

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE  
SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT BUDGET 2015-16  
SUBMISSION FROM BEMIS SCOTLAND

**BEMIS Scotland** are the national Ethnic and Cultural Minorities led umbrella body supporting the development of the Ethnic Minorities Voluntary Sector in Scotland and the communities that this sector represents.

Our vision is of a Scotland that is equal, inclusive and responsive: A society where:

- people from the diverse communities are valued, treated with dignity and respect,
- have equal citizenship, opportunities and equality of life,
- and who actively participate in civic society.

**Scottish Government's draft budget 2015-16**

BEMIS Scotland continue to support the use of the National Indicators / outcomes model for progressing budget evaluation and impact on our diverse communities across a number of sectors.

The current Scottish Government and previous administrations have expressed a commitment to positively progress Equality issues in Scotland. The Parliament has a good track record on Equality issues and while this does not mean to say that we live in a social utopia the commitment of cross party support is largely coherent and should be fully harnessed.

We commend the continuation and maintenance of the Equalities budget leading into 2015 / 16 and recognise the responsibility BEMIS Scotland have in this regard, applying our strategies and programmes to reflect the national indicators and feed into the broader outcomes.

Our approach to promoting and engaging citizens and communities via a medium of programmes will continue to focus on specific indicators overlapping with other variables within the implementation of our work including but not reserved to;

- Strong, resilient and supportive communities<sup>1</sup>
- Tackling inequalities<sup>2</sup>
- Promoting a strong fair and inclusive national identity<sup>3</sup>
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bemis.org.uk/publications/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.bemis.org.uk/PDF/dignity\\_and\\_fairness\\_2013.pdf](http://www.bemis.org.uk/PDF/dignity_and_fairness_2013.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://bemis.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Multicultural-Homecoming-Summary-Document.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://bemis.org.uk/project/gathered-together-cruinn-comhla/>

- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.<sup>5</sup>

### **Context of the Budget**

The 2015/16 budget follows directly from the Scottish Independence Referendum and will be administered in part in the context of the Smith Commission proposals and development.

In relation to the continuing process of Equal Opportunities legislation and 'social justice' BEMIS recognise that;

“with the full devolution of Equal Opportunities policy development, legislative competency and enforcement Scotland would be in a good position to evoke and trigger the whole concept of 'social origin' as called for within the Scottish definition of 'Equal Opportunities'.

This context which does not exist at a UK or European level will stimulate and enable an equitable response to the 'social justice' agenda in line with what all political parties have stated as a priority”.<sup>6</sup>

Within this context we continue to support the overarching National Outcomes which relate to the objective of increased social justice and the maintenance of budget commitments in these areas;

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.

We broadly welcome the provisions of the Scottish Draft Budget 2015/16 its particular commitment to the Equalities setting and would welcome any further engagement on the budget where appropriate and necessary.

Danny Boyle  
Parliamentary and Policy Officer  
BEMIS Scotland  
4 November 2014

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<sup>5</sup> <http://bemis.org.uk/project/equality-internship-programme/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://bemis.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/bemis-smith-commission.pdf>