

Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 4 June 2020

10am – 12pm

Virtual Meeting by Zoom video communications

Commission Attendees

Bill Scott, Chair

Commissioners

Professor Morag Treanor

Yvonne Blake

Linda Bamford

Katie Schmuecker

Alex Cobham

Douglas White

Lindsay Graham

Shona Stephen

Secretariat Attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Katherine Myant, Analytical Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Commission business as usual

Annual Report

The Commission's Framework Document sets out that the Commission is required to produce an annual report of its activities, together with its budget expenditure, within three months of the end of each financial year. Katherine Hudson gave an update on the Commission's draft Annual Report which was circulated for comment and for Commissioners approval. The report has been approved and sent for approval to the Scottish Government Sponsorship Team. It will be published on the Commission's website by the end of June.

Update on Child Poverty Delivery Plan progress report

Katherine Hudson gave an update on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery plan progress report which was due to be published in June but may be

pushed back to August once Parliament is back in session. The Commission is still waiting to receive progress updates from the Scottish Government in order to scrutinise progress and advise the Scottish Government on the progress report. The Commission's advice will be published at the same time as the Scottish Government publishes its progress report.

3. Covid-19 short-term response work

Update on the food insecurity survey

Katherine Myant gave an update on the Food Insecurity Survey which has been carried out by Professor John McKendrick, Scottish Poverty Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) on behalf of the Commission. 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. 3x1PR will issue a press release on the same day as the publication.

4. Covid-19 input into recovery and renewal

Potential request for input from Scottish Government

Bill Scott updated the Commissioners on the meeting he had with the team within the Scottish Government Performance and Strategic Outcomes Directorate who are working the SG's COVID-19 strategic recovery response (called the 'Renew Programme'). The meeting was to discuss their work and talk about how the Commission's work might feed into and complement the Scottish Government's work and how the Commission could act as a sounding board in future renewal work.

Round Table with Cabinet Secretaries

Bill Scott gave an update on the round table meeting on social renewal with the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People. The Cabinet Secretaries will be looking to establish a more formal Social Renewal Advisory Board and have asked if Bill Scott would like to be part of the Board. Lived experience will need to be part of the board and the Commission will ask how this can be brought to the table.

Update on response to Advisory Group on Economic Recovery

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the request received by the Commission from the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery to seek the views of the Commission on how the Scottish Government sets the course and direction of Scotland's economic recovery in response to the impact of Covid-19. The Commission submitted a response to the call for evidence. Benny Higgins, Chair of the advisory group has requested to meet with Bill Scott and the secretariat is in the process of setting up a meeting.

Update on potential research with the Social Mobility Commission

Katherine Hudson updated Commissioners on potential research work to be carried out jointly by the UK Social Mobility Commission and the Poverty and Inequality Commission. A Memorandum of Understanding is being drafted on how the two Commissions will work. A joint advisory group to discuss the research work will be set up between both Commissions with both secretariats attending.

Katherine Myant gave an overview of the proposed research which will look at how the current pandemic will affect young people. The research will focus on specific groups of young people and how they will be affected by the Covid-19 crisis. Commissioners suggested groups of young people the research work could focus on - young asylum seekers, disabled young people and the impact of homelessness on young people during the crisis. It was agreed that both Commissions should link in with the Children's Commissioner. The MOU and a draft specification of the work will be circulated to Commissioners once developed.

Future expert seminars/discussions

The Commissioners discussed the recent expert seminar/discussion where they had invited a number of experts to talk about the implications of COVID-19 on poverty and inequality, in order to help the Commission start to develop its work to look at the long term impacts and the changes to policy and practice which will be needed.

Commissioners agreed the sessions were useful and to hold other seminars/discussions at future meetings. Commissioners suggested groups that could be invited to future meetings, including grassroot groups who could give an insight into the issues that they face with a focus on lived experience. The Commissioners were asked to send suggestions to Katherine Hudson on particular groups to invite. It was also suggested that it would be useful to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, Economy and Culture to have a discussion about the wellbeing economy.

Lindsay Graham noted that it had been useful to visit local community groups to get a broader insight into the work they are carrying out and that the Commission should try to do more of this.

5. AOB

- The Commissioners discussed the frequency of future meetings and agreed to continue 2 weekly until the end of 2020.
- Linda Bamford will represent the Commission at the Transport Transition Plan Advisory Board meetings and the Transport Equalities Network meetings.
- The next Commission meeting will be on the 23 June 2020.