



Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 25 April 2024

10:00 – 12:30 pm

Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees

Professor Stephen Sinclair

Katie Schmuecker

Yvonne Blake

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick

Tressa Burke

Alex Cobham

Secretariat attendees

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Rory Morrison, Analytical Manager

Órlaith McAree, Senior Participation Officer

Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen Sinclair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Child Poverty Scrutiny – Discussion on draft report and recommendations

Katherine Hudson introduced the paper on the draft Child Poverty Scrutiny Report and recommendations. The paper provides an update on the Commission's child poverty scrutiny work so far, which includes:

- Reports from workshops organised through partner organisations who are in contact with families from the priority types.
- Responses from the Scottish Government policy officials for information about how the Scottish Government is using the information that it has about the six priority family types, and information on delivery against policy commitments taken from the Scottish Government Tackling Child Poverty Programme Board papers that have been shared with the Commission.

Commissioners discussed the main messages, recommendations, and structure of the report and provided feedback to the secretariat.

Following the discussion it was agreed that the secretariat will circulate a revised draft report by 2 May, with final comments required by 7 May in order for the Chair to sign off the report before the final deadline to send to the Scottish Government by 10 May. Commissioners agreed they were content for the Chair to sign of the final report.

3. Commission Annual Report 2023-24

Stephen Sinclair provided a brief introduction on the paper on the Commission's Annual Report 2023-24 and Rory Morrison provided an update on the proposed structure and content. It was confirmed that the Commission has a requirement to publish the annual report by the end of June 2024, and the Commission agreed that the report can take a broadly similar approach to last year.

Stephen suggested Commissioners think about their views on what kind of legacy messages they would like to leave for the Commission when it comes to an end. He suggested that he could use some time during the performance meetings set up with each Commissioner to discuss these. Commissioners were encouraged to think about these issues and send any suggestions/ideas about how to publish these legacy messages from the Commission to the Chair and secretariat.

The annual report will be signed off by Stephen Sinclair, submitted to Scottish Government, and shared with Ministers prior to publication by the end of June 2024.

4. Suggestions for agenda items for Chair/Cabinet Secretary meeting

Stephen Sinclair discussed with Commissioners suggested agenda items for the quarterly meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice on 22 May. It was agreed that the main item for the meeting should be the Commission's Child Poverty Scrutiny Report. Stephen will circulate an update to Commissioners on the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary after the meeting.

5. Experts by Experience Panel update

Órlaith McAree updated that new Experts by Experience Panel members had met informally in two groups at the start of the month. The sessions were mostly focused on digital inclusion and were run by Mhor Collective. The first full panel meeting will take place on 13 May. Stephen Sinclair will attend the first meeting. Tressa Burke and Yvonne Blake indicated that they would be available to attend a panel meeting before the end of June. A previous panel member will potentially attend a future meeting to talk about their experience of being a panel member. Órlaith will circulate the futures dates and Commissioners can join with no obligation to prepare anything for the meetings.

6. Updates from Commissioners

- Tressa Burke updated Commissioners on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill that has been introduced to the Scottish Parliament.
- Stephen Sinclair updated the Commission on people and organisations that he is meeting with:
 - Peter Kelly, Director of Poverty Alliance.
 - a planned visit to MORE with Commissioner Yvonne Blake.
 - A family project at Stepping Stones for Families with Commissioner Yvonne Blake.
 - Meeting with Matt Cole, Chair of the Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel.
 - Speaking at a conference in Bilbao on the evaluation of policies against poverty and social exclusion.
 - Transport Scotland's Transport Equality Group.
- Suzanne Fitzpatrick updated that she will be speaking on behalf of the Commission at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations Annual Conference in June 2024.

7. AOB

- The possibility for the next Commission meeting on 6 June to be in person was discussed. The Chair and secretariat will investigate further and confirm arrangements with Commissioners.
- Rory Morrison will circulate potential dates to Commissioners to check their availability for meetings with Scottish Government tax officials.
- The Scottish Parliament Social Justice and Social Security Committee are conducting a short inquiry on the Scottish Child Payment to which Stephen has been invited to give evidence and make a short written submission. The secretariat and Chair will prepare a submission, and if Commissioners have particular points they want it to make, they can be sent to the secretariat.