



**Equality and
Human Rights
Commission**

Scotland

Is Scotland Worth Coming Home to?

**A Question Time-style debate
on the issues around
Scottish identity**

**Thursday 21st January 2010,
Edinburgh**

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A Question Time-style debate on the issues around Scottish identity

- 6.15pm: Upper Gallery and Reception: welcome drinks
- 7.00pm: Theatre: Welcome from Chairperson - Alex Bell, journalist and broadcaster
- 7.05pm: Introduction from Morag Alexander, Scotland Commissioner, Equality and Human Rights Commission
- 7.10pm: Introductory Statements from the Panellists
- 7.30pm: Question Time Style Debate
- 8.55pm: Closing Remarks - Chairperson, Alex Bell
- 9.00pm: Reception: Drinks Reception
- 10.00pm: Close

Scottish Debates Series

The Equality and Human Rights Commission work to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and build good relations. We want to ensure that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society.

We are hosting a series of debates in Scotland, looking at some of the big issues that arise in the changing social, political, cultural and legislative context in which we live. We are committed to bringing people together for what can often be difficult yet important and timely discussions.



'We believe that it is debate, discussion and the respectful sharing of opinions that will help us shape the kind of Scotland we all want to live in'

Morag Alexander OBE, Scotland Commissioner
Equality and Human Rights Commission

Chairperson Biography



Alex Bell was a BBC Trainee and then a producer, reporter and presenter for the BBC. He has also worked for The Observer, The Herald and the Irish Times. He was also speech writer and head of policy to Alex Salmond and the Scottish National Party.

Panelists Biographies

Aamar Anwar is one of Scotland's highest profile lawyers and has made a major contribution to changing attitudes on equality and social justice throughout Scotland. Practising law since 2000, Aamer set up his own firm of Criminal Defence Solicitors based in Glasgow in 2006. Prior to becoming a lawyer he was the national organiser for the Anti Nazi League. He is a leading member of the Stop the War Coalition and Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees, and most recently helped set up Scotland United.





Charlie Macmillan is one of two Directors of Operations with the Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), Scotland's leading mental health charity. He trained as a social worker and has worked in a variety of settings including alternatives to custody, homelessness and HIV and sexual health. He has worked with SAMH for the last 5 years

and in his current role is responsible for SAMH operations in the North and East of Scotland, Employability services, see me, respectme and the organisation's policy and campaigns team. Charlie has been an equalities trainer since 1989 and worked with the Scottish Executive Health Department between 2002 and 2005 advising on equalities issues. He has a keen interest in both equalities and human rights, especially impact assessment, and has recently completed the first year of an LLM in Human Rights Law.

Gerry Hassan is a writer, commentator and thinker about Scotland, the UK, politics and ideas. Hailed by the Sunday Herald as 'Scotland's main public intellectual', Gerry has written and edited a dozen books in the last decade on



Scotland and the wider world: from the setting up of the Parliament, to its record, policy, in-depth studies of the Labour Party and Scottish National Party, and looking at how we imagine the future. Gerry's activities include facilitating events, discussions and conversations which bring people together in Scotland and across the world.



Janey Godley is a multi-award-winning Scottish comedienne, playwright, award-winning blogger, best-selling author and former Scotsman newspaper columnist. Janey Godley has performed her comedy shows and one-woman play around the world, including off-Broadway in New York. She is a regular on BBC Radio 4's Just a Minute. In 2006, Janey

was nominated and was close runner-up for the annual Scotswoman of the Year title as 'the most inspirational woman in Scotland'. A regular 5-star performer at the Edinburgh Fringe, in 2008 she won the Fringe Report Award as 'Best Performer' and two Nivea Funny Women Fringe Awards - as 'Best Stand-Up' and, overall, for 'Best Show' as "one of the most prolific and extraordinary stand-up comedians working in the UK". In 2008, she also won Edinburgh's WAG of the Year Award as 'Best After Dinner Speaker', was nominated as 'Best International Guest' in the 2008 New Zealand Comedy Guild Awards and was voted No 3 by readers in London listing magazine Time Out's list of Top Ten Comedians.

Mona Siddiqui is Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding and Director of Centre for the Study of Islam. Mona Siddiqui started her academic life with a BA in Arabic and French, which led eventually to a PhD in Classical Islamic Law. Mona came to the University of Glasgow in 1996 and two years later founded the Centre for the Study of Islam, which she directs.



Mona provides consultancy work to institutions such as museums, local government and educational institutions, and also provides advice in legal cases, including anti-terrorism cases. Professor Siddiqui is well known for her broadcasting work, including regular radio appearances, and writes frequently for the Scottish and British press. She has also travelled the world at the invitation of diverse institutions to talk about her life and work. In 2008 she was the Jantina Tammes Visiting Professor at the University of Groningen's Faculty of Theology. Professor Siddiqui is the only female Muslim Professor of Islamic Studies in the UK and holds three honorary doctorates from British universities for 'outstanding contribution to religious studies'. She is currently: The Chair of the BBC's Scottish Religious Advisory Committee; A member of the Commission on Scottish Devolution; A member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Islam-West Dialogue.