

First Minister announces first Cabinet

The First Minister is the youngest ever at 37 years old, and he has now appointed a young cabinet, with five politicians who are under 40. There are also more women than men for the first time.

But the two women notable by their absence are Kate Forbes the former Finance Secretary, and Ash Regan who was until December, Minister for Community Safety. These two, his competitors in the SNP leadership election are not included in the first round of appointments. Kate Forbes is said to have rejected the role as Rural Affairs Minister, preferring to ditch the big salary and return to the back benches.

Edinburgh MSP Angus Robertson retains his job as Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.

The Cabinet including the First Minister numbers ten – and Economy under Neil Gray will be a separate portfolio.

Members include:

- Shona Robison, the new Deputy First Minister, will take on the Finance portfolio, including responsibility for the Scottish Budget
- Michael Matheson becomes the Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care
- Jenny Gilruth joins Cabinet for the first time as

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

- Màiri McAllan joins Cabinet for the first time as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition
- Neil Gray joins Cabinet for the first time as Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy
- Mairi Gougeon remains Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
- Angus Robertson remains Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture
- Shirley-Anne Somerville becomes Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
- Angela Constance returns to Cabinet as the new Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs

Parliament will be asked to approve the new Ministerial appointments on Thursday.

Mr Yousaf said: “The Cabinet team I have unveiled reflects the priorities that we will pursue as a government – including tackling child poverty, improving public services and building a fairer, greener economy.

“Ahead of my appointment as First Minister, I have committed myself to a radical, ambitious and progressive policy agenda for Scotland – and I know that this team is the right one to deliver it.

“I want to thank those Ministers departing government for their leadership over the last few years, through many storms not of our making – the economic damage caused by Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, austerity and the cost of living crisis. Those Ministers – led so ably by Nicola Sturgeon and John Swinney – leave a strong legacy for the new team to build on.

“I have made clear my belief Scotland’s government should look as much as possible like the people we represent. As well as being the first ever First Minister from a minority ethnic background, I am pleased that a record number of women have

agreed to serve, as well as a significant blend of younger and more experienced members. That said, every single appointment has been made on merit.

“Every single person in this government is clear that it is for the people of Scotland to determine their constitutional future – no one else – and we will work to ensure that they are given that right. As we make the case for Scottish independence, we will continue to govern well and demonstrate to the people of Scotland the benefits of decisions about their lives being taken here in Scotland.

“Subject to Parliament’s approval, the new Ministerial team is ready to get to work delivering for the people of Scotland.”



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First Minister Humza Yousaf arrived back from the Court of Session just after 10.30am on Wednesday morning. ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter