

Swinney announces new cabinet

The First Minister has announced little change to the Scottish Cabinet except to bring Kate Forbes into government as promised.

Shona Robison stepped aside as Deputy First Minister, tendering her resignation to the First Minister just after lunchtime, but remains in the Cabinet.



John Swinney introduces his new Scottish cabinet at Bute House
8 May 2024 PHOTO © 2024 The Edinburgh Reporter

Appearing with his Deputy First Minister Kate Forbes
[@JohnSwinney](#) says he will be a First Minister for everyone.

pic.twitter.com/ooQDMtXsqz

The Cabinet of eleven is as follows:

- Kate Forbes, who becomes the youngest-ever Deputy First Minister, and who will take on the Economy portfolio and responsibility for Gaelic.
- Shona Robison remains in Cabinet with responsibility for Finance and Local Government.
- Jenny Gilruth remains Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
- Angela Constance remains Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs.
- Màiri McAllan remains in Cabinet with responsibility for Net Zero and Energy.
- Fiona Hyslop remains Cabinet Secretary for Transport.
- Neil Gray remains Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.
- Shirley-Anne Somerville remains Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice.
- Angus Robertson remains Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture.
- Mairi Gougeon remains Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands.

The First Minister said: “Ahead of my appointment as First Minister, I committed to working collaboratively across the Parliament to address the pressing issues facing the people of Scotland.

“With that in mind, I have selected a Cabinet team that blends experience and energy, with a strong focus on the priorities my government will pursue – eradicating child poverty, driving economic growth, meeting climate obligations and investing in our vital public services.

“My overriding priority will be to work to eradicate child poverty in Scotland, an issue on which real progress has been made through measures such as the Scottish Child Payment. The government I lead will maximise every lever at our disposal to tackle the scourge of poverty in our country.

“A strong economy supports the delivery of services on which people depend.”



John Swinney introduces his new Deputy First Minister and the rest of his cabinet at Bute House 8 May 2024 PHOTO © 2024 The Edinburgh Reporter

Scottish Conservative chairman Craig Hoy said: “This is simply Humza Yousaf’s cabinet with a different figurehead.

“The return of Kate Forbes is a desperate attempt by both John Swinney and his new deputy to gloss over the huge splits in the SNP and fixate on independence.

“A year ago, Mr Swinney questioned whether Kate Forbes was an ‘appropriate individual’ to lead the SNP, but now he deems her fit to be his second in command. Similarly, Ms Forbes, who

warned that 'continuity won't cut it', has now joined a Cabinet with continuity at its core in return for a top job under Nicola Sturgeon's right-hand man.

"This uninspiring cabinet is further evidence that John Swinney as First Minister will just mean more of the same. His fingerprints are all over the failed SNP policies that have damaged Scotland, while he's already doubled down on the SNP's independence obsession, instead of focusing on the public's real priorities such as fixing our ailing public services and growing the economy.

"When the election comes, voters will have the chance to punish the feuding, failing, distracted SNP and get the focus back on the issues that matter – and, in key seats across Scotland, it's only the Scottish Conservatives who can beat them."

Scottish Labour Deputy Leader Jackie Baillie said: "Once again the SNP is putting its own party interest before the country's interest with this uninspiring reshuffle.

"After 17 years of failure, every single institution in Scotland is now weaker and those responsible remain at the heart of government.

"This is a continuity cabinet, that cannot be trusted to fix the chaos and instability they have created.

"With two of the former Finance Secretaries responsible for trashing public finances now in the top jobs, more SNP chaos lies ahead.

"Scotland needs change and the people of Scotland know continuity won't cut it – we need an election.

"Only Scottish Labour can put a stop to the division and decline of the SNP and deliver the fresh start our country needs."

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Alex Cole-Hamilton said: “We need ministers that won’t make empty promises but will get the basics right. Relying on all the same ingredients is a recipe for disappointment.

“This parade of familiar faces proves that nobody in the SNP ever pays the price despite 1 in 7 Scots being stuck on NHS waiting lists, sewage dumping in our rivers reaching record levels, and islanders waiting forever for ferries.

“Scottish Liberal Democrats want to bring people back together, putting Scotland at the heart of a reformed UK and fixing our broken relationship with Europe. We want to help everyone who can’t get a GP appointment or see an NHS dentist, support our schools and deliver for business. It’s time for change.”



John Swinney introduces his new Scottish cabinet at Bute House 8 May 2024 PHOTO © 2024 The Edinburgh Reporter