

# Minutes of the Equality Budget Advisory Group (EBAG) meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019

## Attendees and Apologies

### Attendees

- Angela O'Hagan, WiSE, Glasgow Caledonian University (Chair)
- Nicola Dickie, COSLA
- Liz Hawkins, Communities Analysis
- Alison Hosie, Scottish Human Rights Commission
- Uzma Khan, Office of the Chief Economic Advisor
- Chris Oswald, Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Fiona Page, Public Spending
- Richard Robinson, Audit Scotland
- Sean Stronach, Equality
- Gillian Achurch, Communities Analysis (Secretariat)

### For deep dive session

- Alison Cumming, Early Learning and Childcare
- Fran Iwanyckyj, Early Learning and Childcare
- Louise Scott, Children and Families Analysis
- Katherine Tierney, Early Learning and Childcare

### Apologies

- James Fowlie, COSLA
- Mhoraig Green, COSLA
- Jim McCormick, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Tim Ellis, Performance and Outcomes

## Items and Actions

### 1. Introductions, welcome and aims for 2019

Richard Robinson was welcomed on board as a representative from Audit Scotland. He will attend EBAG not in an advisory capacity, but rather as an active observer.

Angela welcomed the group to the first of a full, monthly series of meetings organised for 2019. The Group's focus for this year will be on both building the Group's knowledge and networks, and on improving processes across Government with respect to equality analysis of the budget. More specifically, EBAG is charged with building and supporting a new approach to equality budget analysis by the summer, suggesting improvements to Equality Budget Statement (EBS) and Fairer Scotland Statement, and potentially incorporating a human rights analysis as the SHRC's work progresses. A series of 'deep-dive' sessions are planned on a range of

policy issues and finance/revenue processes in order to build understanding and develop robust processes in collaboration with colleagues across SG.

Members agreed that this all chimed with their expectations.

## **2. Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes from the previous meeting (29 October 2018) were approved without amendment.

## **3. Membership and resourcing**

In addition to Richard Robinson, a new representative from the Scottish Women's Budget Group will also be joining EBAG once their new Convenor(s) are confirmed. COSLA are to decide who is best placed to represent them on EBAG going forwards. Angela suggested that the Group consider whether it would be beneficial to have a member working in Health. Angela Constance previously queried whether EBAG requires more technical capacity, either in the form of permanent members or bringing in analytical colleagues as required. Angela asked the Group to consider whether they have suggestions for other permanent members.

Angela reiterated that EBAG is aiming to move towards better feedback loops and joint processes, rather than inviting speakers for an involvement limited to one meeting. Core EBAG membership will stand, but others may be invited to join seminars where relevant. Liz confirmed that she is coordinating analytical support to meet the Group's needs but that much of the detailed analysis will happen across the government. It was agreed that EBAG should be conscious that SG resources are likely to be under additional pressure over the coming months, in light of Brexit.

Uzma suggested that EBAG might need more analytical support, in particular because her team are working on papers on how to create budget prioritising frameworks for the Infrastructure Investment Board (IIB) and the Infrastructure Commission and would find it helpful to have EBAG support on this. She asked whether an EBAG subgroup could meet this aim. Angela noted that we need to consider whether there is resourcing for this, and will take advice from SG members on how this support could be resourced internally, and whether this should be on an ad-hoc request basis or by inviting colleagues to meetings as needed.

Angela proposed that a mapping exercise might be useful to highlight policy areas key to EBAG's work.

### **Actions:**

- James and Mhoraig to confirm who will represent COSLA going forwards.
- Group to consider whether they have suggestions for other permanent members.
- Uzma to update the Group on progress with OCEA's work for the IIB.
- Uzma and Liz to discuss analytical support.

