



Attendees:

Commissioners

Steven Cooper
Pippa Dunn
Sam Friedman
Jody Walker
Sandra Wallace
Liz Williams
Sammy Wright

Secretariat

Members of the Secretariat

1. The Director of the Secretariat welcomed Commissioners to the call and invited the Secretariat's new Chief Analyst to give a brief outline of the Conservative and Labour manifestos commitments paper which was circulated prior to the meeting.

2. Conservative manifesto

2.1 The Conservative manifesto makes little reference to social mobility. The main hooks for SMC are on some of their employment proposals. In the scenario of a Conservative government, SMC will want to have a conversation with the PM through the lens of what they care about – for example, social mobility in the context of increasing nursing and police workforce.

3. Labour manifesto

3.1 Labour's key proposal is to replace the SMC with a Social Justice Commission (SJC) which will be based in Treasury. Labour's definition of social mobility is very narrow and did not encompass the full breadth of work engaged upon by the Commission. The creation of SJC would need to be seen in the context of a changing landscape of other inequality focused bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission sponsored by Cabinet Office. There is also a proposal to create two new departments – Ministry for Employment Rights and a Department for Women and Equalities; and a National Education Service which is likely to sit within DfE which might impact the Commission.

3.2 Potential major opportunities that were discussed included:

- SMC would have more impact to influence for example, transport, place and funding if moved to a SJC
- How social mobility is framed, particularly in relation to equality, is highly political. There remains a need for a social mobility element in any SJC. The focus could be on tracking the more systemic and structural drivers of social mobility

- There would be a shift from measuring over the long term to the short term as social justice could be measured here and now.
- Commissioners skills and time commitment as well as Secretariat resources would need reviewing

3.3 It was noted that for a machinery of government change, some practical things could change immediately though statutory powers would take much longer.

3.4 Priority items that Commissioners want to take forward immediately if significant new resources were allocated included Employers Toolkit, FE, Early Years, Digital, Housing, Mental Health, Social Care and a broader look at what the educational curriculum is doing for children from a range of backgrounds.

3.5 Commissioners discussed the desirability of new legislative powers. There was a suggestion that powers to compel organisations to collect social mobility data would improve the evidence base.

4. Preparation for new administration

4.1 Departments are scenario planning and preparing briefing packs for PM/Ministers. The 18 December board meeting will be a critical time to consider how we move forward to January.

Action: Secretariat to hold time on the 18 December agenda to discuss further.

5. AOB

5.1 There was a discussion about social media (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn) and how Commissioners could help get messages out.

Action: Secretariat to include a paper for the 18 December meeting.

5.2 Commissioners highlighted that SMC's visibility on the social mobility agenda within Westminster could be improved, in particular the level of engagement and visibility of Commissioners. Commissioners need to decide whether they had the bandwidth and time to do more / want to do more and how that step change could be made.

Action: Additional Commissioner engagement to be discussed at the 18 December meeting.