



MEMO+

October 2016

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**.*

The Scottish Government Legislative Programme 2016–17

The Scottish Government has published its legislative programme in its *Plan for Scotland* for the coming year, setting out policy priorities, and legislation it intends to introduce into the Parliament.

This also recognises that “A significant minority of the Scottish population continue to feel it is acceptable to hold prejudicial views. Minority communities continue to experience hate crime, abuse and discrimination in their daily lives”, and proposes to address this by supporting “Cohesive communities [that are] anchored in equality of opportunity, respect for human rights, social justice, and an inclusive national identity.”

The programme lists fifteen new Bills that will now be considered by the Scottish Parliament. Four of these relate to areas that were **newly** devolved to the Scottish Parliament by the 2016 Scotland Act: Air Passenger Duty, Gender Balance on Public Boards, Railway Policing, and Scottish Social Security.

The Parliament will also consider Bills proposed by individual MSPs on subjects in which they have a particular interest, but Government Bills generally stand a better chance of becoming law.

Proposed Government Bills

Air Passenger Duty Bill

The Bill will set out the scope, structure, and administrative arrangements for a new Scottish tax to replace Air Passenger Duty from April 2018, under new powers devolved by the Scotland Act 2016.

Budget Bill

The annual Budget Bill will set out the Government's spending plans for the year ahead, and is likely to be the first to set Scottish tax rates and bands.

Child Poverty Bill

The Bill will replace sections of the **UK Child Poverty Act 2010** that have recently been repealed (i.e. cancelled), and will require Scottish Ministers to publish a Child Poverty Delivery Plan every five years, and to report annually on progress towards eliminating child poverty.

Contract (Third Party Rights) Bill

The Bill will update the law on how a contract can create rights for a third party, and how these rights can be used. These proposals are based on recommendations made by the Scottish Law Commission.

Domestic Abuse Bill

The Bill will create a new offence of domestic abuse that will include psychological abuse such as coercive and controlling behaviour, and will set out appropriate penalties to deal with abusers.

Expenses and Funding of Civil Litigation Bill

The Bill is intended to make the civil justice system more accessible, affordable and fair by introducing, making the costs of civil court cases more predictable, making rules about cases funded by third parties, and introducing class actions (when a large number of people who have been affected by an issue can group together to bring a case), and making new arrangements to check that court costs are fair.

Forestry Bill

The Bill will set out new arrangements for regulating all aspects of forestry, and will replace the Forestry Commission with a new land management authority.

Gender Balance on Public Boards Bill

The Bill will require the boards of public authorities to take steps to move towards equal representation from both men and women.

Housing (Amendment) Bill

The Bill will limit the powers of the Scottish Housing Regulator in order to ensure that registered social landlords continue to be classified as private sector organisations.

Islands Bill

The Bill will create a National Islands Plan, provide legal protection for the Scottish parliamentary constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles), allow greater flexibility around ward sizes in island communities, and give new powers to island councils.

Limitation (Childhood Abuse) Bill

The Bill removes the current three year limitation period for personal injury actions relating to abuse against children. This is based on recommendations from the Scottish Human Rights Commission.

Railway Policing Bill

The Bill will extend the powers of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to cover railway policing so that the British Transport Police in Scotland can be integrated with Police Scotland.

Social Security Bill

The Bill will set out a legal framework for social security in Scotland including the establishment of a new Scottish Social Security Agency. Before drafting the Bill, the Scottish Government plans to consult on matters such as increasing Carer's Allowance, replacing Sure Start maternity grants with a new maternity and early years allowance, and reviewing and appealing decisions and handling personal data.

Wild Animals in Circuses Bill

The Bill will ban the performance and exhibition of wild animals in travelling circuses and make provision for penalties and enforcement.

Referendum Bill

Following the UK referendum result in favour of Britain leaving the European Union, the Scottish Government plans to consult on a draft Bill that would enable them to hold a second Scottish Independence referendum.

In addition to the Bills listed above, the Scottish Government plans to improve equality of employment opportunity for people from all ethnic backgrounds through the appointment of a Race Equality Framework Adviser, the implementation of the [Equality Action Plan for Modern Apprentices in Scotland](#), and the development of a Workplace Equality Fund based on the recommendations of the [Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030](#) and the findings of the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee inquiry into [Removing Barriers: Race, Ethnicity and Employment](#).

Useful Links

- **The Scottish Government**
<http://www.gov.scot/>
- **A Plan for Scotland: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2016-17**
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00505210.pdf>
- **Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030**
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497601.pdf>
- **The Scottish Parliament**
<http://www.parliament.scot/>
- **MEMO+ The Scottish Parliament and Government 2016-17**
http://www.scojec.org/memo+/2016/16x_sp_and_sg_2016-17.pdf



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. SCoJeC is Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation, no. 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. BEMIS is a Scottish Charity, no. SC027692. <http://bemis.org.uk/>



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://onescotland.org/>