

# **The Scottish Government publish citizenship paper**

**The First Minister Humza Yousaf held a round table event at New Register House on Thursday to discuss the fifth paper in the Building a New Scotland series “Citizenship in an independent Scotland”.**

The participants included Lorna Slater, Minister for Green Skills, Circular Economy and Biodiversity who is a Canadian by birth but now holds British citizenship, and Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Independence.

Others taking part included members of the public who would be eligible for citizenship in an independent Scotland, which would be based on having one parent born in Scotland. This mirrors the Irish example, allowing people born in the UK to claim dual citizenship if they choose. The government want to ensure that the procedure is easier than at present under UK rules.

EU residents would be entitled to settled status and a child born in Scotland would be automatically a Scottish citizen if at least one parent is Scottish, British or Irish or had settled status. There would also be rules under which others living in Scotland could apply for citizenship.

Sitting down under the domed roof of the building which holds all the records of all births, deaths and marriages in

Scotland The First Minister welcomed everyone to the discussion.

*Inspirational setting at New Register House for the [@ScotGovFM](#) to launch the fifth paper in the Building a New Scotland series – this one about citizenship [pic.twitter.com/1kWZtevcUH](https://pic.twitter.com/1kWZtevcUH)*

*– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [July 27, 2023](#)*

Scottish Greens Co-leader, Lorna Slater MSP, said: “I have experienced a very warm welcome since arriving in Scotland in 2000, with so many people telling me that “if you live in Scotland, you are Scottish”. I am proud to be part of a Scottish Government that wants to take that further.

“This is a progressive and inclusive vision for citizenship, one that recognises people’s dignity and stands in stark contrast to the hostile environment and hurdles that have been put in place by successive UK governments.

“This proposal says a lot about the kind of country we aspire to be: one that is welcoming, and generous. We want to include people, make them part of our community and let them know that they have value.

“As well as being the right thing to do, this approach is vital for Scotland’s future. By offering a positive and straightforward system of citizenship we can encourage people to come to Scotland to contribute to our society and our economy.

“By re-joining the EU as soon as possible after independence, Scottish citizens will regain what we lost due to Brexit: the freedom to work, study, live and love in 31 nations across Europe.

“The future is bright for an independent Scotland. We can be

part of building something new and better.”



Jamie Hepburn Minister for Independence PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



Minister Lorna Slater attended the roundtable at New Register House PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter





First Minister Humza Yousaf published a paper setting out the proposed approach to citizenship in New Register House where a roundtable discussion was held. Here he is looking at the birth and baptism certificate of Robert Burns who was born on 25 January 1759. PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

First Minister Humza Yousaf said: “In this country, we are used to feeling a mix of identities. As a proud Scottish Pakistani, that’s something I understand and respect, and the policies in this paper would not require anybody to choose between being Scottish, British, or any other nationality.

“Instead, this paper proposes an open and inclusive approach to citizenship. One that welcomes people who want to settle in Scotland, rather than putting barriers and excessive fees in the way of individuals and their families.

“With our aging population, Scotland faces an urgent demographic challenge. That’s why we want to welcome more people, to join those who have already settled in communities across our country and are contributing to a better economy, higher living standards, and stronger public services like our

NHS.

“Scottish citizens could also enjoy benefits such as the right to hold a Scottish passport, continued freedom of movement within the Common Travel Area, and eventually, following our commitment to re-join the EU as an independent nation, resumed rights as EU citizens.

“I hope this paper will help to answer questions people might have about citizenship in an independent Scotland, and I look forward to hearing people’s views on our proposals.”

























Scottish Conservative shadow secretary for the constitution, external affairs and culture Donald Cameron MSP said: "People across Scotland will be appalled that Humza Yousaf is focusing

on yet another self-indulgent paper touting independence. It is the wrong priority at the worst possible time.

“This paper is not only a blatant misuse of public money and resources by the SNP, but it also demonstrates how out of touch they are with the public.

“Rather than wasting taxpayers’ money and civil servants’ time on pushing a divisive, party political agenda, a strong First Minister would be concentrating on Scots’ real priorities – cost of living difficulties, unacceptable NHS waiting times and the ferries crisis.

“We know the SNP want to make the next election another referendum on independence – but separation would mean a new hard border between Scotland and England, which would devastate the economy. The SNP don’t seem to have even thought about this huge issue, while choosing to dwell on citizenship instead.”

Scottish Liberal Democrat communities spokesperson Willie Rennie MSP criticised The Scottish Government for indulging in “therapy” as he warned that ministers should be focussed on getting public services right rather than launching yet another set of papers on breaking up the UK.

Mr Rennie said: “Writing these independence papers is more therapy for Humza Yousaf and the nationalist movement than a serious attempt to persuade people to support their cause.

“Even if it is just for a few hours, it must be a great relief to be distracted from broken ferries, ever longer waiting lists and a social care backlog that mushrooms.

“But the SNP shouldn’t be using government time and money when funds are tight and for something that they know just isn’t going to happen. A majority of people want government to focus on the day job.”

[The previous four papers](#) have set out evidence showing that independent countries comparable to Scotland are wealthier and fairer than the UK, how Scottish democracy can be renewed with independence, the macroeconomic framework, including currency arrangements, for an independent Scotland, and how rights and equality could be at the heart of a written constitution developed by the people of Scotland.



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