Poverty and Inequality Commission and Experts by Experience Panel In-person Meeting

Thursday 30 April 2026
10:00 – 16:00 pm
COSLA, Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh EH12 5BH

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

Secretariat attendees
Katherine Hudson, Secretariat Manager
Keith Dryburgh, Analytical Manager
Órlaith McAree, Senior Participation Officer
David Askew, Senior Policy Officer
Michele Barr, Secretariat Administrator

1. Welcome and apologies

Stephen Sinclair, Chair of the Commission, welcomed Commissioners to the in-person meeting, noting that the meeting would provide an opportunity throughout the day to reflect on the Commission's role, the wider context and to consider future priorities.

2. Commission Budget

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the Commission's 2026–27 budget allocation from the Scottish Government and reported on a meeting she attended with Stephen and Scottish Government officials to discuss the Commission's budget. The Commission noted the planned approach to manage the budget for 2026-27.

3. Child Poverty Scrutiny

Stephen Sinclair introduced the Commission's draft Child Poverty Scrutiny Report 2025–26 which Commissioners received in advance of the meeting. Commissioners discussed the report and provided comments. It was agreed that there should be a strengthened introduction or foreword to the report and a clear Executive Summary. and that any additional feedback on the report should be submitted to the Secretariat by Monday 4 May. It was agreed that the Secretariat would draft the revised introduction/foreword and an executive summary and circulate it to Commissioners by email.

4. 2030 Child Poverty Targets

Stephen Sinclair introduced a brief discussion on the 2030 Child Poverty Targets, the Commission's statutory duties to monitor progress and advise on meeting the targets, and what the Commission's role might look like as 2030/31 approaches. Commissioners discussed a range of factors that would be relevant for consideration during this period.

5. What does the Commission see its role being?

Katherine Hudson presented the Commission's strategic priorities and outlined examples of the kinds of roles and approaches the Commission could take for the future. Commissioners discussed their initial thoughts in two breakout groups, with the aim of informing discussions throughout the day. It was suggested that the Commission could consider developing this work into a paper setting out a series of lenses/questions that inform the Commission's work. The Secretariat will circulate the slides from the presentation.

6. What is the current and future context the Commission is operating in?

David Askew presented to Commissioners on the wider issues likely to affect poverty and inequality in Scotland over the next 10–20 years, along with analysis of political party manifesto commitments. This was followed by a discussion, with Commissioners providing feedback on the key issues identified and highlighting additional areas for the Commission to focus on going forward.

7. What do we mean by inequality?

Katherine Hudson introduced a presentation on how inequality is defined within the Commission's remit and the different ways it can be interpreted. She noted that the Commission's work to date has focused primarily on poverty, particularly child poverty. Commissioners highlighted that greater consideration should be given to

inequality in future work of the Commission and shared ideas of how this could be taken forward.

8. What is the focus of recent research and analysis on poverty and inequality in Scotland?

Keith Dryburgh presented the recent research and analysis on poverty and inequality in Scotland and provided a brief overview of the non-child poverty statistics. Commissioners discussed where the focus of recent research work in Scotland has been and where might the gaps be.

9. The Commission's work programme over the next two years

Stephen Sinclair introduced a discussion on the Commission's work programme for the next two years, taking into account the discussions held during the meeting. Commissioners highlighted a range of topics and issues for the Commission to consider over this period. The Secretariat captured the options raised and will develop a draft work plan, setting out possible areas of focus for the Commission.

10. Future of the Experts by Experience Panel

Órlaith McAree presented a review of, and options for, the Commission's approach to participation and engagement. Commissioners were advised that the current Experts by Experience Panel is due to conclude in August–September 2026. A range of options for the future of the Panel were presented. Commissioners discussed the options and provided feedback on their preferred option.

11. AOB

Next online Commission meeting will be on 11 June 2026.