

HOLYROOD EXPOSED



**A guide to lobbying
in Scotland**

This booklet has been compiled by SpinWatch,
Unlock Democracy and the Electoral Reform Society

We have endeavoured to make sure that the information in this booklet is correct and up-to-date at the time of going to print. A referenced version of this booklet can be downloaded from www.spinwatch.org

Spinwatch (www.spinwatch.org) is a UK-based non-profit making organisation, which monitors the role of public relations, spin and lobbying in society. We are funded by donations and grants, including from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for our work on lobbying transparency (please visit our website for a full list of donors).

Unlock Democracy (www.unlockdemocracy.org) is a grassroots campaign for democratic reform and participation. We are owned and run by our members. Our aim is to build a better democracy, reconnecting politics with ordinary people. We campaign to reform the way our Parliament is elected and how it is run; to limit the influence of big money in politics; and to empower people to decide how to run their local communities.

The Electoral Reform Society (www.electoral-reform.org.uk) was founded in 1884 and has over 100 years of experience and knowledge of democratic processes and institutions. As an independent campaigning organisation working for a better democracy in the UK we believe voters should be at the heart of British politics. The Society works to improve the health of our democracy and to empower and inform voters.



Welcome to your guide to lobbying in Scotland

It gives you a snapshot of the business interests and their lobbyists that are influencing your politicians in Holyrood.

Lobbying is a serious, but normally invisible feature of our politics. Commercial lobbyists – whose paid job it is to influence the decisions taken by our politicians – operate without scrutiny. Lobbying is best done and is most effective when no one is watching.

Wherever there are politicians with the power to make decisions, there are lobbyists trying to influence those decisions. As the Scottish Parliament gets more powers, so lobbying will increase. Scottish politics has been called a ‘lobbyists’ dream’¹.

“This is an incredibly exciting time for Scottish politics and public affairs [aka lobbying],” says lobbying agency **PLMR** ¹ (4 Hunter Square, EH1 1QW) (see the map on pages 4 and 5). It promises its clients to ‘be here on the ground and ready to make the most of it’². Another firm talks of the ‘unprecedented opportunity’³ from recent shifts in British politics, which is ‘good news for all of us’.

Lobbying by corporations is always a tactical investment. Whether facing down a threat to profits from regulation, or pushing for public sector contracts, lobbying has become another way of making money. This is why the corporate sector dominates the influence industry.

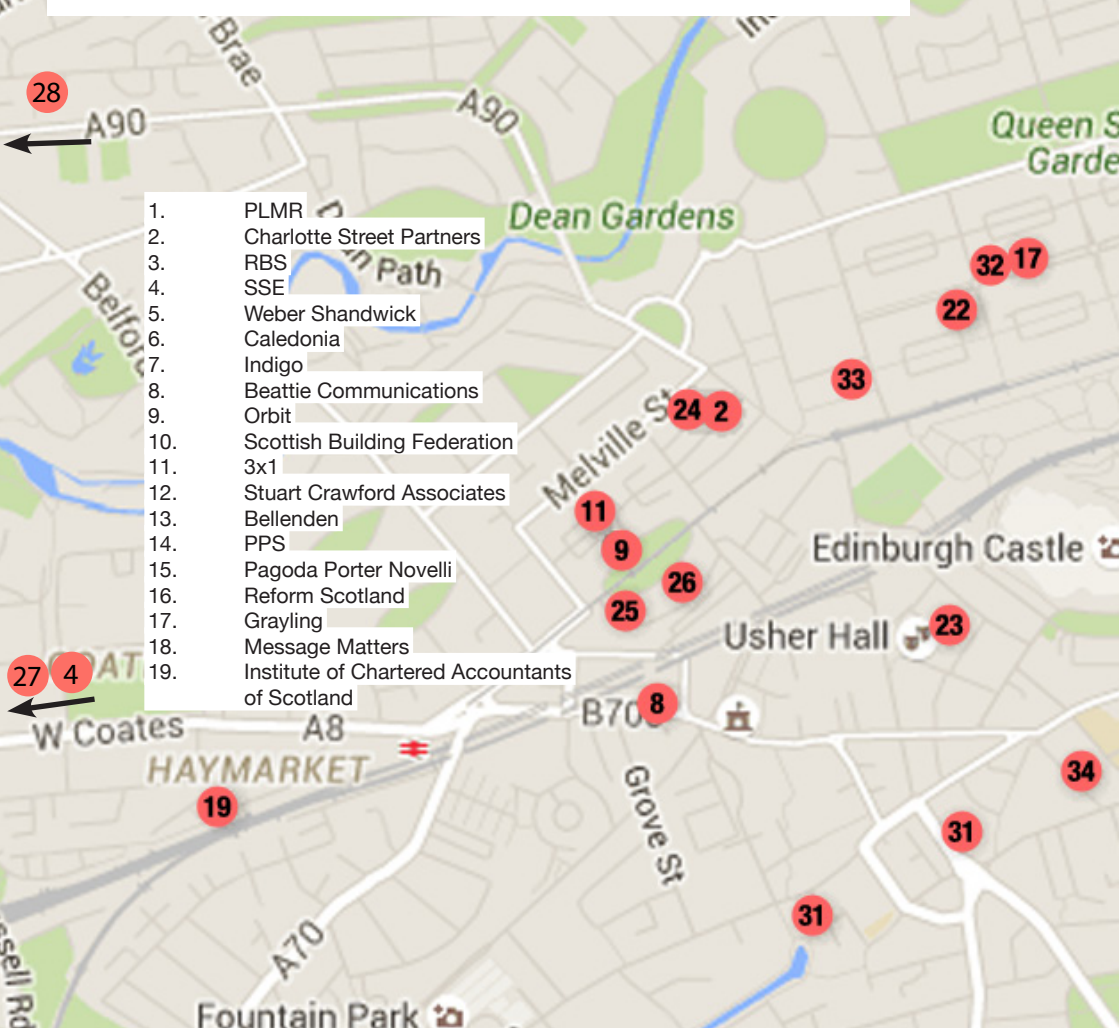
Over the next few pages, we outline some of the central techniques and tactics of lobbyists, and profile some of the key lobbyists operating in Edinburgh.

