MEMO+PLUS

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 Council of Jewish Communities

BEMIS
Empowering Scotland's Ethnic and Cultural Minority Communities

Supported by
one scotland
SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

"Scotland's Future"
Scottish Government White Paper on Independence: Education and Employment

On 18 September 2014 there will be a referendum in which voters will be asked the question, "Should Scotland be an independent country?", and the Scottish Government has produced a White Paper to explain its proposals for the way in which an independent Scotland would be governed.

A White Paper is a document produced by the Government that sets out details of their proposed future policy on a particular subject. It is not a consultation and does not set out alternatives, but only gives details of the Government's intentions. This White Paper does not, therefore, provide an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of Scotland becoming an independent country, and it does not discuss what should happen if Scotland remains in the UK.

This MEMO+ is one of a series that summarises the main points of the White Paper. Other issues cover Scottish Government proposals for:

White Paper: General Info	Energy & Resources	Immigration & Asylum
Culture & Communications	Environment & Agriculture	International Relations
Defence & Security	Equality & Human Rights	Justice
Economy & Finance	Health & Wellbeing	Third Sector & Civic Society

Why the Scottish Government is dissatisfied with the current system

Although education is already almost fully devolved, i.e. under the control of the Scottish rather than the UK Parliament, the Scottish Government is concerned that factors such as poverty limit the ability of children and young people to achieve as much at school and in higher education as they otherwise might. It also disagrees with UK Government policies on student visas that limit the number of international students studying in Scottish universities and colleges, and prevent them from remaining in Scotland to work after graduation. Since, however, many issues relating to tax, welfare, and immigration, are reserved to the UK Parliament, the Scottish Government is not currently able to make the changes it would like. (*For more information about "reserved" and "devolved" issues, see MEMO+ "Scotland's Future: General Information".*)

If Scotland were to become independent, the Scottish Government proposes to introduce the following policies:

Childcare

Although the main aim of improving childcare is to give children the best possible start in life, the Scottish Government believe it would also enable more mothers of young children to go out to work, and provide around 35,000 new jobs in the childcare sector. The White Paper proposes that if Scotland becomes an independent country, the Scottish Government would provide:

- from the first budget, 600 hours of childcare per year to two year old children whose parents receive working tax credit or child tax credit;
- by the end of the first session of an independent Parliament, 1,140 hours of childcare per year to all children aged 3 and 4, and to vulnerable 2 year olds;
- by the end of the second Parliament, all pre-school children from the age of 1, with 1,140 hours of childcare per year.

Schools

The Scottish Government is already fully responsible for the school system, so there would not be any immediate changes if Scotland were to become an independent country. In particular, parents would still have the right to send their children to a faith school, since the Scottish Government believes that these make "an important and valued contribution to Scottish society".

Vocational Training and Higher Education

The White Paper proposes that, if Scotland were to become an independent country, the Scottish Government would:

- introduce a "Youth Guarantee" giving everyone between the ages of 16 and 24 the right to education, training, or employment;
- continue to provide free university tuition for Scottish students living in Scotland. Students from the rest of the UK and from countries outwith the European Union would have to pay fees, but not students from other European Union countries;
- collaborate with the rest of the UK to operate a "common research area", including shared research councils and facilities, to support collaborative research between universities in Scotland and the rest of the UK
- reintroduce the post-study work visa to enable overseas students to remain in Scotland after they have completed their studies.

Employment

The Scottish Government proposes that, if Scotland were to become independent:

- the minimum wage would increase in line with inflation;
- a Fair Work Commission would be established, with responsibility, amongst other things, for developing a mechanism for upgrading the minimum wage;
- a National Convention on Employment and Labour Relations would be established to encourage dialogue between all key stakeholders about issues such as labour market reform, and addressing skills shortages;
- employment protection would be protected by, for example, restoring a 90 day consultation period for redundancies affecting more than 100 employees;
- early intervention schemes would prevent long-term unemployment;

- the "Shares for Rights" scheme would be abolished. (This replaces certain rights in the area of unfair dismissal and redundancy pay with tax incentives on holding shares in the company.)

Click here and *here* for more details about Scottish Government proposals for Education and Skills, and *here* for more details about their proposals for Employment.

Useful Links

- **White Paper: Scotland's Future: Your Guide to an Independent Scotland**
  - ○ Full Document   http://82.113.138.107/00439021.pdf
  - ○ Summary   http://82.113.138.107/00439013.pdf

- **Scottish Government Q&A about Education and Skills**
  http://www.scotreferendum.com/topic/education-and-skills/

- **Scottish Government referendum website**
  http://www.scotreferendum.com/

- **UK Government Scotland Office referendum website**
  https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/scotland

- **Yes Scotland** (Campaign for Scottish Independence)
  http://www.yesscotland.net/

- **Better Together** (Campaign for Scotland to remain part of the UK)
  http://www.bettertogether.net/

- **BBC Scottish independence: Referendum library**
  http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21618252

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/**