

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.

Scottish Parliament Election 2011: The Parties and their Policies

Scottish Parliament elections will take place on 5 May 2011. It is important that as many people as possible vote so that the make-up of the new Scottish Parliament and Government reflect the balance of views of the people of Scotland.

There are 129 MSPs in the Scottish Parliament, of whom 73 represent individual [constituencies](#) and the remaining 56 represent eight [regions](#) formed from groups of constituencies.

Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership and encourage everyone to vote!

For information about how MSPs are elected see [MEMO+ Voting in the Scottish Parliamentary Election](#).

The Scottish Parliament only has responsibility for **Devolved** issues. Other issues are **Reserved** and are the responsibility of the UK Parliament.

Devolved issues include:

- **The Economy:** Most taxes are decided by the UK Parliament but the Scottish Parliament has the power to vary income tax in Scotland by 3p above or below the UK rate. This power has never been used.
The Scottish Parliament also has responsibility for the main economic development agencies, including Scottish Enterprise, and for the voluntary sector.
- **Arts, Culture, and Sport** including the 2014 Commonwealth Games which will be held in Glasgow.
- **Education** including nursery, primary and secondary schools, colleges, and universities.

- **Environment** including water quality regulation and issues relating to climate change.
- **Farming and Fisheries** including forestry.
- **Health** including the NHS, ambulance service, dentistry, and public health issues such as alcohol and drug abuse, and smoking. The fire service is also the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.
- **Housing and Planning**
- **Justice** including civil and criminal law, the police, courts, and prisons.
- **Local Government** including overseeing and funding the work of the 32 local councils.
- **Transport** including public transport, roads, and ferry services.

Reserved issues, about which the Scottish Parliament has no say, include:

- **The Constitution** including the powers allowed to the Scottish Parliament, and, even if approved by a Scottish referendum and by the Scottish Parliament, Scotland would only be able to become independent if this were also to be approved by the UK Parliament.
- **Defence**
- **Foreign Policy**
- **Immigration and Nationality**
- **Social Security** benefits and tax credits.

Each of the political parties has published a manifesto describing what it would do if it wins the election and becomes the new Scottish Government.

Key policies are listed below. You can also read the complete manifestos by clicking on the relevant link.

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Party websites, candidate lists and manifestos		
Economy	Employment	Business
Public Services	Justice	Education
Health	Community	Energy
Environment	Other policies	Useful Links

Political Parties

Figures in brackets show how many MSPs each party had at the end of the last Parliament.

Scottish National Party Scottish National Party Website	(21 constituency MSPs and 26 regional MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Labour Party Labour Party Website	(37 constituency MSPs and 9 regional MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Conservative Party Conservative Party Website	(*3 constituency MSPs and 13 regional MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Liberal Democrat Party Liberal Democrat Party Website	(11 constituency MSPs and 5 regional MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Green Party Green Party Website	(2 regional MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Scottish Socialist Party Scottish Socialist Party Website	(no MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Solidarity Solidarity Website	(no MSPs) <i>Candidate list not online</i>	Manifesto
Socialist Labour Party Socialist Labour Party Website	(no MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party SSCUP Website	(no MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Christian People's Alliance Christian People's Alliance Website	(no MSPs) <i>Candidate list not yet online</i>	<i>Manifesto not yet online</i>
United Kingdom Independence Party UKIP Website	(no MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto
Scottish Christian Party Christian Party Website	(no MSPs) <i>Candidate list not yet online</i>	Manifesto
British National Party British National Party Website	(no MSPs) <i>Candidate list not yet online</i>	<i>Manifesto not yet online</i>
Scottish National Front Scottish National Front Website	(no MSPs) Candidate list	Manifesto

There are also **Independent Candidates** who are not affiliated to any political party. At the end of the last Parliament there was 1 independent regional MSP.

* **Note:** The Presiding Officer, who was elected as a Conservative constituency MSP, has not been included in the above tally because he sets aside his allegiance to a political party to demonstrate that he is acting impartially, although he is standing again as a Conservative in 2011.

