



## **Ministerial Meeting of the Social Inclusion Group**

**20 May 2008**

### ***Communiqué***

The British-Irish Council (BIC) Social Inclusion group held its third Ministerial meeting hosted by the Welsh Assembly Government in the Senedd, Cardiff, Wales today. The meeting focussed on the challenges presented by child poverty, in particular that of lone parents, faced by all eight Member Administrations.

The BIC, established under the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiation in Belfast in 1998, is a forum for its members to exchange information, discuss, consult, and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on matters of mutual interest within the competence of relevant Member Administrations.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Brian Gibbons AM, the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. The British Government was represented by the Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP, the Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform. The Irish Government was represented by Mr Gerry Mangan, the Director of the Office for Social Inclusion. The Scottish Government was represented by Mr Stewart Maxwell MSP, Minister for Communities and Sport; the Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Mr Edwin Poots MLA, the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure and Mr Conor Murphy MLA Minister for Regional Development; the Isle of Man by Mr Dudley Butt MLC, the Political Member for Social Services division, DHSS; Jersey by Senator Paul Routier, the Minister for Social Security, and Guernsey by Mr Al Brouard, the Deputy Minister for Social Security department.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

### **Update on Social Inclusion**

The Ministers discussed the recent developments in social inclusion in their administrations focused particularly on issues relating to poverty/child poverty.

### **Child Poverty with a focus on Lone Parents**

The Ministers reviewed the successful work carried out by BIC Social Inclusion group on child poverty, with a focus on lone parents, since the theme was chosen in 2006.

They noted the range of definitions used in this field, and the comparison of statistics across the BIC region. They also acknowledged the findings of the literature review of the existing evidence base on tackling child poverty, particularly among lone parent households as well as the key challenges met by the Member Administrations and commended the examples of good practice in tackling such challenges.

### **Future Work Programme**

The Ministers considered the merits of each of the four potential new areas of interests to be taken forward by the BIC Social Inclusion group. These were older people – longterm care; homelessness/affordable housing; voluntary and community sector, and migrant workers.

They agreed that work over the coming year will focus on the contribution of the voluntary and community sector in promoting social inclusion.

The work carried out by the officials will continue to seek to strengthen and consolidate the ongoing co-operation and exchange of information, experience and best practice between Member Administrations.

### **Child Poverty in Wales**

Wales presented a paper on child poverty in their administration.

The Ministers welcomed and noted the next Ministerial meeting will take place in Scotland, with further details to be confirmed.

### **BIC Social Inclusion**

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<b><u>British Government</u></b>	
Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform	Rt. Hon. Stephen Timms MP
Head of Child Poverty Unit	Ms Caroline Kelham
<b><u>Irish Government</u></b>	
Director of the Office for Social Inclusion	Mr Gerry Mangan
Family Affairs Unit	Ms Ann Marie O'Connor
<b><u>Welsh Assembly Government</u></b>	
Minister for Social Justice and Local Government	Dr Brian Gibbons AM
Director, Social Justice and Local Government	Dr Emyr Roberts
Director, Communities Directorate	Dr Caroline Turner
Head of Child Poverty Unit	Mrs Tracey Breheny
Child Poverty Unit	Mrs Delwen Burton
Child Poverty Unit	Mrs Carol Godfrey
<b><u>Scottish Government</u></b>	
Minister for Communities and Sport	Mr Stewart Maxwell MSP
Deputy Director, Social Inclusion	Ms Frances Wood
Policy Adviser, Social Inclusion	Ms Sharon Wilson
<b><u>Northern Ireland Executive</u></b>	
Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure	Mr Edwin Poots MLA
Minister for Regional Development	Mr Conor Murphy MLA
Assistant Secretary, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Dr Gerry Mulligan
Head of Anti Poverty Unit, Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	Mr Michael Pollock
<b><u>Isle of Man</u></b>	
Political Member for Social Services Division, DHSS	Mr Dudley Butt MLC
Deputy Director of Social Services	Mr David Gibson
<b><u>Jersey</u></b>	
Minister for Social Security	Senator Paul Routier
Chief Officer, Social Security department	Mr Richard Bell

<b>Guernsey</b>	
Deputy Minister for Social Security department	Mr Al Brouard
Chief Officer, Social Security department	Mr Malcolm Nutley