

Fourth Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Tuesday, 12th December 2017

10.30am – 13.30

DoubleTree By Hilton, Glasgow

Commission Attendees

Douglas Hamilton, Chair

Kaliani Lyle, Deputy Chair

David Eiser

Hugh Foy

Katie Schmuecker

Sally Witcher

Apologies; Naomi Eisenstadt, Caroline Kennedy

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

Contributors

Russell Gunson, IPPR Scotland

Chris Chapman, Policy Scotland, University of Glasgow

Items

1. Introductions

Douglas opened the meeting and introduced the Commissioners and Secretariat to Russell Gunson from IPPR Scotland.

2. Initial findings from IPPR analysis: Ending Child Poverty in Scotland – how much would it cost?

Russell Gunson, IPPR Scotland

Russell summarised the work undertaken by IPPR so far and explained some of the assumptions underlying the analysis. The Commission had the opportunity to ask questions about the analysis.

3. Initial findings from Policy Scotland analysis

Chris Chapman, Policy Scotland, University of Glasgow

Chris outlined the findings from the analysis of potential policy levers to address child poverty undertaken by Professor Glen Bramley. The Commission had the opportunity to ask questions about the analysis.

4. Considerations of Child Poverty Delivery Plan advice – Work and wages, social security, tax and housing costs.

The Commission discussed the analysis undertaken by IPPR Scotland and Policy Scotland and what it might mean for the Commission's advice in relation to work and wages, social security, and housing costs. In developing its advice the Commission identified the importance of understanding which groups had the highest risk of poverty and which had the largest numbers in poverty and considering actions to address both. It also emphasised the need for clarity about how actions would contribute to the targets. Some of the points raised in the discussion included:

- The need to consider quality of work, including hours and stability of work, not just employment rates
- Consideration of transition points and what interventions are required to stop people going in and out of poverty
- The need to be aware of potential unintended consequences of actions
- That we need greater clarity on the housing aspects of the advice, including a better understanding of geographical variations and potential opportunities with the establishment of the new Social Security agency and ensuring these were not missed.

5. Considerations of Child Poverty Delivery Plan advice – actions to mitigate the impact of poverty and address longer term prospects.

The Commission reviewed areas identified at last meeting and agreed that they were all relevant. Other areas that were identified as relevant included transport, health, strengthening communities and supporting family life and relationships. The Commission identified that its advice should articulate that the child poverty targets are important because income is important in influencing child outcomes. The Commission also recognised the need to reflect in its advice the importance of quality of life and the extent to which actions enabled people to do things they otherwise would not be able to do. It was also suggested that the advice could consider where a capability approach might add value to the delivery plan.

The Commission discussed what criteria it might use to prioritise actions to mitigate the impact of poverty and to potentially make recommendations for the use of the £50m Tackling Child Poverty Fund. The Commission identified that it would be important that there is a direct link between the proposed actions and the outcomes that are trying to be achieved.

6. Commission's response to consultation on the Public Services Reform (Poverty and Inequality Commission) (Scotland) Order 2018

Overall the commission were supportive of the Order but wanted to clarify that, under the function 'promote the reduction of poverty and inequality in Scotland', the Commission was not expected to promote what the Scottish Government is doing to reduce poverty and inequality.

The issue of the public appointments process for the statutory Commission was raised. The Commission agreed that it was important to make the process fully inclusive so that it was accessible to people with lived experience of poverty. It was considered that the current process would not work for people with lived experience. It was agreed that the Commission should raise this now so the need for changes could be taken into account immediately. The Commission agreed to write to the Scottish Government on these two points.

7. Matters arising

A list of organisations to be included in consultation on the work plan is to be circulated around Commissioners for comment/feedback. It was noted that the consultation needed to be accessible and should use different formats such as Easy read and audio description.

Commissioners reported back on recent events attended.

8. AOB

- The Secretariat will confirm the number of places available for the Commission at the Frameworks Institute session in February and send out invitations to the Commission.
- Main focus of the next Commission meeting will be the advice for the Child Poverty Delivery Plan.
- The next meeting will be on 18 January at COSLA, Edinburgh.