



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

29 January 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Pat Sheehan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Danny Baker MLA
Mr David Brooks MLA
Mr Colin Crawford MLA
Mrs Michelle Guy MLA
Mr Peter Martin MLA
Mrs Cathy Mason MLA

Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Jim Nulty (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Thomas McConville (Clerical Officer)

Present via Teleconference

Ms Cara Hunter MLA



The meeting commenced at 2:00pm in public session.

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Committee discussed the impact of recent storms on school properties.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority praising the work of the Estates Management team safely reopening schools following Storm Eowyn.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking a breakdown of the response to Storm Eowyn, and lessons identified for the future.

The Committee discussed research carried out by Ulster University on the role of classroom assistants, 'A profile of Classroom Assistants in Northern Ireland'.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite the authors to brief it on the study.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

5. Minutes of Proceedings

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 22 January 2025.



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6. Relationships and Sexuality Education Inquiry – Oral briefing from Love for Life

The Committee noted a submission to the RSE inquiry from Love for Life.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 2:06pm:

Ms Judith Cairns, Chief Executive Officer, Love for Life

Ms Heather Joy Wallace, School and Community lead, Love for Life

The witnesses provided the Committee with a briefing on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

7. Relationships and Sexuality Education Inquiry – Oral Briefing from Women's Aid

The Committee noted a submission to the RSE inquiry from Women's Aid.

The following witnesses joined the meeting at 3:05pm:

Ms Karen Devlin, Representative, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

Ms Sonya McMullan, Regional Services Manager, Women's Aid Federation Northern Ireland

The witnesses provided the Committee with a briefing on Relationships and Sexuality Education.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

Ms Hunter left the meeting at 3:44pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education asking that it engage with Women's Aid on the Early Years and Childcare Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask Women's Aid for an evaluation of the Helping Hands programme as discussed in Q&A.



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The Committee adjourned at 4:02pm.

The Committee resumed at 4:08pm.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted a correspondence Index.

8.2 The Committee noted is a response from the Minister of Education on recent changes to senior staff at the Department of Education.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 4:12pm.

The Committee returned to public session at 4:19pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister of Education seeking further clarification on staffing issues.

8.3 The Committee noted a response from Department regarding the process for the appointment of the new Chairperson of the Education Authority.

8.4 The Committee noted a response from the Education Authority providing details of the Cubbie® Sensory Integration Hub pilot.

8.5 The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) to an environmental event on Saturday 29 March 2025.

8.6 The Committee noted correspondence from National Museums NI seeking the committee's views on its new Corporate Strategy and offering to meet with the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 4:23pm

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee discussed its oral briefing with the Minister for 5 February 2025.

The Committee considered a draft forward work programme.

The Committee returned to public session at 4:47pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme.



12. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 February 2025 at 2:00pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48pm.

Nick Mathison MLA

**Chairperson, Committee for Education
5 February 2024**