



## **Ministerial Meeting of the Social Inclusion Work Sector**

**St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

The British-Irish Council<sup>1</sup> (BIC) Social Inclusion work sector held its sixth Ministerial meeting hosted by the Scottish Government at St. Andrew's House, Edinburgh today. Ministers adopted an important Report entitled *Spend to Save – Innovative Approaches to Preventative Spend* and commissioned future work on the role of Carers.

The meeting was chaired by Shona Robison, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport. The Welsh Government was represented by Mark Drakeford AM, Minister for Health and Social Services. The UK Government was represented by Jon Rouse, Director General for Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships at the Department of Health. The Irish Government was represented by Ann Phelan TD, Minister of State at the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Junior Ministers Jennifer McCann MLA and Jonathan Bell MLA from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon. Howard Quayle, MHK, Minister for Health and Social Care. The Government of Guernsey was represented by the Chief Minister Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq and the

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<sup>1</sup> The BIC, established under the Agreement reached in the Multi-Party Negotiation in Belfast on Good Friday 1998 is a forum for its eight Member Administrations to exchange information, discuss, consult, and use best endeavours to reach agreement on co-operation on policy areas of mutual interest.

Government of Jersey was represented by Senator Paul Routier MBE, Assistant Minister at the Chief Minister's Department.

### **Spend to Save**

In March 2012, BIC Ministers agreed that preventative spend, in particular in the context of an ageing population, should be the focus of the work programme for officials of the Social Inclusion work sector. Today, Ministers discussed and reviewed the Report entitled *Spend to Save – Innovative Approaches to Preventative Spend* prepared by BIC Social Inclusion officials who visited all eight BIC Administrations to research the different approaches to tackling this key generational issue. They noted the many different, creative and community-based approaches to supporting older people to optimise their independence and remain in a place they can call home, in a community they feel connected to, for as long as possible.

Ministers thanked the many voluntary and community organisations in each of the Administrations for their active engagement with officials in the preparation of the Report. Ministers commended the Report as a further rich contribution to the shared learning that is at the heart of the work of the British Irish Council.

### **Future Work Programme**

Ministers confirmed their interest in the issue of Carers and tasked officials, working closely with the BIC Secretariat, to begin consideration of how best we can support carers by looking at best practice, new and creative policy responses and community actions across the eight Administrations.

The Ministers agreed that the next Ministerial meeting will take place in Wales in late 2017 or early 2018.

**BIC Secretariat**

**11 March 2015**

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