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May 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 UK Government Legislative Programme 2016

The UK Government has published its plans for new legislation in the coming year in the “Queen’s Speech” delivered at the State Opening of Parliament. This sets out the proposed new laws, known as “Bills”, that it will ask the UK Parliament to approve.

Twenty-one new Government Bills will be introduced during the coming year, as well as some carried forward from the last session. The Parliament will also consider Bills proposed by individual MPs on subjects in which they have a particular interest, but Government Bills generally stand a better chance of becoming law, especially since the current Conservative Government has more MPs than all of the other parties together.

Many of the proposed laws will not apply to Scotland because they relate to matters that are “devolved” to the Scottish Parliament, so that decisions about these are taken in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament can, however, give the UK Parliament permission to legislate on devolved matters by passing a Legislative Consent Motion (sometimes referred to as a “Sewel Motion”) after the proposals have received detailed consideration by a Scottish Parliament Committee.

### **Proposed UK Bills that would apply in Scotland**

#### **Digital Economy Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes proposals to give every household a legal right to a fast broadband connection and compensation for service failures, to cut the cost of building the network infrastructure, to fine companies that send unwanted messages, and to require pornographic websites to check the age of users.

#### **Modern Transport Bill** *(mostly applies in Great Britain but not Northern Ireland)*

The Bill encourages investment in driverless cars, electric cars, space planes, and drones, and updates the financial protection scheme for holidays (ATOL).

**Better Markets Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes proposals to make it easier to switch banks and energy providers, to bring in recommendations for energy competition, and to speed up competition investigations and give regulators more powers.

**Pensions Bill** *(applies in Great Britain but not Northern Ireland)*

The Bill proposes better protection for members of pension schemes known as Master Trusts, a cap on early exit fees from occupational pension schemes, and the creation of a single financial advice body.

**Lifetime Savings Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes proposals to help people on low incomes or on certain benefits to save for the future through the “Help to Save” scheme and a “Lifetime ISA” for younger people.

**Small Charitable Donations Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill proposes changes to the Gift Aid Small Donations scheme, to increase benefits for new and smaller charities and amateur sports clubs, and to clarify the benefits for charities connected with community buildings.

**Criminal Finances Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes proposals to make companies criminally liable if their staff facilitate tax evasion, to change the law on the proceeds of crime, and to change reporting requirements to focus on systemic money laundering.

**Cultural Property Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill proposes protections for items of cultural importance affected by war, by joining the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property, making it a criminal offence to deal in illegally exported cultural property, and marking protected property with a Blue Shield.

**Intellectual Property Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes measures to change the law about unjustified threats of legal action in cases involving patents etc, and to make it easier for companies to settle such disputes out of court. *(Subject to consultation by the Law Commission)*

**Investigatory Powers Bill** *(applies throughout the UK)*

The Bill includes proposals about how the state collects private communications or other data to combat crime, to compel providers to keep communications data for a year, and to create a new Investigatory Powers Commissioner.  
*(carried over from last session of Parliament)*

**Soft Drinks Industry Levy** *(applies throughout the UK)*

A proposal for a charge on drinks with added sugar will be included in the next Budget, with the money raised being used to increase funding for school sports, after-school activities, and breakfast clubs.

## **Other Proposed UK Bills that may apply in Scotland**

### **National Citizen Service Bill** *(under discussion with the devolved administrations)*

The Bill proposes a new statutory framework to deliver the National Citizen Service, with a requirement on all schools and councils promote it.

### **NHS Overseas Visitors Charging Bill** *(territorial range not yet clear)*

The Bill includes proposals to recover full costs from overseas patients, and to make it more difficult for visitors from the European Economic Area to access free health care.

### **Bill of Rights** *(would apply throughout the UK)*

There will be a consultation on plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights setting out a new framework of human rights based on those in the European Convention on Human Rights and taking account of the UK's common law tradition.

## **Proposed UK Bills that would not apply in Scotland**

### **Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill** *(applies in England and Wales only)*

The Bill includes measures to simplify and give local communities more say over planning, and to make compulsory planning orders and compensation fairer.

### **Local Growth and Jobs Bill** *(applies in England only)*

The Bill proposes to new powers for local authorities, including using business rates to fund infrastructure projects.

### **Bus Services Bill** *(applies in England only)*

The Bill includes proposals about franchising, sharing information about services with developers of software applications, and permitting Councils to set standards for services.

### **Children and Social Work Bill** *(applies in England only)*

The Bill includes proposals to speed up adoption, to improve educational achievement of adopted children, to give children leaving care new rights to better advice, and to create a new regulator for social work training and standards.

### **Education for All Bill** *(applies in England only)*

The Bill includes measures to encourage schools to become “academies”, to establish a new national funding formula for schools, to make head teachers responsible for school improvement, and make schools responsible for assisting excluded pupils.

### **Higher Education and Research Bill** *(mainly applies in England only)*

The Bill includes measures to encourage the establishment of new universities, to establish a new Teaching Excellence Framework, and to require universities to publish data on the diversity of their admissions.

### **Prison and Courts Reform Bill** *(applies in England and Wales only)*

The Bill proposes to set up new "reform" prisons emphasising rehabilitation and education, to give governors more powers, to publish more statistics on reoffending and employment rates of ex-prisoners, and to modernise and reduce delays in courts and tribunals.

### **Counter-Extremism and Safeguarding Bill** *(applies in England and Wales only)*

The Bill proposes new civil orders to counter extremist activity, new powers to tackle radicalisation of children and for Government to intervene if councils fail to tackle extremism, and to give Ofcom the power to regulate material from outside the EU on the internet.

### **Draft Law of Property Bill**

The Bill is a response to a Law Commission report on simplifying land ownership.

### **Policing and Crime Bill** *(applies in England and Wales only)*

The Bill includes proposals to require closer collaboration between the emergency services, to update the police complaints and disciplinary systems, and to ban the use of police cells as a "place of safety" for under-18s.  
*(carried over from last session of Parliament)*

### **Wales Bill** *(mostly applies in Wales only. Draft bill was published in October 2015)*

The Bill includes measures to clarify how powers are divided between the UK Parliament and the National Assembly of Wales, to devolve powers over energy, transport, and elections, and to remove the requirement for a referendum before income tax powers can be devolved.

### **High Speed Rail Bill** *(technically UK-wide, but actually only relevant in England)*

The Bill would enable the Government to buy land needed for HS2, and to make arrangements to build and operate the railway.  
*(carried over from last session of Parliament)*

## **Useful Links**

- **The UK Government**  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>
- **The UK (Westminster) Parliament**  
<http://www.parliament.uk/>
- **Queen's Speech 2016: what it means for you**  
<http://tinyurl.com/queens-speech-2016>
- **Bills currently under consideration by the UK Parliament**  
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/>
- **Information about individual MPs**  
<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>



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 Charitable Incorporated Organisation 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/>