



## JUSTICE publishes ‘pocket guide’ for Scottish lawmakers

**London, 9 May 2017** – As the makers of our laws, as our representatives, and in holding the Scottish Government to account, MSPs wear many hats. To support them in this, JUSTICE has published a new publication, [Law for Scottish lawmakers: A JUSTICE guide to the law](#).

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The guide, an update of JUSTICE’s 2015 Westminster focussed publication [Law For lawmakers](#), gives a basic introduction to some of the core legal and constitutional principles with which parliamentarians grapple on a daily basis at Holyrood.

Whilst the legal profession has always been well-represented in politics, politicians are not elected for their ability as lawyers. A clear understanding of how law and the legal system works, its principles and its limitations is vital for MSPs seeking to understanding how our constitution, our Government and our society is regulated and how the rights of individuals are protected or enforced.

In these times of political and constitutional change we face significant questions about the nature of our democracy and the foundation of the United Kingdom. This guide doesn’t provide answers to those questions but does provide a basic glossary to help inform discussion and debate. At its heart is a shared understanding – stepping beyond party politics – of the role that Parliament plays in both making the law work and ensuring respect for the rule of law in practice.

### **The Right Hon Lord Carloway writes in his foreword:**

*“We are at a crucial point in the development of the Scottish legal system. Political uncertainty over the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union, and the place of Scotland in the future world order, are only two of the important issues which the Scottish Parliament will have to grapple with in the coming months and years.*

*“The legal consequences of the anticipated political change may be very significant. They will require legislative alterations to the substantive law, especially in those areas which have been heavily influenced by the EU. As law-makers, Scottish Parliamentarians will be responsible for many of these alterations.”*

While aimed at MSPs, Law for Scottish lawmakers would prove useful to any non-lawyers who have to deal with legal issues, including journalists and NGO workers.

*Law for Scottish lawmakers* has been kindly supported by the Law Society of Scotland and the Faculty of Advocates. We thank them, and our Scottish volunteer members who drafted the guide, for their generous support of the project.

### **Derek Ogg QC Chair, JUSTICE Scotland, writes in his welcome to the report:**

*“At the heart is a shared understanding – stepping beyond party politics – of the role that Parliament plays in both making the law work and ensuring respect for the rule of law in practice.*

*“We hope it will prove a useful ‘pocket guide’ for MSPs as well as their staff.”*

The full [Law for Scottish lawmakers: A JUSTICE guide to the law](#) report is available on the JUSTICE website.

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## Notes for editors

1. Now approaching its 60th anniversary, JUSTICE is an all-party law reform and human rights organisation working to strengthen the justice system – administrative, civil and criminal – in the United Kingdom. For more information about JUSTICE visit [www.justice.org.uk](http://www.justice.org.uk).
2. JUSTICE is generating a reputation as a credible and authoritative voice of concern in the law reform debate in Scotland.
3. JUSTICE's work in Scotland includes answering proposals for root and branch reform to the justice system in both criminal and civil areas. We have responded to government consultations and draft legislation. We have built relationships with other interest groups, civil society, lawyer organisations and parliamentarians.
4. JUSTICE members in Scotland and invited guests will attending an exclusive event on Thursday 22 June at 5.30pm in the Faculty of Advocates Reading Room, Edinburgh. Joanna Cherry QC MP will be speaking about the *Law for Scottish lawmakers* guide and there will be an update on the progress of the JUSTICE [Working Party on Legal Advice and Waiver](#) in Scottish Police stations. **To reserve a place at this meeting email [events@justice.org.uk](mailto:events@justice.org.uk)**
5. Please direct all queries to Jodie Blackstock, Legal Director at JUSTICE on [jblackstock@justice.org.uk](mailto:jblackstock@justice.org.uk) and 0207 7626436.