

# The Scottish Government

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## News Release



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### Commission on Public Services

19/11/2010

First Minister Alex Salmond today launched the establishment of a high-level Commission to examine how Scotland's public services can be delivered in future to secure improved outcomes for communities across the country.



The Commission will be chaired by Dr Campbell Christie CBE, former General Secretary of the STUC and President of Scottish Council for Development and Industry since December 2009.

Mr Salmond said:

"The Budget announced by the Scottish Government earlier this week, addresses a financial challenge without precedent since devolution. The £1.3 billion cut in funds next year marks the beginning of the biggest reduction in public spending imposed on Scotland by any UK government.

"Despite the severity and scale of these cuts, we remain ambitious for Scotland's public services. This Government is determined to ensure these services to which we all hold so dear, continue to be delivered in a manner that keeps the social fabric of Scotland intact. The Commission will therefore examine various options for reform whilst retaining the social democratic ethos of our public service delivery in Scotland.

"Campbell is one of Scotland's most distinguished public servants and I'm delighted he has agreed to Chair this important Commission. He is joined by some outstanding people who deliberately represent a wide spectrum of opinion and are independent of party politics. Together, members have unrivalled experience in all aspects of Scottish society and have been asked to challenge accepted wisdoms and think freely about the best way forward for our public services."

Dr Christie said:

"Public Services are the expression of society's commitment to social justice in Scotland and the Scottish Government has charged my Commission to look at the future of public services against that backdrop. The current and future challenges we face could, if not properly responded to, threaten the fabric of social cohesion in Scotland. It is from that perspective that I, and my other Commissioners, welcome the establishment of this Commission and it is in that spirit that I was pleased to accept the First Minister's invitation to chair it."



Two individuals have been invited to join the Commission but are awaiting approval from their employers. The confirmed membership is as follows:

- (Chair) Dr Campbell Christie CBE, Former General Secretary of the STUC, President of Scottish Council for Development and Industry since December 2009
- Dr Alison Elliot OBE, Convener, SCVO, and former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
- Dr Roger Gibbins, Chief Executive of NHS Highland from April 2000 until 31 December 2010. Former local authority Director of Social Services
- Alex Linkston CBE, Recently retired Chief Executive, West Lothian Council. Pioneer of EFQM-based performance improvement, community planning and single outcome agreements
- Kalliani Lyle, Scotland Commissioner of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, former Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Scotland and former Chief Executive of the Scottish Refugee Council
- Jim McColl OBE, Chairman and Chief Executive Clyde Blowers, Chairman of Glasgow Works and member of the Scottish Government's Council of Economic Advisers
- Professor James Mitchell, School of Government and Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, and published widely on multi-level government, devolution and public policy
- Councillor Pat Watters CBE, President, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities in Scotland. Elected for third term in June 2007. First entered local government in 1982 as a member for East Kilbride and a Councillor in South Lanarkshire Council since 1995
- Dr Ruth Wishart, Journalist and broadcaster and Member of the Board of Creative Scotland

The Commission's full remit is as follows:

Facing the most serious budget reductions for at least a generation, there is an urgent need to ensure the sustainability of Scotland's public services. At the same time we must continue to improve outcomes for the people of Scotland: by driving up the quality of services (so the average meet the standards of the best); and by redesigning services around the needs of citizens, tackling the underlying causes of those needs as well as the symptoms.

We are ambitious for Scotland's public services and wish to take them from good to excellent in every facet and in every place. We have a vision of Scotland's public services that:

- are innovative, seamless and responsive, designed around users' needs, continuously improving
- are democratically accountable to the people of Scotland at both national and local levels
- are delivered in partnership, involving local communities, their democratic representatives, and the third sector
- tackle causes as well as symptoms
- support a fair and equal society
- protect the most vulnerable in our society
- are person-centred, reliable and consistent
- are easy to navigate and access
- are appropriate to local circumstances, without inexplicable variation
- are designed and delivered close to the customer wherever possible, always high quality
- respond effectively to increasing demographic pressures
- include accessible digital services, that are easy to use and meet current best practice in the digital economy
- have governance structures that are accountable, transparent, cost-effective, streamlined and efficient

The Commission is therefore asked to identify the opportunities and obstacles that will help or hinder progress towards this vision and make recommendations for change that will deliver us to our destination. In particular the Commission is asked to:

- address the role of public services in improving outcomes, what impact they make, and whether this can be done more effectively
- examine structures, functions and roles, to improve the quality of public service delivery and reduce demand through, for example, early intervention
- consider the role of a public service ethos, along with cultural change, engaging public sector workers, users and stakeholders

The Commission should take a long term view and not be constrained by the current pattern of public service delivery, but should recognise the importance of local communities and the geography and ethos of Scotland as well as the significant direct and indirect contribution the delivery of public services make to Scotland's

economy.

It should have clear regard to joint work already underway to take forward the increasing integration of health and social care and to develop sustainable police and fire services for the future. Updates on work in both areas are expected to be available to the Commission in good time for it to take into account in its recommendations.

The Commission is invited to report with recommendations by the end of June 2011.

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