



## **Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission**

**Thursday 28 September 2023**

**10:00 – 12:30 pm**

**Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams**

### **Commission attendees**

Bill Scott, Chair

Yvonne Blake

Katie Schmuecker

Alex Cobham

### **Apologies**

Lindsay Graham

Linda Bamford

Shona Stephen

### **Secretariat attendees**

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Rory Morrison, Analytical Manager

Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Lindsay Graham, Linda Bamford and Shona Stephen.

## **2. Tax Working Group**

Rory Morrison and Alex Cobham jointly introduced the tax working group paper. The group had a final meeting earlier in September and the paper provided a recap on the process the working group has followed, the recommendations in the report, and proposed next steps.

Commissioners discussed the recommendations and draft report and provided comments to the secretariat for inclusion in the draft. It was noted that Bill Scott had met with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and appeared at the Social Justice and Social Security Committee and verbally highlighted some of the key recommendations from the tax report.

Commissioners were asked to send any further comments to the secretariat by the 29 September, with final sign-off of any changes from Alex and Bill. Commissioners agreed to the next steps for publication of the report on Monday 16 October. Alex Cobham will be the media spokesperson for the Commission on the report and will make a video for social media to promote it.

Commissioners wanted it to be noted that they were deeply grateful for the time and expertise that all members of the working group had contributed over the course of their work on this project, and that each should be formally thanked by the Commission in an appropriate manner.

### **3. Work Programme update**

Katherine introduced the work programme update paper. The paper considered the implications of changes to the Commission membership for the Commission's work programme over the coming year.

Commissioners discussed the work programme and the Commission agreed that it would continue with its tax working group report and evaluation report on the Experts by Experience panel. The public meeting previously planned for this year will be cancelled and reconsidered in 2024. The Commission agreed to pause planned research on employability services for people from minority ethnic groups, the establishment of new Experts by Experience Panel, and the mentoring and shadowing programme for former Panel members until the short-term Chair and Commissioners are in place, which is expected to be in early November. In the meantime, the secretariat suggested it could carry out some work on reviewing the Commission's previous recommendations to Scottish Government, and that work could begin later this year on the Child Poverty Scrutiny if the employability work did not go ahead as previously planned.

Commissioners discussed the next Commission meeting on the 9 November and suggested that this could be used as an informal get together with the short-term Chair and Commissioners with a shorter meeting. It was agreed that this could be a chance to share learning to date, some of the Commission's achievements, and what is still to be done. It was agreed to keep some time just for current Commission members in case there were any reports or other matters that the Commission needed to sign off.

### **4. Human Rights Bill for Scotland consultation**

Rory Morrison introduced the Scottish Government Human Rights Bill for Scotland consultation paper. The Scottish Government is currently consulting on proposals for a Human Rights Bill for Scotland. The Commission is fully supportive of these rights and welcome plans to incorporate them into Scots law. Commissioners agreed to put in a response to the consultation before it closes on 5 October. Due to the detailed and technical nature of the consultation it will be a brief response acting as a marker of the Commission's interest in the issue.

## **5. Intersectionality Strategy**

Katherine Hudson presented the Intersectionality Strategy paper. The paper outlined a draft strategy for the Commission to consider, setting out how the Commission will work towards taking an intersectional approach. It builds on the Commission's work with Talat Yaqoob and the briefing she provided for the Commission.

The Commission discussed the need for cultural change and agreed that the strategy could help guide its discussions and prompt action. The secretariat agreed to update the draft to emphasise the need for the strategy to be part of a wider cultural change and circulate a revised version to the Commission for comment. Commissioners were content to publish the final version of the strategy on the Commission website.

## **6. Panel Evaluation update**

Rory Morrison introduced the Experts by Experience panel evaluation paper. The paper set out some initial key insights from the work of Anna Baillie who has been looking at the Experts by Experience Panel as part of her PhD research on participatory approaches.

Commissioners provided their reflections on the paper and what the key insights might mean for the next phase of the Panel. Commissioners agreed that the secretariat should work with Anna to integrate her findings into a broader report on learning from the Panel, to be published in the Autumn. This report will identify what has worked and also where there is learning and more work for the Commission to do.

Alex Cobham and Yvonne Blake noted that they would be willing to speak to Anna for an interview about their perspectives on the Panel, and Katie Schmuecker would be available for interview but not until later in the Autumn. Commissioners were happy to review and sign off the evaluation report on the Panel, incorporating Anna's findings and other evidence, by correspondence later in October.

## **7. Any other Business**

- It will be confirmed if the next Commission meeting on 9 November will go ahead or be re-arranged to a different date.
- Katie Schmuecker made Commissioners aware of a report [Poverty in Scotland 2023](#) by JRF to be published on Monday 2 October.
- The secretariat informed Commissioners that it had been notified that Scottish Government would be emailing Commissioners to notify them that details of their 2022 appointment extensions were being published. This is a matter of procedure as Scottish Government is required to publish public appointments that have been extended.