

## 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 2012-13 and Cabinet Reshuffle

The Scottish Government has published its [legislative programme](#) for the coming year, setting out policy priorities, and legislation it plans to introduce into the Parliament. The programme lists four objectives:

- accelerating economic recovery and creating more jobs;
- supporting and reforming Scotland's public services;
- creating a fairer Scotland; and
- achieving constitutional reform and independence for Scotland.

Fifteen Government Bills will be introduced during the coming year. 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, especially since the current SNP Government has more MSPs than in all of the other parties together. For information about proposed Members' Bills see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/29731.aspx>

## Proposed Government Bills

### **Bankruptcy Bill**

The Bill will modernise laws relating to bankruptcy to ensure fair processes of debt relief and debt management that take account of the rights and interests of both debtors and their creditors, and will introduce a "Financial Health Service" providing financial education, including advice about debt management and debt relief.

### **Better Regulation Bill**

The Bill will improve the way regulations are applied to ensure a consistent approach throughout Scotland, and will include specific provisions for environmental regulation.

### **Budget Bill**

The Bill will provide parliamentary approval for the Scottish Government's spending plans.

### **Children & Young People Bill**

The Bill will increase the amount of flexible early learning and childcare to a minimum of 600 hours annually for three and four year olds and looked-after two-year olds, and provide children and young people with access to a 'named person' from birth to 18 years old who will act as a central point of contact.

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on a draft Bill (closing date 25 September 2012). For more information see [A Scotland for Children: a consultation on the children and young people bill](#).

### **Criminal Justice Bill**

The Bill will reform and modernise the system for the investigating and prosecuting crime by simplifying the system for the arrest and questioning of suspects, introducing additional protections for child and vulnerable suspects, and removing the requirement for corroboration of evidence in criminal cases.

### **Forth Estuary Transport Authority Bill**

The Bill will co-ordinate the management and maintenance of the Forth Road Bridge and the new Forth Crossing.

### **Integration of Adult Health etc Bill**

The Bill will strengthen the role of clinicians, care professionals, and the third sector in the planning and delivery of services, and will require Health Boards and Local Authorities to integrate adult health and social care budgets.

### **Land & Building Transaction Tax Bill**

The Bill will set up a replacement system for the current Stamp Duty Land Tax.

### **Landfill Tax Bill**

The Bill will set up a replacement for Landfill Tax in Scotland.

### **Marriage & Civil Partnership Bill**

The Bill will enable same sex couples to marry in religious and civil ceremonies, and to register civil partnerships in religious ceremonies. It will also enable civil partnerships, and same- and opposite-sex couples to marry by means of 'belief' ceremonies (for example, conducted by Humanist celebrants).

An amendment to the UK Equality Act is required to protect religious bodies and celebrants who do not wish to conduct civil partnership and same-sex marriage ceremonies, and the Scottish and UK Governments are working together to introduce an appropriate amendment.

### **Post-16 Education Reform Bill**

This Bill will widen access to higher education, ensure a place in learning or training for all 16-19 year olds, and cap the level of higher education tuition fees which Scottish institutions can charge students from the rest of the UK.

### **Procurement Reform Bill**

The Bill will establish a national framework for sustainable public procurement, and expand the use of community-benefit clauses in higher value contracts, in order to promote training, apprenticeships and opportunities for the disabled and long-term unemployed.

### **Referendum Bill**

The Bill will set out the details for holding a referendum on Scottish Independence to be held in autumn 2014.

### **Tribunals Bill**

The Bill will set up a simplified system for the Tribunal Service in Scotland.

### **Victims & Witnesses Bill**

The Bill will improve support for victims and witnesses. It will also set up the National Confidential Forum to give adults who were placed in care as children the opportunity to recount their experiences, in a confidential and non-judgmental setting, to an independent panel. The Scottish Government is currently consulting on proposals for a [National Confidential Forum](#) (closing date October 12 2012).

