

Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 6 July 2023

10:00 – 12:30 pm

Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees

Bill Scott, Chair

Professor Morag Treanor

Yvonne Blake

Shona Stephen

Alex Cobham

Apologies

Lindsay Graham

Linda Bamford

Katie Schmuecker

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Munwar Hussain, Senior Participation Officer

Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Lindsay Graham, Katie Schmuecker and Linda Bamford. Bill noted that this was Morag Treanor's last meeting.

2. Reflections Child Poverty Scrutiny Report 2022-23

Katherine Hudson introduced the paper on the reflections on the Commission's Child Poverty Scrutiny report, its impact and what can be learnt for the future. Bill Scott invited Commissioners to provide their reflections. Commissioners' initial thoughts were that it was valuable having discussions with Scottish Government officials about progress. Commissioners also noted the valuable input in sessions and discussion from the Experts by Experience Panel members. There was some discussion about what impact the report had with Scottish Government, and reflections that the process of discussions with Scottish Government was important as well as the report itself.

Commissioners were overall happy with the current scrutiny approach and retaining the current reporting but agreed to ask if Ministers would be willing to share the

Commission's report with Parliament when sharing advance copies of the Cabinet Secretary's statement.

Commissioners thought different ways of communicating the report would be useful and suggested a podcast, as they may be more accessible, and a transcript could be produced. The Commission also discussed holding an online seminar for future reports to communicate the Commission's conclusions and recommendations.

3. Future of the Experts by Experience Panel – next steps

Munwar Hussain introduced the paper on the next steps for the future Experts by Experience Panel, now that the current Panel formally ended on 30th June 2023. The paper set out the proposed timescale and approach for recruiting the new panel, to be in place for the start of 2024. The paper also provided an update on some draft guidance from a Scottish Government working group on thank you payments to participants.

Munwar also updated the Commissioners on the work of PhD student, Anna Baillie, who has been working with the panel. The secretariat plan to publish the findings of the evaluation exercises with the Panel over Summer 2023 once Anna completes a report following a reflective session she led recently with the Panel. The full evaluation publication will come to the Commission and there will be an opportunity to discuss how these findings will inform the setup of the new Panel.

Commissioners were asked for their views on the paper and provided comments, including the suggestion that Panel members could be involved in recruitment for the new Panel. Commissioners agreed they were content with the intended approach to recruiting the new Panel.

4. Work Programme – Race and ethnicity and employability

Katherine Hudson introduced the paper on race and ethnicity and employability. When the Commission discussed updating its work programme in March, it agreed that it wanted to focus an area of its work on employability and race. The paper set out a proposal to commission research on employability services and what services are being targeted towards people from minority ethnic groups. The proposal is based on an initial review of other work that has been conducted and discussions with other organisations with an interest in employability. Looking more specifically at employability the secretariat identified that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has recently undertaken a piece of work and the Commissioners discussed options in order to not duplicate this work.

Yvonne Blake and Bill Scott agreed to lead on this work supported by Alex Cobham and will work with the secretariat in developing the specification for the research.

The Commissioners agreed to the proposal and using the Commission research budget to conduct the work and would aim to commission it to start by October 2023 and be completed by March 2024.

5. Annual Public Meeting

Katherine Hudson presented the paper on the Annual Public Meeting and set out the proposed agenda, which focuses on major areas of the Commission's work over the last year – the cost-of-living visits, tax working group and the experts by experience panel. The paper suggested that the public meeting is held in September with the option to publish the tax report at the same time as the public meeting, Commissioners were happy with the proposed suggestion and timing.

Commissioners provided some suggestions for the public meeting. e.g. an informal fireside chat, or Commissioners speaking to organisations visited as part of the cost of living visits, and the potential for a podcast off the back of the public meeting.

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the Cost-of-Living briefing which has been sent to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice. The briefing will be published in July on the Commission website along with a blog and tweet.

6. Risk Register, Budget & Work Programme

The Commissioners discussed the budget/risk register and work programme. Katherine Hudson provided an update on the risk register relating to the establishment of the new Experts by Experience Panel. Katherine also provided an update to Commissioners on the Commission budget. The communication budget line has been increased and this is balanced by an underspend on panel and commissioner fees.

7. Any other Business

- The next Commission meeting will be on 17 August 2023.
- The secretariat circulated the draft response to the council tax consultation along with the Commission papers – Commissioners were asked to send any further comments to Rory by Friday 7 July.
- Morag Treanor is leaving the Commission at the end of July, Bill Scott and the other Commissioners expressed their thanks to Morag for her time on the Commission.