



Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 17 September 2020

10:00 – 12:00

Virtual Meeting by Zoom video communications

Attendees

Bill Scott, Chair

Professor Morag Treanor

Yvonne Blake

Linda Bamford

Alex Cobham

Douglas White

Lindsay Graham

Shona Stephen

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Katherine Myant, Analytical Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

Apologies

Katie Schmuecker

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Katie Schmuecker.

2. Strategic Plan

Katherine Hudson introduced a paper on the Commission's draft Strategic Plan which will run until the end of March 2023. The Commissioners discussed the draft Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities and the approach to assessing impact. Commissioners were asked to provide more detailed comments on wording of the Strategic Priorities to the secretariat by email to be incorporated into the next draft.

The Commissioners previously agreed they would like to use the Frameworks Institute approach on how to talk about poverty; the secretariat will follow this up and look into arranging training for the Commissioners on the framework toolkit.

3. Scrutiny work going forward

Katherine Myant gave an overview of the paper on starting the Commission's annual scrutiny report. The scrutiny work was put on hold in March 2020 due the coronavirus outbreak but it was proposed that now would be a good time to re-start this work.

The Commission discussed the purpose and membership of the proposed Advisory Group. Katherine Myant will send round an updated terms of reference for the group. Commissioners were asked if they would like to volunteer to join the advisory group and to identify if there are any further suggested organisations or individuals to join the advisory group. In particular, the Commission felt that consideration should be given to making the group more diverse and there should be a clear strategy for including experts by experience in the scrutiny work.

The Commission discussed the proposed timetable. It was agreed that sufficient time should be given to the work to allow a thorough, robust approach and significant engagement with stakeholders. Therefore, it was agreed to aim to complete and publish in June 2021. As this was an extended timescale, the Commission agreed to draft a communications strategy to be fully transparent about their plans and progress. Katherine Myant will develop plans for this, including suggested timings for engagement and blog posts announcing the Commission's plans.

The Commission agreed to stop the working group on emergency responses to Covid-19 in order to take this work forward.

4. Joint research with Social Mobility Commission

Katherine Myant provided an overview of the paper on the collaboration between the Commission and the UK Social Mobility Commission. The collaboration will take the form of a programme of commissioned research which will provide up-to-date and comprehensive insight into how disadvantaged young people are experiencing and being impacted by the pandemic. This insight will be used by both Commissions to develop recommendations for the UK and Scottish governments on what actions are needed to protect young people's futures.

The research commissioning process will begin in October and it will complete in November 2021. The Commission were happy to proceed with the joint work with the SMC, but asked the secretariat to confirm that it was not duplicating other on-going work in Scotland.

5. AOB

Letter from Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Commissioners discussed the letter from the DFM. Katherine Myant has contacted Scottish Government officials to open discussions on taking forward work on the expansion of free school meals during school holidays and on raising attainment.

Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Commissioners discussed the letter from the Cabinet Secretary to the Commission and Children and Young People's Commissioner. Bill Scott has a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary and will raise again the issue of low income families.

Update on development of approach to involving experts by experience

Katherine Myant provided an update on the work involving experts by experience. The Commission will have a more complete discussion on how it will involve experts by experience in its work at the next Commission meeting in October.

Update on Free Schools Meals research

Katherine Myant updated the Commissioners on plans to carry out research into free school meals. Professor John McKendrick from the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit was originally due to commence this work in March 2020 but it was postponed when the schools closed. Now that schools are open again, Professor John McKendrick has provided a revised proposal which will look at sharing good practice in encouraging free school meal uptake during the Covid-19 crisis and pre-Covid. This will be completed by November 2020.

- The next Commission meeting will be on 15 October 2020.