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MEMO+^{PLUS}

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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](#).

Voting in the UK General Election 2017

The General Election, to select Members of the UK Parliament, will take place on Thursday 8 June 2017, and it is important that as many people as possible vote to ensure that the views of Scottish people are represented at Westminster. Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership and encourage everyone to vote!

The UK Parliament consists of 650 MPs, of whom 59 represent Scottish constituencies.

Candidates from the following parties are standing in Scotland, as well as some from small, sometimes single-issue, parties, and there are also a number of independent candidates.

[Scottish National Party](#)

[Labour Party](#)

[Conservative Party](#)

[Liberal Democrat Party](#)

[Green Party](#)

Who can vote?

In order to vote your name must be on the Electoral Register, and you must be:

- 18 or over on polling day (8 June);
- Resident in the UK, or a British citizen who has been living abroad for less than 15 years;
- A British citizen, an Irish citizen, or a Commonwealth Citizen who either does not require, or has leave to remain in the UK.

If you are already registered to vote, you do not need to register again unless your details have changed – for example, if you have moved house since you last voted. If

you are not registered, or need to update your name, address, or any other details, you can either do so [online](#) or you can [print a form to register by post](#). If you are not sure whether or not you are already registered to vote, [contact your local Electoral Registration Office](#) to ask.

If your name is on the Electoral Register you will automatically receive a polling card that will tell you where you should go to vote. You do not need to take your polling card with you when you go to vote.

If you are unable to go to the polling station you can still [vote by post](#) or you can name another person to vote on your behalf at the polling station ([voting by proxy](#)).

Important dates for the General Election

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 22 May 2017 | Deadline for registering to vote. |
| 23 May 2017 | Deadline for applying for a postal vote. |
| 31 May 2017 | Deadline for applying for a proxy vote.
Note: <i>if you are prevented from voting by a medical emergency you may apply for a proxy vote any time until 5pm on polling day.</i> |
| 8 June 2017 | Polling day – vote between 7am and 10pm. |

How to vote

The ballot paper will list the candidates, their political party and its logo, or whether they are standing as an Independent.

Vote by putting **ONE X** beside the name of the candidate that you want to support. **DO NOT** number candidates in order of preference.

Do not write anything else on your ballot paper otherwise your vote may not be counted. If you make a mistake do not try to correct it, but instead tell the election staff who will give you a replacement ballot paper.

All voters have a right to vote independently and in secret, and local councils must proactively ensure that polling stations don't disadvantage disabled people. [Click here](#) for information about the services that can be provided to assist disabled people.

[Click here](#) for an easy-read guide to help people with a learning disability to understand how to vote at the UK general election.

How your vote counts

The General Election uses a "first past the post" system. This means that the person receiving the most votes wins the seat. The winner does not need to receive a majority of the votes cast, only at least one vote more than the next most popular candidate.

Election Results

In most constituencies ballot boxes will be taken to a central location where they will be opened and the count begun immediately after polling stations close at 10pm. However, Returning Officers may choose to delay starting the count until the following day. This is most likely to be in areas where they will have to wait for ballot boxes to be brought in from rural polling stations. If the election result is close, the full make-up of the new Parliament may not be known until late Friday or even Saturday, especially if close results require recounts in individual constituencies.

From Parliament to Government

Technically, it is the Queen who appoints the new Prime Minister and invites him or her to form the next government. In practice, if one party has an absolute majority of seats in the House of Commons, it forms the Government: its leader will be Prime Minister, and will almost immediately begin to announce senior ministerial appointments. However, if there is a "hung parliament" in which no party has an overall majority, either the largest party may try to form a minority administration, or there will be a prolonged period of negotiation leading to the establishment of a coalition government. It can therefore be some time before the new Government is formed.

**Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership
and encourage people to register and to vote in the
General Election on 8 June!**

Useful Links

- **The UK Parliament**
<http://www.parliament.uk/>
- **Register to vote**
<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>
- **Applying for a postal vote**
<https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-post>
- **Applying for a proxy vote**
<https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/how-do-i-vote/voting-by-proxy>
- **Find your local Electoral Registration Office**
<https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/>
- **Disabled people's voting rights**
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/116906/Disabled-people-voting-rights-factsheet-GB.PDF
- **Easy Read Guide to Voting in the General Election**
http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/226503/Mencap-and-Electoral-Commission-Easy-Read-guide-to-voting-in-the-2017-general-election.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/>