Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 14 March 2024
10:00 – 12:30 pm
Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees
Professor Stephen Sinclair
Katie Schmuecker
Yvonne Blake
Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick
Tressa Burke

External Attendees Scottish Government (Item 2)
Elizabeth Fraser, Statistician, Poverty and Deprivation Statistics, Equality and Social Justice Analysis, Scottish Government
Angelica Lorenzo, Principal Research Officer, Poverty Research, Equality and Social Justice Analysis, Scottish Government

Secretariat attendees
Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager
Rory Morrison, Analytical Manager
Órlaith McAree, Senior Participation Officer
Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

Apologies
Alex Cobham

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Alex Cobham.

2. Presentation and discussion on child poverty priority family types with Scottish Government analysts

Elizabeth Fraser and Angelica Lorenzo from Scottish Government Equality and Social Justice Analysis joined the meeting for item 2 and gave a short presentation on the Scottish Government's approach to priority family types and some of the analysis available on priority families. Following the presentation Commissioners discussed the presentation with the Scottish Government analysts. The presentation slides will be circulated to Commissioners.

Scottish Government officials left the meeting

3. Child Poverty priority family types – returns from Scottish Government

Katherine Hudson introduced the Child Poverty priority family types paper. The paper sets out an initial descriptive analysis of responses from the Scottish Government to the Commission's request for information about how the Scottish Government is using the information that it has about the six priority family types to develop, implement and evaluate policies and initiatives to tackle child poverty.

Commissioners discussed the responses from Scottish Government policy areas and provided their initial views on the responses which will be used to inform the next steps for the Commission's Child Poverty Scrutiny report. Following the discussion the secretariat were asked to look at what they can do in terms of shaping the material received and Commissioner views into findings more closely related to the drivers of poverty. The Commission were updated that seven workshops have been carried out with parents from the priority family types, with feedback expected at the end of March. This should allow the Commission look at the Scottish Government responses in the context of the experiences and views of the priority families.

4. Consultation on 'Below Average Resource' poverty measure

Rory Morrison provided an overview of the Department for Work and Pensions consultation on a new **'**Below Average Resource' poverty measure. Commissioners discussed the consultation and agreed that the Commission would provide a response that focused on particular aspect of the consultation of most interest to the Commission. The consultation closes on 11 April, Rory will circulate a draft Commission response by email for the Commission to comment upon.

5. Review of previous Commission recommendations

Rory Morrison introduced a presentation on the review of previous Commission recommendations to Scottish Government that looked at the results of the previous analysis under themes suggested by the Commission at its last meeting. Commissioners discussed the suggested next steps and agreed that any further substantive work on this will not be possible for the secretariat to start on until the child poverty scrutiny drafting is completed, and the Child Poverty Scrutiny report is submitted to Scottish Government in May. The presentation will be circulated to the Commission.

6. Update on recruitment of Experts by Experience Panel

Órlaith McAree provided a verbal update on the recruitment on the Experts by Experience Panel which has been delayed due to challenges in obtaining

membership from the desired range of demographic groups and geographic regions across Scotland.

Órlaith outlined the next steps planned for the recruitment, fifteen prospective Panel members have been notified and updated on the process and planning for the digital inclusion sessions with new Panel members has started. Órlaith will continue to seek to recruit participants from currently underrepresented regions and groups. The first meetings with Panel members are planned for the second week in April. The secretariat will keep the Chair and Commission updated over the coming weeks.

7. Budget and risk register

The Commissioners discussed the budget and risk register. Katherine Hudson provided an update on the Commissions budget which will have an underspend on this year's budget that has been notified to the Scottish Government. The risk register has been updated to include new risks, both of which were discussed at a previous Commission meeting.

8. Updates from Commissioners

Commissioners were invited to briefly share relevant updates from events, meetings and engagements they had attended or will attend in the near future. Stephen Sinclair is attending a Planning meeting on campaigning for fairer tax in Scotland and is meeting Education Scotland.

Katie Schmuecker highlighted that the next Scottish Government Child Poverty statistics will be released on 21 March at 9.30. Rory Morrison talked through the media plan, the secretariat will prepare some media comment on these from the Commission, and will share with Stephen Sinclair for approval and release on the day.

Tress Burke highlighted that she will soon be attending a meeting with the First Minister and other ministers regarding the government's 'immediate priorities plan' for disabled people and the incorporation of a 'duty to comply' in relation to rights for disabled people as part of the Scottish Government's forthcoming Human Rights Bill, and will keep the Commission updated.

8. AOB

- The next Commission meeting will be on 25 April 2024.