

Social Justice and Social Security Committee
Thursday 18 April 2024
11th Meeting, 2024 (Session 6)

Poverty and Inequality Commission: Public Appointments

Purpose

1. [The Poverty and Inequality Commission](#) provides independent advice and scrutiny to Scottish Ministers on poverty and inequality. The Commission consists of a chair and between 4 and 8 other members, all appointed by the Scottish Ministers.
2. Under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 (which established the Commission), the Scottish Ministers may appoint a person as a member of the Commission only if the Parliament has approved the appointment (paragraph 1(3) of the schedule to the Act).
3. The Parliament's approval of statutory public appointments is given by resolution – that is, by the Parliament agreeing to a motion, lodged by the relevant minister. By convention, this is preceded by a process of scrutiny by the relevant lead committee. Typically, this is in two stages – scrutiny at an early stage of the draft specification for the post and the appointment plan, and then an opportunity to meet and assess the suitability of the Scottish Government's nominees for appointment.
4. The Commission currently consists of a Chair and five other members. The Chair (Professor Stephen Sinclair) and two of those members (Tressa Burke and Professor Suzanne Kirkpatrick) were appointed on a short-term basis in November 2023, with their current terms of office due to expire on 30 June 2024.
5. At its meeting on [16 November 2023](#), the Committee considered and agreed the Scottish Government's draft recruitment documentation for a new appointment round. In addition, the Committee agreed to meet informally and in private with the Scottish Government's recommended nominees as a group, to inform its forthcoming report on the recommended appointments.

Appointment Process

6. The Cabinet Secretary wrote to the Committee on 28 March 2024 to advise that, following a competitive exercise, she had identified nominees for appointment as the Chair and as members. All nominees have agreed to be nominated for appointment. The Cabinet Secretary's letter is attached as an Annex.

Private Meeting

7. An informal private meeting has been arranged that will take place immediately before the Committee's formal meeting. At this informal private meeting, committee members will first meet with the Selection Panel Chair, Julie Humphreys (Deputy Director, Tackling Child Poverty and Financial Wellbeing, Scottish Government), to discuss the skills and attributes sought in the appointees.
8. Members will then meet with the recommended appointees. The aim is to enable members to assess whether the appointees have the requisite expertise.

Public Meeting

9. During the Committee's formal meeting, members will be able to provide their views on the nominees in public.

Reporting and next steps

10. The Committee has agreed with the Scottish Government that it will report to the Parliament by 2 May 2024. Accordingly, it is proposed that it considers a draft report at its next meeting, on 25 April 2024. The Committee is invited to agree, at today's meeting, to take its consideration of the draft report in private.
9. Subject to the Parliament approving the appointments (anticipated consideration in May), it is expected that the nominated Chair and seven of the Commissioners will take up appointment on 1 July 2024, with the eighth Commissioner taking up appointment on 1 December 2024.

Clerks to the Committee
April 2024

Annex

Correspondence from the Scottish Government

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

Collette Stevenson MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee

28 March 2024

Dear Convener,

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMISSION – NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

Further to my earlier correspondence regarding the new round of public appointments to the Poverty and Inequality Commission (the Commission), I am pleased to advise that the appointment exercise for a new Chair and Commissioners has now concluded, and I am writing to advise you of my nominations for appointment.

Following this competitive exercise, which saw an exceptional response, the following candidates have been identified as the most suitable for appointment as Chair and Commissioners of the Commission. All have agreed to be nominated for appointment.

Chair

- Professor Stephen Sinclair

Commissioners

- Peter Cawston
- Kim Dams
- Taliah Drayak
- Paul Fletcher
- Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick
- Louise Hunter
- Ross McQueenie
- Rami Okasha

These nine nominees most closely match the specific requirements of the Commission, as set out in the appointment documents previously reviewed by

the Committee. Viewed collectively, the nominees bring a varied range of skills and experience, thereby ensuring that the Commission can effectively deliver on its statutory duties and benefit from the unique perspective and knowledge that each nominee brings.

I would be grateful if you could initiate the Parliamentary scrutiny process to ensure that, subject to Parliament's approval, the nominated Chair and seven of the Commissioners may take up appointment on 1 July 2024, with the eighth Commissioner taking up appointment on 1 December 2024. This will ensure the Commission is quorate in order to deliver on its statutory duties.

