Thursday 3 July 2014.

#### **5. Department response to Dr Litchfield's Independent Review of Work Capability Assessment – Departmental Briefing**

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.06am:

- Mr Tommy O'Reilly, Chief Executive, SSA
- Mr Pat Magee, Director of Working Age Services, SSA
- Ms Margaret Boyle, Assistant Director of Working Age Services, SSA

The officials briefed the Committee on the Department's response to Dr Litchfield's Fourth Independent Review of Work Capability Assessment.

The Department addressed members' concerns about issues including the arbitrary nature of the WCA points system and the treatment of customers at appeals tribunals.

*Jim Allister MLA left the meeting at 11.10am.*

The officials left the meeting at 11.14am.

#### **6. YouthSpeak NI – Let's Talk: Youth Homelessness – Briefing from Council for the Homeless (YouthSpeak project)**

The following officials joined the meeting at 11.15am.

- Ms Kirsty Girvan, YouthSpeak Peer Rep, Council for the Homeless NI
- Ms Sarah Kennedy, Youth Participation Officer, Council for the Homeless NI
- Ms Kathy Maguire, Youth Unit, Council for the Homeless NI.
- Ms Sarah Louise Wallace, YouthSpeak Peer Rep, Council for the Homeless NI

The representatives from Council for the Homeless NI's 'YouthSpeak' project briefed the Committee on issues facing young homeless people.

The Committee acknowledged the representatives' assertion that more integrated work between government departments was essentially to begin to effectively address the problem. The officials left the meeting at 12.12pm.

*Paula Bradley MLA left the meeting at 12.12pm.*

*Michael Copeland MLA left the meeting at 12.12pm.*

## **7. Key issues and emerging trends in homelessness in NI - Briefing from the Simon Community**

The following officials joined the meeting at 12.13pm:

- Mr Jim Dennison, Chief Executive, Simon Community NI
- Mr Patrick McGettigan, Director of Accommodation & Community Support Services, Simon Community NI

The officials briefed the Committee on emerging trends in homelessness. They emphasised that homelessness is a multi-faceted problem and should not be considered purely as a housing issue. They noted the need for a number of Assembly committees and departments to address homelessness in an integrated way.

Representatives noted that it would be bringing out an App to assist homeless people find resources.

*Paula Bradley MLA joined the meeting at 12.29pm.*

The representatives noted that they would keep the Committee updated on its work and emerging issues relating to homelessness and again noted the importance of an integrated strategy to ensure an inter-departmental approach to address homelessness.

*Dolores Kelly MLA left the meeting at 12.39pm.*

The officials left the meeting at 12.40pm

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it would reschedule the visit to a Simon Community venue for the Autumn and engage with the organisation regarding sponsoring the launch of its App.

## **8. Liquor Licensing Reform – Departmental Briefing**

The following officials joined the meeting at 12.40pm.

- Ms Caroline Hobson, Social Policy Unit, DSD
- Mr Liam Quinn, Social Policy Unit, DSD
- Ms Carol Reid, Social Policy Unit, DSD

The officials briefed the Committee on the Minister's proposals for liquor licensing reform  
The officials addressed Committee members' queries.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to ask the Department to establish whether there has ever been an attempt to enforce the law that prohibits the resale of alcohol, by retail, by an individual without a licence to do so.

The officials left the meeting at 1.05pm.

*Stewart Dickson MLA left the meeting at 1.06pm.*

#### **9. SL The Jobseekers Allowance (Homeless Claimants) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014**

*Agreed:* Members were content for the Rule to be made

#### **10. Draft SR The Business Improvement Districts (Miscellaneous) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014**

The Committee had no objections to the Regulations.

The Chairperson read the following into the record:

*That the Committee for Social Development has considered the amended Draft Statutory Rule The Business Improvement Districts (Miscellaneous) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and recommends that it be affirmed by the Assembly.*

#### **11. SR 175/2014 The Child Maintenance (2008 Act) (Commencement No. 13) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014**

The Committee noted the Commencement Order.

#### **12. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to seek further clarification on whether the current planned maintenance budget is likely to be spent before the end of the financial year.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to action the correspondence as outlined on the correspondence memo.

#### **13. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* The Committee was content with the Forward Work Programme as drafted.

#### **14. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **15. Date, time and location of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 3 July 2014 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.12pm.

**Alex Maskey**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Social Development**

**3 July 2014**