

## **Response from the SNP:**

### **Are Christians and those of other faiths welcome to become members in your party, to participate within them and in the political process, without discrimination?**

Yes, they are. Scotland is a multi-faith country, and the SNP welcome the contribution all faiths and belief communities make to enriching Scotland. Christians and those of other faiths are very welcome to become members of the SNP, and participate in the political process without discrimination.

### **Would your party support another cross-party group on religious freedom in Scotland at the Scottish Parliament?**

Cross-Party Groups are formed and led by MSPs and so the re-registration of the CPG on religious freedom would be up to individual MSPs.

### **Do you think that Christianity has a role in the public square, especially in politics, education and the media?**

Individual politicians can bring their faith into an issue if they so wish, and are free to do so in the SNP.

### **How will your party ensure Scotland has a strong influence protecting the rights of persecuted Christians around the world?**

In Scotland we believe in equality for all people whatever they believe, and as good global citizens we have a strong and enduring commitment to securing democracy, the rule of law and fundamental human rights around the world. The SNP believe that no one should have to face threats of violence for practicing their faith, no matter where they live, and we support an end to the persecution of religious minorities.

### **What is your party's position on state-funded faith schools, whether they be Christian or Muslim?**

The SNP welcomes the positive contribution that denominational education can make to Scottish education in ensuring that successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals.

### **We believe a diversity of schools would create a healthy competition of ideas and outcomes and improve educational standards across the nation. Should Scotland lead the way by democratising our education system by allocating vouchers to parents to produce financial support for faith schools?**

The SNP does not support vouchers, but we do support making parents and teachers the key decision makers in education. Our manifesto has pledged to review school governance to enable parents, families and communities to play a bigger role both in their children's education and in the life of the school.

**As the state education system becomes increasingly secular and removed from its Christian roots and values, if the Free Church were to set up its own schools, open to all, would you support this?**

The legislative responsibility for the provision of education in Scotland rests with individual local authorities, this includes powers to establish a denominational school for any denomination or faith if they are satisfied that such a school is required.

**Do you agree that children being bullied and taunted at school because they go to church should also be included in new anti-bullying advice being prepared by the Scottish Government?**

There is no place in Scotland for prejudice or discrimination, and the SNP want all children and young people to be able to learn in schools free from discrimination, so that they can learn and reach their full potential.

**Do you agree that sex education should be inclusive of a wide variety of options and views on the nature of sex and sexuality?**

Our manifesto includes a commitment to promoting healthy relationships and anti-bullying through refreshed, age-appropriate strategies and resources, and we will promote an inclusive approach to sex and relationships education.

**Will your party support moves to reconsider the Sunday trading issue in Scotland so that we can move towards a more continental approach?**

The SNP are supporters of Sunday trading, and we think in principle it can be a good thing. At Westminster SNP MPs have been clear that if reforms are to take place, there must be protections in place for employees in Scotland who receive premium pay for working on a Sunday.

**Given that babies can survive at 24 weeks outside the womb, and that France, Germany and Italy have 12-week limits, is there any scientific or logical reason not to reduce the age limit on abortion in Scotland? Would you support a reduction in the time limit?**

We do not intend to change the law on abortion

**Do you agree that the named person scheme needs to be refined, and if so, in what way?**

The named person policy is aimed at protecting children's well-being and is about supporting, not diminishing, the role of parents, It is widely supported by leading children's charities and welfare organisations, as well as by the Scottish Police Federation, who say it will 'help keep children safer' - and has also been upheld by the highest court in Scotland, including a ruling which said the policy had 'no effect whatsoever on the legal, moral or social relationships within the family'.

**What are your proposals to alleviate poverty in Scotland? How do you think that Government can work together with the churches on this?**

Poverty is not inevitable and our focus will be on tackling the root causes of poverty and deprivation - not just on mitigating the cuts imposed by a Westminster government. We will continue our work to increase the income low income families by extending payment of the living wage, increase the income tax free personal allowance to £12,750 and reduce council tax bills for low income families with children. We are also increasing free child-care and making it more flexible, enabling parents to return to work and increase the family income. We are also investing in education and closing the attainment gap. This will reduce the chance of children growing up to be in poverty, as education is known to be one of the best routes out of poverty. Despite all the steps we will take if re-elected, we know that government alone cannot eradicate poverty. We need to harness the efforts of all of society to work towards the common goal of an equal and prosperous country.

**Do you believe that we should accept more refugees in Scotland?**

Scotland stands ready to help to offer sanctuary to refugees who need our help, and the SNP has called for greater resettlement of refugees since the start of the crisis. The SNP Scottish Government has proudly led the way in the UK on practical support for refugees - launching Scotland's refugee taskforce with £1million of funding, providing £375,000 in aid to support humanitarian activity in southern Europe, and ensuring Scotland has taken in more than 400 of the 1,300 refugees given a safe haven in the UK under the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

**Do you think that children have the ability to choose their own gender? How many genders do you think there are?**

The SNP want to encourage and foster tolerance, respect and inclusion in modern, fairer Scotland. By enabling young people to make informed choices about their gender and sexual identity we will support them to be themselves so that they might fulfil their potential.