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What do the parties say about the Economy and Public Finance?

Council Tax:

Labour and Conservative undertake to freeze Council Tax for 2 years, and SNP throughout the whole of the next Parliament. Conservatives would also introduce a pensioner discount of £200. The Greens would replace it with a Land Value Tax, the Scottish Socialist Party with a Scottish Service Tax assessed on income, and the Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party with a local Income Tax.

Income Tax:

In addition to above, the Greens would use the variable rate of income tax to offset UK spending cuts, but Labour and SNP both undertake not to increase in income tax above UK rate during this Parliament.

Labour Party

- Scrap Council of Economic Advisors and Scottish Futures Trust.
- Increase government spending on innovation and reduce use of consultants.
- Reform Scottish Water and use proceeds to create 100,000 new jobs.

Conservative Party

- Require a local referendum before rates can be increased by more than inflation.

Green Party

- Require public bodies to aim to reduce inequality.
- Direct 10% of public spending through social enterprises.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Sell Scottish Water and use the proceeds to create 100,000 new jobs.
- Create “enterprise zones” and introduce a business support package.

Scottish National Party

- Support setting up new banks, and expand social banking.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Increase state pension to £160 per week, and restore the link to earnings.

Solidarity

- Increase the state pension to over £200 per week.

Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party

- Abolish means testing, and increase pensions for all pensioners to £180 per week.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Raise the tax threshold to £11,500 and introduce a flat-rate 31% income tax.

TOP

What do the parties say about Education?

University Fees:

SNP, Liberal Democrats, Labour, Greens, and Solidarity oppose charging fees for Scottish students. The Conservatives would introduce means-tested loans, and UKIP and the SSP would reintroduce student grants.

The Lib-Dems would encourage introduction of 3-year degrees, and the Conservatives would encourage universities to admit suitable qualified students direct to the second year of courses.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Provide £250m for 'early years' education.
- Give head teachers of state schools control over discipline
- Introduce off-site education for persistently disruptive or violent pupils.
- Provide extra help with learning, including one-to-one tuition, mentoring, and literacy and numeracy work.
- Encourage making school facilities available to the wider community.

Scottish National Party

- Introduce Graduate Apprenticeships, to allow students to work while studying.
- Expand pre-school, college bursary, and adult literacy provision.
- Create Education Quality Improvement Agency, and revise national qualifications.
- Introduce "Scottish Studies" courses in schools.

Labour Party

- "Zero tolerance" of illiteracy and innumeracy, with more specialist teachers.
- Expand family centres, support for early years, and for vulnerable youngsters.
- Tackle bullying and indiscipline in schools.
- Introduce a right to education or training till age 18 by 2015.

Conservative Party

- Enable charities, philanthropists, and parents to set up new schools and allow existing state schools to be run independently of local authorities
- Give head teachers of state schools control over discipline, recruitment and budget.
- Introduce rigorous standards for reading, writing and arithmetic in primary schools.
- Pilot Second Chance Centres for disruptive pupils.
- Ensure greater flexibility in the provision of nursery care.

Green Party

- Support home schooling.
- Allow students to work, and provide loans to set up businesses.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Introduce 'School Vouchers' so parents can choose state or private schools.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Free school meals for all pupils.

TOP

What do the parties say about Health?

NHS administration:

Labour would reduce the number of health boards and review bonuses and merit awards. The Conservatives would protect the overall health budget while reducing management costs, and place social care under the control of the NHS. The SNP would also integrate the health and social care systems. The Greens oppose reorganisation of NHS and centralisation of health services. UKIP would replace NHS bureaucracy with locally elected County Health Boards

Prescription charges:

The Conservatives would reintroduce charges at the 2009 level. Labour and SNP would retain free prescriptions.

