

# **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND REVIEW ADVISORY GROUP**

## **Introduction**

The Review Advisory Group has been formed to give oversight and guidance to the research project undertaking an independent review of the Scottish Welfare Fund. Group members will represent a range of interests and policy areas and will provide a means of support for research contractors and consultants.

## **Role and Responsibilities**

The role of the Advisory Group is to:

- Monitor general progress of the research
- Provide expert advice and quality assurance to the method and approaches to be taken during the research and the outputs produced
- Assist researchers by providing advice, problem solving support, contacts, introductions, and access to data within their own field of expertise or client group
- Contribute a range of policy perspectives and provide an opportunity for researchers to discuss these directly with the group members
- Provide a link to relevant external agencies or experts, which may also facilitate the gathering of data or access to those with experience of applying to the Fund
- Advise on technical aspects of the research, when appropriate
- Provide feedback on interim and final reports
- Advise on the content and presentation of the research reports

Information provided to Advisory Group members must be treated as confidential and findings must not be divulged in advance of publication or other dissemination of the research findings.

The research project manager is responsible for the professional management of the contract and ensuring that the research is progressed within the agreed resources. The responsibility for the conduct of the research, the content of and views expressed in interim and final reports, rests with the researchers and this should be stated in all final reports.

The group will agree its advice, with consensus where possible. The Scottish Government will make best efforts to ensure this advice will be incorporated by the contractor, ensuring consistency with the objectives of the Review.

## **Membership**

The membership of the Group will be determined at the outset of the project by invitation and will be overseen by the project manager or Chair. Representation will be sought from a broad range of stakeholders and policy interests and the Group may also, temporarily, seek representation and input from specialist agencies or staff if particular client groups or issues are raised during the course of the research. The Group membership will also include the contracted researcher(s) and relevant Scottish Government policy and research officials.

## **Meetings and Attendance**

The Review Advisory Group will meet at key points in the research project. It is expected that the Group will formally meet at least three times over the duration of the project: at the outset of the contract being awarded; at the interim report stage and at the final report stage. However Group members or officials may request additional meetings if required, in order to monitor progress effectively or discuss key stages within the research.

The project manager is responsible for providing the secretariat for Group meetings and will ensure that:

- The agenda and any relevant papers are circulated to group members at least one week in advance of meetings;
- A short note of key points arising at the meeting is circulated within 3 weeks of the meeting having taken place.

To ensure continuity and effective monitoring of the review process, on acceptance of membership to the Group, members are expected to attend all key meetings and to engage productively in discussions. If members are unable attend, a suitable replacement or representative from their organisation can attend in their place subject to agreement from other group members.

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