#### **4. Future EBAG meetings**

Angela noted that the annual IAFFE Conference, which will be held at Glasgow Caledonian University at the end of June, offers a thinking space for EBAG as well as a chance to showcase the work happening in Scotland. Naila Kabeer, the current President, is keen that there be a full plenary on gender and Scotland's economy and requests have been made to the FM and other external speakers. Angela proposed organising a panel on equalities analysis and infrastructure investment. Care and human rights will also be key themes at the conference and related events either side of the formal conference. Details will be circulated.

Chris flagged seminars on cumulative distributional analysis in early March, which are attracting a lot of attention from committees including EHRiC and the Finance Committee.

Alison updated that the SHRC's Human Rights Budgeting Masterclass will also be running on 15 March 2019, and they want to encourage more attendance from public sector finance officials.

There was agreement that it is important to have John Nicolson and/or Fiona Page in attendance at the tripartite roundtable meeting between EBAG, SHRC and EHRiC, currently scheduled for 24 April.

#### **Actions:**

- Alison to send info on SHRC's Masterclass to Liz, for circulation.
- Gillian to invite John Nicolson to tripartite meeting.
- Angela to send info on IAFFE.

#### **5. Updates on other work around equality budgeting**

SHRC have developed a Scottish equivalent of the Open Budget Index's 3 human rights budget process indicators, measuring transparency, participation and budget scrutiny. SHRC have followed the Index's methodology and have tried to establish comparable scores. The indicators should be available for wider use after this year.

SHRC's other current budget-related work includes considering how to engage with Local Authorities on the budget process and ensuring transparency; producing leaflets on budgeting and scrutiny for key stakeholders; and, following on from work begun last year, identifying how economic and social rights are addressed in the budget and related changes in budget allocations.

The Equalities Analysis team are continuing to explore distributional analysis. A meeting is planned in February between representatives from UK, Scottish and Welsh governments on this subject. Permission has been given to include a set of intra-household distribution of resources questions in the 2019 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey.

The team also have access to data from the Multinational Time Use Study (MTUS), based at Oxford, and are producing analysis of the Scottish data. This covers gender

and age, and should be published in February. The Scottish findings are very similar to those for the UK. ONS are finalising the methods for an online 'time use light' survey and, if this goes ahead, we will consider funding a boost to acquire a Scottish dataset. The timing of this is still to be confirmed. Existing EU data will allow us to benchmark Scottish findings.

The Director of the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT) is coming to Scotland soon to meet with the Finance Minister about improving fiscal openness. It was agreed that EBAG should investigate a meeting, possibly as part of a working group.

Richard confirmed that Audit Scotland are also engaged with the issue of transparency and how to better enable people to understand how the budget is contributing to outcomes.

A key difference in the 2019-20 budget process was the involvement of subject committees, who were asked to submit views on priorities for the budget from their portfolios. Each committee convenor will have 5/6 minutes to question the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy at the budget debate, so it will be useful to observe the extent to which each is concerned with equalities.

Liz confirmed that there has been no feedback on the EBS or Fairer Scotland statement from external stakeholders although JRF and Fraser of Allander provided some comments on the budget as a while. She noted that this could be of concern, since it is hard to encourage people to devote resources to these products if the view is that they are not widely used.

**Actions:**

- Alison to confirm arrangements for a meeting with the GIFT Director.
- Angela to pick up with members online over the coming months around improvements to the EBS and Fairer Scotland Statement.

## **6. Early Learning and Childcare**

Colleagues from Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) joined the meeting for a 'deep dive' session.

Angela noted that EBAG have a key interest in ELC as a significant and sustained part of the budget. Equalities issues are central to the expansion of ELC hours, in terms of the wellbeing and attainment of young people, recasting gender relations, addressing occupational segregation including as experienced by disabled people and Black and minority ethnic workers, as well as access to childcare provision across a range of intersecting needs. ELC investment is also a core element in addressing gender imbalances in education, training and employment, and in the workforce expansion required to deliver the offer.