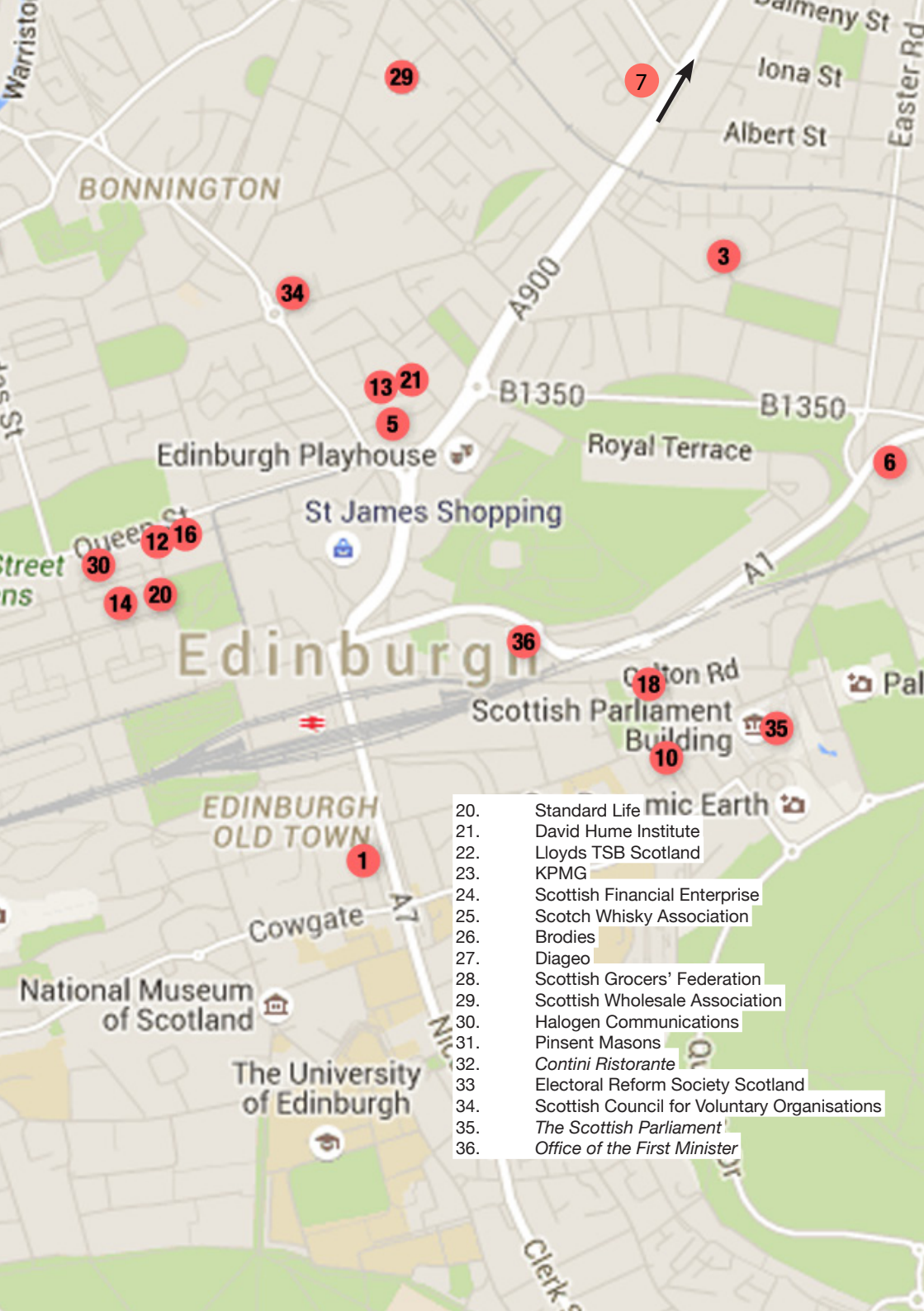
We think the attempts of these lobbyists to bend politicians to their will should be public knowledge. In principle, the Scottish government agrees. It has proposed a compulsory register of lobbyists to open up their back-room dealing. But these proposals do not go far enough. They will only allow you to see a fraction of the lobbying activity taking place in and around Holyrood. If you think we should know who is having a quiet word with our politicians, pages 21 to 23 have details of our campaign to bring lobbying out of the shadows.

