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Shona Stephen

22 August 2023

Dear Shona,

I am writing in response to your letter of 21 August regarding your resignation from the Poverty and Inequality Commission.

I appreciate the situation that has arisen is stressful for all concerned and am aware that sponsor officials have been mindful to emphasise the importance of the wellbeing of all parties in the discussions they have had with you on these issues and have offered mediation and support to resolve. Given I cannot act in a way that puts Scottish Ministers in breach of the law by accepting your early resignation I am, of course, keen to ensure that appropriate support is put in place to enable all to participate and balance wellbeing.

I know that officials are more than willing, in the same spirit of minimising the impacts on the wellbeing of those involved, to do what they can to facilitate the ongoing work of the Commission during the notice period with the Secretariat. I have asked them to engage with you in relation to your questions about available support. I understand the planned engagement would be limited to participation in no more than three online meetings and therefore that is why I hoped you would be able to continue to participate, in the best interests of the Commission and those it seeks to improve the lives of.

I would be happy to meet with you in due course should you still wish to do so and have asked officials to liaise with you in relation to this.

I would like to take this opportunity again to thank you for your service to the Commission over the past few years, and the impact that work has had on improving the lives of those in poverty.

Yours sincerely,

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE