

## 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: Immigration and Asylum

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 summarises the main points of the White Paper. Other issues cover Scottish Government proposals for:

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

### Citizenship

The Scottish Government proposes that if Scotland were to become an independent country the following people would automatically become citizens of Scotland with a right to apply for a Scottish passport:

- British citizens living in Scotland at the time of independence;
- British citizens born in Scotland but living outside Scotland at the time of independence;
- Children born in Scotland after the date of independence, if, at the time of their birth, at least one parent is a Scottish citizen or has leave to remain;

- Children born outside Scotland after the date of independence, at least one of whose parents is a Scottish citizen.

In addition, the following people would be able to register as Scottish citizens:

- British citizens living outside Scotland with at least one parent who qualifies for Scottish citizenship;
- Citizens of any country who have a parent or a grandparent who qualifies for Scottish citizenship.

Migrants living in Scotland legally, and anybody who has lived for at least 10 years in Scotland at any time and who has an ongoing connection with Scotland, would be able to apply for naturalisation as a Scottish citizen.

The Scottish Government proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it should continue as part of the Common Travel Area with England, Wales, Northern and Southern Ireland, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. It would not, therefore, be necessary to show – or even to have – a passport to travel from Scotland to any of these.

## **Immigration**

At present, immigration is a reserved issue, which means that decisions are taken by the UK Government in London. The Scottish Government believes that the UK Government has adopted an aggressive approach to immigration, asylum seekers, and refugees, and that Scotland's needs in relation to immigration are very different from those elsewhere in the UK. Because of Scotland's relatively smaller, and aging, population, the Scottish Government has said that it is in Scotland's interests to encourage people, particularly those of working age, to move to Scotland. In particular, the Scottish Government opposes withdrawal of the post-study work visa, which allowed recent graduates to spend two years working or setting up a new business in the UK. It also opposes the requirement that most potential immigrants have high earnings and savings because these are standard throughout the UK, even though there are wide variations in average earnings between, for example, London and the Highlands.

The Scottish Government proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would:

- introduce a new "points-based" immigration system that would take account of the particular needs of, and situation in, Scotland;
- lower the currently required financial maintenance threshold and salary level in line with average Scottish wages and the cost of living in Scotland;
- reintroduce the post-study work visa.

People from outwith the European Economic Area, whose visa to live in the rest of the UK had expired, would not have an automatic right to move to Scotland, but would have to apply for a Scottish immigration visa.

## **Asylum**

Asylum is also currently reserved to the UK Parliament. The Scottish Government proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, it would:

- establish a Scottish Asylum Agency to oversee asylum applications;
- promote the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into Scottish society from the day they arrive, not only after leave to remain has been granted;

- close Dungavel detention centre;
- end dawn raids on the homes of failed asylum seekers;
- not forcibly remove vulnerable failed asylum seekers, such as young children or heavily pregnant women.

[Click here](#) and [here](#) for more details about Scottish Government proposals about Immigration and Asylum.

### 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>
- **New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities**  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00439604.pdf>
- **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/>