



Engaging with policy makers: How does the Scottish Parliament engage with academia?



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

SPICe

The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh

Outline

- **The role of the Scottish Parliament**
 - What are the powers of the Scottish Parliament?
 - The role of Committees
 - How are laws made?
 - The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe)
- **Academic engagement**
 - People, networks, events

The background image shows the interior of the Scottish Parliament chamber. The room is large and tiered, with wooden paneling on the walls and a glass roof allowing natural light to filter through. Numerous spotlights are mounted on the ceiling. In the center, a raised wooden podium serves as the focal point, with several people seated behind it. The floor is filled with rows of wooden desks and chairs, occupied by many individuals in professional attire, likely members of parliament or staff. The overall atmosphere is formal and legislative.

The role of the Scottish Parliament

Which of these statements is FALSE:

The Scottish Parliament...

- A: makes laws
- B: is led by the First Minister
- C: holds the government to account
- D: is answerable to the people of Scotland

Which of these statements is FALSE:

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The Scottish Government & the Scottish Parliament



- runs the country
- spends the money!
- answerable to Parliament
- led by First Minister
- not the government
- makes laws
- scrutinises the government
- holds Government to account
- led by Presiding Officer

In which year was the current Scottish Parliament founded?:

- A: 1999
- B: 1948
- C: 1707
- D: 2005



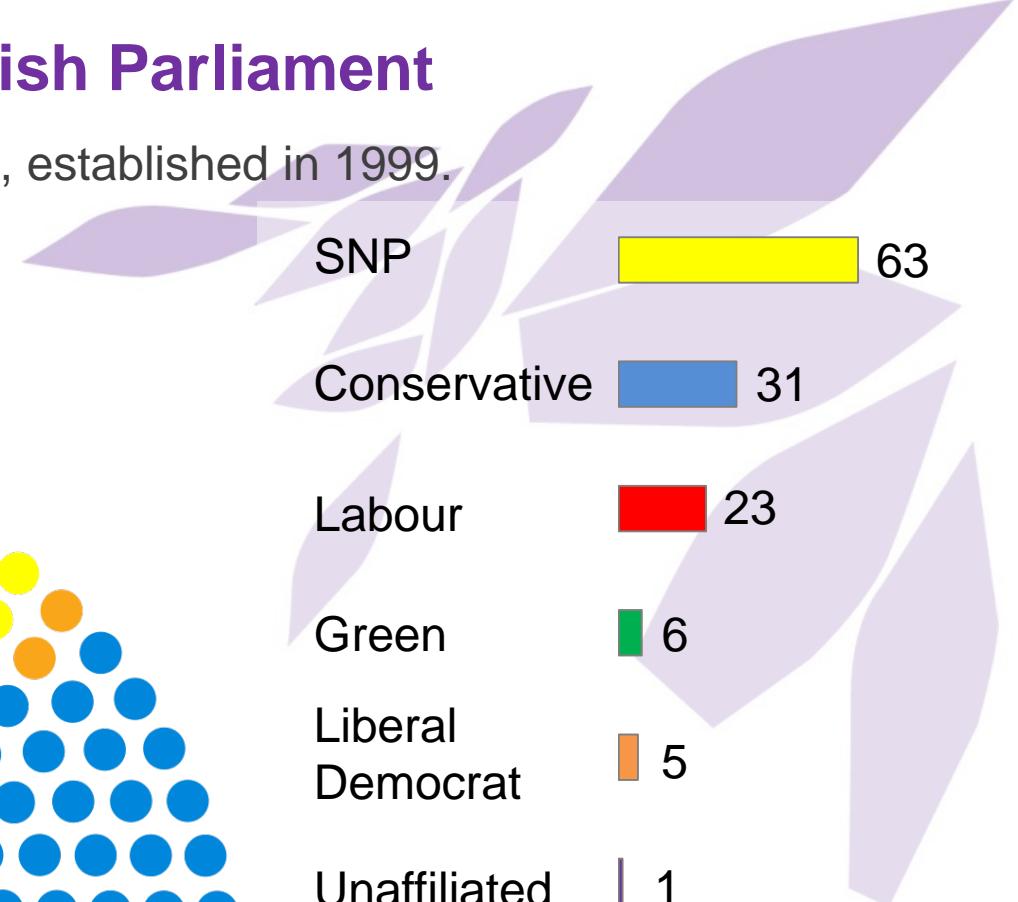
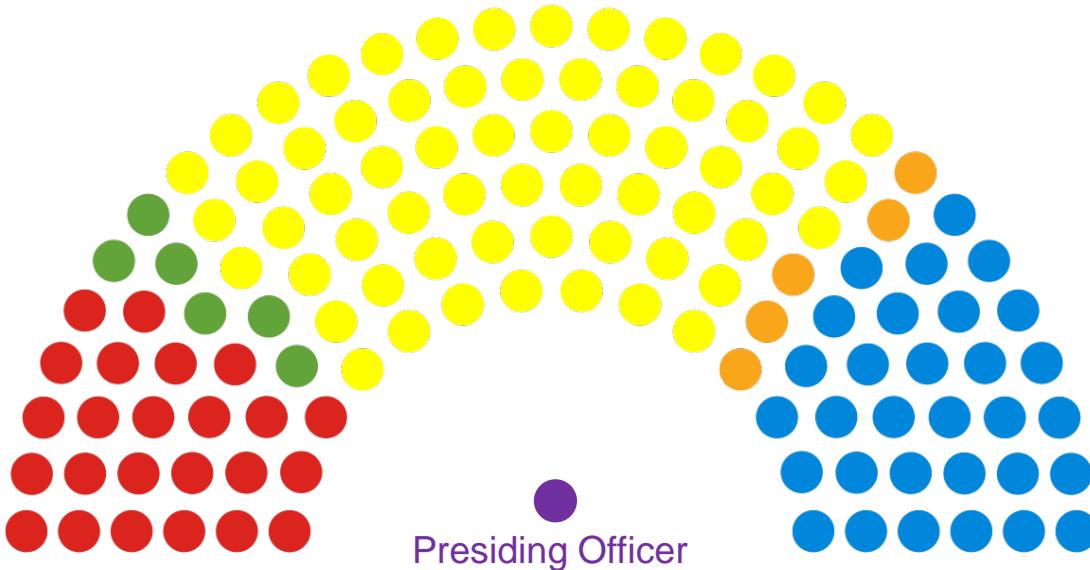
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The Scottish Parliament

