



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Joint Concurrent Committee meeting  
of the  
Committee for the Economy  
and the  
Committee for Education  
**Minutes of Proceedings**  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.**

**Present:** Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Phillip Brett MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Diana Armstrong MLA  
Mr Danny Baker MLA  
Mr David Brooks MLA  
Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA  
Ms Michelle Guy MLA

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Mr David Honeyford MLA

Mr Peter Martin MLA

Ms Cathy Mason MLA

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Ms Emma Sheerin MLA

**Present by video-conferencing:**

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Ms Cara Hunter MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Colin Crawford MLA

Ms Kate Nicholl MLA

Mr Pat Sheehan MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)

Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)

Katie McMaster (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Karen O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)

Stuart Gilmour (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:43am.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There was no Chairperson's business.

## **4. Cross-Departmental Delivery**

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:46am:

- Moira Doherty, Deputy Secretary of the Skills and Education Group, DfE;
- Clement Athanasiou, Director of Apprenticeships, Careers and Vocational Education Division, DfE;
- Mark Lee, Director of Higher Education Division, DfE;
- Linsey Farrell, Deputy Secretary for Education Policy & Children's Services, DE;
- Karen McCullough, Director of Qualifications, 14-19 Strategy and Statistics & Research, DE; and
- Andrew Scott, Director of Curriculum and Youth, DE;

David Brooks joined the meeting at 11:03am.

Danny Baker and Cathy Mason joined the meeting at 11:09am.

Key issues discussed included:

Careers Action Plan – establishment of a cross-departmental careers working group, adoption of new quality standards, primary careers pilot scheme, a careers support information campaign, Matrix benchmark report on the careers service, recruitment issues for the careers service, work placement provision, Special Education Needs careers support including Autism Spectrum Disorder measures and the anticipated publication of the Careers Action Plan.

Careers Portal - the conclusion of the discovery phase, the inclusion of AI and digital tools and the anticipated Phase 1 roll-out scheduled for late 2026.

14-19 Framework – the development of system leadership, anticipated curriculum review, anticipated progress in teacher professional learning, anticipated changes in the qualifications landscape; the absence of a 6<sup>th</sup> Form policy; duplication and the

need for policy in respect of the relationships between Further Education and Schools.

Post-19 SEN – a report produced by Stranmillis University College, a Ministerial statement expected in June 2025 and no related budget allocation in 2025-26 for Post-19 SEN.

Mandatory education – timeline for legislation and implementation 2030 and Green Skills guidance to be issued.

Other matters including – apprenticeships and cross border issues; apprenticeships as a preferential career development route; addressing productivity shortfalls and skills gaps; reforming the Common Funding Scheme; increasing co-operation and collaboration between the Department of Health and the Department of Education at pre-school stages and inter-departmental co-operation in line with the provisions of the Children Services Co-operation Act.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 11:28am.

Jonthan Buckley left the meeting at 11:36am.

Danny Baker left the meeting at 11:58am.

Cara Hunter left the meeting at 12:15pm.

Sinead McLaughlin left the meeting at 12:20pm.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their evidence.

Officials left the meeting at 12:41pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to meet again in 6 months' time, in joint concurrent session, in order to consider issues relating to the cross-departmental delivery of childcare.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to meet again in 12 months' time, in joint concurrent session, in order to consider progress in respect of cross-departmental delivery relating to: careers support; the 14-19 Framework; Post-19 SEN; and mandatory education and training.

## **5. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **6. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next joint concurrent Committee will take place in approximately 6 months' time.

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 12:44pm.

**Nick Mathison MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for Education**

**21 May 2025**

**Phillip Brett MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for  
the Economy**

**21 May 2025**