

Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 17 March 2022

10:00 – 12:00

Virtual Meeting by Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees

Bill Scott, Chair

Professor Morag Treanor

Yvonne Blake

Linda Bamford

Shona Stephen

Alex Cobham

Katie Schmuecker

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Orlaith McAree, Senior Participation Officer

Michele Barr, Secretariat/Administrator

Apologies

Douglas White

Lindsay Graham

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Douglas White and Lindsay Graham.

2. Public meeting – feedback and discussion

The Commissioners discussed the Commission's Annual Public meeting which had been held virtually, Commissioners commented that the event went well and that the experts by experience panel's contributions were excellent. Commissioners provided comments/feedback to the secretariat for future hybrid events.

3. Rented Sector Strategy consultation

Katherine Hudson provided an overview of the Scottish Government's consultation on A New Deal for Tenants - Draft Rented Sector Strategy. Orlaith McAree has been working with the experts by experience panel on a response to the consultation. The Commissioners discussed the strategy and the main points in more detail and identified other areas to ask the panel to consider and to include in the response to Scottish Government. Commissioners will send more detailed comments on the

consultation to the secretariat. Responses to Scottish Government are due by the middle of April and the final strategy will be published by the end of 2022.

4. Scottish Government Child Poverty Programme Board

Bill Scott provided an overview of the newly established Scottish Government Child Poverty Programme Board to the Commissioners who discussed the Board's remit and agreed to write to Scottish Government officials to raise concerns regarding overlap of remit of the Programme Board and Commission. Katherine Hudson will draft a letter to Scottish Government, seeking clarity on the remit of the board, and circulate around Commissioners for comments.

5. Future work programme

Following a discussion about the future work programme at the previous Commission meeting, Commissioners had identified some potential additional pieces of work for the Commission to undertake. The Commissioners discussed which work should be prioritised in the work programme up until June 2024. It was agreed that work on adult skills should be incorporated into the employability work set to start in 2023. The Commission agreed to take forward a piece of work on tax work, which is expected to have several prongs, including breaking down assumptions around tax paying in poverty and political participation, looking at tax paid and inequalities, and revenue raising through tax. Work around tax is expected to start in June 2022 and a working group will be established. Commissioners will be asked if they would like to volunteer for the group.

6. Budget/Risk Register/Work Programme

The Commissioners discussed the budget/risk register and work programme. Commissioners provided comments to be updated on the risk register. Katherine Hudson updated Commissioners on the Commission's budget 2020-21.

7. AOB

- Date of next Commission meeting is the 14 April.
- A Commissioner acknowledged the previous engagement and agreements between the PIC and MACS and update that MACS had written to the CEO of Motability Operations asking that the 3.1% uplift to PIP/DLA be retained by customers (disabled people and one of the 6 priority groups in the child poverty delivery plan) rather than automatically taken by Motability Ops, particularly against the background of the excessive profits being made by the organisations, derived from disabled people's benefits.

This uplift was intended to help with the cost of living crisis and allowing customer to retain their uplift rather than adding it to the already excessive profits of Motability operations was the right and socially just thing to do.

The commissioner agreed to keep PIC informed of the response from Motability Operations and shared MACS latest position briefing paper for information.