



Northern Ireland  
Assembly  
Committee for Education  
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2016  
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

**Present:**

Barry McElduff MLA (Chairperson)  
Chris Lyttle MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Rosemary Barton MLA  
David Hilditch MLA  
Carla Lockhart MLA  
Phillip Logan MLA  
Colin McGrath MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Sandra Overend MLA  
Catherine Seeley MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)  
Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk)  
Bronagh Irwin (Clerical Supervisor)  
Kevin Marks (Clerical Officer)

**Apologies:**

None

*The meeting commenced in closed session at 10:08am.*

**1. 2016-21 Programme for Government draft Delivery Plans consultation.**

The Committee considered its draft response in respect of the 2016-21 Programme for Government draft Delivery Plans consultation.

*Mr Chris Lyttle joined the meeting at 10.11am.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content to submit a revised version of the response to the Committee for the Executive Office and to copy this to the Department of Education, for information.

*The meeting moved into public session at 10:23am*

## **2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

### **3.1 Children in Northern Ireland**

The Chairperson advised of a request from Children in Northern Ireland to meet informally with the Committee.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to invite Children in Northern Ireland to an informal meeting.

### **3.2 National Citizen Service / Action Mental Health**

The Chairperson advised Members of a recent informal engagement with the National Citizen Service.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to arrange a further engagement with the National Citizen Service and Action Mental Health in order to discuss mental health support in schools, when it visits Omagh in March 2017.

### **3.3 Christmas and New Year greetings**

The Chairperson recorded his best wishes for Christmas and the new year to Members, Committee staff and their families.

## **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 7 December 2016.

## **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

*The order of agenda items was altered.*

## **6. Correspondence**

**6.1** The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

**6.2** The Committee warmly welcomed correspondence clarifying that a joint Looked After Children strategy is to be developed by the Departments of Education and Health.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the relevant correspondence to the Committee for Health, for information.

**6.3** The Committee noted a response from the Department clarifying that guidance had not been provided to the Education Authority relating to the employment of tutors in Outdoor Education Centres.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking clarification on its previous evidence which suggested that the Department had provided guidance which had led to a reduction in the employment of part-time tutors in Outdoor Education Centres.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to consider items of outstanding correspondence at its next meeting on 11 January 2017.

*Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting at 10:34am.*

**6.4** The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) regarding the proposed rationalisation of Outdoor Education Centres.

**6.5** The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding changes to inspection arrangements for schools, Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) settings and youth organisations.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a briefing on the inspection changes and clarification on the related consultation.

**6.6** The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding a recent Northern Ireland Audit Office report and its reference to access to the Voluntary Exit Scheme for officials in the Education Training Inspectorate.

**6.7** The Committee noted a copy of the Pupils' Voice report produced by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY).

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister seeking his commentary on the report and NICCY's suggestion that the relevant school council Departmental circular be revised.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Education Authority seeking further information on the development of the Network for Youth.

**6.8** The Committee noted an invitation for the Chairperson to attend the Irish National Teachers' Organisation annual conference on Friday 3 March 2017.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content for the Chairperson to attend the conference, diary permitting.

**6.9** The Committee noted the Confederation of British Industry report entitled 'Unlocking Regional Growth'.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an explanation for the reports' reference to the absence of data relating to Northern Ireland GCSE results.

**6.10** The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Finance to the call for evidence for the Committee's inquiry into Educational Underachievement.

**6.11** The Committee noted correspondence from BT about the launch of the Barefoot Computing Initiative.

**6.12** The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the procurement of Computer-Based Assessment provision.

**6.13** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing further information on the funding of Together: Building a United Community Shared Education Campuses.

**6.14** The Committee noted correspondence from the Education Authority regarding the relocation of its chairperson, chief executive and directors.

**6.15** The Committee noted correspondence from Fleming Fulton School providing its response to the Education Authority consultation on the Area Planning Framework.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarity in respect of consultations relating to changes to Special School enrolment levels and the closure / amalgamation of Special Schools.

**6.16** The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the absence of consultation on Annual Area Action Plans.

**6.17** The Committee noted a revised version of a response from the Department confirming that the definition of urban/rural schools in the Sustainable Schools Policy is unchanged.

**6.18** The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding teacher redundancies during 2016-17.

**6.19** The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office providing an update on Delivering Social Change projects.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a list of pre-school settings involved in the Getting Ready to Learn programme.

**6.20** The Committee noted a response from the Minister of Health regarding the legislative timescales for the VAT exemption for the Employers for Childcare Approved Home Childcare Scheme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write again to the Department of Health seeking a further explanation for the legislative timescale.

**Agreed:** The Committee also agreed to forward the relevant correspondence to Employers for Childcare, for information.

**6.21** The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister of Health advising of a UK-wide consultation to amend regulations to allow schools to retain adrenaline auto-injectors.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health suggesting that the consultation/regulations be extended to include all Department of Education funded youth settings.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Education seeking clarity in respect of training for teachers in the administration of medication including adrenaline auto-injectors.

**6.22** The Committee noted a response from the Department providing information on teachers' salaries.

**6.23** The Committee noted a response from the Department providing information on the use of modular classrooms by schools.

## **7. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to stakeholders regarding its planned Children and Young People's (CYP) Strategy event. The Committee also agreed to request the provision of youth panel attendees from NICCY, Children's Law Centre and the Northern Ireland Youth Forum.

**Agreed:** The Committee noted a list of relevant CYP stakeholders and agreed that Members should advise the Clerk of any additions including e.g. members of the Youth Parliament and the Education Authority Youth Network etc.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to engage with the Fermanagh Area Learning Community when it visits Fermanagh in March.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Forward Work Programme as amended.

*Ms Carla Lockhart left the meeting at 10:55am.*

The Committee considered its draft Strategic Plan.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed its Strategic Plan.

## **8. Nurture Provision in Primary Schools – Queen's University Belfast (QUB) – Oral Evidence**

Witnesses joined the meeting at 10:58am.

Dr Seaneen, Sloan, Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation, QUB; Dr Karen Winter, Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation, QUB; and Aideen Gildea, Health Visitor, Centre for Evidence and Social Innovation, QUB provided oral evidence to the Committee.

*Ms Carla Lockhart rejoined the meeting at 11:03am.*

*Ms Sandra Overend left the meeting at 11:40am.*

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:43am.

*Mr David Hilditch left the meeting at 11:44am*

*Mr Colin McGrath left the meeting at 11:44am*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Queen's University Belfast seeking information on the cost of whole school training on nurture.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on its plans for nurture provision including:

- possible revisions to the selection criteria for participating schools;
- the inclusion of schools in a wider range of locations in a future nurture programme;
- the commissioning of further research, including randomized control trials and longitudinal studies, in order to assess the longer term benefits of nurture; and
- information on the Early Intervention Transformation Programme including clarification as to how it dovetails with nurture.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule a visit to a nurture unit.

## **9. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

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

The Committee will meet again on Wednesday 11 January 2017, at 10.00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting was adjourned at 11:46am.*

**Barry McElduff**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Education**  
**11 January 2017**