

MEMO+ is an occasional series of briefing papers on topics of interest to minority ethnic communities in Scotland. MEMO+ is produced by the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities in partnership with BEMIS and is supported by the Scottish Executive.

Briefing: The New Scottish Parliament and Executive

The Scottish Parliament

Election Results

The elections to the Scottish Parliament in May 2007 resulted in the SNP having the largest number of seats although no single party has an overall majority. The smaller parties did far worse than they did in the previous election; the number of Green MSPs fell from seven to two, whilst the Scottish Socialist Party, Solidarity and the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party lost all seven of their seats. There was also a reduction in the number of Independent MSPs from five at the end of the last Parliament to one, Margo MacDonald.

Number of MSPs elected in each political party

(figure in brackets shows the number of MSPs at the end of the last Parliament)

	Constituency MSPs	Regional MSPs	Total
SNP	21 (8)	26 (17*)	47 (25*)
Labour	37 (46)	9 (4)	46 (50)
Conservative	3 * (3)	13 (14)	16 * (17)
Liberal Democrat	11 (13)	5 (3)	16 (16)
Green	- (-)	2 (7)	2 (7)
Independent	- (-)	1 (5)	1 (5)

* These figures exclude the Presiding Officer who gives up his party allegiance on election. The new PO, Alex Fergusson, was elected as a Conservative constituency MSP; his predecessor, George Reid, was elected as an SNP regional MSP for Ochil.

No group of parties was able to agree to form a coalition, but the SNP, as the largest party in the Parliament, has formed a minority administration. They have signed a [cooperation agreement](#) with the Green Party under which Green MSPs supported Alex Salmond in the vote for First Minister, and gave support to his

ministerial nominations. In return, the Green Party will be consulted about the budget and key legislation, and a Green MSP will be nominated as Convenor of one of the Parliament's Committees.

The practicalities of governing as a minority are not yet clear, but since other parties could easily combine to vote down any controversial legislation, the SNP will have to negotiate agreements on each issue separately if its proposals are to obtain a majority in the Parliament. This means that only legislation about which there is a high level of consensus between parties is likely to be passed, and so that there will be fewer Bills than in the last Session.

How does the Parliament work?

The Presiding Officer: [Alex Fergusson](#)

The Presiding Officer, who is elected from among their own number by the MSPs themselves, chairs proceedings in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament, and is also Convenor of the [Parliamentary Bureau](#) and the [Corporate Body](#). (The Parliamentary Bureau is responsible for timetabling parliamentary business and establishing parliamentary committees, and the Corporate Body manages the administration of the Parliament.)

The Presiding Officer sets aside any party political allegiance and remains politically impartial, taking the interests of all Members equally into account and acting on their behalf, so, although Alex Fergusson was elected as a Conservative MSP he will play no further role in party politics either within or without the Parliament.



Alex Fergusson represents Galloway and Upper Nithsdale as a regional MSP, but does not have any party political affiliation.

He was born in 1949 in Leswart and educated at Eton College and West of Scotland Agricultural College. He was a cattle and sheep farmer in Ayrshire until he became an MSP in 1999.

He is married with three sons. He has been President of the Blackface Sheepbreeders Association and lists his hobbies as rugby, curling, Scottish country dancing and folk music.

MSPs also elected two **Deputy Presiding Officers**. They only set aside their party allegiance whilst they are actually deputising for the Presiding Officer, and are able to speak and act in accordance with their party political views at all other times.

Deputy Presiding Officer: [Trish Godman](#)



Trish Godman represents the West of Scotland as a regional MSP.

She was born in 1939 in Govan and left school at 15. She had a variety of jobs before studying Social Work at Jordanhill College, and becoming a social worker in Glasgow. She was elected an MSP in 1999, and was Deputy Presiding Officer 2003-2007.

She is married and lists her hobbies as growing fruit, vegetables and flowers on her allotment.

Deputy Presiding Officer: **Alasdair Morgan**



Alasdair Morgan represents the South of Scotland as a regional MSP.

He was born in 1945 in Aberfeldy and studied Mathematics at Glasgow University, and Politics and Economics through the Open University. He worked in the IT industry before becoming an MP in 1997-2001, and an MSP in 1999.

He is married with two daughters.