Alison Cumming offered an overview of the expansion policy and how it has considered equalities, to complement their paper submitted to the Group [attached]. It is framed as a key driver for closing the poverty-related attainment gap, and as

such the aim is that children who will benefit most in these terms should be the first to access the expanded offer. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) was used in planning the expansion. While improving parents/carers' ability to access training and employment continues to be recognised as a significant benefit of the policy, the key focus and policy driver is now on the quality of ELC and children's outcomes.

EQIAs have been completed for different parts of the policy, but not for the policy as a whole, although this will be addressed. The team are currently developing a framework for out of school care, and welcome EBAG's input into the EQIA for this.

The expansion of the childcare workforce will require up to 11,000 new entrants, who will predominantly be female. The policy is seeking to ensure that the real living wage is offered across all sectors, and to increase the gender diversity of the workforce. The team have been working with CEMVO on grants to encourage minority ethnic women to consider ELC careers, with an upcoming event on this topic. They will be looking for other opportunities to engage with minority ethnic men going forwards.

Chris noted the legal requirement for EQIAs to be conducted at planning stage. He raised particular concerns around evaluation of disability and race impacts, and that without the necessary data equality of access cannot be measured. However, it was confirmed that while work is ongoing to improve the quantitative data, qualitative data has been pursued, including extensive consultation, from which any inequalities of uptake should be clear. The current quantitative data is aggregated and based on registrations, and the current work to make this available at individual level will be completed in 2024. Tests are currently being run on individual data to better understand its complexity, and whether local data improvement needs to take place. Concerns about the detail of race and ethnicity data can be addressed in the trials.

It is likely to take time to see substantive changes in the workforce, so uptake is being prioritised in the short term. Uzma queried whether there was evidence that uptake might be related to changes in the workforce, and whether this longer-term objective should therefore be more central.

Work is currently underway to examine why uptake for 2-year-olds has been lower than expected. Engagement suggests that reluctance to use the hours, confusion about the process, and lack of awareness of the offer are all contributing to lower uptake. Potential causes also include suspicion about the motives behind the policy and issues around safety and trust, which improving parental/carer engagement and participation in services may help with. The offer in England is explicitly linked to employment support for parents/carers, so it is important to communicate that the Scottish offer differs in this aspect.

Nicola suggested that the complex employment landscape and confusion around why ELC places should be taken up could be contributing, and that careful communication at local level and through trusted professionals is central to encouraging uptake. In order to ensure that the policy benefits wider communities, it will be important to foster relationships with providers as well.

Katherine noted that as more existing providers become funded through the programme, this should improve the uptake. The eligibility criteria for 2-year-olds is also likely to be reviewed to ensure that it is open to those who would benefit the most. Uzma noted that infrastructure considerations (such as transport) will be central to enabling uptake. Some Local Authorities are considering aiming for everyone eligible to have a provider within reasonable walking distance of their home.

Questions from the Scottish Household Survey will provide some data on ELC by income status later this year. In the long-term, the evaluation will measure whether the policy corresponds to an increase in the income tax base, especially for women, although cautioned that it will be difficult to directly establish causality. Data should show improvements in efficacy and readiness for work before an increase in parental/carer employment, if the policy is effective in this area. Liz noted that the evaluation for the Child Poverty Strategy will include a cumulative evaluation across all areas of the strategy.

Nicola confirmed that in the medium term, COSLA's evaluation work will include mapping whether the provision is making people's longer terms ambitions greater against other future economy measures.

Angela noted that this series of deep dive seminars aims to encourage consideration of how the budget and parliamentary process will be able to analyse outcomes for equality groups. Establishing baseline data will be key, as will considering how policy outcomes are picked up in budget decisions. ELC colleagues were invited to return to EBAG in six months to feedback on these points.

Angela noted that currently, the EBS and Fairer Scotland Statement are not sufficiently clear about exact funding commitments in each area, which prohibits effective scrutiny of the budget.

**Actions:**

- Gillian to invite ELC colleagues back to an EBAG meeting later in the year.