



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 1st October 2025

Meeting Location: Room 21, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Phillip Brett MLA

Ms Pam Cameron MLA

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Online:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

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 2.02pm in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

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.

Pam Cameron declared a standing interest as having worked previously in TEO as a junior Minister from February 2024 until September 2025.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Truth Recovery Independent Panel

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee has written to the Department to request a breakdown of the £80,000 that was spent on a communications campaign including the geographical spread of this activity.

The Clerk has also contacted the Panel regarding these queries prior to appearing before the Committee at next week's meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item of correspondence.

3.2 Call for Evidence

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee's formal Call for Evidence on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill has now closed and sixty responses have been received via Citizen Space and twenty written submissions have also been received.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a deadline of Monday 6 October 2025 (7 days after the original deadline) for receipt of any outstanding hard copy responses.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 September 2025.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 – 5.4 Health Trusts – Access to Records

The Chairperson advised Members that correspondence was sent to the five Health Trusts on the 23 May in relation to access to records and the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Belfast Trust is still outstanding and the Committee have contacted the Trust following last week's meeting to follow-up on a reply.

Carál Ní Chuilín declared an interest as being Communities Minister in 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to wait for a response from all Health Trusts before writing to the Health Minister to outline the concerns as detailed in the replies to date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request legal advice from Assembly Legal Services regarding the non FOI route and accessing records.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to request an updated read out in relation to the non-FOI route.

5.5 WAVE Trauma Centre – Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the additional correspondence received from WAVE Trauma Centre in relation to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

5.6 Truth Recovery NI – Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note additional correspondence sent by Truth Recovery NI regarding additional institutions regarding the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

5.7 Adopt NI – Access to Records

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note additional correspondence received from Adopt NI following in relation complexities of access to records.

6. Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill: Dublin City University and Queens University – Oral Briefing

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

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Professor Anne-Marie McAlinden, Professor School of Law, Queen's University Belfast
- Dr James Gallen, Associate Professor, School of Law and Government, Dublin City University

The witnesses provided information 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.

Carál Ní Chuilín declared an interest as being Communities Minister in 2020 and appearing before the Covid Inquiry in 2024.

Phillip Brett joined the meeting at 2.40pm.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.10pm.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their attendance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further information on the exclusion of unmarried women prior to 1948 and any EQIA conducted in relation to the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask whether a modular approach could be considered in relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to DCU and QUB to request follow-up information on the number of eligible individuals within the scope of the Bill if the posthumous date was 15 November 2021, and to provide a list of any additional institutions from the research they have conducted in this area.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee team should gather information on the Australian Child Abuse Inquiry and the map of engagement used through the Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session at 3.13pm for the next item of business.

7. Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill: Legal Advice: Assembly Legal Services (Closed Session)

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Bill Clerk could sit in the public gallery for the oral evidence session.

The officials joined the meeting at 3.13pm.

Members received a briefing from:

- Rebecca Ellis, Legal Adviser, Northern Ireland Assembly
- Simon Kelly, Legal Adviser, Northern Ireland Assembly

Áine Murphy left the meeting at 3.29pm and returned at 3.32pm.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 3.37pm and returned at 3.45pm

The officials left the meeting at 3.58pm.

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

The meeting was suspended at 3.59pm.

The meeting resumed at 4.10pm in public session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department in relation to cross-border jurisdictional discussions and the use of public interest immunity within the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and the Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a further oral briefing with Assembly Legal Services in relation to the application of special measures regarding the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department for an update on HIA payments made to date by religious institutions, and the key steps taken to date.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee team should review previous RalSe research papers on the publication of voluntary contributions and the Scottish model used for the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department what engagement has taken place at a political level following the North South Ministerial Council Plenary meeting on 20 June, and what discussions have taken place an official level in

relation to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and the Redress Scheme Bill.

8. PSNI Summary report on the PSNI's investigation into Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses, 1922-1990 – Oral Briefing.

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

The witnesses joined the meeting at 4.12pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Jordan Piper, Detective Superintendent, PSNI
- Zoë McKee, Detective Chief Superintendent, Head of Public Protection Branch, PSNI

The witnesses provided information on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

The witnesses left the meeting at 4.35pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the PSNI to ask for further information in relation to the following areas:

- Of the 107 referrals made to the Mother and Baby Investigation Team, the geographical spread of these referrals.
- The cost of their social media campaign in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and the number of referrals resulting from the campaign.
- The number of referrals relating to child abuse.

9. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.

- ii. The Committee noted correspondence from Committee for Finance regarding the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.
- iii. The Committee noted a response from TEO to the Committee's correspondence of 10 July requesting further information on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.
- iv. The Committee noted a response from TEO to the Committee's correspondence of 12 September requesting further information on the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy commissioned research.
- v. The Committee noted a response from the First and deputy First Minister to the Committee's correspondence of 13 June in relation to the Department's approach following recent disorder across Northern Ireland.
- vi. The Committee noted a response from TEO to the Committee's correspondence of 12 September regarding further information on delivery of the Programme for Government and the role of the Delivery Unit.
- vii. The Committee noted a Hansard Report - Birth Mothers and Their Children for Justice oral briefing 17 September 2025.
- viii. The Committee noted a Hansard Report - Truth Recovery NI oral briefing 17 September 2025.
- ix. The Committee noted a Hansard Report - Birth Mothers and Their Children Together oral briefing 17 September 2025.
- x. The Committee noted a Hansard Report - The Consultative Forum oral briefing 17 September 2025.

- xi. The Committee noted correspondence from AERC regarding a review of Assembly Committee engagement on cross-cutting Executive strategies.
- xii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance in relation to the Cyber Security and Resilience (Network and Information Systems) Bill.
- xiii. The Committee noted an invitation to Queens University Belfast - AI and the Future of Work Event taking place on 22 October.
- xiv. The Committee noted an invitation from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission regarding their Engagement Session taking place on 17 November.
- xv. The Committee noted a response from TEO to the Committee's correspondence of 12 September in relation to the Executive's Investment Strategy.
- xvi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Communities regarding the visibility of Minority and Indigenous Languages.
- xvii. The Committee noted a TEO News Release - Junior Ministers welcome start of work on DNA Museum.
- xviii. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the analysis of 2025-26 Outturn and Forecast Outturn.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to follow up with the Department on outstanding correspondence that was sent on the 23 May regarding the overseas bureaus.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation to the Stakeholder oral evidence session on the Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Troubles/Conflict 2024-2034 which is due to take place at the 3 December meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to send invitations to SEFF, Ely Centre, Relatives for Justice, Wave Trauma Centre and Bridge of Hope.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to proceed with the remaining briefings as set out in the forward work programme.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 October at 2.00pm in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.45pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 1 October 2025