



Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 23 January 2025

10:00 – 12:30 pm

Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees

Professor Stephen Sinclair

Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick

Doctor Peter Cawston

Kim Dams

Taliah Drayak

Louise Hunter

Doctor Ross McQueenie

Paul Fletcher

Apologies

Rami Okasha

External Attendees Scottish Government (Item 2)

Ann McKenzie, Tackling Child Poverty Policy Unit - Unit Head

Darren Tierney, Child Poverty Team Leader – Local Support and Engagement

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, Chair of the Commission, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Rami Okasha.

2. The Scottish Government's planned approach to developing its next Child Poverty Delivery Plan

Stephen Sinclair introduced Darren Tierney, Child Poverty Team Leader – Local Support and Engagement and Ann McKenzie, Tackling Child Poverty Policy Unit – Unit Head, Scottish Government who joined the meeting for item 2. Ann and Darren presented to the Commission on the Scottish Government's planned approach to developing its next Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Following the presentation

Commissioners asked questions and discussed the development of the Delivery Plan with the Scottish Government officials. Scottish Government officials will share the presentation slides, and these will be circulated to Commissioners.

Scottish Government officials left the meeting

Suzanne Fitzpatrick left the meeting

3. Approach to Commission's advice on the Child Poverty Delivery Plan

Katherine Hudson introduced the paper on the approach to the Commission's advice on the Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Following on from hearing from Scottish Government officials, the Commission discussed further a revised approach to its advice..

In light of the Scottish Government's plans, Commissioners agreed to pursue a two-part approach to the Commission's advice, with initial advice on strategic areas the Scottish Government should focus on included as part of the Commission's child poverty scrutiny report, and further more detailed advice on specific actions/areas produced in time to inform 2026-27 Budget considerations. As part of the advice work Stephen Sinclair highlighted that the Commission should liaise with some key organisations, including the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, and potentially invite them to a future Commission meeting. The Commission could potentially invite other organisations to either a future Commission meeting or additional meetings with Commissioners and Experts by Experience Panel members in between scheduled Commission meetings.

4. Updates

Commission Research

Rory Morrison provided an update on the procurement progress of the Commission's child poverty modelling research and outlined the current status of the procurement. Responses to the invitation to tender were currently being assessed and confirmation of the successful bidder would be given to the Commission in the coming week.

Following successful conclusion of the procurement process. the next update to the Commission was expected to be in February or early March when an interim report of findings should be available. Part of the contract includes a presentation to Commissioners on research findings at a suitable time in the future. The intent is for the report to be published on the Commission website in due course following completion of the work.

Child poverty scrutiny work

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the next steps for the Commission's child poverty scrutiny work. The secretariat has been liaising with Scottish Government officials and are in the process of setting up scrutiny meetings and associated pre-meets, along with members of the Experts by Experience Panel. The secretariat will send a briefing for each area of the scrutiny work in advance of the pre-meets with Scottish Government to Commissioners and Experts by Experience Panel members, and will co-ordinate sharing topics of interest to Commissioners/Panel members arising from the pre-meet with the Scottish Government officials who are attending the scrutiny meetings.

5. Commissioner Fees

Katherine Hudson provided a verbal overview of the Commission fee claiming process, and explained the need for the Commission to move to a single administrative approach to claiming fees, following the ending of a transition period while the Scottish Government was moving to a new finance system. Commissioners agreed to claim a standard day's fee for each month where a Commission meeting took place to cover the meeting, preparation and dealing with Commission business during that month, rather than claiming on an hourly basis.

6. Risk Register and Budget

The Commissioners discussed the Commission risk register and budget. Rory Morrison presented the risk register in a revised format which better aligns with the Scottish Government's preferred format and addressed the various risks and changes to the risks. Commissioners provided comments to be updated on the risk register. Commissioners were content with the Commission budget.

7. Platforming different experiences in the Commission

Stephen Sinclair introduced the item on the idea of platforming the range of different experiences and backgrounds present in the Commission. Stephen suggested that Commissioners could publish individual blogs on the Commission website, with the potential for 3x1PR – the Commission's communications support to help with the drafting of blogs. Commissioners could draft their own if this was the preferred option. Commissioners agreed to take this idea forward. The secretariat will discuss this with 3x1 and update the Commission on next steps.

8. Performance Conversations

Stephen Sinclair highlighted the Performance conversation paper that had been circulated and reminded Commissioners that the first of their six-monthly meetings with himself were due and the secretariat would be in touch to offer dates and set up the meetings. Stephen updated the secretariat will be available to take a note of

these conversations, or Stephen and the Commissioner having the performance conversation can take their own record if that is their preference. The secretariat will be in touch by email to organise a suitable date.

9. Commissioner updates

- Rory Morrison updated that the Commission advice to the Scottish Government on developing a cross-party agreement to meeting the 2030 child poverty targets, and the Scottish Government's response are required by the Child Poverty Act to be published. These papers will be published on the Commission website the afternoon of 23 January.
- Stephen Sinclair update the Commission on his engagement with UNICEF on their request for input from Scotland to inform the development of the UK Government's forthcoming child poverty strategy.
- Katherine Hudson and Rory Morrison recently met officials from the UK Government Child Poverty Unit on 20 January and UK officials had indicated they were keen to meet further with the Commission. A meeting with Stephen Sinclair and Commissioners will take place on 3 February with UK Government officials and Commissioners.
- Stephen Sinclair indicated that he would be attending a First Minister Roundtable on child poverty at Bute House on 28 January.
- Stephen Sinclair and Rory Morrison met with Stephen Boyd, Director, IPPR Scotland, with the intent to have a further meeting in the Spring..
- Stephen Sinclair updated he will be attending a Scottish Government Public Service Reform event on 17 February and will report back to the Commission with an update.
- Commission bimonthly newsletter: Stephen made Commissioners aware they can get in touch with the Secretariat if they would like papers/minutes from meetings/events attended by other Commissioners and to summarise what items were on the agenda for such meetings.

10. AOB

- The next online Commission meeting will be on 6 March 2025 and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice will attend. The secretariat asked if Commissioners would like to send any questions or topics of interest in advance for the Cabinet Secretary.
- Peter Cawston highlighted the work he is carrying out with the Deep End Project with GPs and Commissioners indicated their interests for a potential meeting with the Deep End Project to discuss further.

- Paul Fletcher highlighted concerns he has heard from community and Third Sector organisations around the upcoming increase in employer National Insurance rates.