

## **Poverty and Inequality Commission Work Plan November 2019 – June 2020**

The Poverty and Inequality Commission was established by *The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017*, as amended by *The Public Services Reform (Poverty and Inequality Commission) (Scotland) Order 2018*. The Commission's remit is to:

- Advise Scottish Ministers on any matter relating to poverty or inequality in Scotland, including the impact of policies and the use of resources in reducing poverty and inequality (**advice**)
- Monitor progress in reducing poverty and inequality in Scotland (**scrutiny**)
- Promote the reduction of poverty and inequality in Scotland (**advocacy**)

The Commission has a specific role to provide advice to Scottish Government on Child Poverty Delivery Plans; and to comment on annual progress towards the child poverty targets and what further progress is needed to meet the targets.

### **The Commission's work plan**

This work plan sets out the work that the Poverty and Inequality Commission plans to do from November 2019 – June 2020. It covers the three things the Commission is set up to do: advice, scrutiny and advocacy.



The Commission will publish a two year strategic plan in June 2020 and will spend the next few months exploring some of its priority areas in more detail and engaging further with stakeholders to decide what to include in its strategic plan.

## **1. Advice**

### **Local Child Poverty Action Reports**

Under the Child Poverty Act, local authorities and health boards have to produce local child poverty action reports setting out the actions they have taken and their plans to tackle child poverty. The first local child poverty action reports were published in July 2019. The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government asked the Commission to review a sample of the reports. The Commission has looked particularly at how far the reports show evidence of partnership working, areas of good practice and the involvement of people with lived experience of poverty.

### **Child Poverty Progress Report**

The Child Poverty Act says that the Scottish Government must consult the Commission when it is preparing its annual Child Poverty Progress Report. The Commission will provide advice to the Scottish Government on:

- the progress made during the reporting year towards meeting the child poverty targets
- whether it appears to the Commission that such progress is sufficient to meet the child poverty targets
- what further progress the Commission considers is required to meet the child poverty targets

The Commission's advice will be published at the same time as the Scottish Government publishes its progress report.

### **Other advice**

The Scottish Government may ask the Commission for other advice during the year.

## **2. Scrutiny**

One of the main functions of the Poverty and Inequality Commission is to monitor progress in tackling poverty and inequality.

### **Annual scrutiny report**

The Commission will publish an annual scrutiny report looking at overall progress in tackling poverty and inequality across Scotland. It will consider:

- What progress has been made towards tackling poverty and inequality in Scotland?
- Is this progress sufficient and proportionate to the scale of the issue?
- What further progress is required?

The report will use a range of evidence, such as: published statistics on poverty and inequality, the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan progress report, local child poverty action plans, findings from the Commission's own work over the previous year, Programme for Government and Budget announcements, and the views and experiences of people with direct lived experience and those working in frontline delivery.

We will publish the report in late summer/autumn.

### **Fairer Scotland progress report**

The Scottish Government has published a progress report on the actions in its Fairer Scotland Action Plan and the recommendations from two reports of the Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality.

The Commission plans to review and comment on the progress report. We will publish our report in March 2020.

## **3. Advocacy**

The Commission is taking some immediate actions. These are:

- Responding to the Scottish Parliament Social Security Committee inquiry into benefit take-up, and looking at what the Commission can do to promote take-up of pension credit in particular.
- Following up the recommendations from the previous Poverty and Inequality Commission's report on Transport and Poverty by responding to the consultation on the National Transport Strategy and engaging with Transport Scotland and Scottish Ministers.
- Jointly hosting an event on health inequalities with the Scottish Public Health Network (ScotPHN) and looking at opportunities for follow-up action.

### **Research**

The Commission is commissioning three pieces of research as part of its advocacy work

#### ***Free school meals take up***

The Commission is funding research on free school meals to learn from schools about what they have done to successfully encourage children to take up free school meals and why in some schools uptake has decreased.

#### ***Developing guidance on how the Commission involves people with direct lived experience of poverty.***

The Commission is committed to involving people with direct lived experience in its work. It is important that being involved is a good and useful experience for people with lived experience, as well as being useful for the Commission. We are asking

people with direct lived experience of poverty to produce guidance, setting out how they think the Commission should involve them and what is important to them.

### ***Intersectional inequalities***

The term 'intersectionality' describes the relationship between overlapping social identities and protected characteristics. It recognises that people may have more than one type of protected characteristics, for example, a disabled woman, or a Muslim older person. The idea of intersectional inequalities recognises that people may face different types, or different extents, of inequality depending on those combined characteristics.

The Commission is commissioning an evidence review on intersectional inequalities, looking at what is known about intersectional inequalities in Scotland, and what data and evidence is available in Scotland to support the Commission in taking an intersectional approach to poverty and inequality.

### **Developing the Commission's Strategic Plan**

The Commission has identified a number of areas that might form longer term priorities for the Commission. It wants to explore these further to help it develop its strategic plan. The Commission will be hosting a number of 'evidence sessions' between December 2019 and April 2020 where a range of experts will be invited to discuss the topic. The topics identified by the Commission are:

- How can Scottish tax powers be used to reduce poverty and inequality?
- Should Scotland be moving from a commitment to inclusive growth to a wellbeing economy? And if so how?
- What are the levers in Scotland to address in-work poverty?
- How can a focus on children's rights help us to tackle child poverty?

The Commission also plans to meet with relevant groups and projects to find out about their experiences of these issues.