Cancer treatment:

The SNP would set up early detection initiatives for cancer; Labour and the Lib Dems would guarantee seeing a specialist within 2 weeks. The Conservatives favour establishing a Cancer Drug Fund.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse:

Greens and SNP support minimum pricing on alcohol. Labour would crack down on alcohol sales to under 18s, limit caffeine levels in alcoholic drinks, and introduce alcohol treatment orders. Lib Dems would speed up referral to treatment centres. SSP would prescribe free heroin to registered addicts, and expand drug and alcohol rehabilitation and detox facilities.

Scottish National Party

- Tackle smoking-related disease and obesity.
- Retain free personal care for elderly.
- Support carers with respite care, and recognition for employers who support them.

Labour Party

- Eliminate superbugs in hospitals.

Conservative Party

- Further develop the role of pharmacists in prescribing medication.
- Provide guaranteed health visitor support for children under 5.
- Introduce free universal health checks for everyone between 40 and 74.

Green Party

- Improve out-of-hours care, especially in remote and rural areas.
- Protect free personal care for the elderly.
- Improve mental health services and develop more community-based support.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Introduce 'Health Credit Vouchers' to allow people to opt out of the NHS.
- Reintroduce free NHS dental check-ups and eye tests.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Increased funding for community psychiatric nurses.

TOP

What do the parties say about Justice?

Policing:

Conservatives and Labour support creating a single national police force, while SNP would also reduce the number of forces; all would maintain current police numbers. Lib Dems oppose a single force but favour forces sharing services. Scottish Christian Party and Greens oppose a national force.

SSP would replace Joint Police Boards with community, regional and national boards; UKIP would replace them with locally elected County Police Boards. The Christian People's Alliance favour establishing Safer Neighbourhood Panels, funded by Local Authorities, where police would meet with representatives of residents, businesses, and minority groups.

Lib Dems and Conservatives would require the police to publish local crime statistics and engage more with local communities.

Labour Party

- Tackle low conviction rates for sexual offences, and introduce tagging for offenders.
- “Zero tolerance” of drugs in prison; prisoners to undertake work or study.
- Tackle “problem neighbours”.
- Review Legal Aid, criminal justice system, and Fatal Accident Enquiries.

Conservative Party

- Re-introduce prison sentences of less than three months.
- Clamp down on access to drugs in prison.
- Use funds confiscated under the Proceeds of Crime Act to help victims of crime.
- Reform the Legal Aid system.

Green Party

- Put mediation and restorative justice at the heart of the justice system.
- Oppose prison privatisation and improve victim support services.
- Focus on corporate crime and sexual offences, and protect peaceful protest.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Set up community justice panels as an alternative to court action.
- Extend victim notification to when the offender is released or is unlawfully at large.

Scottish National Party

- Zero tolerance of football-related violence and prejudice.
- Reform law on rape, similar fact evidence, damages, and class actions.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Set up secure units to provide intensive rehabilitation for sex offenders.

Scottish Christian Party

- Promote biblical alternatives to the current criminal justice system.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Abolish the Crown Prosecution Service and return to county police prosecutions.

[TOP](#)

What do the parties say about Employment?

Conservative Party

- Create a new cabinet level Minister for Enterprise and Jobs.

Green Party

- Minimum wage of £7.15 per hour in public sector.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Encourage the provision of more work experience, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities for young people struggling to find work.

Scottish National Party

- Create 2000 new jobs in the voluntary sector.

Labour Party

- Introduce a “Scottish Living Wage” of £7.15 per hour in the public sector.
- Abolish youth unemployment and create guaranteed apprenticeships.
- Create 250 000 new jobs.
- Create an immediate 300 jobs and 750 traineeships through the “Green New Deal”.

Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party

- End compulsory retirement.

Scottish Christian Party

- Improve apprenticeship to help small businesses and new employees.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Introduce a minimum wage of £9/hour in the public sector.
- Fund 5000 new apprenticeships in construction trades.

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What do the parties say about Business?

