



Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 31 October 2024

10:00 – 12:30 pm

Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees

Professor Stephen Sinclair

Katie Schmuecker

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick

Doctor Peter Cawston

Kim Dams

Taliah Drayak

Louise Hunter

Doctor Ross McQueenie

Rami Okasha

Apologies

Paul Fletcher (observer)

Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager

Secretariat attendees

Rory Morrison, Analytical Manager

Órlaith McAree, Senior Participation Officer

Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen Sinclair, Chair of the Commission, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Paul Fletcher (observer). Stephen thanked Katie for her contributions to the Commission as this was her last meeting. Paul Fletcher's appointment to the Commission will officially start on 1 December and he will be a member of the Commission at the next scheduled meeting on the 12 December.

2. Commission approach to its Child Poverty Scrutiny Report and advice on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan

Stephen Sinclair introduced the item on the Child Poverty Scrutiny Report and advice on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Commissioners provided their views on the actions/areas they would like to focus on in their scrutiny report. Commissioners were asked to consider the intersectionality guide questions in their discussion of both of the options presented by Stephen. Commissioners agreed they were content for the secretariat to consult the Experts by Experience Panel on the Scrutiny Report proposal. The secretariat will gather the responses from Commissioners and Panel members on the Child Poverty Scrutiny Report and will circulate a draft plan including proposed areas to focus on. The secretariat will also be in touch to confirm meeting dates with smaller groups of Panel members and Commissioners in January.

Stephen presented the options for the advice on the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Commissioners provisionally agreed to adopt a similar process to that used for its advice on the 2022-2026 Delivery Plan, and will consult with the Experts by Experience Panel at a future panel meeting on the options.

3. Policy on paying childcare costs for Experts by Experience Panel members

Órlaith McAree introduced the paper which set out details of the Commission's approach to reimbursing childcare costs to enable the Experts by Experience Panel member participation, and the proposed change to the approach to allow the Commission to reimburse Panel members for the costs of informal childcare. Commissioners agreed to the proposed approach and Órlaith agreed to take forward the points raised.

4. Review of Recommendations to Scottish Government

Stephen Sinclair introduced this item and Rory Morrison updated on the Commission's Review of Recommendations to Scottish Government paper. The paper recaps the internal work brought to the previous Commission in February and March 2024 that reviewed past Commission recommendations to Scottish Government, for awareness of Commissioners. Commissioners provided comments and agreed the document was useful and can be used as an internal reference tool for the Commission.

5. Commission Budget and Risk Register

Commissioners discussed the Risk Register and Budget which are reviewed at every second Commission meeting. Commissioners provided comments to be updated on the risk register for future meetings. Rory Morrison updated that the risk register will be transferred into a new format i, to align with the Scottish Government's preferred format and be brought to the Commission meeting in January.

Commissioners provided comments and questions on the Commission budget. Michele updated that the Commission is required to report monthly to the Scottish Government sponsor team on the budget and highlight any underspends or overspends in the Commission budget.

6. Updates from Chair and Commissioners

Stephen Sinclair provided updates on meetings he has and will attend:

- Stephen met with Russell Gunson, Head of Programmes and Practice at the Robertson Trust on the Minimum Income Guarantee. It was agreed at this meeting to set up a further meeting on the 25 November, in Russell's capacity as Head of Programmes and Practice at the Robertson Trust, to discuss other areas of shared interest. Stephen highlighted if any other Commissioners would like to attend, the invite can be circulated. Stephen will send on the note of his meeting with Russell Gunson on the MIG to Commissioners.
- Stephen met with Matt Cole, Chair, Scottish Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel who would like to meet with the Commissioners in 2025. Once a date has been organised the secretariat will circulate.
- Suzanne Fitzpatrick will attend the Engaging with the United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Human Rights in Scotland – Public Sector Leaders Roundtable Discussion in her role as Deputy Chair.
- Kim Dams suggested for Commissioners to meet with other Commissions/similar Public Bodies to share learning on issues of shared interests.
- A visit has been organised to Robin House, a Children's Hospice in Balloch which Stephen Sinclair will attend with Rami Okasha.
- Stephen will attend the Scottish Parliament Social Justice & Social Security Committee, Post Legislative Scrutiny of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 on 28 November.

7. AOB

- The next online Commission meeting will be on the 12 December 2024.
- Rory updated Commissioners that the next Scottish Government Budget will be on the 4 December.
- Katie Schmuecker is leaving the Commission at the end of November, Stephen Sinclair and the other Commissioners expressed their thanks to Katie for her time on the Commission.