Scotland's influence industry is similar in its makeup to the lobbyist playgrounds of Washington, Brussels and London. It's just smaller. The political and social networks around Holyrood are often likened to a village, where everyone knows everyone else. While it might seem and feel like this to policy insiders, this is not a world recognisable to the rest of us.

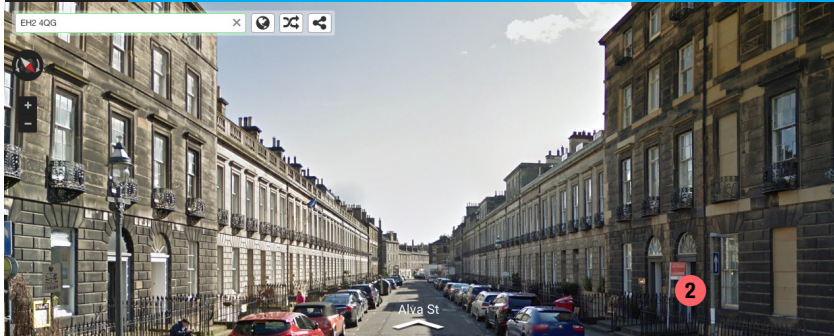
Take a stroll around the streets of central Edinburgh, and you will encounter the same players as in other capitals: commercial lobbying agencies; corporate in-house lobbying teams; industry bodies, think tanks; law firms; management consultants and well-funded charities, all of whom are trying to influence government decisions.

What follows is a selection of these lobbyists. Let's take a virtual walk.





- 20. Standard Life
- 21. David Hume Institute
- 22. Lloyds TSB Scotland
- 23. KPMG
- 24. Scottish Financial Enterprise
- 25. Scotch Whisky Association
- 26. Brodies
- 27. Diageo
- 28. Scottish Grocers' Federation
- 29. Scottish Wholesale Association
- 30. Halogen Communications
- 31. Pinsent Masons
- 32. Contini Ristorante
- 33. Electoral Reform Society Scotland
- 34. Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- 35. The Scottish Parliament
- 36. Office of the First Minister



Alva Street, home to lobbying firm Charlotte Street Partners

Political relationships and PR for hire

The most visible side of the business is the lobbyists-for-hire who sell their services to clients, which are mainly for-profit corporations. These firms are peopled with political insiders – former politicians, ex-government advisers, political aides – who have solid relationships with Scotland’s politicians and provide clients with access to them. Access doesn’t always equate to influence, but deals can only be cooked up once in the kitchen.

Beyond access, these firms also provide a raft of services, including public relations. Lobbyists are very adept at using the media to push their client’s case. The trick is in knowing when to use the press and when to avoid it. The more noise there is, the less control lobbyists can have. As a way of talking to government, though, the media is crucial. Messages are carefully crafted and framed. Even if the corporate goal is pure, self-interested profit-making, it will be dressed up to appear synonymous with the wider, national interest.

There are an unknown number of lobbying agencies operating in Edinburgh, with more in Glasgow and Aberdeen.

One of the best connected – and most discreet – of Edinburgh’s lobbying agencies is **Charlotte Street Partners** 2 (16 Alva Street, EH2 4QG). It has a direct line to the Scottish government in the form of Kevin Pringle, who until summer 2015 was the SNP’s chief spin doctor, and before that Alex Salmond’s most trusted adviser.⁴ This is a man with a decent contacts book.

What does Charlotte Street do for its clients? ‘Whether it is a major bid for a new franchise or a policy decision you need taken in your favour,’ Charlotte Street is on hand to help in the ‘relentless pursuit of your interests’, it says.⁵ It also undertakes some high-level schmoozing of politicians: Charlotte Street Partners has organised a dinner discussion with Nicola Sturgeon, and wined and dined her special adviser on energy and enterprise, Malcolm Fleming, as well as the government’s head of policy, Colin McAllister.⁶

Charlotte Street Partners also draws on the experience of its board, which includes banker Angus Grossart, chair of the government’s infrastructure investment body, the Scottish Futures Trust and former vice chair of **RBS** **3** (36 St Andrew Square, EH2 2YB). The lobbying agency also employs RBS’s former head of communications, Andrew Wilson, who was before that an SNP MSP and shadow cabinet member as well as a *Scotland on Sunday* columnist.

Who is benefiting from these political and media contacts, however, is their secret. Unlike many lobbying agencies south of the border – including Finsbury run by Roland Rudd, a co-founder of Charlotte Street Partners and one of the most UK’s powerful PR people – Charlotte Street Partners does not disclose its lobbying clients.

