Meeting of the Poverty and Inequality Commission

Thursday 30 July 2026
10:00 – 12:30 pm
Virtual meeting – Microsoft Teams

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

External attendees Scottish Government
Rachel McGruer, Deputy Director, Tackling Child Poverty (Item 4)

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

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Stephen Sinclair, Chair of the Commission, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Universal and targeted approaches report and Distributional analysis – Next Steps**

Keith Dryburgh provided an introduction to the Universal and targeted approaches and Distributional analysis reports. Commissioners provided comments on both reports and discussed the publication timeline. Stephen Sinclair invited Commissioners to provide any further comments/reflections for the Universalism and targeted approaches report to the Secretariat by email by 6 August. There will be an opportunity for further discussion of the Universalism and Targeting principles, and what they mean for the Commission, at the next Commission meeting on the 3 September.

3. Functional Review of Public Bodies

Katherine Hudson provided information about the Scottish Government's functional review of public bodies. The Scottish Government is carrying out a functions-based review of the public service delivery landscape across Scotland, covering all public bodies. A response to the review has been submitted by the Commission's Scottish Government sponsor team in relation to the Commission. The Scottish Government Sponsor team will keep the Secretariat informed of any developments arising from the review.

4. Review of Child Poverty Targets

Rachel McGruer, Deputy Director, Tackling Child Poverty at the Scottish Government, joined the meeting. She provided further detail on the Scottish Government's plans for the review of child poverty targets and its willingness to work with both the Commission and Experts by Experience Panel throughout the review process. The Commission Chair will be invited to be a part of an expert technical group, with further details coming in due course. Commissioners were invited to ask questions and discuss the proposals. The Scottish Government will write formally to the Commission to request advice on the review in due course.

Rachel McGruer left the meeting.

5. Work Plan 2026-27 and Experts by Experience Panel

Katherine Hudson provided an update on the Commission's Work Plan for 2026-27 and proposals for the Experts by Experience Panel. Commissioners were invited to consider and agree the research proposal and the proposed next steps for the Panel.

Katherine advised that the Commission's research budget could be used to support its child poverty scrutiny work for 2026-27. She also updated Commissioners on secretariat staffing arrangements for the coming year.

The Commission agreed the research proposal, next steps for the Experts by Experience Panel and approved the Work Plan for 2026-27.

6. Updates

- Stephen Sinclair met with Scottish Government, Deputy Directors, supported by the Secretariat, to talk about the Commission's Child Poverty Scrutiny report on 28 July 2026.
- Stephen Sinclair attended a Scottish Government Essential Food Price Cap Meeting on 29 June 2026.

- Stephen Sinclair is meeting with Kate Smith, Head of School Age Childcare and Iain MacAllister, Head of ELC, Scottish Government on 20 August. Commissioners are invited to attend.
- Peter Kelly, CEO, Poverty Alliance will attend the next Commission meeting on 3 September 2026.

7. AOB

- The next online Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 3 September 2026.
- Stephen Sinclair highlighted that performance conversations with most Commissioners had already been scheduled. He asked any Commissioners who had not yet arranged a meeting to contact the Secretariat with suitable dates.