Green Party

- Replace business rates, extend to vacant and disused properties, and increase large business supplement.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Help Scottish businesses win public sector contracts.
- Set up Regional Development Banks to provide better support for businesses.
- Promote jobs and research in science, engineering, and industrial development.

Scottish National Party

- Invest £450m in the Small Business Bonus Scheme.
- Introduce a one-stop Finance Information Service.
- Introduce programmes to help small businesses tender for public service contracts.

Labour Party

- Double exports.
- Continue Small Business Bonus Scheme and provide grants for first employee.

- Retain separate Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.
- Expand role of VisitScotland and EventScotland.

Conservative Party

- Provide funding for vocational training and the creation of new businesses.
- Extend the scope of the small business rates relief scheme.
- 25% of government contracts to be awarded to smaller businesses.

Solidarity

- Nationalise gas, electricity, oil, banking, insurance, and transport companies.

Scottish Socialist Party

- End Uniform Business Rate and give local councils control over non-domestic rates.
- Introduce a business rate exemption for the shop in single shop villages.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Amend the UK Takeover Code to prevent foreign interests from gaining control of strategic British companies.

[TOP](#)

What do the parties say about Public Services?

Emergency Services:

SNP, Labour, and Conservatives favour moving towards a single national Fire and Rescue Service, and single national Police Force; the Greens are opposed.

Conservative Party

- Replace the concordat with Local Authorities with a requirement to set out their own plans and report on progress.

Green Party

- More autonomy for local authorities, including fundraising and borrowing.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Introduce payment-by-results in public services.
- Ensure sustainable funding and infrastructure support for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, and help organisations to work together.

Scottish National Party

- Frontline services boosted by public sector efficiency savings.

Labour Party

- Improve delivery of local services by developing partnerships between the Scottish Government, COSLA, trade unions and the voluntary sector.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Build 20,000 fully accessible new rural homes for low cost rent to local people.

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What do the parties say about Community?

Green Party

- Invest in social housing and regulate private sector.
- Make planning law serve public good rather than economic growth.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Bring new life and sustainability to rural post offices.

Scottish National Party

- Introduce “Community Empowerment” including taking over underused public buildings.
- Community involvement in planning process.

Labour Party

- Establish a “Fairer Scotland Commission” to tackle poverty and social exclusion.
- Encourage volunteering and community ownership of derelict property.
- Introduce a Code of Conduct for factors.
- Review the planning system.
- Modernise libraries and protect free admission to galleries and museums.

Conservative Party

- Introduce a less onerous regulatory regime for small charities.
- Encourage multi-year funding deals for the voluntary sector, and require all public bodies to report what proportion of their contracts are placed with third sector bodies.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Introduce reduced water bills for voluntary organisations.
- Work with community groups to train independent community representatives.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Build more social housing and encourage the use of 800,000 empty homes.
- End support for multiculturalism and promote one shared British culture for all.

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What do the parties say about Energy?

Power generation:

Lib Dems, SNP oppose any new nuclear power stations, and Greens would close existing stations. Labour would consider them on their merits, and the Conservatives only on existing sites. UKIP would promote new nuclear capacity.

Labour and Greens oppose new coal-fired power stations, while SNP and UKIP would require carbon capture on new ones.

SNP, Greens, and Lib Dems would aim to generate all Scottish energy demand from renewables by 2020 or 2025.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Require new-build homes and non-domestic buildings to be "zero carbon" by 2016.

Scottish National Party

- Encourage the development of small-scale hydro-electric power stations.

Labour Party

- Increase use of renewable energy in homes and transport.

Conservative Party

- Introduce national guidance to prevent inappropriately sited or sized windfarms.

Green Party

- Provide at least £100million per year for a home energy efficiency programme.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Every new building, including private homes, to be carbon neutral by 2016.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- Oppose wind farms.

[TOP](#)

What do the parties say about the Environment and Transport?

Road network:

Labour and SNP would complete the M8 between Glasgow and Edinburgh, make other improvements to the M8/M73/M74 network, and build the new Forth road bridge and the Aberdeen Western Bypass. The Greens would scrap these projects and divert the funds to public transport.