- Created by the Scotland Act 1998, established in 1999.
- 129 elected members
 - 73 Constituency
 - 56 regional



What are the powers of the Scottish Parliament?



Devolved

The **Scottish Parliament at Holyrood** can pass laws on **devolved matters** – in general, those affecting most aspects of day-to-day life in Scotland.



Reserved

The **UK Parliament at Westminster** can pass laws on **reserved matters** – in general, those with a UK-wide or international impact.

Which of the following is NOT a devolved matter?:

- A: Health
- B: Education
- C: Tourism
- D: Trade



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- B: Education
- C: Tourism
- D: Trade





Environment



Education

Devolved



Transport



Housing



Tourism



Benefits and Social Security



Broadcasting

Reserved



Trade



Employment



Immigration



The role of committees

The role of committees

- Small groups of MSPs
- Meet on a regular basis, usually on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday
- Hold the Scottish Government to account
- Hold inquiries
- Scrutinise and amend legislation



The role of committees

How?

- Call for views.
- Question expert witnesses and stakeholders.
- Go on fact-finding visits.
- Question Ministers.
- Question other individuals and outside organisations.



What are the committees up to?



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Committees

[Previous Committees](#)

[Conveners Group](#)

[Scottish Commission for Public Audit](#)

[Register as a Committee Adviser or Research Consultant](#)

Committees

Current committees

For information about individual committees please choose from one of the links below.

