

APPG on Poverty and Inequality

EGM

2 April 2025 - 3pm - 3.30pm

Portcullis House Room U

Attendees: Sian Berry MP (Chair), Baroness Lister (Co-Chair), Abtisam Mohamed MP, Baggy Shanker MP, Baroness Bennett, Baroness Healy, Baroness Primarolo, Brian Leishman MP, Dianne Abbott MP, Ian Lavery MP, Imran Hussain MP, Kim Johnson MP, Lord Davies of Brixton, Neil Duncan-Jordan MP, Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Richard Burgon MP and Simon Opher MP

Also in attendance: Priya Sahni-Nicholas - Equality Trust (Secretariat) and Rob Donnelly - Equality Trust (Secretariat)

1) Officer election

- Neil Duncan Jordan MP stood for the vacant Officer role and was nominated by Kim Johnson MP and seconded by Brian Leishman MP.
- Neil Duncan-Jordan MP was unanimously elected to the Officer role.

2) APPG activity

- Priya Sahni-Nicholas gave an update on the work of the APPG since the AGM in November. The APPG has been working closely with the APLE Collective on priority setting for the upcoming year and have previously discussed holding a lived experience centred review of the social security system as well as running a campaign calling for an end to standing charges on energy bills.
- Priya updated the meeting on the APPG's inquiry into the disproportionate impact of poverty and inequality on disabled people and the call for evidence which is set to close on Monday 7 April. The APPG has received 15 evidence submissions so far, from both organisations and individuals with lived experience.
- Kim Johnson asked if evidence could be sent through after 7 April deadline
- Sian Berry (Chair) agreed with the Secretariat that the deadline for submissions will be extended. The Secretariat will send out details on a deadline extension.
- A discussion was had on the recently published government green paper on social security reform.
 - The meeting noted that the proposals that are likely to cause the most hardship, e.g. the changes to the assessment criteria for the PIP daily living element, are not being consulted on.
 - A discussion was had around primary and secondary legislation and how this affects the consultation process.

- The meeting noted that the government's impact assessment of the social security reforms is currently incomplete.
 - Lots of MPs constituents are frightened by the government's proposed changes to social security, especially to PIP and the Universal Credit health element.
 - **Action:** Write a letter to a national newspaper strongly opposing the government's proposed social security reforms. The letter will be signed by APPG Officers and will be sent out as soon as possible.
- Sian Berry (Chair) updated the meeting on a joint event the APPG is planning with the APPG on Ending the Need for Food Banks. The event will take place on either 12 or 13 May and the Secretariat will send out full details once confirmed.
 - Baroness Lister updated the meeting on a letter the APPG has drafted to Minister of State for Social Security and Disability, Stephen Timms. The letter calls on the DWP to ensure that voices with lived experience are at the heart of the department's ongoing review of Universal Credit. The final draft is being finalised and will be sent out shortly.
 - A discussion was had on longer term APPG priorities:
 - Lord Davies raised the issue of pensioner poverty and how it is often overlooked by the media and requested that the APPG hold a meeting on the issue later in the year.
 - Baroness Lister suggested waiting until the Work and Pensions Select Committee have published their report on Pensioner Poverty. The meeting noted that the Committee is currently holding oral evidence sessions.
 - Baroness Lister ran through other ideas that were mentioned at the AGM in November:
 - Poverty and inequality relating to a just transition
 - Rural poverty
 - Intergenerational poverty and the accumulative effects of inequality
 - APLE Collective suggestion - a lived experience centred review of how the DWP administers the social security system
 - APLE Collective suggestion - looking at ending standing charges on energy bills (it was agreed that this issue would be better suited to an APPG that is focused on fuel poverty)
 - Priya Sahni-Nicholas raised the issue of inequality and how it is the key driver of the current polycrisis and how tackling inequality has to be central to any solution. Baroness Bennett suggested that the APPG could look at how redistribution of wealth could tackle poverty and inequality. Baroness Lister noted the work the Fairness Foundation has been doing in this area.

- Diane Abbott raised the issue of how poverty and race intersect and how this is particularly prevalent in cities. She noted the work of the APPG on Race and Community in this area.
- A discussion was had on devolution and inequality and opportunities to table amendments to the upcoming Devolution Bill to ensure that tackling inequality is at the heart of the legislation.
- Commencement of the socioeconomic duty (SED) was also discussed. It is anticipated that the SED will be fully commenced early next year. Priya Sahni-Nicholas noted that the government is not currently acting in the spirit of the duty in relation to the cutting of the winter fuel allowance, maintaining the two child limit and the proposed social security reforms. Neil Duncan-Jordan mentioned the General Federation of Trade Union's ['Make Equality Real' campaign](#), which is focused on effective implementation of the SED. The campaign is holding a photocall in parliament with MPs on 22 April.
- **Action:** Secretariat and APPG Officers to set-up a further meeting regarding priority planning in the coming weeks.

3) AOB

- None

Meeting closed

Action Points

- The Secretariat to:
 - Send out a new deadline for the call for evidence - Monday 14 April.
 - Finalise and send letter to Stephen Timms on the importance of centering lived experience at the heart of the review into Universal Credit.
 - Share details of joint event with APPG on Ending the Need for Food Banks on the future of crisis support funds once event plans have been finalised.
 - Work with APPG Officers on a letter to a national newspaper to be sent to the press on proposed social security reforms.
 - Working with APPG Officers and members on sending out a public statement on the Green Paper proposals once the APPG inquiry into poverty and disability has concluded.
 - Secretariat and APPG Officers to set-up a further meeting regarding priority planning in the coming weeks.