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Stephen Sinclair
Poverty and Inequality Commission Chair

By email:
chair@povertyinequality.scot

22 November 2024

Dear Stephen,

I am grateful to you and the Commission's members for further considering the options to deliver the first recommendation in your Annual Scrutiny Report, focusing on building cross-party and civil society agreement on how to meet the 2030 child poverty targets.

While I appreciate the ambitious options presented and the thinking this has been given, the risks and issues that you have rightly identified mean that neither option would be deliverable at this time. In particular, the time taken would mean that the cross-party group reports around the same time as the delivery plan is set to be published and after the Scottish Budget is set for 2026-27. As you note there is also the risk that challenging issues are not considered as part of this work and it fails to deliver the transformational change needed. While a phased approach would mitigate some risks, it remains that the group would require to report shortly ahead of the plan publication and the Holyrood election, and would direct valuable resources from wider consultation and engagement efforts.

We will of course give careful and ongoing consideration to how we will address the issues that you have raised through our consultation and will continue our regular engagement with you as this develops.

The Scottish Government remain committed to developing a robust Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan which will set the flightpath to deliver the 2030 targets, and to publishing this by the end of March 2026. In doing so we will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including those across civil society, our public sector, and the Scottish Parliament. As part of this I am keen to undertake bilateral engagement across parties, to build consensus on the action and investment needed. We will also work closely with the UK Government in development of their own Child Poverty Strategy, to be published in Spring 2025, and will seize opportunities to work collaboratively together and maximise the impact of our collective action.

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I look forward to continuing to work with the Poverty and Inequality Commission, in your role as a critical friend, as you prepare your advice to Scottish Ministers on the forthcoming plan.

Yours sincerely,



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

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