I am confident that the Parliamentary stage of the process will be a positive part of these nationally important appointments and I understand that the Committee has scheduled a private evidence session on 18 April 2024 to meet with the Selection Panel Chair and the nominees for appointment. Please note that one of the nominated candidates, Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, who has already been approved by the Committee for a short term appointment to the Commission, has indicated she may not be able to attend on that date due to an unavoidable commitment.

To support this session, and the Committee's consideration, I have provided the person specification for both the Chair and Commissioner roles in **Annex A** and **Annex B** respectively. I have also attached to the covering email information from the candidates' applications, an extract of the Selection Panel's assessment for each of the nominees, and their contact details to allow arrangements for the private Committee session to be arranged. Please contact my official Elaine Paterson at Elaine.Paterson@gov.scot should you require any further information.

I await with interest the outcome of the Committee's consideration and look forward to working with the nominees, subject to the Parliament's approval.

Yours sincerely,



SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE

PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY
COMMISSION

Section A Essential Criteria

Candidates were required to demonstrate evidence of all of the criteria listed below in Section A during the selection process.

Section A Essential criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
An ability to provide strategic, collaborative and adaptive leadership to effectively deliver on set objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can demonstrate an ability to provide strategic leadership in a changing environment, considering long term vision and setting appropriate goals. • You can demonstrate an ability to provide a clear focus to an organisation to ensure it achieves its objectives. • You can demonstrate the skills of encouraging all team members to make an effective contribution, are respectful of differing views when taking decisions and ensure the organisation works collaboratively to reach an agreed position. • You are committed to equality of opportunity and to developing and maintaining a diverse membership. • You have the ability to create the conditions to build a confident and effective team and address any performance issues using constructive feedback. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
Ability to constructively challenge others and be open to scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can ask questions to effectively challenge and better understand proposals and you are willing to debate issues with colleagues. • You can put forward your point of view, can justify it 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, we will also assess this criterion at interview by asking you to consider a short paper before giving a verbal response to</p>

	<p>and are also open to that of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You respect colleagues and stakeholders during debates or discussions. • You have the ability to make objective decisions / recommendations based on evidence and can challenge proposals and the findings of research. • You can present evidence-based challenge to statutory or government policy-making. • You can use your influencing skills to bring about change. 	<p>the selection panel, who will also ask you questions.</p> <p>This paper will be sent to you in advance.</p>
<p>Ability to communicate effectively and influence others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can express your views clearly and confidently, both when writing and speaking, including publicly to a varied audience and through different media channels. • You can demonstrate the ability to influence other stakeholders. • You can tailor and explain complex information appropriately to ensure it is accessible to a wide range of stakeholders. • You have effective written communication skills and the ability to succinctly convey key points. 	<p>Your written communication skills will be tested by the quality of your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, we will also assess this criterion at interview by asking you to consider the same short paper before giving a verbal response to the selection panel, who will also ask you questions.</p> <p>This paper will be sent to you in advance.</p>

Ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have the ability to build strong relationships with external organisations and work with them on a respectful basis. You have the ability to work with different organisations and stakeholders to deliver shared objectives and 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
	outcomes.	
Understanding of poverty and inequality issues in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can display an understanding of poverty and inequality, the differences between the two, how poverty is experienced, its intersectional nature, and the factors which could lead to reductions in levels of poverty and inequality in Scotland. You can demonstrate a knowledge of the current policy and legislative landscape in relation to poverty and inequality and relevant powers available to the Scottish Parliament. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, we will also assess this criterion at interview by asking you to consider the same short paper before giving a verbal response to the selection panel, who will also ask you questions.</p> <p>This paper will be sent to you in advance.</p>
Understanding of the corporate governance processes that underpin the successful leadership of a public body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have an understanding of the requirements for effective governance at senior management or board level, such as displaying transparency in decision making or using resources effectively. You can demonstrate an understanding of good practice in relation to audit and risk management. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>

Section B Essential Criteria

Candidates were required to demonstrate evidence of one of the criteria listed below in Section B during the selection process.

