



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA
Mr David Hilditch MLA
Ms Anna Lo MLA
Mr Fra McCann MLA
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Noreen Hayward (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr William Irwin MLA

The meeting opened in public session at 10:02 am.

1. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

- The Chairperson advised Members that the itinerary for the Committee visit to Manchester as part of its on-going Committee Inquiry into post Special Educational Need Provision in education, employment and training for those with Learning Disabilities has been confirmed.

- The Chairperson advised Members of the informal meeting with representatives of the Voluntary and Community sector regarding the ESF application process on 17 February 2015 in the Senate Chamber.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 11 February 2015

Agreed: The minutes of the meetings on 11 February 2015 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meeting on 11 February 2015.

5. Correspondence

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister for Employment and Learning regarding defibrillator provision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Committee stage of The Children's Services Co-Operation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Assembly Research and Information Service response to Departmental comments on the briefing paper on Self-Employment in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward it to the Department for information.

- Correspondence from the Department for Employment and Learning to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Children's Services Co-Operation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence

- Northern Ireland Assembly EU Officer providing the EU Matters Newsletter for February 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the newsletter and write to the Department requesting further information on the Youth Employment Initiative and what regions of the UK can avail of the funding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking if it has responded to the Review of the Working Time Directive and, if so, can it provide the Committee with a copy of the response.

- Correspondence from Colleges NI regarding an event for Supporting Students with Autism.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from the Northern Ireland Assembly Business Trust to a briefing on the Review of Public Administration on 10 March 2015, at 4:30 pm in The Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from the Confucius Institute at the Ulster University to a celebration of the Chinese New Year on 26 February 2015, at 7:00 pm in The MAC, Belfast.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

6. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme to 15 April 2015.

7. Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Service - EC Legislative Work Programme

10:08 am The researcher joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Eoin Murphy, Researcher, Assembly Research and Information Service.

10:14 am Mr Thomas Buchanan joined the meeting.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The researcher agreed to provide the Committee with further information on whether Northern Ireland is a NUT 2 or NUT 3 region and what regions of the UK can avail of the Youth Employment Initiative funding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the research paper to the Department for information and comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the European Priorities paper to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for information.

10:21 am The researcher left the meeting.

8. Departmental Briefing - Subordinate Legislation - Work and Families Act Northern Ireland 2015

10:21 am The Departmental official joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

9. SL1 - The Paternity and Adoption Leave (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Paternity and Adoption Leave (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposals.

10. SL1 - The Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 (Application of Parts 12ZA, 12ZB and 12ZC to Parental Order Cases) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 (Application of Parts 12ZA, 12ZB and 12ZC to Parental Order Cases) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposals.

11. Departmental Briefing - Zero Hours Contracts

10:32 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Tom Evans, Deputy Director, Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mr John McKeown, Head of Employment Relations Policy and Legislation Branch and Ms Deirdre Walsh, Employment Relations Policy and Legislation.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

10:59 am Mr Hilditch joined the meeting.

11:06 am Mr Phil Flanagan left the meeting.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide information of its liaising with the Department of Social Development regarding difficulties experienced by individuals on Zero Hours Contracts and claiming benefits.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information regarding whether individuals on Zero Hours Contracts are eligible for parental leave under the new legislation.

11:09 am Ms Anna Lo joined the meeting.

11:34 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

11:34 am The Committee moved into closed session.

12. Departmental Briefing - European Social Fund

11:45 am The Committee moved into open session.

11:45 am The Departmental officials joined the meeting.

The Committee was briefed by Mr Colin Jack, Director of Strategy, European and Employment Relations Division, Mr John Noble, Head of ESF Managing Authority and Ms Breige Rainey, ESF Future Funding.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the Committee with copies of guidance notes originally published and amended guidance regarding the application process.

Agreed: The officials agreed to provide the details of the selection panels conducting the review of applications at Stage 2 of the process.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that he personally intervene in the current ESF application process to help reassure Committee members and the groups involved in the funding process that monies will be allocated on a fair basis, and that experienced groups will not be disadvantaged by the poor way the process has been implemented thus far.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing with the Minister for the week commencing 23 February to discuss the issues.

1:15 pm Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.

1:16 m Ms Anna Lo left the meeting.

1:36 pm Mr Fra McCann left the meeting.

1:45 am The Departmental officials left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Chairperson approves a Press Release highlighting its concerns relating to the ESF application process.

13. Any other business

None.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

1:48 pm The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.

Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA
Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning

4 March 2015