## **New Government Ministers**

The First Minister has also announced a number of changes to his Cabinet.

### **Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities: [Nicola Sturgeon](#)**

(Formerly Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing, and Cities Strategy; replaces Alex Neil.)

Responsible for Infrastructure & capital investment, transport, housing, Scottish Water, procurement, European Structural Funds, Scottish Futures Trust, cities strategy, welfare reform. Government strategy & co-ordinating policy delivery across portfolios. Constitution policy, including preparations for the Referendum, UK relations, Freedom of Information.



*Nicola Sturgeon represents the constituency of Glasgow Govan. She was born in 1970 in Irvine, studied Law at Glasgow University, and practiced as a solicitor before becoming an MSP in 1999. She was Deputy Leader of the party and Leader of the Opposition in the Scottish Parliament, from 2003 to 2007, and Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing from 2007 to 2011.*

### **Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing: [Alex Neil](#)**

(Formerly Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure and Capital Investment; replaces Nicola Sturgeon.)

Responsible for NHS, Health Service Reform, Allied Healthcare Services, Acute and Primary Services, Performance, Quality Strategy, Patient Safety, National Service Planning, NHS Workforce, NHS Pay.



*Alex Neil represents the constituency of Airdrie and Shotts. He was born in 1951 in Irvine, and studied Economics at Dundee University, later establishing his own consultancy business. He worked for the Labour Party in Scotland, and was a founder member of the Scottish Labour Party, before leaving to join the SNP and becoming an MSP in 1999. He was Minister for Housing and Communities from 2009 to 2011. He is married with a son.*

## Minister for Parliamentary Business: **Joe FitzPatrick**

(Replaces Brian Adam.)

Responsible for Parliamentary Reform, Group matters, liaison between the Group and Ministers.



*Joe FitzPatrick represents the constituency of Dundee City West. He was born in 1967 in Dundee, and studied forestry at Inverness College, and Science at Abertay University. Before becoming an MSP in 2007, he worked for the Forestry Commission.*

## Minister for Housing and Welfare: **Margaret Burgess**

Responsible for Housing, communities, anti-poverty measures and welfare.



*Margaret Burgess represents the constituency of Cunninghame South. She was born in 1949 in Ayrshire. Before becoming an MSP in 2011, she was employed as the manager of East Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureau, is also an elected board member of Citizens Advice Scotland.*

## Minister for Environment and Climate Change: **Paul Wheelhouse**

Responsible for Forestry Commission Scotland, Biodiversity, Crofting, National Parks and Environmental Justice, Flooding, Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Aquaculture.



*Paul Wheelhouse represents the region of South of Scotland. He was born in 1970 in Edinburgh, and studied Economics at Aberdeen University. Before becoming an MSP in 2011, he worked as an economist.*

## Minister for External Affairs and International Development:

**Humza Yousaf**

Responsible for Europe, external affairs, international development, culture and the arts, broadcasting, architecture, built heritage, Historic Scotland and lottery funding, National Records of Scotland, major events strategy.



*Humza Yousaf represents the region of Glasgow. He was born in 1985 in Glasgow, and studied Politics at Glasgow University. Before becoming an MSP in 2011, he was employed as aide to Bashir Ahmad MSP.*

Bruce Crawford, Brian Adam, and Stewart Stevenson have stepped down from their Ministerial posts.

Other Ministers remain unchanged – to find out Who's Who, see [MEMO+ The New Scottish Parliament and Government](#).

## Useful Links

- **The Scottish Government**  
<http://home.scotland.gov.uk/home>
  - **Government Ministers**  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/People/14944/Scottish-Cabinet>
- **The Scottish Parliament**  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/index.aspx>
  - **Information about individual MSPs**  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msps/177.aspx>
  - **Parliamentary Committees**  
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/Committees.aspx>  
Links to the webpage of each Parliamentary Committee, including membership details, current and proposed future work, and contact details.



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 Charity 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.scotlandagainracism.com/>