



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

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

**WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2015**

**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**Present:** Mr Thomas Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA  
Mr Phil Flanagan MLA  
Mr David Hilditch MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA  
Ms Anna Lo MLA  
Mr Fra McCann MLA  
Ms Bronwyn McGahan MLA  
Mr Pat Ramsey MLA

**In Attendance:** Mrs Cathie White (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Clerk)  
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)

**Apologies:** Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)

The meeting opened in public session at 10:03 am.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Committee considered the Report of its visit to Compass Advocacy Network, Ballymoney as part of its Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the report and include it in the Committee Inquiry report into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Northern Ireland.

### **3. Minutes of the meetings held on 18 February 2015 and 23 February 2015**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meetings on 18 February 2015 and 23 February 2015 were agreed.

### **4. Matters arising**

- The Committee noted a list of matters arising from the meetings on 18 February 2015 and 23 February 2015.

*10:08 am Mr Sydney Anderson joined the meeting.*

*10:10 am Mr William Irwin joined the meeting.*

*Ms Anna Lo declared an interest as a Board Member of GEMS NI.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the Department contact groups who applied to the European Social Fund (ESF) urgently with the results of the evaluation process.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting an update on the whole ESF process.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a list of both the successful and unsuccessful groups after the ESF process has been completed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the Department explain to the unsuccessful groups and the Committee the reasons why they failed to pass the evaluation process.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that he brief the Committee next week if the groups who have applied for ESF funding have not been contacted by the Department by Friday 6 March 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to contact all groups applying for ESF funding who have been in contact with the Committee to update them on what action the Committee has taken on this issue.

### **5. Correspondence**

The Committee considered the following items of correspondence:

- Correspondence from the Department of Justice regarding the Judicial Pensions Regulations - Forfeiture Provisions

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Speakers Office regarding the Public Petition for St. Mary's University College.

*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 European Commission Work Programme 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the Committee for Education regarding the implementation of the Careers Review 2014 Report.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Department for information and comment and to request an update on the implementation of the Report recommendations.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence requesting an update on the NEET Strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a breakdown of the £61 million for Pathways to Success and the numbers of those that have gained employment.

- Strategy Investment Board, Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, Departmental Investment Activity Report for February 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the report.

- Correspondence from Include Youth providing a copy of their response to the Departmental consultation on the Review of Youth Training.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental response to Committee correspondence regarding industrial relations at North West Regional College.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to consider the response at its next meeting.

- Correspondence from Specialisterne NI regarding an application to the European Social Fund.

*Agreed:* The Committee noted that the correspondence had been forwarded to the Department for comment.

- Departmental correspondence regarding Targets for Social Clauses.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department for clarification on how social clauses in contracts can cover individuals with learning disabilities/difficulties.

- Departmental correspondence to the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment regarding the Inquiry Economic Growth and Job Creation in a Reduced Tax Environment.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Correspondence from the NI Assembly European Affairs Manager regarding Erasmus+ Projects Funded in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding the European Social Fund.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Departmental correspondence regarding Essential Skills in Schools.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

- Invitation from Generator Northern Ireland to the MuseED 2015 Conference on 26 March 2015 at the Nerve Centre, Derry/Londonderry.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

- Invitation from NIACRO to the Celebration of Success Event, Titanic Quarter campus of Belfast Metropolitan College On 24 March 2015 at Belfast Met, Titanic Campus.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the invitation.

*10:18 am Mr David Hilditch joined the meeting.*

## **6. Forward Work Programme**

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

## **7. SL1 – Time Off to Attend Adoption Appointments (Prospective Adopters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

The Committee considered the SL1 – Time Off to Attend Adoption Appointments (Prospective Adopters) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

*Agreed:* The Committee was content with the proposals.

## **8. Briefing from VOYPIC - Life in Care**

*10:22 am The representatives joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms Eithne Gilligan, Policy Manager, Ms Ruth Barry, Senior Policy Officer and Mr Darren Smith, Young Representative and Intern.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to request a research paper on the model of provision for young people in care in Scotland.

*11:07 am Mr Pat Ramsey left the meeting.*

*11:09 am Mr Sydney Anderson left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward a copy of the VOYPIC research paper to the Department for information and comment.

*11:10 am The representatives left the meeting.*

## **9. Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with Learning Disabilities in Northern Ireland - Briefing from Action on Hearing Loss on its Research into Transitions Experiences of Young People with Hearing Loss**

*11:11 am The representatives joined the meeting.*

*11:12 am Mr Pat Ramsey re-joined the meeting.*

The Committee was briefed by Ms Claire Lavery, Campaigns Manager, Mr Barry Campbell, Health and Sports Advisor, Healthier Lives for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People project, Ms Sara Kelly, Service User and Ms Sally Gillespie, Sign Language Interpreter.

*11:21 am Mr Sydney Anderson re-joined the meeting.*

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the further education colleges and the Universities requesting information on why numbers of students with hearing loss have decreased over recent years and to detail what facilities they provide for students with hearing loss.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the Action on Hearing loss briefing documents to the Department for comment on its proposed solutions as outlined in the briefing paper.

*12:00 pm Mr David Hilditch left the meeting.*

*12:13 pm The representatives left the meeting.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the Clerk to the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding the waiting lists for individuals needing hearing aid support and for clarification on why there is a shortage of Audiologists in Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the Clerk would liaise with the Clerk to the Committee for OFMDFM regarding an update on progress of the Disability Strategy.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Assembly Commission to ascertain whether the Assembly would provide a sign language interpreter for a relevant debate or Minister's Question Time in the future.

**10. Any other business**

None.

**11. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The Committee noted that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday 18 March 2015 at 10.00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*12:17 am The Chairperson adjourned the meeting.*

**Mr Robin Swann MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Employment & Learning**

**18 March 2015**