

APPG on Poverty

Tuesday 1st December, 2020 at 10am

Zoom

Attendees:

Neil Gray MP (Co-Chair), Baroness Ruth Lister, Stephen Timms MP, Samuel Spong (office of Rushanara Ali MP), Louisa McGeehan (Co-Secretariat, CPAG), Zhané Edwards (Co-Secretariat, CPAG), Frankie Galvin (Co-Secretariat, Equality Trust), Matthew Oakley, Fran Bennett, Tom Sefton (CofE), Martin Coppack (Fair by Design), Michael Smaldon, Tom Burgess, Sarah Greenwood, Sabrina Dubash (CPAG), Rachel Gregory, Rachel (Family Fund), Nick Plumb, Michelle Heath, Malcolm Torry, Kingsley Purdam, Joseph Howes (Buttle UK), Jase Wheatley, Heather Ryan, Gareth McNab (Nationwide), Dr Freda Owusu, Deborah Streatfield, Carol Evans, Audrey Symes, Beth TLG, Bel Crewe, Wayne.

Apologies:

Baroness Christine Blower, Lyn Brown MP, Afzal Khan MP, Tony Lloyd MP, Lord Bird and Wanda Wyporska (Co-Secretariat, the Equality Trust).

1. Social Metrics Commission presentation from Matthew Oakley, followed by discussion

Main points of discussion were:

- When creating the poverty measure, SMC considered net income, available assets, debt repayments, and inescapable family-specific costs (housing, childcare, additional disability costs, social care).
- The SMC holds its poverty line at 54% of median total resources available (54% was chosen to equal the same number of people in poverty as the HBAI measure).
- The two measures count the same number of people, but different groups. SMC's measure identified more disabled people, children, young people and people living in London in poverty than the traditional measure.
- Because of targeted policies, pensioner poverty has reduced, showing that poverty can be reduced with government intervention. For example, the £20 uplift has had a positive impact on poverty levels.
- 46% of all people living in families where the household head is Black/Caribbean/African/Black British were in poverty compared to 19% of those living in families where the head of the household is white.
- The economic impact of covid-19 has fallen more heavily on people already in deep and persistent poverty.
- People in poverty were more likely to be lonely before the crisis, and have experienced increased loneliness since.

2. What should be in the Government's plan to tackle child poverty? - Discussion introduced by Louisa McGeehan from the Child Poverty Action Group

Some key points were:

- Conservative, Labour and SNP all mentioned reducing child poverty in their 2019 manifestos and this has become more urgent as a result of the Covid-10 pandemic.
- Leadership and commitment across government, alongside statutory targets, are necessary for a plan to be effective.
- Policy options to tackle child poverty include social security, decent work and pay, affordable childcare when families need it, inclusive education, secure homes for families, and services providing information, advice and support.
- There is growing cross-party support for maintaining the £20 uplift in universal credit – the loss of this in spring 2021 will greatly increase child poverty.

3. Any other business

There was no other business.

4. Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting will address the likely impact of losing the temporary 'Covid-19 uplift' in universal credit and tax credits and the impact of it not being extended to other benefits. This will be followed by an Officer-only meeting a couple weeks later to set the APPG's future agenda.

The meeting closed at 11:30am.