



# 2gether Scotland Public Affairs Update

resourcing members of the evangelical alliance in Scotland

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[2getherScotland.org](http://2getherScotland.org)

Public Affairs Update - a fortnightly email helping you engage

17 Sep. 08

## WELCOME!

Welcome back to the *2gether Scotland Public Affairs Update*. I hope you find this informative and helpful in equipping you for effective prayer and action and keeping you up-to-date. Don't hesitate to get in touch anytime if you would like more information on any of the issues below or if you feel something is missing/ inaccurate within each update. Thanks for your time!

### NOTES OF INTEREST AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**2gether Scotland Podcast.** This fortnightly Podcast, which is available from the website and iTunes, provides listeners with information about what the Lord is doing across Scotland and helps us engage in some of the big cultural and spiritual conversations impacting Scotland. Our current edition is an interview with **Pete Chirnside**, National Manager of Tearfund in Scotland. Log on at [www.2getherscotland.org](http://www.2getherscotland.org) this to hear the full interview.

#### Monthly newsletter on public affairs issues from across the UK: September's PQ articles include

- Will Anyone Challenge Brown?
- McCain and Obama vie for the Christian vote
- Another Equality Bill
- Do we get the Leaders we Deserve?
- Northern Ireland - Whose Choice?
- Scotland - Are you Hard Enough?
- Wales - Equality for Evangelical Organisations in Wales
- Religious Liberty - Violence Returns to India

[Click here to download this month's PQ as a PDF file](#)

### CURRENT ISSUES

#### Alcohol

The Scottish Government is to establish a Youth Commission on Alcohol to allow young Scots to play an active role in dealing with the country's alcohol problems. Public Health Minister Shona Robison said: *"We recognise that alcohol misuse is a societal issue in Scotland and by no means restricted to young people. But drinking habits*

### In this Issue

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### Forthcoming Parliamentary Business

BUSINESS FOR WEEK COMMENCING 15 SEPTEMBER

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON
<b>Mon 15</b>	Constituency	1430-1700 Constituency
<b>Tues 16</b>	0930-1230 Committees	1430-1700 Committees
<b>Wed 17</b>	<b>1430</b> Time for Reflection Followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions (if required) <b>1435-1700</b> Scottish Government Business Followed by Business Motion Followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions (if required) <b>1700</b> Decision Time followed by Members' Business (Lab)	
<b>Thur 18</b>	<b>0915</b> Parliamentary Bureau Motions (if required) <b>0915-1140</b> Scottish Government Business <b>1140 - 1200</b> General Question Time <b>1200 - 1230</b> First Minister's Question Time	<b>1415-1455</b> Themed Question Time [Education and Lifelong Learning; Europe, External Affairs and Culture] <b>1455-1700</b> Scottish Government Business Followed by Parliamentary Bureau Motions (if required) <b>1700</b> Decision Time followed by Members' Business (SNP)
<b>Fri 19</b>	Constituency	Constituency

think should be done if we are to bring about the cultural shift needed to rebalance Scotland's relationship with alcohol.”

To read more [click here](#)

## Asylum Seekers

Under plans being developed by the Scottish Government young people arriving in Scotland without a relative who subsequently claim asylum will be provided with a Guardian to act as an independent advocate for their rights. There are approximately 150 separated children in Scotland, where 50-70 such unaccompanied minors claim asylum each year. The majority of the children are aged between 12 and 17 and reside in Glasgow.

To read more [click here](#)

## Cervical Cancer

The new school term saw the start of a programme to vaccinate schoolgirls against the virus which causes cervical cancer. Although there were initial objections from the Catholic Church it will be offered to children in denominational churches as the Church were satisfied that the guidance which accompanies the vaccination does not endorse or encourage the use of artificial contraception to project against other forms of sexual transmitted infections.

## Child Obesity

Public Health Minister Shona Robinson announced that Scotland's health boards will share an extra £19m to help tackle childhood obesity. In addition to the funding the minister indicated that the Government would also provide free fruit to mothers and pre-school children, and later this month will be expanding the Counterweight programme, which offers lifestyle and weight management advice to adults at risk of obesity.

## Hospital car parking charges

Nicola Sturgeon, Minister for Health and Wellbeing announced that car parking charges would be abolished at NHS hospitals across Scotland.

