



Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 30 January 2020
10:00am – 3pm
City Chambers – Glasgow

Commission Attendees

Commissioners

Shona Stephen
Professor Morag Treanor
Lindsay Graham
Douglas White
Yvonne Blake
Linda Bamford
Katie Schmuecker (dialling in)
Alex Cobham (dialling in)

Apologies

Bill Scott, Chair

Secretariat Attendees

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

Expert Attendees Morning session

Gary Gillespie, Chief Economist, Scottish Government
Katherine Trebeck, Policy and Knowledge Lead, Wellbeing Economy Alliance
Gerry McCartney, Head of Scottish Public Health Observatory
Rachel Statham, Economic Analyst, IPPR Scotland

Presentation

Elizabeth Fraser, Statistician, Scottish Government

Apologies

Richard Foggo, Director of Population Health, Scottish Government

1. Welcome and apologies

Shona Stephen chaired the morning session and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Bill Scott and Richard Foggo. Shona Stephen welcomed Katie Schmuecker and Alex Cobham who were dialling into the meeting.

Morning session – 10 pm – 12 pm

2. Discussion: ‘Should Scotland be moving from a commitment to inclusive growth to a wellbeing economy? And if so how?’

The Commission held an exploratory session with experts to discuss – Should Scotland be moving from a commitment to inclusive growth to a wellbeing economy? And if so how? The session will help to develop the Commission’s strategic plan and future work plan. The Commission will have further expert discussions over the next few months.

Afternoon session – 12 pm – 3 pm

Morag Treanor, Deputy Chair, chaired the afternoon session of the meeting. Morag welcomed Elizabeth Fraser from Scottish Government.

3. Presentation from Elizabeth Fraser, Scottish Government statistician, on local data

Elizabeth Fraser, from Communities Analysis Division in Scottish Government, gave a presentation on the different types of local child poverty data that are available.

4. Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan progress report – proposals for approach and areas to look at

The Commission discussed how it would approach the requirement in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 for the Commission to provide the Scottish Government with its views on the progress the Scottish Government is making toward meeting the child poverty targets, in order to inform the Scottish Government’s progress report. Commissioners identified key policy areas and actions that they would like to focus on as part of their scrutiny. The secretariat will set up meetings with relevant officials to enable Commissioners to discuss actions and progress that Scottish Government are making on child poverty. The Commission will provide a report to Scottish Government at the beginning of May.

5. Letter for Cabinet Secretary on Fairer Scotland Action Plan progress

The Commission discussed a draft letter to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government on measuring progress and scrutiny of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan. It was agreed this letter would now be sent to the Cabinet Secretary.

6. Research update

Katherine Myant updated the Commission on two pieces of research work being carried out by the Commission. A contract to develop guidance on how best to involve people with direct lived experience of poverty has been awarded to the Poverty Alliance and the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit. The advisory group for this project are meeting at the end of February, and an invite has been extended for a member of the Commission to speak to the group.

The contract for an evidence review on intersectional inequalities in Scotland has been awarded to IPPR Scotland.

Both of these research contracts will complete by the end of June 2020.

Lindsay Graham gave an update on the Free School Meals working group. Members have now been invited to join the working group and the first meeting of the group will be at the end of February.

7. Commission public meeting

The Commission agreed that its annual public meeting will be held on the 21 May in Dundee. Commissioners will provide the secretariat with details of additional organisations, led by or working with people with lived experience of poverty, to invite to the meeting .

8. Discussion of session on taxation

The Commission reflected on its prior discussion on ‘How can Scottish tax powers be used to reduce poverty and inequality’ and started to explore potential areas it could focus on as part of its strategic plan. In the short term, the Commission agreed to consider council tax and how local taxes could be reformed to effectively tackle poverty and inequality.

9. Consultation opportunities – Housing 2040, the National Planning Framework, National Transport Strategy implementation and minimum transport standard

The Scottish Government is currently undertaking a number of consultations and developing strategies relevant to the Commission’s remit and there are potential opportunities for the Commission to ensure that Scottish Government policy better addresses poverty and inequality. The Commission agreed to look in more detail at the Housing to 2040 Strategy. The secretariat will set up a meeting with policy officials.

10. Any other business

- The next Commission meeting will be on the 20 February in Edinburgh.
- The Secretariat will look into the CashBack for Communities which is a Scottish Government programme which takes funds recovered from the proceeds of crime and invests them into free activities for disadvantaged young people.