



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## Committee on Procedures

### Minutes of Proceedings

**12 February 2025**

**Meeting Location:** Room 21, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Kellie Armstrong MLA (Chairperson)  
Órlaithí Flynn MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Trevor Clarke MLA  
Danny Donnelly MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Robbie Butler MLA  
Cara Hunter MLA  
Maolíosa McHugh MLA

**Apologies:** William Irwin MLA

**In Attendance:** Stella McArdle, Assembly Clerk  
Christine Darrah, Assembly Clerk  
Michael Best, Assistant Assembly Clerk  
Veronica Lo Pinto, Clerical Officer

The meeting started at 10.01 a.m. in public session.

## 1. Apologies

As above.

## 2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised the Committee that Órlaithí Flynn had replaced Sineád Ennis as Deputy Chairperson of the Committee, and welcomed Órlaithí Flynn to her new role.

The Chairperson placed on record the Committee's appreciation of the valuable contribution made by Sineád Ennis, in her capacity as Deputy Chairperson, to the work of the Committee over the last year.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should write to Sineád Ennis to thank her for her contribution to the work of the Committee during her time as Deputy Chairperson of the Committee.

## 3. Draft Minutes

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2025.

## 4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson advised the Committee that work on the Speaker's guidance on proxy voting for parental leave in Plenary is ongoing.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the meeting should move into closed session.

The meeting moved into closed session at 10.06 a.m.

## **5. Inquiry into an Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy – Long-Term Illness**

The Committee considered whether Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy should be extended to include long-term illness and injury.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy should be extended to cover long-term illness or injury.

The Committee discussed a range of issues relating to the potential definition and terminology to be used.

*Trevor Clarke left the meeting at 10.13 a.m.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request legal advice on the definition of long-term illness and injury and serious long-term illness and injury, with reference to their potential use in the Standing Order.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a research paper on the definition of long-term illness and injury and serious long-term illness and injury.

*Robbie Butler joined the meeting at 10.15 a.m.*

*Trevor Clarke re-joined the meeting at 10.21 a.m.*

The Committee discussed a number of principles that may be included in the Standing Order and a range of practical / administrative issues.

*Robbie Butler left the meeting at 11.28 a.m.*

The Chairperson advised the Committee that a further discussion on the issues would be scheduled in due course.

The meeting moved into public session at 11.34 a.m.

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered an updated Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the amended Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted the final costs associated with the Study Visit to the Scottish Parliament in December 2024.

## **7. Correspondence**

The Chairperson advised the Committee that correspondence had been received the day before from the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association NI Assembly Branch in relation to the Committee Inquiry into an Extension of Standing Order 27A Voting by Proxy and it would be included in the papers for the meeting on 26 February 2025.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Committee noted the position regarding the updating of the hard copy version of Standing Orders.

## **9. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 10.00 a.m. in Room 21, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.37 a.m.

Kellie Armstrong MLA  
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures  
26 February 2025