



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for The Executive Office

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 25 March 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Ms Paula Bradshaw MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mrs Pam Cameron MLA

Mr Timothy Gaston MLA

Ms Áine Murphy MLA

Online:

Ms Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Apologies:

Mr Phillip Brett MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mr James Gilsenan (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

As above.

2. Declarations of Interest

Aine Murphy has an ongoing declaration in relation to sessions relating to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme.

Pam Cameron has an ongoing declaration as having worked previously in TEO as a junior Minister from February 2024 until September 2025.

Pam Cameron has a second ongoing declaration 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 has an ongoing standing interest on the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill having served as Communities Minister in 2020.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG)

The Chairperson expressed her concern and condolences to the family following the recent murder of a young mother in Derry/Londonderry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask if the Executive have approved Phase 2 of the EVAWG Delivery Plan and if preparations are in place to commence delivery as scheduled for 1 April 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a written update from all government departments on EVAWG, including details of the evidence they are continuing to collect and the funding allocated for this work.

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Committee team to contact the PSNI to arrange an oral briefing on EVAWG in terms of its role and the multi-agency approach required.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to discuss the issue of EVAWG further at its Strategic Planning meeting next month, including consideration of the structure of potential stakeholder panel sessions with grant recipients from TEO EVAWG funding and organisations in receipt of the Local Change Fund managed by the 11 local councils.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Communities regarding male aggression in women's sports and team sports, to seek further information on what sporting bodies are doing and what safeguards are in place to address this issue.

3.2 & 3.3 The Dromore Group – Follow up Correspondence

The Chairperson advised Members that the Dromore Group emailed them following their oral evidence session with the Committee on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

The Chairperson advised Members that she had also been copied into an email to the junior Ministers from The Dromore Group confirming that a meeting between both parties will now take place on 30 April 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note these items and to write to The Dromore Group to confirm that it is not possible to move the HCCA policy area, or any potential public inquiry, to another government department and to clarify how this sits within TEO. The Committee also agreed to follow up with the Interfaith

Representatives of Survivors on any response regarding HCCA once a reply is received from the Department.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 March 2026.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Final Press Release – Historical Clerical Child Abuse

The Chairperson reminded Members that at last week's meeting the Committee considered a draft press release calling on TEO to publish the research and the recommendations in relation to Historical Clerical Child Abuse. Subject to one amendment, the final version was then agreed by Members via email and published.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item.

5.2 Open University – Follow up Information

The Chairperson advised Members that following the oral briefing with Open University at last week's meeting they have now sent further information regarding the estimated cost of delivery for the 'Why Riot?' programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item.

5.3 Committee for Finance – Views on multi-year Draft Budget

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee for Finance recently wrote to all Statutory Committees seeking information on the proposed departmental multi-year budgets.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Hansard of the oral evidence session from the meeting on 4 February 2026 to the Committee for Finance for its information in relation to the draft TEO multi-year budget.

Timothy Gaston raised an issue in relation to an action from last week's meeting where the Committee agreed to write to the Irish Language Commissioner to request

a copy of the correspondence issued to the Belfast Telegraph in relation to the court action taken by individual citizens regarding Grand Central Station and to seek clarification on the authority under which legal advice was obtained, including the associated costs. The Assistant Clerk confirmed this had been sent.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Irish Language Commissioner to ask for clarification regarding 'advice to public bodies' during the oral evidence session with the Committee on Wednesday 18 March 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to circulate correspondence received by the Committee from an individual in relation to the Irish Language Commissioner and the function of his powers. This will also be included in the next meeting pack for Wednesday 22 April 2026.

6. Oral Briefing - Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill: Departmental officials

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 2:32pm

Agreed: The Committee agreed for the Bill Clerk to join the oral evidence session.

The officials joined the meeting at 2.32pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Martin Carey, Truth Recovery Programme Director, TEO
- Francesca Murray, Truth Recovery Programme, TEO

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.

The witnesses left the meeting at 3.26pm.

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

The meeting was suspended at 3.36pm.

The meeting resumed in closed session at 3.43pm.

7. Oral Briefing - Assembly Legal Services: Supreme Court Judgement on religious education in Northern Ireland

The official joined the meeting at 3.43pm.

Members received an oral briefing from:

- Htaik Win, Legal Advisor, Northern Ireland Assembly

The official provided a briefing on the Supreme Court Judgement on religious education in Northern Ireland.

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

The Chairperson thanked the official for their attendance.

The official left the meeting at 4.02pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into public session.

The meeting moved into public session at 4.02pm with the following Members present; Paula Bradshaw, Stewart Dickson, Pam Cameron, Timothy Gaston and Áine Murphy.

