



Ministerial Meeting of the Social Inclusion Group

7 March 2012

Communiqué

The British-Irish Council (BIC) Social Inclusion group held its fifth Ministerial meeting hosted by the Welsh Government at the City Hall in Cardiff, Wales today. The meeting focussed on the Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion across all eight Member Jurisdictions. 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 Jurisdictions.

The meeting was chaired by Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Local Government and Communities, Welsh Government. The Scottish Government was represented by John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth. The British Government was represented by Helen Stephenson, Director of the Office for Civil Society. The Irish Government was represented by Phil Hogan TD, Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Nelson McCausland MLA, Minister for Social Development and Martina Anderson MLA from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon. Chris Robertshaw MHK, Minister for Social Care. The States of Jersey was represented by Senator Paul Routier MBE, the Assistant Chief Minister, and the States of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Carol Steere.

A full list of delegation members is attached.

Update on Social Inclusion

The Ministers discussed the recent developments in social inclusion in their Jurisdictions focussing particularly on issues relating to the contribution of the Third Sector.

Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion

In March 2010, BIC Ministers agreed that 'The Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion' would be the continued as a theme of the Social Inclusion work area.

Today, Ministers reviewed the Report on the work carried out by BIC Social Inclusion group on the Contribution of the Third Sector.

They noted that the Third Sector across all Member Jurisdictions is playing a key role in delivering flexible and inclusive services within communities, which is of even more importance in the current economic climate. They acknowledged the work that is being done to actively engage the third sector from an early stage in policy discussions and development within each jurisdiction.

Ministers commended the willingness and commitment of the third sector to support the resilience and sustainability of communities, and the mobilising of voluntary effort, to meet the big challenges facing people in their everyday lives.

Ministers thanked the third sector in each of the jurisdictions for their active engagement and valued contribution, to the rich and shared learning that has emerged from the work of the British Irish Council.

Future Work Programme

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. Ministers confirmed their interest in the issue of preventative spend, in particular in the context of an ageing population.

Ideally the work programme would also address the issue of funding models. Officials will now prepare a methodology statement as a first stage to the work programme.

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

BIC Social Inclusion

7 March 2012

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DELEGATE LIST

Ministers

Welsh Government

Carl Sargeant AM, Minister Local Government and Communities

Scottish Government

Mr John Swinney, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment and Sustainable Growth

UK Government

Helen Stephenson, Director of the Office for Civil Society

Northern Ireland Executive

Martina Anderson MLA – Junior Minister, First Minister and deputy First Minister's Office

Nelson McCausland, MLA, Minister for Social Development

States of Guernsey

Deputy Carol Steere,

States of Jersey

Senator Paul Routier MBE, Assistant Chief Minister

Isle of Man Government

Hon. Chris Robertshaw MHK, Minister for Social Care

Government of Ireland

Phil Hogan TD, Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government

Officials

Wales

Iain Willox
Kate Cassidy
Wendy Thomas
Colin Hedges

Scottish Government

Yvonne Strachan
Carol Kirk
Gareth Allen

UK Government

Steve Wallace

Northern Ireland

Barbara McConaghie
Roy McGivern
Aine McCabe
Carol Morrow
Joe Reynolds

Guernsey

Carol LePage

Jersey

Paul Bradbury
Tara Murphy

Isle of Man

Andrew Swithinbank

Ireland

Don Sexton

BIC Secretariat:

Ciarán Byrne
Astrid Stuart