

*These notes refer to the Employment Act (Northern Ireland)
2011 (c.13) which received Royal Assent on 22nd March 2011*

Employment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

Time to train

7. Given the central role that a skilled workforce plays in shaping Northern Ireland's ability to compete nationally and internationally, the Department for Employment and Learning carried out a public consultation between July and October 2009 on a proposed new right which would entitle an employee to ask his or her employer for time to undertake training.
8. Following the positive outcome of the consultation, the Minister for Employment and Learning determined it appropriate to introduce this new legal entitlement and to place a responsibility on employers to give serious consideration to requests, with a facility to turn them down only where business reasons apply. The intention of the new framework is to help raise employees' awareness and aspirations in relation to skills and encourage more employers to invest in the talents of their employees, contributing towards improved business performance and competitiveness.
9. This aspect of the Act replicates a measure already established in statute in Great Britain by way of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009.