

Meeting of the Addressing low income policy circle

Thursday 9 July 2020

10:00 – 11:30

Virtual Meeting by Zoom video communications

Attendees

Bill Scott, Chair, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Professor Morag Treanor, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Yvonne Blake, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Linda Bamford, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Katie Schmuecker, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Alex Cobham, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Douglas White, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Lindsay Graham, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Professor Jennifer Davidson, Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, and Co-chair, Scottish Leaders Forum Child Poverty Group
Matthew Sweeney, COSLA
Robert McGregor, COSLA
Kerry McKenzie, Public Health Scotland
Andrew Fraser, Social Justice Strategy Unit, Scottish Government
Ann McKenzie, Social Justice Strategy Unit, Scottish Government
Katherine Myant, Analytical Manager, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator, Poverty and Inequality Commission

Apologies

Shona Stephen, Poverty and Inequality Commission
Emma Ritch, Executive Director, Engender
Satwat Rehman, Director, One Parent Families Scotland
Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager, Poverty and Inequality Commission

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Shona Stephen, Katherine Hudson, Satwat Rehman and Emma Ritch. Introductions were given via zoom chat.

2. Role of the policy circle and terms of reference

Ann McKenzie outlined the role of the policy circle and terms of reference.

Policy circle members had the opportunity to ask questions and agreed the terms of reference.

3. Discussion on scope of the work and potential focus of recommendations

Bill Scott introduced a paper on the scope of the work. The first output of the policy circle is a set of recommendations to the Social Renewal Advisory Board to inform the Programme for Government. The turnaround for this is short and requires to be completed by the beginning of August.

Circle members considered the Scottish Government's suggested approach and focus for the policy circle which included potential questions and themes. The paper suggested focusing on the key drivers of poverty reduction, identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. The policy circle agreed this was an appropriate way to focus their work. They further decided to focus in on education, training and employment, with an emphasis on particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.

The circle discussed the coverage of the other policy circles in order to ensure they were not duplicating the efforts of another circle. The Poverty and Inequality Commission has already undertaken some analysis of the delivery of the Scottish Welfare Fund during the COVID-19 crisis. It was agreed that this would sit well under the financial security policy circle and should be offered to them as a potential area for focus.

The circle also identified a number of gaps in the areas the nine policy circles were covering. These were carers, childcare, substance abuse, domestic violence, transport, digital exclusion, asylum seekers and refugees, no recourse to public funds and local vs. national responsibilities. It was agreed this would be fed back to the Scottish Government.

The circle discussed what information they would need in advance of their next meeting to inform their thinking around recommendations.

Actions:

- **Public Health Scotland** to provide links and information on what Public Health Scotland is doing around areas discussed (substance abuse, domestic violence, asylum seekers and refugees, NRPF)
- **Scottish Government** to raise the issues that the circle feel may be missed by the other policy circles at the policy circle leads meeting on 9/7/20 to see if other areas are picking these up. Issues were carers, childcare, substance abuse, domestic violence, transport, digital exclusion, asylum seekers and refugees, no recourse to public funds and local vs. national responsibilities.
- **Scottish Government** to provide information in advance of the next meeting on existing Scottish Government actions on education, training and employment (relating specifically to poverty) and crisis measures.
- **PIC secretariat** to provide a summary of Advisory Group on Economic Recovery recommendations that are relevant to education, training and employment
- **Scottish Government** to provide information on the Education Recovery Group (membership, terms of reference, work so far)
- **Bill** to speak to the chair of the financial security policy circle about passing over the Commission's work on the Scottish Welfare Fund so far and whether this is something they could take forward. **Scottish Government** to raise this with the policy lead for the circle.

4. Involving people with lived experience

Katherine Myant gave an overview of learning from people with lived experience of poverty. The policy circle agreed it will draw on existing information that has been gathered during the Covid-19 crisis to inform the initial piece of work for Programme for Government. People with lived experience of poverty will also be invited to the next meeting to talk about their experiences. Further proposals will be developed for how people with lived experience can be involved in the longer term work of the policy circle.

Actions:

- **Bill** to arrange for a person with lived experience of low income work to speak to the policy circle at the meeting on 23 July about their experiences of this crisis and prospects for the future. **Satwat** to arrange for a single parent to speak to the policy circle.
- **PIC secretariat** to develop a short summary of lived experience evidence for the next meeting.

5. Expected timescales and future meetings

Ann McKenzie provided the expected timescales for the group outputs for these are set across two key stages:

Stage 1 - These recommendations should be provided to the board by the end of the first week in August

Stage 2 - These are to be provided to the Board for consideration by mid-November.

Dates for the future policy circle meetings will be 23 July, 6 August thereafter the policy circle will meet monthly.

6. Actions

Katherine Myant will circulate actions which arose from the policy circle meeting.

7. AOB

Bill Scott closed the meeting