Meetings of the full Parliament

The Parliament meets in the Debating Chamber on Wednesday and Thursday each week to debate new legislation and issues raised by MSPs, and to question Ministers. All meetings are open to the public; to watch proceedings from the public gallery contact [Scottish Parliament Visitor Services](#) and to watch online see <http://www.holyrood.tv/>

Parliamentary Committees

Committees are central to the work of the Parliament. They scrutinise proposed legislation, taking written and oral evidence from interested parties, conduct inquiries and consider petitions submitted by members of the public. Their meetings, which generally take place on either Tuesdays or Wednesdays, are usually open to the public; to attend a meeting contact [Scottish Parliament Visitor Services](#) and to watch online see <http://www.holyrood.tv/>

Mandatory Committees have to be established at the beginning of every parliamentary session, and their remits are determined by parliamentary rules. These are:

Audit	Equal Opportunities
Finance	European and External Relations
Procedures	Public Petitions
Subordinate Legislation	Standards and Public Appointments

The Parliament can also choose to establish **Subject Committees** to consider legislation relating to issues such as Health and Education. Since the election Parliamentary time has been occupied with procedural matters, such as the election of the Presiding Officer and First Minister, and the legislative programme has not yet been announced. There is, as yet, no information about the subject committees, but details will be published on the committee pages of the Scottish Parliament website when it becomes available.

Public Petitions

Members of the public can bring issues to the attention of MSPs by submitting a petition for consideration by the Public Petitions Committee. This can raise awareness about local issues that might not otherwise be discussed in the Parliament, and has, in a small number of cases, resulted in legislation. The procedure for submitting a petition will be the subject of a future issue of MEMO+.

The Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive is the government of Scotland, and consists of Ministers who make policy decisions and are supported by the civil service. (The term is sometimes used to refer to the ministerial team, sometimes the civil service, and sometimes both!) The new SNP administration has reduced the number of ministers and reorganised departmental responsibilities. It now consists of the First Minister, five Cabinet Secretaries, ten junior Ministers and two Law Officers. Elish Angiolini, who was Lord Advocate in the last Parliament, has been re-appointed, but will no longer attend Cabinet meetings except when requested to give legal advice.

First Minister: Alex Salmond

Head of the devolved Scottish government: responsible for development, implementation and presentation of Government policy, constitutional affairs, and for promoting and representing Scotland.



Alex Salmond represents the constituency of Gordon.

He was born in December 1954 in Linlithgow and studied Economics and History at St Andrews University. He worked in the civil service, banking and industry before becoming MP for Banff and Buchan in 1987, a position he has retained.

Alex Salmond was previously leader of the SNP 1990-2000, an MSP 1999-2001, and leader of the Opposition in the Scottish Parliament from 1999-2000. He was elected SNP leader for the second time in 2004.

He is married, has an interest in horseracing and football, and plays golf.

Minister for Parliamentary Business: Bruce Crawford

Responsible for Parliamentary affairs and the management of Government business in the Parliament.



Bruce Crawford represents the constituency of Stirling.

He was born in February 1955 in Perth and educated at Kinross & Perth High School. He worked as a civil servant in the Scottish Office and was also leader of Perth and Kinross Council before becoming an MSP in 1999.

He is married with three sons and lists his hobbies as football and golf.

Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture: Linda Fabiani

Responsible for Europe, external affairs, culture and the arts, architecture, built heritage, Historic Scotland and lottery funding, major events strategy, Gaelic.



Linda Fabiani represents Central Scotland as a regional MSP.

She was born in December 1956 in Glasgow, and has a degree in Housing Studies from Glasgow University. She worked as Director of a Housing Association before becoming an MSP in 1999. She was recently awarded the Star of Italian Solidarity by the Italian government in recognition of her work promoting good Scottish-Italian relations.

Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth: [John Swinney](#)

Responsible for the economy, the Scottish Budget, public service reform, de-regulation, local government, public service delivery, cities and community planning, General Register Office, Registers of Scotland, relocation, e-government, Scottish Public Pensions Agency, procurement, budgetary monitoring, business and industry including Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise' trade and inward investment, corporate social responsibility, voluntary sector and the social economy, community business and co-operative development, European Structural Funds, energy, tourism, land use planning system, climate change, building standards, transport policy and delivery, public transport, road, rail services, air and ferry services, Scottish Water.



John Swinney represents North Tayside as a regional MSP. He was born in 1964 in Edinburgh and studied Politics at Edinburgh University. He worked in business before becoming an MP in 1997-2001 and an MSP in 1999. He was leader of the SNP, and leader of the Opposition, in the Scottish Parliament 2000-2004. He is married with two children, and lists his hobbies as cycling, cooking and reading.

Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism: [Jim Mather](#)



Jim Mather represents Argyll and Bute as a regional MSP. He was born in March 1947 in Lochwinnoch and studied Accountancy, Law and Economics at Glasgow University. He worked in business before becoming an MSP in 2003. He is married with two children.

Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change:

[Stewart Stevenson](#)



Stewart Stevenson represents the constituency of Banff and Buchan. He was born in October 1946 and studied Mathematics at Aberdeen University. He was Director of Technology Innovation at the Bank of Scotland and a lecturer at Heriot-Watt University before becoming an MSP in 2001. Stewart Stevenson is married, holds a pilot's licence and lists his hobbies as photography and reading and writing.

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning: [Fiona Hyslop](#)

Responsible for further and higher education, science and lifelong learning, school education, training and skills, HM Inspectorate of Education and the Scottish Qualifications Authority, nurseries and childcare, children's services, children's hearings, social work and HM Social Work Inspectorate.



Fiona Hyslop represents the Lothians as a regional MSP.

She was born in 1964 and studied Economic History and Sociology at Glasgow University. She worked in the insurance industry before becoming an MSP in 1999.

She is married with three children, and lists her hobbies as gardening and swimming.

Minister for Schools and Skills: [Maureen Watt](#)



Maureen Watt represents North East Scotland as a regional MSP.

She was born in 1951 in Aberdeen and studied at Strathclyde University, before working in industry and as a teacher. She became an MSP in 2006 and was the first MSP to take the oath in Doric.

She is married and has a great interest in the history and culture of the North-East.

Minister for Children and Early Years: [Adam Ingram](#)



Adam Ingram represents the South of Scotland as a regional MSP.

He was born in 1951 in Kilmarnock and studied Business Economics at Paisley College. He worked as an economic consultant before becoming an MSP in 1999.

He is married with four children.

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing:
Nicola Sturgeon

Responsible for the NHS, health service reform, allied healthcare services, acute and primary services, performance, quality and improvement framework, health promotion, sport, public health, health improvement, pharmaceutical services, food safety and dentistry, community care, older people, mental health, learning disability, substance misuse, social inclusion, equalities, anti-poverty measures, housing and regeneration.



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

Minister for Public Health: Shona Robison



Shona Robison represents the constituency of Dundee East.

She was born in May 1966 in Redcar and studied Social Sciences at Glasgow University. She worked in Glasgow City Council Social Work Department before becoming an MSP in 1999.

She is married with a daughter.

Minister for Communities and Sport: Stewart Maxwell



Stewart Maxwell represents the West of Scotland as a regional MSP.

He was born in 1963 in Glasgow and studied Social Science at Glasgow College of Technology. He worked for Strathclyde Fire Brigade before becoming an MSP in 2003.

He is married with a daughter.

Cabinet Secretary for Justice: [Kenny MacAskill](#)

Responsible for criminal law and procedure, youth justice, criminal justice social work, police, prisons and sentencing policy, legal aid, legal profession, courts and law reform, anti-social behaviour, sectarianism, human rights, fire and rescue services, community safety, civil contingencies, drugs policy and related matters, liquor licensing, vulnerable witnesses, victim support and civil law, charity law, religious and faith organisations.



Kenny MacAskill represents the constituency of Edinburgh East and Musselburgh.

He was born in 1958 in Edinburgh He studied Law at Edinburgh University and practiced as a solicitor before becoming an MSP in 1999. He is married with two sons.

Minister for Community Safety: [Fergus Ewing](#)



Fergus Ewing represents the constituency of Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber.

He was born in 1957 in Glasgow and is the son of Winnie Ewing, the former SNP President, MP, MEP and MSP. He studied Law at Glasgow University and practiced as a solicitor before he, his mother, and his late wife Margaret, were elected MSPs in 1999. He describes himself as a keen hill runner, and has completed the New York, Chicago, and Loch Ness Marathons.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment:

[Richard Lochhead](#)

Responsible for agriculture, fisheries and rural development including aquaculture and forestry, environment and natural heritage, land reform, water quality regulation and sustainable development.



Richard Lochhead represents Moray as a regional MSP.

He was born in 1969 in Paisley and studied Politics at Stirling University. He worked for Dundee City Council and worked as Office manager for Alex Salmond before becoming an MSP in 1999.

