

## Brief Introduction to Committee Inquiries

### KEY:

N: Narrator  
PG: Paul Givan

N: Assembly committees play an important role in monitoring and checking the work of government departments. They are made up of a Chair, Deputy Chair and nine other members from a mix of parties. Part of their role is to hold Inquiries into important issues. Here, we learn how and why.

PG: A committee will look and see what a department is providing for, and if we think there's a gap in that provision then a committee may decide to hold an Inquiry to gather evidence, produce a report which makes recommendations and then will apply pressure on the department to address any shortfalls that the committee may highlight.

N: Once a committee has chosen the subject of its Inquiry, it agrees terms of reference. That is what the committee wants to examine and find out. When a committee is ready to gather evidence, it will place a call for evidence in the newspapers. This is when it asks people to write in with their views on the issues the Inquiry is looking into.

All the details on the Inquiry and what the committee wants to hear about, are placed on the Assembly's website. An Inquiry usually follows these steps. People offer their views and they may be invited to come and talk to the committee. The committee may hold an event if there are lots of people it wants to hear from. (CHATTER) The committee will also visit places or companies related to the Inquiry. Once all the information is in, the committee produces a report with recommendations which goes to the Assembly for debate and it is then sent to the department.

PG: When committees produce a report, we expect the department to respond to that, to implement the recommendations that have taken place. If a committee feels that the department isn't responding quickly enough or fulfilling everything the committee wanted, we could call back officials from that department or indeed, the Minister, to ask why they haven't fulfilled the recommendations in the report. And indeed, other organisations that lobby Stormont, they will use often the reports produced by committees to demand actions to be taken by the department as well.

N: If you want to have your voice heard on issues that are important to you, your work or your community then get involved and take part in a committee Inquiry.