The firm appears very concerned, though, with what corporations need to do to rebuild public trust. Charlotte Street Partners’ Chris Deerin, columnist for the *Scottish Daily Mail*, describes it as ‘the most important question of our age’. ‘There is talk of a new ‘double bottom-line’ of ‘profit and virtue’, he wrote in a publication on the ‘good corporation’ and its role in society.⁷ It was sponsored by **SSE** **4** (headquartered in Perth, but with an office next to Edinburgh Airport), which in 2013 recieved a record fine for ‘prolonged and extensive’ mis-selling to potential customers.⁸

At the other end of Princes Street is rival lobbying firm, **Weber Shandwick** 5 (9 York Place, EH1 3AB). The Edinburgh office of this international communications giant picked up its own Holyrood insider just after the general election. Luke Skipper, who as chief of staff of the SNP in Westminster was ‘deeply involved’ in the planning of the party’s general election landslide, jumped ship to Weber Shandwick in June 2015. He’s now flogging his ‘insight and experience’ to the firm’s lobbying clients.⁹

Expect more of this revolving door activity as anyone who has worked closely with the SNP sees their market value rocket.

‘As more powers are devolved, the need for business to engage with the Parliament and Scottish government will increase,’ explains Weber Shandwick’s Moray Macdonald. ‘There are going to be winners and losers’ added the firm’s chief lobbyist, Jon McLeod.¹⁰

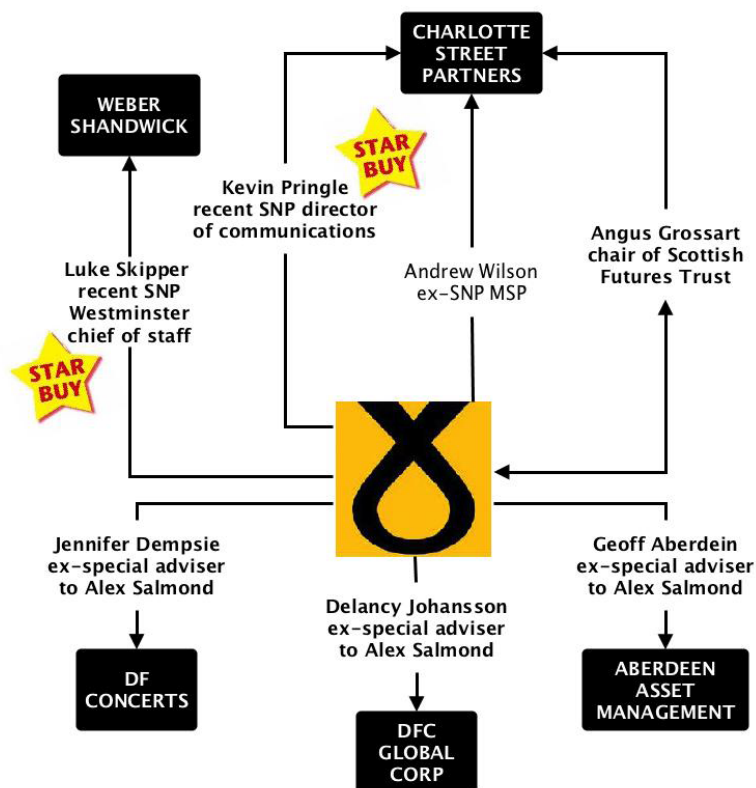
Weber Shandwick’s clients are all, of course, hoping to be winners. These include developers like Artisan Real Estate, which is behind the fiercely opposed Caltongate development that has seen parts of Edinburgh’s Old City demolished to build luxury flats, shops and offices. Weber has lobbied for them for the past three years.¹¹

Other lobbyists-for-hire operating in Edinburgh include:

Caledonia 6 (50 Montrose Terrace, EH7 5DL), which employs two former Liberal Democrat MSPs; **Indigo** 7 (27 Maritime Street, EH6 6SE), which is run by a former adviser to a Conservative Scottish Secretary; and **Beattie Communications** 8 (152 Morrison Street, EH3 8EB), which used to employ the son of a Labour Scottish Secretary.

Beattie Communications was at the centre of the first scandal of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 after two of its lobbyists were stung by the *Observer* (‘I know the Secretary of State very, very well, because he’s my father,’ one of the lobbyists boasted to the journalist posing as a businessman).¹²

Another Edinburgh-based lobbying firm is **Orbit** ⁹ (2 Walker Street, EH3 7LB), which lobbies for house builders and the construction industry lobbying group, **Scottish Building Federation** ¹⁰ (4 Crichton's Close, EH8 8DT); **3x1** ¹¹ (6a Walker Street, EH3 7LP), which counts among its clients NHS Health Scotland, and major NHS IT contractor in Scotland, Atos; and **Stuart Crawford Associates** ¹² (7-9 North St David Street, EH2 1AW), which claims to have helped clients as they 'strive to influence the development of government policy'.¹³



Recent moves between the Scottish National Party and those lobbying it.

Playing with the planning process

A proportion of Edinburgh's lobbying firms are specialists in winning planning permission for developers, whether that's for a new supermarket, a power station, or housing development. As a result, some of them employ elected councillors or former council chiefs to guide the way.