 Contract  Expand

+ [Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee](#)

+ [Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee](#)

+ [Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee](#)

+ [Education and Skills Committee](#)

+ [Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee](#)

+ [Equalities and Human Rights Committee](#)

+ [Finance and Constitution Committee](#)

Guide for Witnesses



Giving
evidence to
a committee?

Our guide explains what to expect before, during and after the committee meeting.

[www.parliament.scot/witnesses](#)

Get Involved

Find out how you can attend Committee Meetings. See our Visiting Parliament section.



How does the parliament make laws?

How does the Parliament make laws?

Stages of a bill

Bill introduced to the Parliament

General principles considered by Committees then by Parliament in the chamber

1

Committee scrutinises the Bill in detail, line by line. Amendments are made.

2

Parliament makes amendments and debates the Bill.

Parliament votes on whether the Bill should become law

3

Royal Assent makes it an Act of the Scottish Parliament



Committee taking evidence



Chamber debate

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Academic peer-review

Paper submitted to journal

Journal editor decides if the paper is suitable for publishing and assigns reviewers.

1

Reviewers scrutinise the paper and recommend changes.

2

Changes made to paper and resubmitted. Editor decides if the paper should be accepted for publication.

3

Article published

Peer-review process from hell!



129 reviewers



Peer-review is
open access
and broadcast
live



The chief editor
is The Queen!

SPICe

The Information Centre
An t-Ionad Fiosrachaidh



SPICe provides factual, accurate and timely information and analysis to Members in support of parliamentary business.

We provide: facts, analysis and briefings; research services; news and current affairs; and impartial expertise to MSPs, MSP staff and Parliament staff.

**Justice, Health
&
Social Affairs
Research team**

**Financial
Scrutiny
Unit**

**Brexit,
Environment and
Rural Affairs**

**Enquiries and
Collections
team**

There are four teams, including around 40 researchers and information specialists working in SPICe

Who does SPICe support?

MSPs and their staff

Parliamentary Committees

Scottish Parliament staff

- The public and media (indirectly)

Enquiries

- First point of contact for enquirers
- Answer majority of SPICe enquiries
- Ensure Parliamentary information is up to date

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Document Supply

- Newspapers (local and national)
- Books
- Journals
- Official publications

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Research

- Impartial briefing and support to MSPs, MSP staff and Parliament staff
- Expertise and technical knowledge on a range of devolved (and reserved) issues

Examples of recent briefings: Variety is the life of SPICe!



How can we reduce obesity in Scotland? 11 October 2017

This briefing was prepared by Kate Grant (University of Edinburgh) during an RCUK Policy Placement. The briefing looks at reducing obesity in Scotland, compares the policy recommendations made by several organisations and explores 25 policy areas in more detail.



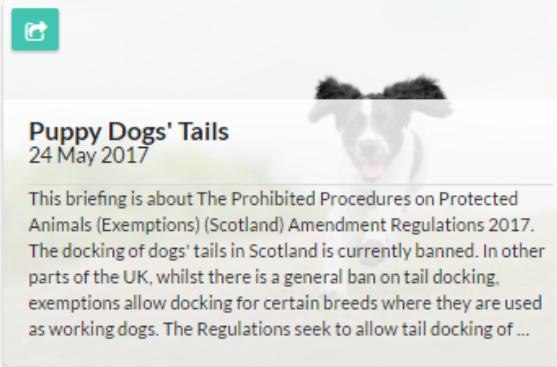
Brexit: The Financial Settlement and the Withdrawal Agreement 04 September 2017

This SPICe briefing, prepared for the Scottish Parliament's Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Relations Committee, provides background information about the EU budget and the UK contributions to the budget along with the EU27's proposals for the financial settlement.



Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill: Consideration prior to stage 3 03 August 2017

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill will be debated at Stage 3 in Autumn 2017(date to be confirmed). This briefing summarises the key issues arising during consideration of the Bill at Stage 1 and Stage 2. It highlights the recommendations made by the Social Security Committee at Stage 1 and the main amendments debated at Stage 2.



