



Ministerial Meeting of the Social Inclusion Group

26 March 2010

Communiqué

The British-Irish Council (BIC) Social Inclusion group held its fourth Ministerial meeting hosted by the Scottish Government at the Mansfield Traquair Centre in Edinburgh, Scotland today. The meeting focussed on the Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion across all eight Member Administrations. Arrangements for the meeting, including an opportunity to hear about innovative developments in the third sector, were made in partnership with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Community Enterprise in Scotland.

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 John Swinney MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth, Scottish Government. The British Government was represented by Rolande Anderson, Director General for the Office of the Third Sector and the Social Exclusion Taskforce. The Irish Government was represented by Don Sexton, Department Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs. The Welsh Assembly Government was represented by Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government. The Northern Ireland Executive was represented by Junior Minister Robin Newton MLA and Margaret Ritchie MLA, Minister for Social Development. The Isle of Man Government was represented by Hon. Eddie Teare

MHK, Minister for Health and Social Security; the States of Jersey was represented by Senator Paul Routier, the Assistant Chief Minister, and the States of Guernsey was represented by Deputy Hunter Adam, Minister, Health and Social Services 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 focussing particularly on issues relating to the contribution of the Third Sector.

Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion

In March 2008, BIC Ministers agreed that 'The Contribution of the Third Sector to Social Inclusion' would be the next 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 Administrations is complex and diverse, with a significant social and economic potential. They also acknowledged that the Third Sector has a reach to people and communities that statutory agencies sometimes find more difficult to engage. Ministers commended the excellent examples of investment and good practice across all Member Administrations. Ministers agreed that the theme has led to a dynamic process of learning and cooperation, reflecting the original intention of the BIC.

Future Work Programme

The Ministers agreed that there are major, immediate challenges facing the Third Sector and Member Administrations. These include how the third sector working together can make communities more sustainable and socially cohesive; how we can enable wider civil activity, and enable the third sector to become part of the mainstream in service delivery.

They therefore agreed to the continuation of the Third Sector theme rather than selecting a new theme at this stage.

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.

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

BIC Social Inclusion

26 March 2010

www.british-irishcouncil.org

DELEGATE LIST

Ministers

Scottish Government

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

Welsh Assembly Government

Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

UK Government

Rolande Anderson, Director General for the Office of the Third Sector and the Social Exclusion Taskforce

Northern Ireland Executive

Junior Minister Robin Newton MLA

Margaret Ritchie MLA, Minister for Social Development

States of Guernsey

Deputy Hunter Adam, Minister Health and Social Services Department, Guernsey

States of Jersey

Senator Paul Routier, Assistant Chief Minister

Isle of Man Government

Hon. Eddie Teare MHK, Minister for Health and Social Security

Mr Bill Malarkey, MHK, Political Member with responsibility for Social Services

Government of Ireland

Mr. Don Sexton, Department Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs

Officials**Scottish Government**

John Ewing
Christine Carlin
Gareth Allen

Wales

Iain Willox,

UK Government

Neil Smith

Northern Ireland

Alma McManus
Peter King
Maeve Walls
Patricia Carey
Gordon Bell
Valerie Devlin
Karen Arthurs
Joann Hanna

Guernsey

Sarah Harvey

Jersey

Tara Murphy

Isle of Man

Andrew Swithinbank

BIC Secretariat:

Kam Samplay
Aoife McGarry