In many cases, securing permission will involve not only swaying the vote of the local planning committee, but quelling any local opposition. Companies faced with a development that has drawn the ire of a local community will often hire lobbyists to run a public consultation. This is not as benign as it sounds. 'Businesses have to be able to predict risk and gain intelligence on potential problems,' says ex-Tesco lobbyist Bernard Hughes. 'The army used to call it reconnaissance; we call it consultation'.¹⁴

In some lobbyists' hands, consultation is a way of flushing out opposition and providing a managed channel through which would-be opponents can voice concerns. Opportunities to influence the outcome are almost always nil.

Just round the corner from Weber Shandwick is **Bellenden** **13** (16 Forth Street, EH1 3LH) a UK-wide specialist in securing planning consent, run by an ex-Labour councillor in the London borough of Southwark. It promises to provide developers with local intelligence on communities and the 'key political influencers and decision makers' that serve them.

Another of the leaders in this field is **PPS** **14** (27 George Street, EH2 2PA) which prides itself on its work in the 'tougher areas' of planning PR. Its current roster of nearly 100 lobbying clients across the UK includes the energy firms EDF and E.ON; infrastructure giants Balfour Beatty and Peel Group; and developers Land Securities, Sainsbury's, Barratt and scores more.

Chief lobbyist in PPS' Edinburgh office is Donald Anderson. Prior to joining, Anderson was leader of Edinburgh City Council from 1999-2006. During this time, he supported the controversial Caltongate development. The original developers, Mountgrange, were then

clients of PPS. Anderson said it was 'laughable' to think that his new job was linked to his support for the plans.

PPS isn't the only lobbying firm to bag a leader of Edinburgh City Council. Policy chief at **Pagoda Porter Novelli** ¹⁵ (4 Eyre Place, EH3 5EP) is Keith Geddes, who led the council in the nineties. Geddes says his objectives are simple: 'to effect change in public policy by linking up clients with key decision makers'¹⁵, revealing why the revolving door is so important to the lobbying industry. Pagoda doesn't say who is benefitting from this access, unlike some firms that voluntarily disclose their lobbying clients.

Not to be left out, energy giant SSE (formerly Scottish and Southern Energy) picked up its own former Edinburgh City Council chief, Sue Bruce, in 2013. Bruce took up a £50,000-a-year director role with SSE just weeks before the firm went into talks with the council over the renewal of a contract to supply energy to the local authority's tenants, a contract worth at least £11 million.



The controversial Caltongate development in Edinburgh's Old Town was given the green light, aided by lobbyists.

Financing influential others

Employing people with an inside track to decision-makers is just one of the ways lobbyists game the system. Politicians do not make decisions in a vacuum and so lobbyists also seek to fill the environment around decision-makers with their messages. Politicians are influenced by what the media says, by the views of influential others — business leaders, think tanks, commentators — and sometimes public opinion. The game thus played by lobbyists is to control the intellectual space in which officials make policy decisions.

One method is to get influential others, like think tanks and business lobby groups, to carry a message to politicians. The tactic of hiring think tanks to provide third party endorsement is an open secret in lobbying. While some are independent-minded, others behave more like lobbyists-for-hire.

One of the newest of Scotland's think tanks is **Reform Scotland** ¹⁶ (7-9 North St David Street, EH2 1AW). Founded in 2008, it has been described as the 'tartan offshoot' of the London-based free market think tank, Reform. It also promotes a similar agenda: limited government; tax reform; and the opening up of public services to the private sector.

The think tank, which is run by Geoff Mawdsley, formerly with lobbying agency **Grayling** ¹⁷ (107 George St, EH2 3ES), has ties to the Scottish Conservative Party, but has enjoyed support from other political parties: Alex Salmond, for example, spoke at Reform Scotland's first annual dinner in 2009. It also employs its own lobbying firm, **Message Matters** ¹⁸ (22 Calton Road, EH8 8DP) run by the former chair of the Conservative Party in Scotland. Message Matters counts the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, or **ICAS** ¹⁹ (21 Haymarket Yards, EH12 5BH), and financial services firms,

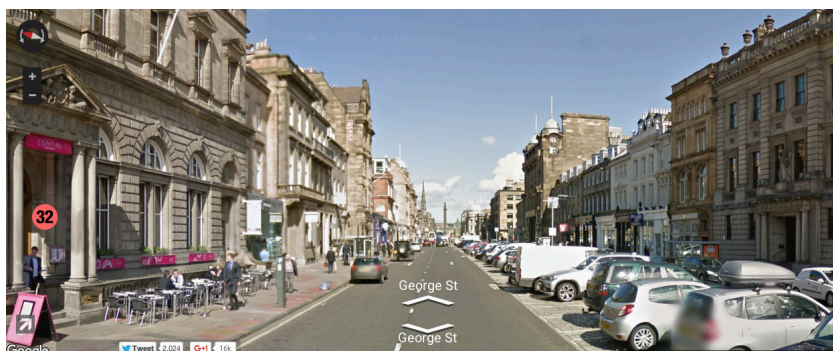


like **Standard Life** 20 (1 George Street, EH2 2LL) among its clients. It also recently partnered with London-based financial services lobbying firm, Cicero, with its own roster of City clients. Reform Scotland does not reveal who funds it, only that it accepts donations from a range of sources, ‘not just the financial sector’.¹⁶

Reform Scotland is chaired by multimillionaire financier Alan McFarlane, who is also a recent donor to another of the country’s think tanks, the **David Hume Institute** 21 (26 Forth Street, EH1 3LH). The Institute has been described as a northern neoliberal outpost that was designed to complement the London-based granddaddy of free-market think tanks, the Institute of Economic Affairs.