The Clerk provided an update on the agreed actions from the previous two evidence sessions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request the following information:

- That TEO officials confirm with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland any issues relating to Clauses 3 and 4.
- To seek further information on the definition of 'fair and meaningful' and the definitions used in the Scottish model.
- To seek clarity on the rules for organisations regarding capital and resources, including required levels and reserve funding requirements.
- To seek clarity on the right to property and the right to an effective remedy and their relationship with the competence of the Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to withdraw two amendments currently tabled for the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill;

Clause 4, Page 3, Line 25 – inserted words After 'Office' insert ', having consulted the chairperson,' and Clause 21, Page 12, Line 12 – replaced words Leave out 'with the approval of' and insert 'having consulted with.'

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold an ad hoc meeting on Monday 20 April (time tbc), to further discuss Committee amendments relating to the Inquiry (Mother and Baby Institutions, Magdalene Laundries and Workhouses) and Redress Scheme Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the legal advice regarding the Supreme Court judgement on religious education in Northern Ireland and to review relevant areas that may require updating for the Final Report on its Inquiry into Gaps in Equality Legislation.

8. Correspondence

- i. The Committee noted the summary of Committee correspondence.
- ii. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding an update to Common Frameworks.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed to write to the Department to ask that they keep the Committee updated on progress as the

Common Frameworks programme moves towards completion and to provide an oral briefing to the Committee following completion of the programme.

- iii. The Committee considered a response from MEARS in relation to an informal invitation to brief the Committee in relation to immigration enforcement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item.

- iv. The Committee considered correspondence from the Department regarding Historical Institutional Abuse.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item and agreed to write to the Department to request that it keeps the Committee updated on the negotiation process with institutions once all redress determinations have been made. The Committee also agreed to arrange an oral briefing with Departmental officials and the HIA Redress Board once the process of securing contributions from religious institutions towards the cost of redress has concluded.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to arrange an oral briefing with the HIA Independent Facilitator as part of the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

- v. The Committee considered correspondence from the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the publication of the NI Executive's response to the Covid-19 Inquiry Module 2 Recommendations.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note this item.

- vi. The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the final report on the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.

- vii. The Committee noted a TEO News Release – Northern Ireland deserves its place on the Global Stage.

- viii. The Committee noted correspondence from Legal Services - The sixtieth report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules. There are no rules for the attention of this Committee.

- ix. The Committee noted correspondence from Legal Services - The sixty-first report from the Examiner of Statutory Rules. There are no rules for the attention of this Committee.
- x. The Committee noted a response from the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Committee's correspondence on 6 February 2026 regarding the Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to all government departments to request information on what work they are undertaking in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Veterans Commissioner to ask how the Armed Forces Covenant should be delivered and to ask if they can provide an oral briefing to the Committee on this issue.

- xi. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Chief Scientific & Technology Adviser in relation to data and information sharing.
- xii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Head of the Civil Service regarding the implementation of the Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015.
- xiii. The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to TEO in relation the implementation of the Children's Services Cooperation Act (NI) 2015.
- xiv. The Committee noted a TEO News Release – Junior Ministers in Brussels to Strengthen Relations and Promote Northern Ireland on St Patrick's Day.
- xv. The Committee noted a TEO News Release - Northern Ireland is a Place that is Building Something Extraordinary – deputy First Minister.
- xvi. The Committee noted report from the Official Report (Hansard) - Historical Clerical Child Abuse: Cross-denominational Network of Survivors; Amnesty International UK – 11 March 2026.

- xvii. The Committee noted report from the Official Report (Hansard) - Programme for Government and Programme for Government Delivery Unit: TEO – 11 March 2026.
- xviii. The Committee noted a TEO News Release – Deputy First Minister meets U.S. President.

9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft forward work programme.

The Committee noted an update from the Assistant Clerk in relation to the first meeting after Easter recess on Wednesday 15 April 2026, when the Committee will not meet but will instead undertake a visit to the Public Record Office (PRONI).

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

10. Any Other Business

Stewart Dickson raised an issue relating to a meeting they had with the Red Cross where the issue of registers of claims for damages in Ukraine was discussed, including the addition of a protocol in terms of individuals displaced throughout the UK.

Agreed: The Committee agreed in the first instance, to share material relating to this issue with Members before deciding on any further action.

11. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chairperson advised Members due to the Committee visit to PRONI on Wednesday 15 April 2026, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 2.00pm in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson informed Members that, following the adjournment of the meeting, the Committee would undertake training on the new delegated legislation process.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.22pm.

12. Committee Training

The Committee completed training on the new delegated legislation process.

Paula Bradshaw MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Executive Office

Wednesday 25 March 2026