

Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 13 May 2021

10:00 – 12:00

Virtual Meeting by Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Bill Scott, Chair

Professor Morag Treanor

Lindsay Graham

Linda Bamford

Alex Cobham

Katie Schmuecker

Douglas White

Shona Stephen

Yvonne Blake

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Rory Morrison, Analytical Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Fairer Scotland Duty Guidance

Rory Morrison provided an overview of the paper on the Fairer Scotland Duty – Consultation on revised guidance for public bodies. The Commissioners discussed the guidance and provided comments on the draft guidance to the secretariat. The final version of the response will be signed off by the Chair before being submitted to Scottish Government. Scottish Government expect to publish the final version of the guidance in summer 2021.

3. Annual Scrutiny Approach – decision on timetable

Rory Morrison presented to the Commission the paper on the Annual Scrutiny Approach and set out the options around the timetable. The Commissioners discussed the options and agreed to proceed with the scrutiny report along the timetable as originally planned, provided the risks identified around insufficient

engagement with experts by experience can be adequately mitigated. Commissioners were asked if they would like to be more involved with the report, Morag Treanor has previously volunteered to work with the secretariat on the report and the secretariat will email the Commission for additional volunteers.

4. Approach to the Child Poverty Advice

Katherine Hudson provided an overview of the paper on the approach to the Child Poverty Advice. The paper sets out the Commission's suggested approach to its Child Poverty Advice. Commissioners agreed to the approach and additional time commitment for follow-up sessions which will run from May-December 2021. Commissioners provided thoughts on the gaps in the evidence base and where the Commission might want to use its budget to commission further research, modelling or analysis. The Commissioners agreed to invite Scottish Government officials to participate in the expert discussion and share briefing papers with them. The Commissioners provided names of other expert organisations to the secretariat who could be involved in the advice.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Fraser of Allander are to be invited to the Commission meeting on Social Security on the 10 June.

5. Follow up actions from the housing debt discussion

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the follow up actions from the housing debt discussion. The Commission held an expert discussion session on 18 March to discuss the impact of the pandemic on housing debt and look at what further action might be needed to prevent this sweeping more people into poverty and homelessness. The Commission discussed what action it might take next and agreed to write to the incoming Housing Minister to ask that the Tenant Hardship Loan Fund be converted into a Grant Fund. In addition the Commission agreed to maintain a watching brief and revisit housing debt (along with wider debt issues) in December to see what new evidence there is about the extent of the issue, and consider what further action is required. The Commission will also consider the impact of housing debt as part of the work on housing costs when developing the child poverty advice.

6. AOB

- The next Commission meeting will be on the 10 June.
- The Commission congratulated Morag Treanor for her involvement in the recent Trussell Trust report *State of Hunger 2021*.