



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 10th September 2025

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Brian Kingston MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Online:

None

Apologies:

None

In Attendance: Mr Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Andrienne Magee (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in public session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Declarations of Interest

Áine Murphy declared a standing interest as having a family member who was born in a Mother and Baby institution in relation to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Claire Sugden joined the meeting at 2.04pm.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Extension of Committee Stage of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

The Chairperson reminded Members at its meeting of 2 July 2025, the Committee agreed to extend the Committee stage of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill until Monday 26 January 2026.

The Clerk read out the text of the draft motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the wording of the draft motion as follows:

Extension of Committee Stage: Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill (NIA Bill 15/22-27) That, in accordance with Standing Order 33 (4), the period referred to in Standing Order 33 (2) be extended to 26 January 2026 in relation to the Committee Stage of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill (NIA Bill 15/22-27).

3.2 Rosetta Trust

The Chairperson advised Members that Rosetta Trust have written to her in capacity of Chairperson of the Committee outlining their concerns around the proposed memorial plaque transcript for victims and survivors of HIA.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask what consideration has been given by TEO to the proposed transcript to take into account the concerns raised by victims and survivors regarding the wording and a state apology.

3.3 Familiarisation Session 9 September 2025

The Chairperson updated Members that the Committee held its second Familiarisation Session at the new building in WAVE Trauma Centre Belfast on Tuesday afternoon. The Chairperson encouraged Members to attend the final Familiarisation Session which will take place online via Microsoft Team's on Thursday afternoon at 4.00pm.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 02 July 2025.

5. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

6. First Minister, deputy First Minister and junior Ministers – Oral Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed for Hansard to record the evidence session.

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.14pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Michelle O'Neill, First Minister
- Emma Little-Pengelly, deputy First Minister
- Aisling Reilly, junior Minister
- Pam Cameron, junior Minister

The witnesses provided an update on the work of The Executive Office.

The oral briefing session was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 2.55pm and returned at 2.59pm.

Carál Ní Chuilín left the meeting at 3.29pm and returned at 3.33pm.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.10pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and request further information in relation to:

- The recently commissioned research in relation to EVAWG – including timescale, author, and related details.
- To ask if there is any potential to enhance the scope and role of COSICA in relation to the forthcoming Inquiry on Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses.
- To ask for further information regarding Good Relations, including the review of TBUC and the Community Relations Council.
- To request an oral briefing with the Chief Scientific Officer Professor Helen McCarthy and the Committee.

- To ask for an update on the Investment Strategy and whether it has been discussed and/or had approval by the Executive.
- To ask what specific activities, including timescales on delivery, are being funded by the Local Change Fund within council areas.
- To ask for further information about the £20 million allocation for Lough Neagh that the deputy First Minister discussed, including a breakdown of how this money will be spent.
- To ask for a confirmed date regarding the next appearance for First, deputy First Minister and junior Ministers before the Committee prior to Christmas recess.
- To ask for further information on PfG Delivery and the Delivery Unit, in particular in relation to Department of Health and priorities for the Unit, whether this is being led by the First Minister and deputy First Minister, and its approach to data and evidence.
- To request an oral briefing from the junior Ministers on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill, as an additional session before Christmas recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to take a short comfort break and suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 4.10pm.

The meeting resumed at 4.27pm in public session.

Claire Sugden left the meeting at 4.10pm.

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 4.10pm.

7. RalSe - Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill – Oral Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed for Hansard to record the evidence session.

The officials joined the meeting at 4.28pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Thomas Lough, Research Officer
- Karen Clarke, Research Officer
- Michael Greig, Research Officer

The officials provided an update on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

The oral briefing session was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

Sinéad McLaughlin left the meeting at 4.59pm.

Brian Kingston left the meeting at 5.01pm.

The officials left the meeting at 5.18pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send out the copy of the RaiSe briefing papers and presentation to Members via email.

8. Review analysis to date: Call for Evidence Themes - Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move this item of business to next week's meeting.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from an individual regarding an urgent need for a National Trauma Plan in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence and agreed to seek permission to forward the individuals' correspondence to the Mental Health Champion and to ask what work has been progressed in the areas outlined.

- iii. The Committee considered responses from the Infrastructure, Finance, AERA, and Justice Committees outlining their views on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill. The Justice Committee have requested clarification on whether clerical abuse is covered by the provisions in the Bill or if it will form a strand of the Inquiry, particularly given the clerical aspect of many of the institutions within its scope.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note these items of correspondence and to forward the Justice Committee's correspondence to the Department in relation to the query around clerical abuse.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to COSICA to seek suggestions on appropriate target groups to engage with as part of the Committee's Call for Evidence on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the academics and the documentary team who contributed research to the recent ITV documentary on Mother and Baby Institutions in England, inviting them to provide evidence to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer the other items of correspondence until next week's meeting.

10. Any Other Business

The Chairperson updated Members that the Committee received a response from the Equality Commission following the letter sent by the Committee on the 9 July in relation to the Supreme Court judgment in 'For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers'.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Equality Commission have provided an update on the strategy and timeline of the Roadmap following the judgement and have offered to provide the Committee with an oral update on the matter. They have also advised that subject to judicial proceedings, the Commission may be limited on the scope and detail of discussions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee team would liaise with the Equality Commission to arrange an oral briefing as soon as possible.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17 September at 2.00pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 5.21pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 10 September 2025