



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Monday 19 January 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30, 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

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Online:

None

Apologies:

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mr Nick Mitford (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Aoife Keating-Fitzpatrick (Snr Assist Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sarah-Anne McKinley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Neil Porter (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10.00am 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.

Pam Cameron declared a standing interest on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill as it stands, she has a family member who may be entitled to a redress payment as part of the second part of this legislation.

Carál Ní Chuilín declared a standing interest on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill serving as Communities Minister in 2020.

3. Chairperson's Business

There were no items of Chairperson's Business.

4. Draft Minutes

The Chairperson advised Members that draft minutes of the meeting held on the Wednesday 14 January 2026 will be considered at the Committee meeting on Wednesday 21 January 2026.

5. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

6. Deliberation: Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10:01am.

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

The meeting was suspended at 10:18am.

The meeting resumed in public session at 10:21am.

The Chairperson updated Members that while in closed session the Committee divided in relation to a proposed Committee amendment to Clause 31 (5).

Stewart Dickson proposed that the Committee should accept the amendment to Clause 31 (5). The Chair then put the question to the Committee that the proposal be agreed.

The Committee divided: Ayes 6; Noes 2; Abstain 0

Ayes: Paula Bradshaw MLA; Stewart Dickson; Sinéad McLaughlin; Carál Ní Chuilín; Áine Murphy and Mr Timothy Gaston

Noes: Mr Phillip Brett and Ms Pam Cameron

The proposal was carried.

The Chairperson also updated Members that while in closed session there was a proposed Committee amendment to Clause 31(9).

Sinéad McLaughlin proposed that the Committee should accept the amendment to Clause 31 (9). The Chair then put the question to the Committee that the proposal be agreed.

The Committee did not divide. The proposal was not carried.

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee had now completed its informal clause by clause scrutiny of the Bill.

7. Final Deliberation: Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill

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

The Committee commenced its formal clause by clause consideration of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Long title

The Committee considered Clause 1 as drafted

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Long title as drafted.

Clause 1: The Inquiry

The Committee considered Clause 1 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 1 as drafted.

Clause 2: Terms of Reference

The Committee considered its proposed amendments to Clause 2(1) and Clause 2 (6).

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 4

At end insert—

‘(1A) The terms of reference must be published no later than six months after the coming into operation of this Part.’

Clause 2, Page 2, Line 30

At end insert—

‘(6) In subsection (2), ‘other persons’ includes but is not limited to private hospitals, private maternity homes and private nursing homes; general practitioners; social workers; clergy; and private businesses.’

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with its proposed amendments.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 2, subject to the Committee proposed amendments.

Clause 3: Definition of “prescribed institutions”

The Committee considered Clause 3 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 3 as drafted.

Clause 4: Definition of “relevant persons”

The Committee considered Clause 4 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office.

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 16

At end insert—

‘(i(a) a woman or girl who had become pregnant while she was under the care of the workhouse;’

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 25

After 'Office', insert ', having consulted the chairperson,'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendments proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 4, subject to the amendments proposed by the Department.

Clause 5: The Inquiry panel

The Committee considered Clause 5 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office.

Clause 5, Page 3, Line 35

Leave out from 'either' to end of line 37 and insert 'a chairperson with one or more other members.'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendment proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 5, subject to the amendment proposed by the Department.

Clause 6: Appointment of members

The Committee considered Clause 6 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 6 as drafted.

Clause 7: Requirement of impartiality

The Committee considered Clause 7 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 7 as drafted.

Clause 8: Duration of appointment of members

The Committee considered Clause 8 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 8 as drafted.

Clause 9: Assessors.

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 9.

Clause 9, Page 6, Line 8

Leave out 'assessors' and insert 'expert advisers'

Clause 9, Page 6, Line 10

Leave out 'assessor' and insert 'expert adviser'

Clause 9, Page 6, Line 14

Leave out 'assessor' and insert 'expert adviser'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee proposed amendments as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 9, subject to the Committee proposed amendments.

Clause 10: Advisory Panel.

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 10 (1).