Section B Essential criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
Experience in, and knowledge of, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy relating to poverty and inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have developed, implemented or evaluated policy at a local or national level related to poverty and/or socioeconomic inequality; whether to improve day to day life or tackle the root causes. • You have developed policy at a local or national level related to the economy, economic development or progressive taxation that had reducing poverty and inequality as an aim. • You have utilised available evidence to develop effective solutions to tackle poverty. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
Experience of poverty or inequality (or both) and the ability to reflect on your lived experience of poverty or inequality in order to inform solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can describe how personal experience of living on a low income or experiencing disadvantage – now or in the past - has informed your thinking about poverty and/or inequality issues, your understanding of the challenges faced by others and your ability to suggest possible improvements. • You can suggest and influence positive improvements or solutions based on your own or others' lived experience of poverty or disadvantage. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>

<p>Experience in, and knowledge of, developing and using research and analysis in connection with poverty and inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have developed or undertaken research, or statistical or economic analysis into domestic and/or international issues in relation to poverty and socio-economic disadvantage and/or the intersectionality of poverty and inequality. • You have prepared reports or advice to develop and communicate compelling evidence relating to poverty and inequality. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
<p>Experience in, and knowledge of, working with persons experiencing poverty or inequality (or both), including children and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can describe how personal experience of working with persons experiencing poverty or inequality (or both), including any experience of frontline delivery of services or support, has informed your thinking about poverty and/or inequality issues, your understanding of the challenges faced by others, and your ability to suggest possible improvements. • You can suggest and influence positive improvements or solutions based on your own or others' lived experience of poverty or disadvantage. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>

ANNEX B PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONERS TO THE POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMISSION

Section A Essential Criteria

Candidates were required to demonstrate evidence of both of the criteria listed in below in Section A during the selection process.

Section A Essential criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
Ability to constructively challenge others and be challenged by others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You ask questions to effectively challenge and better understand proposals and you are willing to debate issues and research findings with colleagues. You can put forward your point of view, can justify it and also are open to that of others. You respect colleagues and stakeholders during debates or discussions. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, we will also assess this criterion at interview by asking you to consider a short paper before giving a verbal response to the selection panel, who will also ask you questions.</p> <p>The paper will be sent to you in advance.</p>
Ability to communicate effectively and influence others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can express your views clearly and confidently. You can influence people such as fellow Commissioners and the Commission's stakeholders. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>Your communication skills will be tested through the application and, if shortlisted, at interview stage.</p>

Section B Essential Criteria

Candidates were required to demonstrate evidence of one of the criteria listed below in Section B during the selection process.

The application form did, however, ask candidates to indicate if they had evidence for any of the other Section B essential criteria. This was to ensure that candidates recommended for appointment reflect the right mix of skills, knowledge and experience for the Commission, as a whole.

Section B Essential criteria	Example indicators	How this will be assessed
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<p>Experience in, and knowledge of, the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy relating to poverty and inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have developed, implemented or evaluated policy at a local or national level related to poverty and/or socioeconomic inequality; whether to improve day to day life or tackle the root causes. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have developed policy at a local or national level related to the economy or economic development or progressive taxation that had reducing poverty and inequality as an aim. You have utilised available evidence to develop effective solutions to tackle poverty. 	
<p>Experience of poverty or inequality (or both) and the ability to reflect on your lived experience of poverty or inequality in order to inform solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can describe how personal experience of living on a low income or experiencing disadvantage – now or in the past - has informed your thinking about poverty and/or inequality issues, your understanding of the challenges faced by others and your ability to suggest possible improvements. You can suggest and influence positive improvements or solutions based on your own or others lived experience of poverty or disadvantage. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>

<p>Experience in, and knowledge, of developing and using research and analysis in connection with poverty and inequality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have developed or undertaken research, or statistical or economic analysis domestic and/or international issues in relation to poverty and socio-economic disadvantage and/or the intersectionality of poverty and inequality. • You have prepared reports or advice to develop and communicate compelling evidence relating to poverty and inequality. 	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
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<p>Experience in, and knowledge of, working with persons experiencing poverty or inequality (or both), including children and families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can describe how personal experience of working with persons experiencing poverty or inequality (or both), including any experience of frontline delivery of services or support, has informed your thinking about poverty and/or inequality issues, your understanding of the challenges faced by others and your ability to suggest possible improvements.• You can suggest and influence positive improvements or solutions based on your own or others lived experience of poverty or disadvantage.	<p>You will be asked to provide evidence in your application.</p> <p>If shortlisted, you will also be asked some questions at the interview to test this criterion.</p>
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