Puppy Dogs' Tails 24 May 2017

This briefing is about The Prohibited Procedures on Protected Animals (Exemptions) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2017. The docking of dogs' tails in Scotland is currently banned. In other parts of the UK, whilst there is a general ban on tail docking, exemptions allow docking for certain breeds where they are used as working dogs. The Regulations seek to allow tail docking of ...



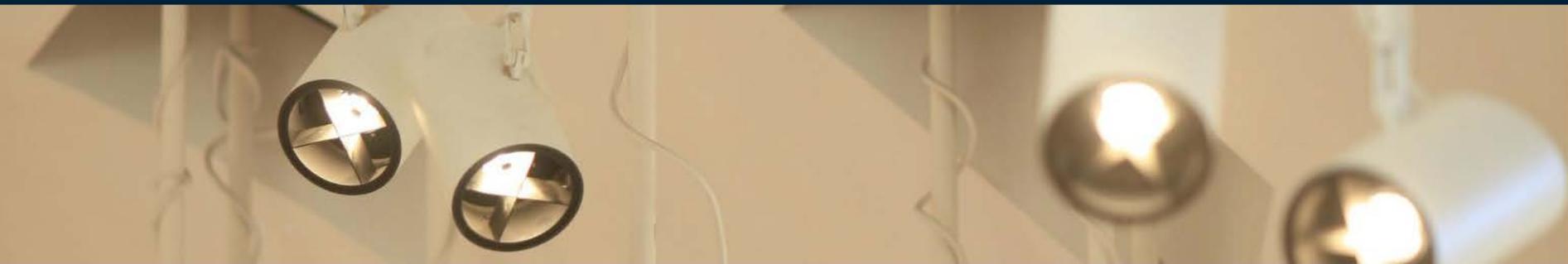
Energy Policy 22 May 2017

This briefing provides an introduction to key energy policies and targets within a world, European, UK, and Scottish context.



Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses (Scotland) Bill 18 May 2017

This Scottish Government Bill would prohibit the performance, display and exhibition of wild animals in travelling circuses. It proposes to make causing or permitting a wild animal to be used in this way a criminal offence, liable to summary conviction.



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Guest blog – Data is everywhere