Unlike Reform, the David Hume Institute does publish a funders list, most of which hail from the financial services industry, including: RBS, Standard Life, **Lloyds Banking Group Scotland** 22 (120 George Street, EH2 4LH), **KPMG** 23 (20 Castle Terrace, EH1 2EG) and ICAS.

The Institute’s director, Ray Perman, previously ran the industry body for the whole of Scotland’s finance sector, **Scottish Financial Enterprise** 24 (24 Melville Street, EH3 7NS), which has also funded the think tank.



George Street is home to in-house lobbyists, like Standard Life and Lloyds; business lobby group the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce; as well as lobbying agencies, such as PPS and Grayling. Contini Ristorante, a lobbyist’s hangout, is on the left.

Alcohol gets in a (legal) fight

Businesses lobby for as many different reasons as there are government decisions. How much they spend will often depend on the size of the opportunity or threat.

If government is looking to put curbs on the sale of a particular product – cigarettes are an obvious example, as increasingly is alcohol – the lobbying effort will be scaled up to meet the size of the potential market loss. Similarly, the value of a potential market gain will determine the intensity of lobbying by companies seeking to enter it. The opening up of the multi-billion pound NHS budget to private sector health companies might be a good example. It follows that the greater the prize, the harder the fight.

In recent years, Scotland's alcohol industry has launched a ferocious attack on the Scottish government's plans to bring in controls on the minimum price at which a unit of alcohol can be sold. The policy aim is to try and reduce the harm caused by alcohol. The consequence to the industry is loss of sales.

The industry lost the first round when Scottish judges ruled that the Parliament was within its powers to enforce a minimum price because the measure would protect the health of Scots. The industry came back though with a legal challenge in Europe, which has led to the government, for the time being at least, putting the plans on ice.



Atholl Street, home to the Scotch Whiskey Association; law firm Brodies; and lobbying firm, Atholl Crescent Consultants.



Leading the charge against minimum pricing of alcohol in Holyrood (and Westminster) is the 100-year old **Scotch Whisky Association** ²⁵ (20 Atholl Crescent, EH3 8HF). It is headed up by David Frost, a former diplomat and recent senior trade official in the Department for Business where he worked closely with major companies and industry groups.¹⁷

The Scotch Whisky Association has also sought the advice of Scotland's largest law firm **Brodie LLP** ²⁶ (15 Atholl Crescent, EH3 8HA and 50 Lothian Road, EH3 9BD). Together they have been busy arguing that a minimum price on alcohol is contrary to EU law.

Brodies is one of a number of law firms to also offer public affairs (lobbying) services to clients. According to the firm, it has successfully 'promoted and challenged legislation in the Scottish Parliament', as well as drafted amendments to proposed legislation, advised clients on the goings on in Westminster, and also litigated 'where that is the only way to protect our clients' interests'.¹⁸

The biggest hitter in the fight, however, is the world's largest producer of Scotch whisky, the alcohol giant **Diageo** ²⁷ (Edinburgh Park, 5 Lochside Way, EH12 9DT). It financially backs the SWA, has numerous seats on the Association's council, and Diageo's former CEO, Paul Walsh recently served as SWAs chair. 'Diageo's lobbying proxy', is how the SWA is seen by some. Not that Diageo really needs one. On its own, Diageo is one of the country's most formidable lobbyists.

Frightening for tobacco

Typically, lobbyists operate behind closed doors, through quiet negotiation with politicians. Sometimes, however, their words fall on deaf ears and they are compelled to draw on a wider array of lobbying tactics to defend their profits.

The tobacco industry has pioneered many of these techniques over the course of its six decade-long campaign to delay legislative restrictions on cigarettes. For years, this meant denying the science on smoking's links to disease, the explicit aim being to sow doubt in people's minds.

It has also covertly funded a huge number of 'third parties' – think tanks, retailers, scientists, academics, former policemen and even journalists – to do its lobbying for it. This is a key tactic of lobbyists: getting someone else to say what it is you want them to say, and separating the message from the self-interested messenger. Lobbyists will help engineer a following of different voices singing to the company's tune.

In 2013, again in a bid to protect public health, the Scottish government announced further restrictions on tobacco. It said it would press ahead with plans to introduce 'plain' cigarette packaging (not quite as it sounds, this removes the branding from cigarettes and replaces it with large graphic health warnings, branding being seen as a key factor in why young people start to smoke). The tobacco firms piled in to oppose it.

They did what they always do and funded others to lead the fight. Key among them were the trade bodies, the **Scottish Grocers' Federation** ²⁸ (222-224 Queensferry Road, EH4 2BN). and the **Scottish Wholesale Association** ²⁹ (30 McDonald Place, EH7 4NH). Both have been vocal in their opposition to plain packaging.

