

UK Responsibilities

The UK Parliament continues to legislate for Scotland on reserved matters. There are currently 72 members in the UK Parliament representing constituencies in Scotland. It may also legislate on devolved matters in Scotland. However, in accordance with the so-called Sewel Convention, a principle has been adopted whereby "The UK Parliament will not normally legislate in relation to devolved matters in Scotland without the agreement of the Scottish Parliament".

The Scottish Parliament can agree the incorporation of legislative provisions affecting Scotland in devolved areas by what is called a 'Sewel Motion'. This enables the Scottish Parliament to agree that Westminster should legislate for Scotland on devolved matters where, for example, it is considered sensible and appropriate to put in place a single UK-wide regime or where the Parliament supports the proposed legislation but no Parliamentary time is available because of separate Scottish priorities.

Reserved issues include:

- constitutional matters
- UK foreign policy
- UK defence and national security
- fiscal, economic and monetary System
- immigration and nationality
- energy: electricity, coal, gas and nuclear energy
- common markets
- trade and industry, including competition and customer protection
- some aspects of transport, including railways, transport safety and regulation
- employment legislation
- social security
- gambling and the National Lottery
- data protection
- abortion, human fertilisation and embryology, genetics,
- xenotransplantation and vivisection
- equal opportunities

The Scotland Act lists, in Schedule 5, the matters that are reserved. Any matter not so reserved, or otherwise defined in the Act as being outwith the competence of the Parliament, is devolved.