March 13, 2018



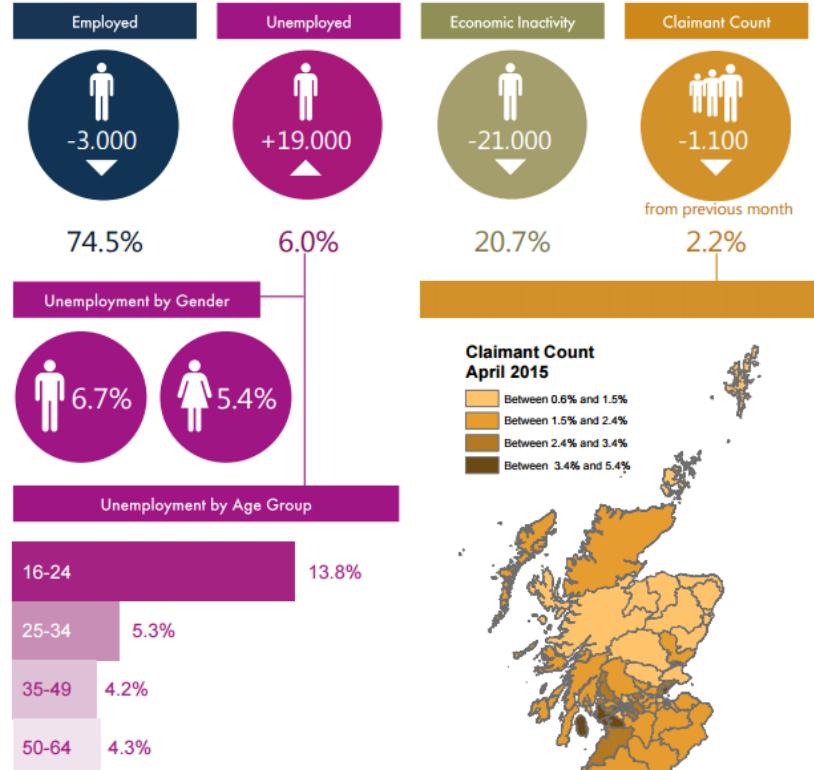
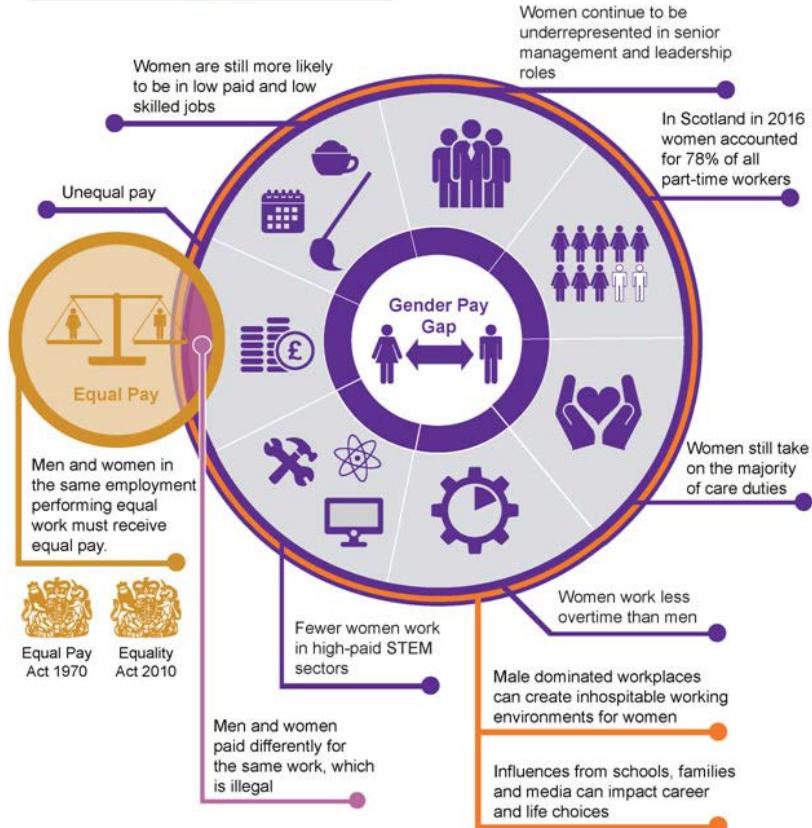
Apples and oranges? Why it's difficult to compare Scottish and English local government funding



The **Scottish Parliament Information Centre** provides impartial, factual, accurate information and analysis to Members in support of Scottish Parliament parliamentary business.

Infographics and data visualisation

What's the difference between Equal Pay and the Gender Pay Gap?



How SPICe supports committees

Work in partnership with committee clerks to deliver:

- Committee work programmes
- Bill briefings
- Policy briefings – oral and written
- Witness identification
- Lines of questioning
- Identification and appointment of advisers
- Commissioned research

Academic Engagement



Why engage with Universities?

- Better scrutiny
- Better law
- Better networked members and staff

Why engage with the Parliament?

- Contribution to civic society
- Profile
- Research impact (e.g. REF)

For every **1** SPICe Researcher
there around

75

University Professors
in Scotland

Three principles:

1. Be open to all – to attract the best expertise
2. Add value to parliamentary business
3. Be agile and pragmatic

How do we engage?

- People
- Networks
- Events



People

PhD placements:

- Hosted by the RCUK Policy Internships scheme
- Work on a parliamentary briefing.

Academic Fellows:

- undertake and communicate analysis which would otherwise not be possible
- increase the use of academic knowledge, skills and research within the Parliament
- promote knowledge and understanding of the Parliament within the academic sector.



SPICe Briefing Drug Misuse

27 March 2017

17/22

Damon Davies

This briefing explores the issue of drug misuse in Scotland. It begins with an overview of the Scottish Government's National Drugs Strategy before providing a summary of the prevalence and trends in drug misuse from the latest available data. It then covers approaches to the treatment of people with a drug problem and drugs services in Scotland. Current policy issues are discussed in the final section.