Clause 10, Page 6, Line 16

After 'chairperson', insert ', having consulted the other members of the inquiry panel,'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with its proposed amendment as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 10 subject to the Committee proposed amendment.

Clause 11: Power to suspend inquiry

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 11(6).

Clause 11, Page 7, Line 13

Leave out subsection (6) and insert –

‘(6) Where the First Minister and deputy First Minister give a notice under subsection (1), they must make an oral statement to the Assembly on the next sitting day.

(6A) In subsection (6), “sitting day” means a day on which the Assembly sits in plenary.’

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with its proposed amendment as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 11 subject to the Committee proposed amendment.

Clause 12: End of inquiry

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to insert a new Clause, 12A:

After clause 12 insert -

‘Contributions to redress payments

12A.—(1) As soon as is reasonably practicable following the date on which the inquiry comes to an end, the First Minister and deputy First Minister acting jointly shall publish a report on a scheme to pursue financial contributions from prescribed institutions.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), ‘financial contributions’ include contributions to the cost of the Truth Recovery Redress Service established in Part 2 of this Act, and any future redress schemes arising from the inquiry.

(3) The report set out in subsection (1) must—

- (a) set out the process through which any scheme would be brought into operation,*
- (b) specify that contributions will only be sought from a prescribed institution where the inquiry has found systemic failings at that institution,*
- (c) be laid before the Assembly.'*

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the new Clause 12A as drafted.

Agreed: That the Committee recommends to the Assembly that the Committee proposed a new Clause 12A, be added to the Bill.

Clause 13: Evidence and procedure

The Committee considered Clause 13 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 13 as drafted.

Clause 14: Public access to inquiry proceedings and information

The Committee considered Clause 14 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 14 as drafted.

Clause 15: Restrictions on public access, etc.

The Committee considered Clause 15 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office.

Clause 15, Page 9, Line 18

At end insert—

'(e) the extent to which any restrictions might impede the participation of relevant persons in the inquiry.'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendment proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 15, subject to the amendment proposed by the Department.

Clause 16: Powers to require production of evidence

The Committee considered Clause 16 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 16 as drafted.

Clause 17: Privileged information, etc.

The Committee considered Clause 17 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 17 as drafted.

Clause 18: Submission of reports

The Committee considered Clause 18 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office to Clause 18(3).

Clause 18, Page 11, Line 18

Leave out 'a report' and insert 'one or more reports'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendment proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 18, subject to the amendment proposed by the Department.

Clause 19: Publication of reports

The Committee considered Clause 19 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 19 as drafted.

Clause 20: Laying of reports before the Assembly.

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 20.

Clause 20, Page 12, Line 8

Leave out from 'either' to end of line 9

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee proposed amendment as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 20 subject to the Committee proposed amendment.

Clause 21: Expenses of witnesses, etc.

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 21(1).

Clause 21, Page 12, Line 12

Leave out 'with the approval of' and insert 'having consulted with'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee amendment as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 21 subject to its proposed amendment.

Clause 22: Payment of inquiry expenses by the Executive Office.

The Committee considered Clause 22 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 22 as drafted.

Clause 23: Offences

The Committee considered Clause 23 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 23 as drafted.

Clause 24: Enforcement by High Court

The Committee considered Clause 24 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 24 as drafted.

Clause 25: Immunity from suit

The Committee considered Clause 25 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 25 as drafted.

Clause 26: Time limit for applying for judicial review

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 26(1)

Clause 26, Page 15, Line 3

Leave out '14' and insert '21'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with its proposed amendment as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 26 subject to the Committee proposed amendment.

Clause 27: Rules

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 27(2a) and Clause 27(5).

Clause 27, Page 15, Line 23

At end insert—

'(2A) Rules under subsection (1)(a) must in particular make provision for the designation of persons as core participants, and for consequent arrangements, similar to provision in the Inquiry Rules 2006.'

Clause 27, Page 15, Line 36

Leave out subsection (5) and insert—

‘(5) Rules under this section may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.’

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee proposed amendments as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 27 subject to the Committee proposed amendments.