He is married with a son, and lists his hobbies as reading, cinema, football and cycling.

Minister for Environment: Michael Russell



Michael Russell represents the South of Scotland as a regional MSP.

He was born in Bromley and studied Theology, and Scottish History and Literature at Edinburgh University. He worked for the Church of Scotland and in the media before becoming an MSP for the first time 1999-2003. He was SNP Chief Executive from 1994 to 1999.

Michael Russell is married and has a son.

Law Officers

Lord Advocate: Elish Angiolini QC

Responsible for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, prosecution of crime, investigation of sudden deaths, complaints against the police, support for victims and witnesses of crime, international cooperation (including mutual legal assistance and extradition), confiscation of proceeds of crime.



Elish Angiolini was born in 1960 in Glasgow and studied Law at Strathclyde University. She has worked in the Procurator Fiscal Service and oversaw the introduction of the European Commission on Human Rights.

She was appointed Solicitor General in November 2001 and Lord Advocate in 2006, and was the first woman and the first non-advocate to hold either post. Signalling the depoliticising of the role, she is also the first Law Officer to be reappointed by an administration of a different political party.

Elish Angiolini is married with two children.

Solicitor General: Frank Mulholland QC

Responsible for legal advice to Scottish Ministers, civil litigation, constitutional issues and appointment of Counsel.



Frank Mulholland studied Law at Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities, and Trial Skills at Harvard University. He has worked in the Procurator Fiscal Service and was one of the first solicitor-advocates to be appointed as a QC.

Opposition Spokespeople

Contact details for all MSPs are on the Scottish Parliament website at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/membersPages/index.htm>

	Labour	Conservative	Liberal Democrat
Party Leader	Jack McConnell Leader of the Opposition	Annabel Goldie	Nicol Stephen
Parliamentary Business	Cathy Jamieson	David McLetchie	Robert Brown
Business Manager and Chief Whip	Michael McMahon	David McLetchie	Iain Smith (Convener)
Finance and Sustainable Growth	Wendy Alexander	Derek Brownlee	Tavish Scott
Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change	Des McNulty	Alex Johnstone	Alison McInnes
Enterprise, Energy and Tourism	Iain Gray	Gavin Brown	Liam McArthur
Education and Lifelong Learning	Hugh Henry	Murdo Fraser	Jeremy Purvis
Children and Early Years	Pauline McNeill	Elizabeth Smith	
Schools and Skills	Ken Macintosh	Elizabeth Smith	Hugh O'Donnell
Health and Wellbeing	Andy Kerr	Mary Scanlon	Ross Finnie
Public Health	Lewis McDonald	Jackson Carlaw	Jamie Stone
Communities and Sport	Johann Lamont	Jamie McGrigor	Jim Tolsen
Rural Affairs	Rhona Brankin	John Scott	Mike Rumbles
Environment	Sarah Boyack	Nanette Milne	Jim Hume
Justice	Margaret Curran	Bill Aitken	Margaret Smith
Community Safety	Paul Martin	John Lamont	Mike Pringle
Europe, External Affairs and Culture	Patricia Ferguson	Ted Brocklebank	
Gaelic and Highland Culture			John Farquhar Munro

Useful Links

- **The Scottish Parliament**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/home.htm>

- **Information about individual MSPs**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/msp/membersPages/index.htm>

- **Photographs of MSPs elected May 2007**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/research/factsheets/documents/PhotographsofMSPs2007.pdf>

- **Parliamentary Committees**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/index.htm>

Links to the webpage of each Parliamentary Committee, including membership details, current and proposed future work, and contact details.

- **Scottish Parliament Visitor Services**

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/visitingHolyrood/chamberTickets.htm>

Tickets for the public gallery of the Debating Chamber and for Committees should be booked in advance either by e-mail

sp.bookings@scottish.parliament.uk or by telephone 0131 348 5000

- **Holyrood TV**

<http://www.holyrood.tv/>

Live broadcasts and archived video of proceedings in the Debating Chamber and Committees

- **The Scottish Executive**

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Home>

***BEMIS** is the umbrella body for ethnic minority organisations in Scotland. It aims to strengthen the capacity of the ethnic minority voluntary sector; raise the profile and coordinate the voice of this sector; and take a lead on policy issues to ensure that issues of concern are raised with government and other relevant bodies. <http://www.bemis.org.uk/index.html>*

*The **Scottish Council of Jewish Communities** 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. www.j-scot.org.uk*

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