A Philip Morris strategy document refers to the Grocers Federation as one of its 'media messengers'.¹⁹ The wholesalers launched a public-facing 'Plain Nonsense campaign' in an early attempt to head off the plans, which was 'made possible' with 'support' from British American Tobacco.²⁰



One of the key messages of the industry's campaign against plain packaging was the highly dubious claim that it would lead to a rise in the illicit cigarette trade.

In its correspondence with Alex Salmond, Philip Morris cited a 'revealing study' by former senior police officer, Will O'Reilly, on the 'endemic illicit tobacco trade operating in Scotland'. It warned of the 'profound unintended consequences' to Scotland if his government proceeded. O'Reilly was employed by Philip Morris to add weight to its arguments.

The tobacco giant also referred Salmond to Philip Morris's PR and lobbying firm in Scotland, **Halogen Communications** 30 (4 Queen Street, EH2 1JE) for further information on tobacco smuggling. Halogen has done its fair share of scaremongering for Philip Morris over the so-called increase in illicit tobacco, including sending all MSPs a report by KPMG, paid for by the tobacco giants, which argued that the illicit trade in cigarettes had increased in Australia after it introduced plain packaging, a conclusion that has been widely dismissed.²¹

Philip Morris was also privately letting MSPs know that it intended to sue the Scottish government if it introduced plain packaging.²²

The frackers take on the opposition

Lobbyists need to persuade government that their course is the right way. For this, they need politicians to listen to their message, but ignore any counter arguments coming from those that oppose them, like environmentalists.

Lobbyists have come up with many ways to counter their critics, or 'antis' as they call them. Monitoring of campaign groups is common. Lobbyists have also long employed divide-and-rule tactics to weaken opposition campaigns, splitting any opposition into 'moderates' that they think are persuadable, and what they deem 'extremists', who they seek to isolate.

The fracking industry appears to be acutely aware of its opposition in Scotland. At a gathering of fracking interests in Edinburgh in February 2015, speakers distinguished between a naive 'silent majority' of the population that merely needed informing of fracking's benefits and a 'hardcore of certain individuals' that would require a tougher approach.²³

The event was sponsored by **Pinsent Masons** ³¹ (*Princes Exchange, 1 Earl Grey Street, EH3 9AQ; Quay 2, 139 Fountainbridge, EH3 9QG*), an international law firm with a strong Scottish presence (since it bought Scots law firm McGrigors). Pinsent Masons is another of the law firms offering lobbying advice to clients.

Pinsent Masons' Melissa Thompson spoke on how to deal with protests. Her solution was 'community engagement'. This would help people to fully understand the fracking process and the real risks involved, but added that this approach didn't apply to 'professional protesters who don't actually don't know what cause they're protesting against', she reportedly said.

The following month, a charm offensive began. The petrochemical giant, Ineos, launched a new 'Scottish shale gas community engagement programme' – a PR campaign – to try and persuade people that the technology is safe and will bring untold economic benefits. Its concern for the Scottish economy might come as a surprise to many: not long ago Ineos was accused of holding

Scotland ‘to ransom’ and ‘economic vandalism’²⁴ after deciding to keep its Grangemouth plant shut even though a planned strike was called off.

There are many other lobbying firms offering advice to wannabe frackers, besides Pinsent Masons. PPS also represents Cuadrilla and Celtique Energy, as well as Ineos. Weber Shandwick counts Tamboran Resources and Rathlin Energy among its clients.

Charlotte Street Partners is working for Cluff Natural Resources. Its founder, Algy Cluff, has warned of the potentially devastating economic impact of the Scottish government’s moratorium on fracking. The day after the temporary ban was announced in January 2015, Cluff wrote to the energy and planning ministers warning them that his plans to invest in underground coal gasification were now at risk.²⁵ A couple of months later, Charlotte Street Partners dined with Nicola Sturgeon’s advisers on ‘infrastructure and investment’ and ‘energy and enterprise’,²⁶ although it is not known what was discussed at George Street’s **Contini Ristorante** 32 (103 George Street, EH2 3ES).

Documents released under freedom of information law reveal that in May 2015 Charlotte Street Partners approached members of Falkirk Council on behalf of Cluff.²⁷ The energy company was holding exhibitions for members of the public to learn about its plans for underground coal gasification, and members of the council were invited to meet with Cluff’s project team to discuss its ambitions.

The council’s head of planning, however, advised members that it would be ‘preferable’ that discussions take place ‘in a council facility, supported by council officers’.



Lobbyists are gearing up to handle what they dub a ‘hardcore of certain individuals’ against fracking in Scotland.

And finally, not forgetting...

The third sector, made up of charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, are also very active lobbyists in Scotland.

For example, the **Electoral Reform Society Scotland** ³³ (12 South Charlotte St, EH2 4AX), which part funded this guide, campaigns for improvements in the systems and processes of government, and promotes debate among the public and politicians about Scotland's democratic future. It believes that its lobbying should be open to public scrutiny.

The sector's membership organisation, the **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations** ³⁴ (15 Mansfield Place, EH3 6BB; Hayweight House, 23 Lauriston Street, EH3 9DQ) is a key player, led by its CEO of 20 years, Martin Sime, and chief lobbyist, John Downie.

