

# Edinburgh's Poverty Commission Meets for First Time

The first meeting of Edinburgh's Poverty Commission took place today (Tuesday, 27 November) to attempt to define the long-term responses needed to significantly reduce poverty in Edinburgh.

This follows the [announcement in October](#) of the independent chair of the Commission Jim McCormick, Associate Director for Scotland with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and vice-chair, Cammy Day, Depute Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council and the Council's Poverty Champion.

The chair and vice-chair have now selected nine commissioners and one commission advisor who provide strong skills and experience across a wide range of fields including business, housing, trades unions, third sector, project delivery, health, and education. The commission also includes citizens with direct experience of living in poverty in Edinburgh.

At today's meeting, the commissioners agreed the programme of work they will carry out over the next year and another four sessions will take place throughout 2019, with each one focusing on different themes related to the experience of poverty in Edinburgh including child poverty, education and attainment, work and incomes, living costs, health and wellbeing, housing, transport, places and communities.

A final report with recommendations for action will be agreed and published by December 2019.

Commission chair Jim McCormick said: "We have a rare

opportunity to explore the modern face of poverty in Edinburgh. We already know that high housing costs, insecure work and the social security freeze combine to pull thousands of city residents into poverty.

“Our job is to listen with care, ask uncomfortable questions and identify better solutions alongside people struggling to make ends meet. Edinburgh can take big strides towards solving poverty by unlocking opportunities in the here and now, and with the long term in mind.”

Commission vice chair Cllr Cammy Day said: “A huge amount of work has gone into setting up an independent Commission for Edinburgh and I’m delighted we’ve had our first meeting. The calibre of commissioners selected for the role is extremely high. I look forward to working with them all to drive forward the change we need to reduce poverty and inequality across the city.

“Most importantly, we have citizens with lived experience as commissioners to keep us all focused on what matters most. If we are to make a difference, what people and our communities think and want will have to be at the heart of every session.

“To ensure our city economy continues to thrive we must all now work together to ensure that everyone benefits from the prosperity so many people in Edinburgh already experiencing.”

- Jim McCormick (Chair) is an Associate Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, an independent organisation working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice.

- Cllr Cammy Day (Vice-Chair), is Depute Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council is councillor for Forth Ward in the north of the city, leader of the Edinburgh Labour Group, and Poverty Champion for the Council Administration.

- Sandy MacDonald is Head of Corporate Sustainability at Standard Life Aberdeen Plc. He is passionate about social

inclusion and creating equal opportunities for people from all backgrounds. He is also Vice Chair of CHILDREN 1st and Chair of the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Project leadership group.

- Zoe Ferguson is an associate of the Carnegie Trust, she has 20 years of experience in public policy and has worked across a wide range of policy areas including, education, lifelong learning, work, regeneration, economic development, culture and public service reform. She has worked with Edinburgh Cyrenians and was a founding board member of the What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

- Mary Alexander is Deputy Scottish Secretary for Unite the Union. During her long career Mary has worked for a number of grassroots campaigning organisations dealing with homelessness, refugees and international development. She also worked for the European Parliamentary Labour Party for five years before joining BIFU (Banking, Insurance and Finance Union) which eventually became part of Unite. Mary is a passionate advocate for women's rights, equality and Fair Work and has worked with union colleagues to promote UNITE's Fair Hospitality Charter to radically improve workers' rights at the fringe and in the wider hospitality industry. She has been a member of the Fair Work Convention since it was set up in 2015 and was on the original Working Together review group which led to the setting up of the Convention.

- Stephen Kelly is Headmaster of Liberton High School, and has a staff of 65 who aim to provide quality experiences to the school roll of 550 pupils

- Chris Kilkenny is a citizen of Edinburgh. He has been in care, has lived in a rehabilitation unit, has been homeless and lived in a B&B. He has struggled – and is still struggling – to build a life for himself and his own young family. He brings to the commission a powerful and thought-provoking view into the world of poverty

•Diana Noel Paton is Chief Executive of the Thistle Foundation, a third sector organisation committed to supporting people with long term health conditions to live life on their own terms. She has worked for a number of statutory and voluntary organisations in the field of supported housing and mental health and is committed to responding individually and flexibly to every person her organisation supports.

•Craig Sanderson is Chief Executive of Link Housing Association. He has 40 years of experience in the housing sector. He is a former board member of Social Enterprise Scotland, Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and Scottish Council for Single Homeless. He currently serves on the Parliamentary Cross-Party Groups on Housing and Social Enterprise and City of Edinburgh Council Homelessness Strategy Implementation Checkpoint Group.

•Betty Stevenson, is a citizen of Edinburgh and convener of Edinburgh Tenants Federation. She is vocal about the importance of communities being at the heart of design and dialogue about place, what it means in practice and the difference that can be made when local people are involved.

•Celia Tennant is Chief Executive of Inspiring Scotland. She is passionate about the potential of people and communities to create lasting positive change. She is a champion of collaborative working to tackle deep-rooted social problems. She sits on the Building Safer Communities Board, Chairs the Community sub group of the Partnership for Action on Drugs in Scotland and is an Advisor to Common Purpose Scotland. She is a Trustee of the Winning Scotland Foundation which uses sport to encourage young Scots to be their best.

•Professor Carol Tannahill is Director of the Glasgow Centre for Population Health where she has a particular interest in place-based approaches to improving health and wellbeing. She is currently on secondment part-time to Scottish Government as

Chief Social Policy Adviser, and is a Trustee of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Housing Trust.