Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 29 May 2025
10:00 – 12:30 pm
Virtual meeting - Microsoft Teams

Commission attendees
Professor Stephen Sinclair
Doctor Peter Cawston
Kim Dams
Taliah Drayak
Louise Hunter
Doctor Ross McQueenie
Rami Okasha
Paul Fletcher

External Attendees (Item 2)
Russell Gunson, Head of Programmes and Practice at the Robertson Trust and Chair of the Minimum Income Guarantee Expert group

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

Apologies
Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen Sinclair, Chair of the Commission, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were given for Suzanne Fitzpatrick. Stephen welcomed Russell Gunson from the Robertson Trust and Chair of the Minimum Income Guarantee Expert Group.

2. Minimum Income Guarantee presentation and discussion

Stephen Sinclair welcomed Russell Gunson from the Robertson Trust and Chair of the independent Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) Expert Group who joined the meeting to present on the MIG Expert Group report and recommendations which are due to be published in the Summer. Commissioners asked Russell questions regarding the presentation and the MIG Expert Group report.

Russell Gunson left the meeting

3. Commission discussion on Minimum Income Guarantee

Commissioners shared their reflections on the Minimum Income Guarantee presentation and the discussion with Russell Gunson. The secretariat confirmed to Commissioners that they will be in touch by email prior to the MIG report launch to finalise any comment the Commission might want to make on publication, and any other next steps on MIG.

Rami Okasha left the meeting

4. Child Poverty Scrutiny Report 2024-25 next steps

Katherine Hudson provided a brief update on the next steps on the Commission's Child Poverty Scrutiny Report. Scottish Government have now been sent the Commission's scrutiny report and a copy of the associated WPI Economics child poverty modelling report. The secretariat confirmed that publication of both will coincide with Scottish Government's own annual progress report, which must take place by the end of June.

5. Commission/Scottish Government reports protocol document

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the Commission/Scottish Government revised publication protocol document. The protocol document required updating to reflect current practice, following discussion between the secretariat and Scottish Government sponsor team. Commissioners indicated they were broadly content with the revised protocol, and the Chair invited any further more detailed comment on the protocol by correspondence.

6. Commission records management policy

Katherine Hudson provided an overview of the Commission's record management policy paper and highlighted the records management procedures required of Commissioners, and the Commission's Freedom of Information policy.

Commissioners agreed they were content with the proposal in the paper and agreed they were happy for Stephen Sinclair to provide written confirmation to Scottish Government that the Commission is content to abide by Scottish Ministerial directives on Records Management.

7. **Child Poverty Delivery Plan advice**

Katherine Hudson introduced the Child Poverty Delivery Plan advice paper. The Commission discussed the four key strategic themes identified by Scottish Government for the next tackling child poverty Delivery Plan. It was agreed that the secretariat would provide a paper to Scottish Government setting out the views of the Commission and Experts by Experience Panel on the strategic themes.

Commissioners discussed and agreed the approach to developing its advice for the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan over the summer, working with the Experts by Experience Panel, to provide to Scottish Government in Autumn.

Commissioners considered the prompt questions from the Intersectionality Strategy and discussed how they related to the Commission's child poverty advice. The secretariat will provide a written update on some of the issues raised by the prompt questions and discussion for the Commission to consider further.

Future topics of interest
Commissioners highlighted potential areas of interest that they were interested in exploring further, subject to capacity. These included:

- Pupil Equity Fund
- Advice services
- Food insecurity and fuel poverty
- Health inequalities and mental health
- Uptake of benefit entitlement and other aspects of social security

4. AOB

- The next scheduled full Commission meeting will be on Thursday, 10 July 2025, with an additional meeting on 12 June 2025 to reflect on the Commission's performance and impact, and future priorities.
- Stephen Sinclair highlighted that Commissioners should confirm with 3x1PR they are content with their blog, if they have not already done so.
- Stephen Sinclair updated on upcoming meetings he will be attending:
  - Fair Work Convention (6 June)
  - Children and Young Peoples Commissioner Scotland Nicola Killean (19 June)

- Commissioners were asked if they had any additional items they wanted to discuss with the Cabinet Secretary for the meeting on the 26 June.
- Stephen Sinclair highlighted that he was attending a Scottish Federation of Housing Associations event and he would be speaking at a panel discussion on UKG welfare reform and impacts on Scotland (along with John Dickie and Ruth Boyle) on 10 June.
- Stephen Sinclair will follow up with Commissioners who were unable to attend today's Commission meeting to provide an update.