The SCVO has expressed opposition to the Scottish government's plans to inject some transparency into lobbying. It has called the proposed register of lobbyists 'undemocratic' and worse, 'immoral', and claimed that this minimal transparency measure could be 'harmful' to the sector's relationship with the **Scottish Parliament** ³⁵ (The Scottish Parliament, EH99 1SP) and **government** ³⁶ (Office of the First Minister, St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, EH1 3DG). It is not known how many of its charity members agree.

Read on to find out how a register of lobbyists could shine a light on lobbying in Scotland.

Opening up Scotland's lobbying industry

Despite its growing influence, the lobbying industry in the Scotland is entirely unregulated and unaccountable. There is no way for either Members of the Scottish Parliament or the public to know who is having a quiet word with the country's leaders.

In 2013 the Scottish government agreed to introduce a register of lobbyists to shed some light on the activities of lobbyists in Scotland.

A decent register, as they have had for decades in Canada, the US and other countries around the world, would require lobbyists to regularly disclose their activities. It *should* mean that the people of Scotland could see: who is influencing whom, which decisions they are trying to influence, and how much money they are spending in the process.



The Royal Bank of Scotland, for example, declares its lobbying activity in Washington, Canada and Brussels. The quarterly declarations (see examples below) reveal who RBS has been meeting in the Canadian finance ministry; that RBS is spending in the region of €1m (£750k) a year on influencing EU officials; and that in the seven years it has been under public ownership it has spent \$5.5m (£3.6m) of British taxpayers' money on lobbyists in Washington.

The people of Scotland currently have no way who it is talking to in Holyrood, what it is seeking to influence, nor how much it spends in the process.

Transparency in lobbying is key to modern governance. It helps to put an end to secret decision-making behind closed doors. It shows that our politicians are keen to be held to account for their decisions. It helps us trust them.

Scotland should be leading the way on this. However, the SNP's proposals are likely to fall way short of what's needed. If they go with their initial plans, published in 2015, we would see only a fraction of the lobbying that goes on in the capital. And only marginally more than is revealed by the sham register introduced earlier in the year by the UK government in Westminster.

Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada
canada.gc.ca
Registration - Consultant
The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc
Client name: The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc
Lobbyist name: ROBERT ELLIOTT, Consultant
Lobbyist registration start date: 2008-11-28
Initial registration status: Inactive
Registration Number: 778693-230862
Version 1 of 1 (2008-11-28 to 2008-11-28)
Registration v
Lobbying Information
Subject Matters
Financial Institutions

Transparency Register
EUROPA: Transparency Register, Search the register
Home About Consult the register Register your interest
The Royal Bank of Scotland
Identification number in the register: 483974815034-52
Registration date: 27/11/2014 16:30:37
The information on this entity was last modified on: 27/04/2015 17:57:22
The date of the last annual update was: 27/04/2015 17:57:22
Next update due latest on: 27/04/2016
Registrant: Organisation or self-employed individual

LOBBYING REPORT
Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Section 5) - All Firms Are Required to Complete This Page
Registrant Name of Organisation/Lobbying Firm: Self Employed Individual
Address1: 480 Washington Boulevard
City: Washington
State: DC
Zip Code: 20012
Country: USA
Client Name: Mary Lynn O'Neil
Address2: 212 West Building
City: Washington
State: DC
Zip Code: 20012
Country: USA
Telephone Number: 2024779204
E-Mail: Lynn.O'Neil@rbs.com
Income or Expenses - You Must Complete Either Line 12 or Line 13
Income relating to lobbying activities for this reporting period was: \$1,000 or more
Expense relating to lobbying activities for this reporting period was: \$230,000.00

Royal Bank of Scotland regularly declares its lobbying activities on the transparency registers in Canada, Brussels, and the US

Scotland's leaders do not think that lobbying is an issue of concern. 'We do not need to take remedial action to address any problems with lobbying in Scotland', Joe FitzPatrick, minister for parliamentary business, wrote in his introduction to the proposals.²⁸

The government merely thinks that 'the time is right to consider whether there is a need to increase the transparency of lobbying activity'

This complacency is not shared by all in Scotland. Very real concerns exist over the influence of many industries on the country's politics: the alcohol industry's defence of its product in the face of legislation designed to save lives; the shale gas companies lining up to drill in Scotland, just as fracking is rejected by communities south of the border; as well as the very many companies currently looking to profit from the outsourcing of public services to the private sector. The names Trump and Murdoch will also trigger concern for many about undue influence on Scotland's politicians.

Lobbying can be beneficial. It can lead to better policy-making. Too often, though, it produces a rigged system that leads to bad decisions benefitting the few. If public trust is to remain high in the decisions taken by the Scottish government, lobbying needs to be out in the open. All of it.

Get involved

As we go to print (October 2015), the Scottish government is firming up its legislative plans for a register of lobbyists. This means that now is the time to tell them to make their proposals stronger.

Make your voice heard and join us in campaigning for a decent register of lobbyists in Scotland.

Get involved at: www.lobbyingtransparency.com/scotland

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