

Eleventh Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 13 December 2018
10.30am – 13.30pm
COSLA, Edinburgh

Commission Attendees

Douglas Hamilton, Chair
Naomi Eisenstadt, Deputy Chair
Sally Witcher
Hugh Foy
Katie Schmuecker
Caroline Kennedy

Apologies: Kaliani Lyle and David Eiser

Secretariat Attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager
Katherine Myant, Analytical Manager
Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

Scottish Government Attendees (for items 1 & 2)

Aileen Campbell, The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government
Gillian Cross, Private Secretary
Elaine Moir, Policy Lead, Social Justice and Regeneration
Andrew Fraser, Policy Officer, Social Justice and Regeneration

1. Welcome and apologies

Douglas opened the meeting and welcomed Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, Gillian Cross, Elaine Moir and Andrew Fraser from Scottish Government. Apologies were given for Kaliani Lyle and David Eiser.

2. Discussion with Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

The Commissioners and Secretariat introduced themselves to the Cabinet Secretary. The Cabinet Secretary gave an update on some of her key priorities for the coming year which include issues related to employment and also to food security.

Ms Campbell thanked the Commission for the school holiday advice and Commissioners provided further comment on the recommendations that were made. Ms Campbell noted that she would respond officially to the Commission by letter.

The Commissioners then had the opportunity to ask the Cabinet Secretary questions on other issues. Douglas provided Ms Campbell with an update on the Commission's current work plan and Commission's priorities through to June 2019.

Douglas thanked Ms Campbell and her officials and they exited from the meeting.

3. Scrutiny

'Shifting the Curve' scrutiny paper

Katherine Myant introduced a draft report scrutinising progress in implementing the recommendations of "Shifting the Curve", the report published by Naomi Eisenstadt when she was the Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality. An update on progress had been received from the Scottish Government and the Commission's report assesses the extent to which recommendations have been addressed.

Initial feedback from the Commissioners was that they felt the report could have a more robust tone. Some suggestions were made for strengthening the recommendations and the executive summary.

The paper also included a proposal for better understanding the impact of the actions taken around the recommendation to ensure public service delivery staff are trained to provide services with dignity and respect for the user. The Commission is committed to engaging people with lived experience of poverty and inequality in the scrutiny process and the proposal involved speaking to people with lived experience. The Commission agreed this would add value to the scrutiny of the recommendations but suggested that a more diverse group of people should be included.

The Commission agreed to publish the "Shifting the Curve" scrutiny report early 2019 and follow up with further engagement with people with lived experience.

4. Advocacy

Inclusive Growth update

Katherine Myant gave an update on the progress of the Inclusive Growth research which is being carried out by IPPR Scotland and Mark Diffley Consultancy and Research.

The research team have made good progress on the literature review into Inclusive Growth and have developed a list of potential interviewees and an interview guide. Interviews will take place by the end of 2018 and be written up early in 2019. A roundtable has been provisionally planned for the end of January 2019 with staff who are working on the ground from across relevant organisations. The research company will undertake a review of international experience of Inclusive Growth early next year and hold an ideas lab in February to test emerging recommendations.

The Commission agreed to invite the research company to the next Commission meeting at the end of February to give an update on the work being carried out.

Housing Wealth update

Katherine Myant gave an update on the Housing Wealth Inequalities paper. The Commission had previously agreed that the main focus of this initial piece of work would be evidence review. The secretariat have developed a specification for this research and invited a range of organisations and academics to bid for it. Tenders are due in mid-January and the research will start at the end of January with the final report to be completed in mid-2019.

Transport update

Katherine Hudson updated the Commissioners on the work being carried out for the Transport working group. The secretariat is currently undertaking a review of the evidence relating to transport in Scotland and affordability, availability and accessibility, which will be presented at the first working group meeting which will take place early January 2019. The Poverty Alliance have agreed to work with the Commission to organise a transport workshop for people with lived experience of poverty, this will take place in early February 2019.

The Commission discussed the possible opportunity offered by the Transport Bill and agreed to ask the transport working to look at whether something could be included in the Bill that embedded the need to take account of the role of transport in addressing poverty and inequality.

5. Advice

School holidays advice

The Commission discussed the response to the Commission's school holidays advice, including the media coverage. The Commissioners felt that the overall media coverage was excellent. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation would be happy to advise the Commission on an informal basis how to frame any future media messages.

6. Commission recruitment

Douglas gave an update on progress on the recruitment of the new chair of the Statutory Commission. The new chair will be formally appointed in January 2019.

Adverts for new Commissioners for the new Statutory Commission are currently being worked on and will be circulated early 2019. The Commission noted that Inclusion Scotland has previously looked at how public appointments can be made more accessible and that this should be highlighted to the Scottish Government.

7. Other Updates

- Douglas updated the group on his meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. A fuller report from the UN Rapporteur is expected later in 2019.
- Katherine Hudson provided an update from policy officials on progress in developing the Income Supplement. The Scottish Government is organising a workshop with stakeholders for early 2019. Douglas will arrange to meet with policy officials after the workshop.

8. AOB

- Douglas, on behalf of the Commission, formally thanked Naomi Eisenstadt for all her work as Deputy Chair of the Commission. Naomi officially stands down from her role at the end of December. The Commission agreed to keep Naomi Eisenstadt up-to-date with the Inclusive Growth work.
- The next meeting will be on Wednesday 27 February.
- The Commission will invite the Chair of the new Statutory Commission to the meeting on the 27 February.