Scottish National Party

- Support 'green bus services' and use of electric cars.
- Improve rail services, including electrification of central Scotland lines.
- Keep forests in public hands and legislate about high hedges.

Labour Party

- Reinstate Glasgow Airport Rail Link.
- Improve ferry service coverage and promote inland waterways.
- Explore peatland restoration and support tree planting.

Conservative Party

- Promote the use of renewable and low carbon energy sources.

Green Party

- Increase and improve recycling.
- Set up new animal welfare agency.
- Encourage Park-and-ride and reduce speed limits to 50 mph.
- Encourage large-scale ecosystem restoration projects, including peatland restoration.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Increase annually the net productive forest cover to support timber industries.
- Set out a comprehensive waste prevention programme to halve waste by 2020.
- Support the development of facilities to generate power from local waste.
- Make public transport more convenient by developing a Scotland-wide smart card.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Replace pylons with underground cables where environmentally beneficial.
- Identify contaminated land that may pose a health hazard and make it safe.

[TOP](#)

What other policies do the parties have?

The Constitution:

Labour, Conservatives, and Lib Dems support increasing the powers of the Scottish Parliament and Government. The Greens favour establishing a convention on Scottish devolution. The SNP would hold a referendum about Scottish independence.

Sexual equality:

Lib Dems and Labour support parity between marriage and civil partnership for both heterosexual and same-sex couples; the SNP would consult on this.

Green Party

- Increase the international development budget, as well as establishing a climate adaptation fund of £9million per year for communities in developing countries.

Liberal Democrat Party

- Improve treatment of asylum seekers, and ensure they have access to legal advice.
- Ensure Scotland meets its obligations under the Convention Against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Strengthen freedom of information legislation.
- Work with crofters to ensure a secure future for crofting.

Scottish National Party

- Support Creative Scotland, Historic Scotland, and create National Book Week.
- Promote engagement with Scotland's world-wide diaspora.

Labour Party

- Support the learning and use of BSL in order to address the current shortage of BSL interpreters in Scotland.

Conservative Party

- Encourage a reduction in 'food miles', and introduce legislation to ensure that food labels provide clear information about where the food has been produced.

Socialist Labour Party

- Abolish Capitalism.
- Introduce Proportional Representation.

Scottish Socialist Party

- Introduce a national cycle strategy to include training for all primary 6/7 pupils.

Christian People's Alliance

- Encourage placement of asylum seekers with families, rather than hostels.

Scottish Christian Party

- No child under 10 years should be unaccompanied on the street after 9pm.

United Kingdom Independence Party

- End uncontrolled mass immigration.
- Introduce an immediate five-year freeze on immigration for permanent settlement.
- Ban the burka and veiled niqab in public buildings and certain private buildings.

Scottish Senior Citizens Unity Party

- End ageism.

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Useful Links

- **Vote 2011: Scottish Parliament (BBC Scotland)**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/election2011/overview/html/scotland.stm>

List of all candidates standing in the Scottish Parliament election and profiles of constituencies. Results will be posted on the site as soon as they are announced after the polls close at 10pm on 5 May.

- **ScotlandVotes (The Scotsman)**

<http://www.scotlandvotes.com/>

Information about the Scottish Parliamentary election, including candidates and constituencies.

- **Election 2011 (Herald)**

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/election-2011>

News reports, opinion polls and candidates for the Scottish Parliament and Local Council elections.

- **MEMO+ Voting in the Scottish Parliamentary Election and the referendum on the voting system used to elect MPs to the UK Parliament**

http://www.scojec.org/memo+/2011/11iv_election_and_referendum.pdf

Information about the voting systems being used in the Scottish Parliament election and UK Parliament voting system referendum.

- **Scottish Parliament**

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

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Please circulate this issue of MEMO+ among your membership and encourage everyone to vote on 5 May!



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.scotlandagainstracism.com/>