Clause 28: Consequential amendment

The Committee considered Clause 28 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 28 as drafted.

Clause 29: Interpretation of this Part

The Committee considered Clause 29 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 29 as drafted.

Clause 30: The Service

The Committee considered Clause 30 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 30 as drafted.

Clause 31: Entitlement to a payment

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 31(4).

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 23

After ‘(2)’ add ‘and (4)’

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 30

Leave out 'under the care of' and insert 'receiving shelter and maintenance (or both) from'

Clause 31, Page 17, Line 32

Leave out 'under the care of' and insert 'receiving shelter and maintenance (or both) from'

Clause 31, Page 18, Line 1

Leave out paragraph (b)

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee amendments as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 31 subject to the Committee proposed amendments.

Phillip Brett and Pam Cameron opposed the removal of Clause 31, Page 18, Line 1 Paragraph (b).

Clause 32: Time limit for applications for a payment

The Committee considered Clause 32 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office to amend Clause 32(3).

Clause 32, Page 18, Line 26

Leave out subsection (3) and insert—

'(3) Regulations under subsection (2) may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendment proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 32, subject to the proposed amendment by the Department.

Clause 33: Applications for payments

The Committee considered Clause 33 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 33 as drafted.

Clause 34: Priority of applications

The Committee considered Clause 34 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 34 as drafted.

Clause 35: Power to require further information or oral evidence

The Committee considered Clause 35 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 35 as drafted.

Clause 36: Power to disclose information

The Committee considered Clause 36 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 36 as drafted.

Clause 37: Payments

The Committee considered Clause 37 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 37 as drafted.

Clause 38: Right to appeal

The Committee considered Clause 38 and an amendment proposed by The Executive Office to amend Clause 38(2) and a new clause proposed by the Committee at 38(a).

Clause 38, Page 21, Line 18

Leave out '30' and insert '90'

Before clause 39 insert—

'Promotion of Truth Recovery Redress Service

38A.—*(1) The Service must take reasonable steps to promote awareness of the Service.*

(2) The Executive Office shall provide such amounts as it may determine to the Service, to enable any steps taken under subsection (1).'

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the amendment proposed by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the new clause proposed by the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 38 subject to the proposed amendment by the Department.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the new clause proposed by the Committee.

Clause 39: Advice and assistance

The Committee considered Clause 39 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 39 as drafted.

Clause 40: Orders restricting disclosure of information

The Committee considered its proposed amendment to Clause 40.

Clause 40, Page 22, Line 34

At end insert—

‘(6) A person is guilty of an offence if the person, without reasonable excuse, contravenes a restriction order imposed under subsection (1).

(7) Only the President may institute proceedings for an offence under subsection (6).

(8) A person who is guilty of an offence under subsection (6) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both.’

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the Committee proposed amendment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 40 subject the Committee proposed amendment.

Clause 41: Advisers

The Committee considered Clause 41 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 41 as drafted.

Clause 42: Regulations

The Committee considered Clause 42 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 42 as drafted.

Clause 43: Application to the Crown

The Committee considered Clause 43 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 43 as drafted.

Clause 44: Power to make supplementary, etc. provision

The Committee considered Clause 44 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 44 as drafted.

Clause 45: General interpretation

The Committee considered Clause 45 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 45 as drafted.

Clause 46: Commencement

The Committee considered Clause 46 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 46 as drafted.

Clause 47: Short title

The Committee considered Clause 47 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 47 as drafted.

Schedule 1: The Truth Recovery Redress Service

The Committee considered Schedule 1 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 1 as drafted.

Schedule 2: Relevant Institutions and relevant years

The Committee considered Schedule 2 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 2 as drafted.

Schedule 3: Eligible relatives

The Committee considered Schedule 3 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 3 as drafted.

Schedule 4: Status of payments

The Committee considered Schedule 4 as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with Schedule 4 as drafted.

The Chairperson advised the Members that the formal clause by clause scrutiny of the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalane Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill had concluded.

The Chairperson thanked the Committee team and the Bill Clerk for their work.

8. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 21 January at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.32pm.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Monday 19 January 2026.