

Covid-19 Response Working Group

Thursday 28 May 2020

9:30-11:00

Virtual Meeting by Zoom video communications

Attendees Commission

Bill Scott, Chair

Commissioners

Katie Schmuecker

Lindsay Graham

Shona Stephen

Morag Treanor

Secretariat Attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Katherine Myant, Analytical Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

External Attendees

Patrick Hogan, 3x1PR

Professor John McKendrick, (SPIRU)

Stephen Campbell, (SPIRU)

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

2. Food insecurity

Survey findings

Professor John McKendrick from the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) presented the findings of the survey of local community organisations on food insecurity. The working group members discussed the survey methodology and findings. It was agreed that John would provide a draft by the end of the week for working group members to comment on.

Update on visits to Community Organisations

Bill Scott and Lindsay Graham updated the working group on recent visits they had taken to Community Organisations and also a food surplus redistribution charity. They had spoken to staff and volunteers and observed the way in which they are working.

Discussion of potential recommendations based on survey and visits

Both the findings from the survey and the observations from the visits will inform the working group's recommendations to the Scottish Government. The group discussed making recommendations around leadership, funding and the need for continuous learning to inform future resilience, recovery and renewal.

Engagement and communications plan

SPIRU's report of the survey findings will be published on the Commission's website on 8 June, along with a briefing providing the Commission's recommendations. In advance of publication, Lindsay Graham and Katherine Myant will talk through the findings and recommendations with Scottish Government officials and the reports will be shared with the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government.

Professor John McKendrick will present the findings of the survey at two seminars in advance of publication – Voluntary Health Scotland's online meeting on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Insecurity and the Food Foundation's webinar "Emerging practices from the devolved nations: supporting Free School Meal pupils and food aid community responses to Covid-19". He will make clear the findings are embargoed until publication on Monday 8 June.

Patrick Hogan, 3x1PR will work with the Glasgow Caledonian University communications team to issue a press release on the publication.

3. Scottish Welfare Fund – update and next steps

Katie Schmuecker updated on her plans to analyse how easy or difficult it is to navigate local authority websites to find information on the Scottish Welfare Fund and to apply for the fund.

Katherine updated that Scottish Government officials had been approached to arrange a meeting but they were presently too busy to meet. As an alternative approach, the working group had emailed a number of questions to ask for more information and is currently awaiting a response.

4. Free School Meals – update on meeting and next steps – Morag and Lindsay

Morag Treanor and Lindsay Graham provided an update on their meeting with Scottish Government to discuss free school meals, including data collection methods and plans for the school holidays.

5. AOB

- Date of next meeting is 11 June