



Women's Equality Party Conference

26 November 2022

Title: **WE Scotland**

Proposed by: **WE Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch**

Proposer: **Polly Selkirk**

Seconder: Charlotte Gilbert

Supported by: David Renton - Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch

Maddy Millar - Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch

Sarah Bezuidenhout – Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch

Suzi Martin (Dundee based member without a formal branch to attend)

Ruth Wilkinson – Glasgow Branch

Su Edwards – Highlands and Islands Branch

Elisabeth Loose – Glasgow Branch

Anna Nordhal – Highlands and Islands Branch

Jasmine Woolley – Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch

Type of motion: **Special debate**

Motion text:

1 **The Issue:**

2 **SWEP (Scottish Women's Equality Party) would like more autonomy and recognition from**
3 **central office:**

4 The Scottish government has its own parliament in Holyrood and the ability to make its own laws.
5 Therefore, many issues are entirely devolved to the Scottish parliament and not governed by
6 Westminster at all. Many of these are in areas that WEP is focused on (e.g. health care, social care
7 and education). There is also the possibility that Scotland may become independent in the future and
8 WEP should be prepared for this.

9 Anecdotally, there is thinking amongst SWEP members that central office has forgotten or seems to
10 be unaware of Scottish members. We have backed this up by adding extra names to this motion and

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- 11 including email screenshots of emails^{1,2,3} sent from central office which related to issues which were
12 devolved in the Scottish parliament (but with no information of how to campaign for them in Scotland).
- 13 i. *Scotland has its own parliament with law-making abilities and wide devolved powers (e.g. health,*
14 *social care and education).*
- 15 ii. Election by election SWEP becomes better known and more visible to Scottish voters.
- 16 iii. Election by election more Scottish voters wonder whether SWEP is part of a London-centric Party.
- 17 iv. Election by election more Scottish voters conclude that SWEP is London-centric and as a result
18 will not consider voting for us.
- 19 v. Paradoxically then, the more visible SWEP becomes, the more voters there are who decide they
20 cannot vote for us despite supporting our aims.
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Motion rationale:

21 Scotland has not cast a majority vote for the Conservative party since 1955, but has on numerous
22 occasions in the 67 years since then been regulated by a Conservative Government at Westminster
23 (3). The SNP contests for MPs only in Scotland but has the most MPs of any Scottish standing party
24 in Westminster (1).

25 Of the parties which currently hold seats in the Scottish Parliament (in order of largest number of
26 seats):

- 27 a. The SNP (Scottish National Party) - 64 seats - Has been the majority leadership in the Scottish
28 Parliament for 11 years
- 29 b. The Scottish Conservative Party - 31 seats - is administratively independent of, and has different
30 Political leadership from, the Conservative Party at Westminster.
- 31 c. Scottish Labour - 22 seats - is administratively independent of, and has different Political
32 leadership from, the Labour Party at Westminster
- 33 d. The Scottish Green Party - 7 seats - is an entirely separate organisation from the Green Party at
34 Westminster.
- 35 e. The Scottish Liberal Democrats - 4 seats - are a State Party of the Liberal Democrat group in the
36 UK. They are federated with, but not part of, the Liberal Democrats at Westminster (2).

37 WE stand in Scottish Government elections under the name Scottish Women's Equality Party (SWEP).
38 SWEP is in no way separate from WE, administratively or otherwise, and does not have an office, or
39 any employed staff, based in Scotland and primarily addresses issues of Scottish Government.
40 Smaller parties like WE are far more likely to win seats in the Scottish Parliament (because of
41 proportional representation) than at the Westminster Parliament (where elections are first past the

1 Email screenshot 1:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ShBl8xulROHdf-P6g-WHkdUYhgs6j3p_/view?usp=sharing

2 Email screenshot 2:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zjmPxgxSXjtqY-BMBglVgEAesA1Jle3r/view?usp=sharing>

3 Email screenshot 3:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IWPxE_b56ZkvEMk8UT8vEYzYxKlnYTxt/view?usp=sharing

42 post). *Having WE elected members in the Scottish Parliament would make WE substantially more*
43 *visible and politically influential throughout the UK.*

44 **Some possible Solutions that could help encourage further debate:**

- 45 1. Employ at least one full or part time paid member of WE whose job description is focused around
46 WE work in Scotland; focusing only on the Scottish Government; and who is based in Scotland.
47 This should involve having a SWEP Scottish address, even if there is not a full office structure in
48 Scotland.
- 49 2. Establish a full WE office in Scotland.
- 50 3. Create a federation of WE parties in the UK, along the model of the Liberal Democrat federation
51 of parties.
- 52 4. Establish a separate Scottish Women's Equality Party which shares aims with WE, along the lines
53 of the Scottish Green Party.

References:

- 1) <https://ballotbox.scot/uk-parliament>
2) <https://www.parliament.scot/msps/current-party-balance>
3) <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/general-elections-without-scotland-part-1-1945-2010/>
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