To read more [click here](#)

## Hate Crime Legislation

As you may remember, in May the Green Party MSP Partick Harvie was successful in getting government backing to introduce a bill to make assaults on individuals because of their sexual orientation or disability, aggravated offences. The Proposed Sentencing of Offences Aggravated by Prejudice (Scotland) Bill would require that

Business for the Week Commencing 22 September has yet to be published. [Click here to check the agenda and minutes for the Parliamentary Bureau](#)

## Scottish Parliamentary Legislation in Process

Title (click for further info)	Status
<a href="#">Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Bill</a>	<b>Completed:</b> 14 May 2008 <b>Status:</b> Stage 1 Scrutiny
<a href="#">Scottish Register of Tartans Bill</a>	<b>Deadline:</b> 13 June <b>Status:</b> Stage 1
<a href="#">Offences (Aggravation By Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill</a>	<b>No Deadline</b> <b>Status:</b> Stage 1
<a href="#">Disable Persons Parking Spaces (Scotland) Bill</a>	<b>No Deadline</b> <b>Status:</b> Stage 1
<a href="#">Damages (Asbestos-related Conditions) (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 12)</a>	<b>No Deadline</b> <b>Status:</b> Stage 1
<a href="#">Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 13)</a>	<b>No Deadline</b> <b>Status:</b> Stage 1
<a href="#">Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill</a>	<b>No Deadline</b> <b>Status:</b> Stage 1

Related Links: [Understanding Bills](#)  
[Current Bills Tracker](#)

## Significant Scottish Government Consultations

Title (click for further info)	Ends
<a href="#">Safeguarding our Rural Schools and Improving School Consultation Procedures: Proposals for Changes to Legislation</a>	9 September 2008
<a href="#">Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-permanent accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations</a>	19 September 2008
<a href="#">The Adoption Information (Scotland) Regulations and The Adoption (Disclosure) of Information (Scotland) Regulations</a>	8 October 2008

disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity to be taken into account in sentencing.

The Equal Opportunities Committee and the Justice Committee are seeking written views on the general principles of the Bill. Both committees will separately be considering and publishing a report on the Bill's general principles. The closing date for making written submissions to the Equal Opportunities Committee is **21 October**. The closing date for making written submissions to the Justice Committee is **18 November**.

For more information [click here](#)

**Prison Numbers**

There has been a 3% rise in Scotland's prisoner numbers over the last year, adding to a rise of 22% over the since 1998. Figures from the Scottish Prison Service show that average daily prison population was 7376 in 2007/08. The daily average of women prisoners was 371, a five per cent increase on the previous years.

To read more [click here](#)

**SNP Government Legislative Agenda**

The main aim of the SNP administration over the next term will be to focus on delivering sustainable growth.

Parliament were introduced to an "ambitious" Scottish Government legislative program for the year ahead. In the statement, Mr Salmond set out both legislative and non-legislative priorities included 15 wide ranging bills focusing on areas such as criminal justice, the environment and public service reform. Highlights include the possibility of a global leading Scottish Climate Change Bill, which aims to cut emissions by 80% by 2050; a Rural Schools Bill, setting a presumption against the closure of rural schools; and a Scottish Parliament and Local Government Elections Bill, which proposes to hold Scottish council and parliamentary elections on different dates and would be completely administered from Holyrood. More controversially the proposed Health Bill would bring in a tobacco sales registration scheme, would ban under-21s from buying drink at off-licences and set a minimum price for alcoholic drinks.

The most contentious of the 15 bills is the proposal to replace the current Council Tax with a 3p local income tax, enabled by a £281 million tax cut across Scotland. The Council Tax Abolition Bill, Mr Salmond claims, "will lift 85,000 individuals from poverty. And it will save the average Scottish family between £350 and £535 per year."

<a href="#">Generation of National Qualifications in Scotland</a>	2008
<a href="#">The Adoption (Supervision Requirement Report) Regulations</a>	8 October 2008
<a href="#">Wheelchair and Seating Services Action Plan</a>	31 October 2008
<a href="#">Custodial Sentences and Weapons (Scotland) Act 2007: Licensing of Knife Dealers: A consultation</a>	22 October
<a href="#">Adapting our Ways: Managing Scotland's Climate Risk</a>	31 October 2008

For a full list [click here](#).

**Ways of bringing God into your conversations**  
[Friday Night Theology](#)

**Slipstream: Leaders-in-Formation**  
[Website](#)

**Micah Challenge Campaign**  
[Join here](#)

**What are the current political issues we are facing across the UK?**  
[Parliamentary Questions](#)

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