



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday 9 December 2014
Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Alex Maskey MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Mickey Brady MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Ms Paula Bradley MLA
Mr Gregory Campbell MLA
Mr Maurice Devenney 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)
Mr Richard Reid (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Michael Copeland MLA

The Chairperson declared the meeting open to the public at 9.38am.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as noted above.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 The Chairperson noted that currently no stakeholders were in a position to present oral evidence to the Committee, but that Committee staff would schedule briefings in the New Year, once the deadline for written submissions has passed.

2.2 The Chairperson noted that the Department had responded to the Committee's queries following last week's briefing from NIPSA.

3. Pensions Bill Communications Strategy – Briefing by SSA

The following officials joined the meeting at 9.40am:

- Mr Damian Mahon, State Pension Reforms Project Manager, SSA
- Ms Lisa Hamilton-Sturdy, Senior Communications and Engagement Manager, SSA

The officials briefed the Committee on the planned communications activities to support the changes relating to the new State Pension and the Voluntary National Insurance Contributions Class 3A (State Pension Top-Up Scheme).

The officials took questions from the Committee.

Sammy Wilson MLA joined the meeting at 9.43am.

Gregory Campbell MLA joined the meeting at 10.04am.

Paula Bradley MLA joined the meeting at 10.13am.

Sammy Wilson MLA left the meeting at 10.15am.

The Committee encouraged the SSA to take as comprehensive an approach as possible when communicating the key impacts of the Pensions Bill to reach as wide an audience as possible.

The officials left the meeting at 10.20am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

4. Pensions Bill – Departmental Briefing

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.20am:

- Gerry McCann, Social Security Policy and Legislation Division, Department for Social Development

- Seamus Cassidy, Social Security Policy and Legislation Division, Department for Social Development

The officials briefed the Committee, clarifying issues raised during the SSA briefing in relation to the Pensions Bill.

Agreed: The Department agreed to liaise with HMRC to establish whether people will be able to make piecemeal contributions to buy additional qualifying years rather than paying in a lump sum.

The officials left the meeting at 10.25am.

This session was recorded by Hansard.

5. AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish its response to the Department's 2015-2016 spending and savings proposals on the Committee website.

6. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Social Development will take place on 11 December 2014 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 10.26am.

Alex Maskey
Chairperson, Committee for Social Development

8 January 2015