

Third Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Tuesday, 7th November 2017

10am – 12.30

COSLA Conference Centre, Edinburgh

Commission Attendees

Douglas Hamilton; *Chair*, Naomi Eisenstadt; *Deputy Chair*, Kaliani Lyle; *Deputy Chair*, David Eiser, Hugh Foy, Caroline Kennedy, Katie Schmuecker, *Apologies*; Sally Witcher

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson; Secretariat Manager, Michele Barr; Secretariat Administrator

Oxfam attendees

Philomena Cullen, Senior Policy Adviser for the UK Programme within Oxfam GB, Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam, Scotland

Items

1. Introductions

Douglas opened the meeting and introduced the Commissioners and Secretariat to the speakers from Oxfam.

2. “Double Trouble”

An overview of the Oxfam report and relationship between UK poverty and economic inequality was provided by *Philomena Cullen and Jamie Livingstone*.

The key finding of this research is that a positive correlation between income inequality and relative income poverty in the UK over recent decades can be clearly established. This suggests that to reduce UK poverty, it is also important to address high levels of economic inequality. A review of the evidence on a selection of mechanisms linking inequality with poverty helps to explain why higher levels of inequality are associated with higher levels of poverty.

3. Matters arising

a) matters arising from the last meeting

An update of various matters relating to the Commission was given:

- Child Poverty Bill Stage 3 – takes place 8 November 2017 at the Scottish Parliament. Various amendments have been made to the Bill to tidy up the amendments that were agreed at Stage 2. It will also be proposed that the Commission becomes a Statutory body as of 1 July 2019. The Child Poverty

Bill will make provision for a statutory Commission and the remit will be widened by the Scottish Government bringing forward an Order under the Public Services Reform Act 2010.

- The Chair and Commissioners acknowledged their thanks to Andrew Fraser for his support to the Commission over the past few months.
- Paul Tyrer, Head of Social Justice Strategy at the Scottish Government, is to be invited to attend for part of future meetings to provide updates on Scottish Government's work.
- Katherine Hudson provided an update on Policy Scotland analytical work. Policy Scotland have proposed undertaking two pieces of work going forward:
 - a stocktake of the available evidence about the costs and benefits of using different levers to reduce poverty in Scotland, drawing on UK wide evidence
 - analysis of the impact of Scottish Government's existing work on child povertyThe Commission agreed that Policy Scotland should be asked to provide more detailed proposals for the two pieces of work.
- IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research have been asked to submit a proposal to provide analysis as to the financial cost of ending child poverty in Scotland using IPPR Scotland's micro-simulation tax and benefit model.
- An introductory meeting has been arranged with 3x1 PR company. JRF guidelines around language are to be sent to them prior to the meeting. The Commission/PR Team etc are to be invited to a JRF Framing Child Poverty Workshop early February 2018.
- Commissioners reported back on recent events attended and were invited to circulate any further papers or feedback that might be of interest.

3. Commission Work Plan (Paper 1)

- Commissioners agreed that the work plan should be set through to July 2019. Katherine will arrange to speak with Commissioners individually over the coming weeks to discuss priorities for the work plan. Each Commissioner will be encouraged to identify around three key objectives that they would like to see the Commission achieve by 2021 so that we can agree what needs to be prioritised in the first two years. The aim will be to agree the work plan at the April 2018 meeting.
- The Commission agreed that engagement with organisations and individuals with experience of poverty is crucial in developing its work plan. Consultation should include:
 - people with experience of poverty
 - organisations involved in policy and delivery

- individuals who might not normally be involved in this kind of work; some examples included prisoners' families, Gypsy/Travellers etc.
- organisations who we might not normally be engaged with on poverty, such as business organisations

A list of organisations to involve in the work plan will be compiled and options to create a virtual network of existing groups of people with direct experience of poverty will be explored. The Poverty Truth Commission was identified as a useful partner to reach other groups of people. This engagement should be completed by April 2018.

4. Advice to Scottish Ministers on the Child Poverty Delivery Plan (Paper2)

- The Commission was happy with structure of advice as outlined in Paper 2. The Commission agreed that in some areas it might make specific recommendations, but in others it would set out general principles that need to be considered.
- Caroline fed back on a recent event she attended where parents had identified some of the key issues they would like to see addressed in the Child Poverty Delivery Plan. These included issues related to the cost of school, tax credits system, refugee communities and kinship care.
- The Commission discussed other areas of action/focus and identified some key areas:
 - Barriers to participation – Childcare costs for over 5s, Education Maintenance Allowance eligibility
 - Education –attainment, school uniform grants, school trips, school holiday costs, shifting of costs from school to parent (eg printing at home).
 - Tax
 - Housing
 - Family life, relationships and family support
 - Transition points - who are the groups at high risk when change of circumstance.

5. “Speaking Truth to Power”

- Naomi Eisenstadt gave an overview of her combined reports “*Shifting the Curve*” and “*Life Chances of Young People in Scotland*”. It was agreed that the Commission has a role in scrutinising progress on delivery of the recommendations.

The presentation highlighted some of the key themes of the reports with a focus on issues related to employment, in work poverty and the affordability of housing.

Naomi concluded by setting out a life stage approach to poverty reduction that identifies where some of the key challenges are.

6. AOB

- The next meeting will be on 12 December 2017 at the Doubletree Hilton, Glasgow. Papers will be circulated in advance. Commissioners are invited to attend the Human Rights Conference after Commission meeting.
- The following meeting will be 18 January 2018, venue to be confirmed.
- The advice on the Child Poverty Delivery Plan will be the main focus of Commission until end January 2018.