Image source: www.pixnio.com



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RCUK internship scheme:

- Calls go out in June
- Deadline end of August

Events

Breakfast seminars:

Aim is to provide access to academic expertise to improve parliamentary scrutiny by:

- Developing understanding and awareness of issues
- encouraging engagement and debate among a spectrum of attendees.

Positive outcomes:

- SPICe experts promoted alongside academic experts
- Committees have invited academics as witnesses
- MSPs, able to question experts.
- SPICe connect with new contacts to review briefings and help with enquiries.



Networks

Knowledge exchange network

- Includes knowledge exchange staff from universities and research institutes across Scotland.
- Half day seminar held every six months where SPICe staff together with Committee Clerks and other Parliament staff can engage face-to-face with academic colleagues from across Scotland.



scottish universities
insight institute
mobilising knowledge for a better Scotland



Ask academia

Allows any member of parliament staff to contact relevant academics in Scotland. Used widely in the Parliament and has included:

- dissemination of Committee work programmes and calls for evidence for Committees
- calls for proposals for the Fellowship Scheme and Brexit Seminar Series
- notification and promotion of knowledge exchange events and activities



What can you do?

- Keep up to date
- Make contact - academia@parliament.scot
- Network
- Contribute



Useful resources

- accessible
- accurate
- clear and understandable
- impartial
- relevant and brief.

www.plainenglish.co.uk/



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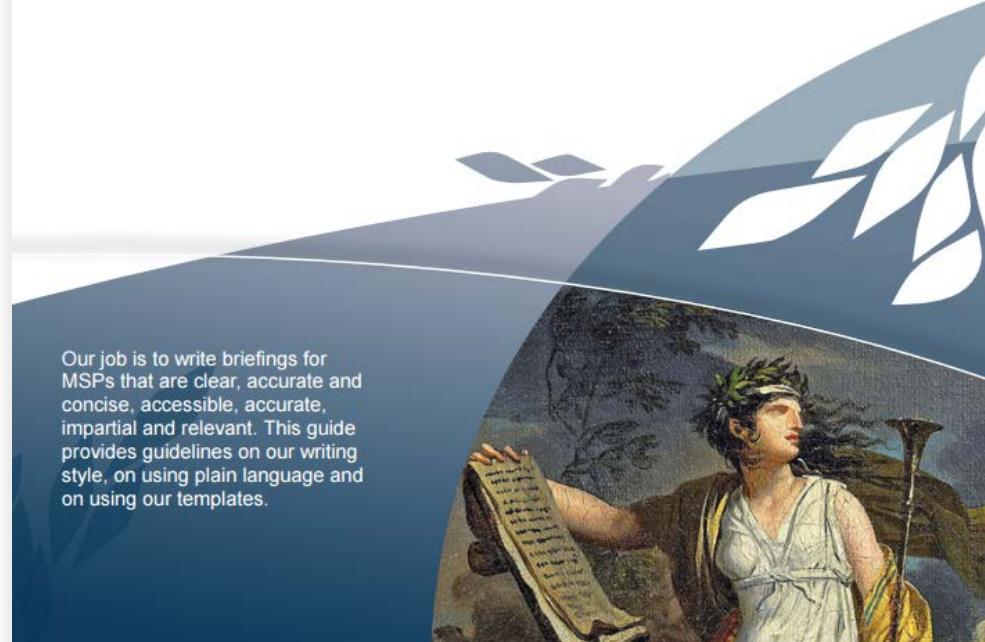
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Pàipear-ullachaidh SPICe

SPICe Style and Writing Guide

Our job is to write briefings for MSPs that are clear, accurate and concise, accessible, accurate, impartial and relevant. This guide provides guidelines on our writing style, on using plain language and on using our templates.



Thanks for listening

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SPICe blog:

<https://spice-spotlight.scot/>



@ScotParl



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