

What Women Want (from local councils)

Handout 1

Women's representation in Scotland

Key stats:

- 4 out of 5 political party leaders or co-chairs are women.
- Number of women MSPs: 35%.
- Number of women councillors: 24% (the highest it has been).
- Number of women council leaders: 5 (out of 32).
- The highest percentage of women MSPs was 39% in the 2007 elections. Women's representation has gone backwards.
- There has never been a BME woman MSP in Scotland.
- There are currently no women MSPs who are known to have self-defined as disabled.
- Out of 32 local authorities, only 7 have BME representation. The City of Edinburgh Council, home of the second largest (8%) non-white population, does not have any BME councillors, while Glasgow hosts 7 of the 17 BME councillors in Scotland. In total, there are only 4 BME women councillors in Scotland.
- In the 2012 Local Government Elections, only 32 candidates were from non-white backgrounds across the 14 local authorities. Almost half (13) of them stood for Glasgow City Council. In this election, only 17 BME Councillors took up office, out of a total of 1223 seats in Scotland. This represents 1.4% of the total Scottish BME population.



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Handout 2

What do local Councillors do?

The basics:

- There are 32 local authorities in Scotland of various sizes.
- There are 1223 local councillors elected.
- They are elected every four years.
- Within councils there are leaders, cabinets and spokespeople for key areas.
- Local authorities are funded through a budget allocation from the Scottish Government, however are able to raise their own income through some taxation, local fares etc.

Who does what?

- **Administration** - Within a council, a group of councillors able to command majority support will form the “Administration” which controls the running of the council.

- **Council Leader** - The council is headed by the Leader of the council, normally elected by the party or coalition that forms the administration of the council.
- **Convenor** - In addition to the Leader, each local authority elects a Convenor, who chairs council meetings and represents the council on civic and ceremonial occasions. In the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, the Convenor is known as the Lord Provost. Other councils may choose their own title for their Convenor, excluding Lord Provost, and most are titled Provost.
- **Chief Executive** - The council’s Chief Executive is normally the head of its paid staff, employed by and responsible to the council.
- **Officers** - The council will also employ a staff of officers, including teachers, social workers and planning officers to carry out its functions.



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