

Welcome to the May 2016 Scotland Monitor – an essential briefing on one month of Scottish current affairs, and packed with additional articles, data and reports. For more policy news see the “[latest news](#)” section on our website. If you have any queries about this document or the CSPP, please don’t hesitate to [get in touch](#).

Scottish Parliament Election Results

On 5 May the electorate gave the Scottish National Party their third successive Holyrood election win, with Nicola Sturgeon re-elected as Scotland’s First Minister in the Scottish Parliament. Key points from the results were: the SNP was the largest party, however narrowly lost their overall majority; the Conservatives became the official opposition while Labour fell back to third place; the Greens leapfrogged the Liberal Democrats to become the fourth party; and the Lib Dems scored some notable constituency victories to maintain their current number of seats. Final results by seats were: SNP: 63 (-6); Conservative: 31 (+16); Labour: 24 (-13); Green: 6 (+4); Liberal Democrat: 5 (no change); Independent: 0 (-1). For more see:

- [Scottish Parliament Election Results Briefing](#) [SPICe]
- [Election 2016: Before and After and Party Strength Maps](#) [BBC]
- [SNP Leader Nicola Sturgeon Re-Elected as First Minister](#) [STV]
- [New MSPs and the Third Sector: Who You Need to Know](#) [Third Force News]

New Scottish Government Cabinet

Following her re-election as First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon unveiled her new Cabinet. The most notable change was the move of Deputy First Minister John Swinney from Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution and Economy to CS for Education and Skills. The First Minister also announced that the Scottish Government’s priorities would be the economy and education, in particular to reduce the attainment gap between pupils from different backgrounds. This focus comes as research from the Sutton Trust has suggested that pupils from the poorest backgrounds in Scotland are four times less likely to go to university than those from the wealthiest backgrounds, the worst rate in the UK. For more see:

- [The Scottish Cabinet](#) [Scottish Government]
- [New Scottish Cabinet Unveiled](#) [Scottish Government]
- [Scottish Cabinet Reshuffle: The New Local Government Team](#) [LGiU Scotland]
- [Debate on First Minister’s Programme of Government Statement](#) [Scottish Parliament]
- [Poorest Pupils Face 'Shocking' Barriers to University](#) [Herald]

European Union Referendum

Following the Scottish Parliament election, focus has begun to shift toward the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union, set for 23rd June. During May the CSPP chaired two flagship debates on the topic, at the universities of Edinburgh and Dundee. At the first event, former Lib Dem leader Lord Campbell and former Labour MP Tom Harris argued the respective cases for Remain and Leave. Meanwhile many analysts are less focused on the result of the vote in Scotland – assumed likely to produce a majority for remain – than the impact on the Scottish constitutional debate if the UK as a whole were to vote to leave the EU. For more see:

- [CSPP Chairs EU Debate with Lord Menzies Campbell & Former MP Tom Harris](#) [CSPP]
- [Alex Salmond Says Scotland Would Leave UK in Event of Brexit](#) [Guardian]
- [What the UK Thinks: EU Referendum Poll of Polls](#) [What the UK Thinks]
- [EU Referendum Poll: Celtic Nations Set to Vote to Remain](#) [Scotsman]
- [Opinion: Impact of Brexit on Scotland's Independence Drive is Hard to Call](#) [OD]

Economy

Scotland's GDP fell by 1% in cash terms last year according to official figures analysed by economist John McLaren of Fiscal Affairs Scotland. The figures also suggest that since the 2008 recession the Scottish economy has been growing at a slower rate than the UK as a whole. The recent reduction in output is considered to be due to a contraction in the North Sea oil industry in a context of falling prices. Meanwhile the unemployment rate in Scotland rose to 6.2% in Q1 2016, compared with 5.1% for the UK overall. Despite this, there was also positive news, with the employment level reaching a record high in 2015, and a record level of foreign direct investment (FDI) also secured in 2015. For more see:

- [Scottish Economy Grows Far More Slowly than UK as a Whole](#) [Guardian]
- [Scotland's Unemployment Total Rises](#) [BBC News]
- [Employment Levels Reach Record High](#) [Scottish Government]
- [Foreign Investment Boost for Scotland](#) [BBC News]
- [Bank of Scotland Purchasing Managers' Index Results](#) [Scotsman]
- [Opinion: Bold Action Sparks Boost for Scottish Foreign Direct Investment Figures](#) [Herald]

And Another Thing...

- Scotland was rated as the best country in Europe for LGBTI equality and human rights laws for the second year running – [read more](#). [Scotsman]
- State-owned Caledonian MacBrayne won a new £900m contract to continue operating the Clyde and Hebrides Ferries Network for an eight year period – [read more](#). [BBC News]
- East Lothian has seen a 50% reduction in youth unemployment over the past 12 months, in part due to a new approach to employability-related services – [read more](#). [East Lothian Courier]

Reports & Statistics

Social Policy

[Access in Scotland](#) – The Sutton Trust

[Health and Care Experience Survey 2015/16 - National Results](#) – Scottish Government

[Free Personal and Nursing Care, Scotland, 2014-15](#) – Scottish Government

[Key Equality Outcomes from the Scottish Surveys Core Questions](#) – Scotland's Chief Statistician

Economy

[Labour Market Brief, May 2016](#) – Scottish Government

[Regional Employment Patterns in Scotland](#) – Annual Population Survey 2015 Summary