

## Minority Ethnic Matters Overview

*MEMO+ is an occasional series of briefing papers on topics of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland. It is produced by the [Scottish Council of Jewish Communities](#) in partnership with [BEMIS - empowering Scotland's ethnic and cultural minority communities](#), and is supported by the [Scottish Government](#).*

# “Scotland’s Future” Scottish Government White Paper on Independence: Culture and Communications

On 18 September 2014 there will be a referendum in which voters will be asked the question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?", and the Scottish Government has produced a White Paper to explain its proposals for the way in which an independent Scotland would be governed.

A White Paper is a document produced by the Government that sets out details of their proposed future policy on a particular subject. It is not a consultation and does not set out alternatives, but only gives details of the Government’s intentions. This White Paper does not, therefore, provide an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of Scotland becoming an independent country, and it does not discuss what should happen if Scotland remains in the UK.

This MEMO+ is one of a series that summarise the main points of the White Paper. Other issues cover Scottish Government proposals for:

<a href="#">White Paper: General Info</a>	<a href="#">Energy &amp; Resources</a>	<a href="#">Immigration &amp; Asylum</a>
<a href="#">Defence &amp; Security</a>	<a href="#">Environment &amp; Agriculture</a>	<a href="#">International Relations</a>
<a href="#">Economy &amp; Finance</a>	<a href="#">Equality &amp; Human Rights</a>	<a href="#">Justice</a>
<a href="#">Education &amp; Employment</a>	<a href="#">Health &amp; Wellbeing</a>	<a href="#">Third Sector &amp; Civic Society</a>

### Culture and Sport

With the significant exception of broadcasting, almost all matters relating to culture, heritage, and sport are already devolved (i.e. decisions are made by the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, and not by the UK Parliament) so in those regards little would change if Scotland becomes independent.

However the White Paper proposes:

- to set up a body similar to the UK Government Listed Places of Worship Scheme to provide grants in respect of VAT costs for eligible repairs, maintenance, and alterations to places of worship of all faith communities, and to consider extending the scheme to cover the repair and maintenance of all listed buildings;

- to seek early Olympic and Paralympic accreditation, to enable a Scottish team to compete at the Games in Rio in 2016.

## **Broadcasting**

Broadcasting and telecommunications policy and regulation are reserved issues, under the control of the UK rather than the Scottish Parliament.

With regard to broadcasting, the Scottish Government proposes that if Scotland were to become an independent country:

- a Scottish Broadcasting Service (SBS) would be created as a new public service broadcaster that would begin broadcasting on 1 January 2017, after the current BBC charter is due to end. Amongst other things, the SBS would take over responsibility for Gaelic broadcasting currently provided by the BBC Alba channel, and Radio nan Gàidheal;
- at the point of independence, the licence fee would not increase above that payable in the rest of the UK, and all exemptions and concessions would continue;
- access to all current radio and television channels would be maintained;
- there would be an increase in the number of productions that reflect life in Scotland;

## **Communications**

Recent research shows that large areas of rural Scotland still do not receive a 3G signal. The Scottish Government believes that UK Government initiatives to improve mobile phone and broadband reception have been fragmented, and, if the result of the referendum were to be in favour of independence, it proposes to look at ways of providing a more joined-up service.

The Scottish Government proposes that, If Scotland were to become an independent country:

- it would negotiate to keep the current international dialling code for Scotland (+44);
- landline calls to other parts of the UK would not be charged at international rates;
- using a mobile phone in other parts of the UK would not incur roaming charges;
- it would study broadband provision in other countries such as Sweden that share a similar geography and demography with Scotland, and to use these to develop a new and more effective regulatory system.

## **Royal Mail and Post Office**

The Scottish Government believes that the UK Government has not adequately addressed issues such as the impact of post office closures, and the high cost of parcel delivery to rural and remote communities. In addition, it is concerned that, despite the fact that the Scottish Government and a majority of Scottish MPs from all parties opposed the UK Government's policy of privatising the Royal Mail, only around one third of the company is now in public ownership.

The Scottish Government proposes that, If Scotland were to become an independent country:

- the Royal Mail in Scotland would be returned to public ownership;
- postal deliveries and collections would continue on six days each week;
- rural post offices would be supported to deliver government services, and to become 'community hubs'.

[Click here](#) and [here](#) for more details about Scottish Government proposals about Culture, [here](#) and [here](#) for Scottish Government proposals about Sport, and [here](#) and [here](#) for Scottish Government proposals about Communications.

## Useful Links

- **White Paper: Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland**
  - Full Document <http://82.113.138.107/00439021.pdf>
  - Summary <http://82.113.138.107/00439013.pdf>
- **Scottish Government Q&A about Culture, Communications and Digital**  
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/topic/culture-communications-and-digital/>
- **Scottish Government Questions and Answers about Sport**  
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/topic/sport/>
- **Scottish Government referendum website**  
<http://www.scotreferendum.com/>
- **UK Government Scotland Office referendum website**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/scotland>
- **Yes Scotland** (Campaign for Scottish Independence)  
<http://www.yesscotland.net/>
- **Better Together** (Campaign for Scotland to remain part of the UK)  
<http://www.bettertogether.net/>
- **BBC Scottish independence: Referendum library**  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21618252>



The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC)** is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland. It advances public understanding about the Jewish religion, culture and community, and also works in partnership with other organisations to promote good relations and understanding among community groups and to promote equality. (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438) <http://www.scojec.org/>



**BEMIS** is the Scottish national Ethnic Minorities led umbrella body, supporting, empowering, and building the capacity of minority third sector community organisations. As a strategic partner with Government, it is proactive in influencing the development of race equality policy in Scotland, and helps develop and progress multicultural Scotland, active citizenship, democracy, and Human Rights Education at the Scottish, UK, and European levels. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>



The **Scottish Government** is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for all those who live in Scotland. **One Scotland** is the Scottish Government campaign designed to tackle racism. It aims to raise awareness of racist attitudes, highlight its negative impact and recognise the valuable contributions that other cultures have made to our society – and make Scotland no place for racism. <http://www.scotlandagainstracism.com/>