

APPG on Poverty: Minutes

Wednesday 8th June 2022 at 10:30am

Room P, Portcullis House

Attendees: Baroness Ruth Lister (Co-Chair), David Linden MP (Co-Chair), Cat Smith MP, Liam Byrne MP, Marsha de Cordova MP, Sophie Clarke (Office of Robin Millar MP), Dr Zubaida Haque (Co-Secretariat, The Equality Trust), Lizzie Flew (Co-Secretariat, CPAG), and Zhané Edwards (Co-Secretariat, CPAG).

Apologies: Baroness Philippa Stroud, Afzal Khan MP, Lyn Brown MP, Tony Lloyd MP, Beth Winter MP, and Robin Millar MP.

1) Welcome and introductions by Co-Chair Baroness Ruth Lister

2) Election of Co-Chairs and Officers

The following parliamentarians were elected as Officers and Co-Chairs:

- David Linden MP (Chair & Registered Contact)
- Baroness Ruth Lister (Co-Chair)
- Cat Smith MP (Member)
- Baroness Philippa Stroud (Officer - elected in absentia)
- Beth Winter MP (Officer - elected in absentia)
- Afzal Khan MP (Officer - elected in absentia)
- Lyn Brown MP (Officer - elected in absentia)
- Tony Lloyd MP (Officer - elected in absentia)
- Robin Millar MP (Member - elected in absentia)

Parliamentarians present approved all Officers and Co-Chairs.

3) Discussion of in-work poverty report and approval of its recommendations

- It was discussed that one of the recommendations should make reference to a potential second earner's work allowance, given the government's recent announcements on increasing the work allowance and its focus on making work the best route out of poverty.
- In relation to publication of the report, it was agreed that the Secretariat would coordinate the report's publication.
 - David Linden MP proposed organising a debate on in-work poverty in the Commons

ACTION - Zhané to format the report and ensure all stats are up-to-date before publication

ACTION - Zhané to finalise the report and send round final draft to all Officers for final comments

4) Discussion of future work for the APPG

a) Joint letter with other nations' Cross-Party Groups on Poverty

- All Officers present agreed to the joint letter.

- It was suggested that the letter could point to what Scotland and Wales are doing and what levers the UK government could pull to alleviate the cost of living crisis.
- Members also raised a point to include the fact there has been no support for children in the spring statement nor the latest economic update.

ACTION - Zhané to email Ashely McLean from Poverty Alliance to organise the draft of the joint letter

b) Inquiry on the adequacy of the social security system in addressing poverty

- It was agreed to hold a staggered inquiry over multiple months with an interim report.
- One session would be on how benefits are uprated and for this interim report to be published in the autumn before next year's uprating rates are published. The APPG will invite witnesses such as IFS, Resolution Foundation, among others.
- It was agreed to invite someone from the DWP to explain the technical aspects of uprating.
- A further session will also be organised to answer more fundamental questions around social security, such as how should the level of benefits be agreed. Suggested witnesses for this session include Covid Realities, APLE Collective, Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy, JRF, Commission on Social Security, among others.

ACTION - Zhané to contact APLE Collective about joint event for the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

c) Pensioner poverty

- All agreed that the APPG should look at pensioner poverty.
- It was highlighted that people in their mid-50s and above have dropped out of the labour market during the pandemic and many have not returned.
- Everyone was in agreement about ensuring the APPG looks at pensioner poverty through an intersectional lens, paying particular attention to the gender, race and disability pay gap among older people, especially as white British groups are more likely to have assets than other minority ethnic groups.
- It was noted that there would be an overlap with disability and older age.
- The issue of fuel poverty was raised, but an APPG on Fuel Poverty already exists, so it was agreed an inquiry wouldn't be necessary as fuel poverty will come up when speaking about pensioner poverty anyway.
- This inquiry would take place after the inquiry on social security.

ACTION - Secretariat to arrange meeting between Officers and Age UK to discuss the scope of a potential work on pensioner poverty

ACTION - Zhané to check if there are APPGs on older people and racial inequalities to approach for a potential joint session

ACTION - Zhané to contact APPG on Fuel Poverty to see if there is appetite to work together on a joint session.

5) AOB

- Despite the planned work above, it is important that the APPG remain able to complete more reactive pieces of work, depending on the news agenda and future government announcements.
- It was agreed that future meetings should be hybrid - taking place both in-person and online to ensure anyone can attend and speak from wherever they are.

ACTION - Zhané to speak to other APPGs to see how they have carried out a hybrid meeting

Meeting closed at 11:10.