

APPG on Poverty Meeting with Helen Rowe Minutes

Tuesday 27 February 2024

10.30am-11.30am

Online Meeting

Parliamentarians present: Baroness Lister (Meeting Chair), David Linden MP, Baroness Healy, Afzal Khan MP, Debbie Abrahams MP

Staff members: Alison Paton (Office of David Linden MP), Nasteha Dirow (Office of David Linden MP), Rob Donnelly (The Equality Trust - Secretariat) and Priya Sahni-Nicholas (The Equality Trust - Secretariat) and Orooj Mirza (The Equality Trust - Secretariat)

Invited guest speaker: Helen Rowe, author of *Eliminating Poverty in Britain*

- This meeting was ticketed and open to the public to sign-up via Eventbrite. 100 free tickets were ordered and 52 people attended the meeting.

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

2) Helen Rowe gave a presentation on her new book *Eliminating Poverty in Britain*

- The presentation looked at how the human body responds to poverty from a biological perspective and the negative impact it has on human health.
- Helen argued that poverty elimination has to happen within five years (i.e. the length of a parliamentary term) and without raising taxes, along with the creation of a new government department for the elimination of poverty with a cross departmental focus on ending poverty.
- Helen went on to look at the current cycle of debt faced by prisoners which forces released prisoners into poverty, the five week wait for Universal Credit as a driver of poverty, setting up an anti-poverty helpline, a national exchange programme, rent controls, creating a more varied housing stock, creating a more trauma informed society, prison reforms, public sector training on the biology of poverty to support better policy making and how to pay for the elimination of poverty, e.g. through Royal Bank of Scotland shares, reduction in nuclear weapons arsenal, clawing back money from fraudulent Covid-19 government contracts, less wasteful public spending and social bonds/green bonds.

3) Question and answer session

- Helen answered a number of questions from attendees, on a range of topics which included; the creation of the department for the Elimination of Poverty, the socio-economic duty (SED) as a means to ending poverty, the categorisation of different types of poverty, e.g. fuel, bed, food, furniture, clothing, etc and whether or not this is useful and how to generate the political will to eliminate poverty.
- Baroness Lister concluded the Q&A section of the meeting and asked for parliamentarians and staff members to remain on the call to discuss the meeting agenda items.

4) Meeting agenda items

- **Update on our joint inquiry with the APPG on Migration**
- **Inquiry report launch event in Parliament on 30th April**
- **APPG plans for the rest of the year**
- **AGM Reminder - Tuesday 19 March - 11.30am - 12.00pm**
- **AOB**

- David Linden MP took over as chair for this part of the meeting. David gave an update on the progress of the APPG's joint inquiry with the APPG on Migration on the link between the migration system and poverty.
 - We received over 220 submissions of evidence regarding the migration system from both professionals and individuals with lived experiences. A workshop organised by the APPG on Migration in collaboration with NACCOM and COMPAS provided a platform for individuals with various migration statuses to share their challenges accessing services, affording necessities, and finding employment and housing. Two oral evidence sessions were conducted in December, inviting experts from organisations like IPPR, British Red Cross, and CPAG, to discuss migration-related issues such as poverty, housing, and financial support. Minutes of these sessions are available on the APPG's website. In the following month, two more oral evidence sessions were held, this time with participants sharing their personal migration experiences, facilitated by Citizens UK and Women for Refugee Women. We are currently assisting our colleagues from the APPG on Migration with finalising the report and planning its launch event in Parliament for April 30th. The event will feature speakers and panellists, with opportunities for networking afterwards.
- **APPG plans for the rest of the year:** Baroness Lister suggested holding meetings in the run-up to the general election on how to make poverty an election campaign issue as well as keeping the idea of holding a future inquiry into pensioner poverty on the table, even if it's more likely to happen after an election.
- The issue of local authority support was discussed, specifically the Household Support Fund and the Welfare Assistance Scheme, and maybe inviting speakers from local government to address a future meeting. Priya Sahni-Nicholas mentioned a contact that she can speak to at the LGA who can help with securing speakers for an event.
- Hosting an event on the socio-economic duty (SED) was also discussed, as well as co-produced priority setting with people experiencing poverty, the APLE Collective were mentioned as well as Changing Realities - Baroness Lister noted that it may be beneficial to look at this after the election when the APPG will need to regroup and set out new priorities.
- Colleagues were reminded of the date of the upcoming AGM - Tuesday 19 March - 11.30am - 12.00pm - Room C, 1 Parliament Street.

Action Items

- Rob Donnelly to write-up a one page proposal for a meeting on local government support for the LGA to consider.

- The Secretariat will follow-up with the APLE Collective on co-production of APPG priorities.

5) AOB

- None

Meeting closed at 11.30am