



# Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community

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## Home Affairs

### Scottish Parliament Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

#### Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 (Post Mortems) (PE1911)

**The Convener (Jackson Carlaw, Conservative):** PE1911 calls for a review of the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006 as it relates to post mortems. The petition ... calls on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to review the 2006 act and relevant guidance to ensure that all post mortems can be carried out only with the permission of the next of kin; that brains are not routinely removed; and that tissues and samples are offered to next of kin as a matter of course. ...

The Scottish Government responded in consultation with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. They explained that, if tissue samples are returned to next of kin, it might impair their ability to investigate the circumstances surrounding a death or establish a definitive cause of death.

The Royal College of Pathologists suggests that returning tissue samples would provide only a marginal gain and would need to be “traded off against further complexities in the authorisation and consent processes”. ...

**Monical Lennon (Labour):** ... [The petitioner] had been awaiting further information from the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. ... [she] had asked questions about body scanners, which would allow for a less invasive post mortem. The Crown Office has come back and identified some training issues, which mean that staff in Scotland do not have the skill set. ...

... it is concerning that [the royal College of Pathologists] says what it says in the context of what it calls “significant pressures on pathology, post mortem and forensic services across Scotland”.

The submission talks about “grossly inadequate facilities and staffing levels being the reality of current provision” and highlights an issue that I raised in the previous parliamentary session, which is the “recent failure of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service procurement exercise to identify compliant bidders for forensic services” putting more light on the challenges that the system faces.

We have to question whether the system is fit for purpose. ...

[One submission] says that it is “offensive” that people are being told “that tissue samples ‘belong’ to the procurator fiscal or pathologists for research, without consent.”

Most people would find that really troubling. ...

In the end, it comes down to dignity. No one would question the important role and responsibility of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service in the investigation of sudden, suspicious, accidental and unexplained deaths in Scotland. However, many people feel that the system is not always compassionate, that it is hard to get information and that communication is not always as good as it should be. ...

... it is important to refer to the thoughtful submission from the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities and to the council’s disappointment. It is important that we listen to SCoJeC’s views. ...

**The Convener:** ... the suggestion that the procedures and processes that are followed might be governed by an underresourcing of pathologists’ work rather than by a freshly determined view of what best practice and policy might be is concerning. ...

Body scanners are now being routinely used elsewhere. If a submission that we might be yet to see vindicates the view that we cannot have scanners in Scotland because of an argument that people are not adequately trained to use them, that would seem inadequate. Use of a body scanner would, obviously, be a far less invasive way to undertake a post mortem. ...

**Paul Sweeney (Labour):** ... I felt that the Royal College of Pathologists submission was a bit excessive in making the point about potential legal reasons for retaining samples from bodies. The implication that next of kin might want to defeat the ends of justice by denying a post mortem was potentially quite offensive. That would be the case in a limited and significant set of circumstances only. ...

In due course, once it is established that there is no foul play in relation to a death, the samples could be released for burial or whatever the family wishes to do with them. ...

**To read the full transcript see**

<https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/what-was-said-in-parliament/CPMP-04-05-2022?meeting=13728&iob=124597>

## Senedd Cymru Written Answer

### Antisemitism

**Laura Anne Jones (Conservative)** [OQ57980] What steps is the Welsh Government taking to tackle anti-semitism?

**Minister for Social Justice (Jane Hutt):** The Welsh Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism in full and without qualification. Through our action plan for an anti-racist Wales, the Welsh Government will take concerted action to tackle antisemitism. The plan will be published next month.

<https://record.senedd.wales/QNR/12838>

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## Israel

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

**Liz Truss:** Appalled by another terror attack in Israel, targeting innocent people as they

celebrate their Independence Day. My thoughts are with the victims and their families. The UK stands with the Israeli people against terrorism.

<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1522298043617447937>

**Liz Truss:** As Israel marks its 74th Independence Day, our relationship is stronger than ever. We stand together in enduring friendship as champions of freedom, democracy and the spirit of innovation. #YomHaatzmaut

<https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1522240657452056579>

**Amanda Milling:** Wishing everyone in Israel a very happy Yom Haatzmaut. I'm thrilled to see the UK-Israel relationship getting stronger all the time. Here's to many more years of prosperity and friendship!

<https://twitter.com/amandamilling/status/1522121089769422849>

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## Relevant Legislation \*\* new or updated today

### UK Parliament

#### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2862>

#### **Online Safety Bill**

<https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3137>

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## Consultations \*\* new or updated today

#### **Independent Review of Social Cohesion and Resilience** (closing date 2 June 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence/independent-review-of-social-cohesion-and-resilience-call-for-evidence>

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The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCoJeC) is Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC029438