A Comprehensive Biography of Foysol Hussain Choudhury MBE

A Life in Public Service

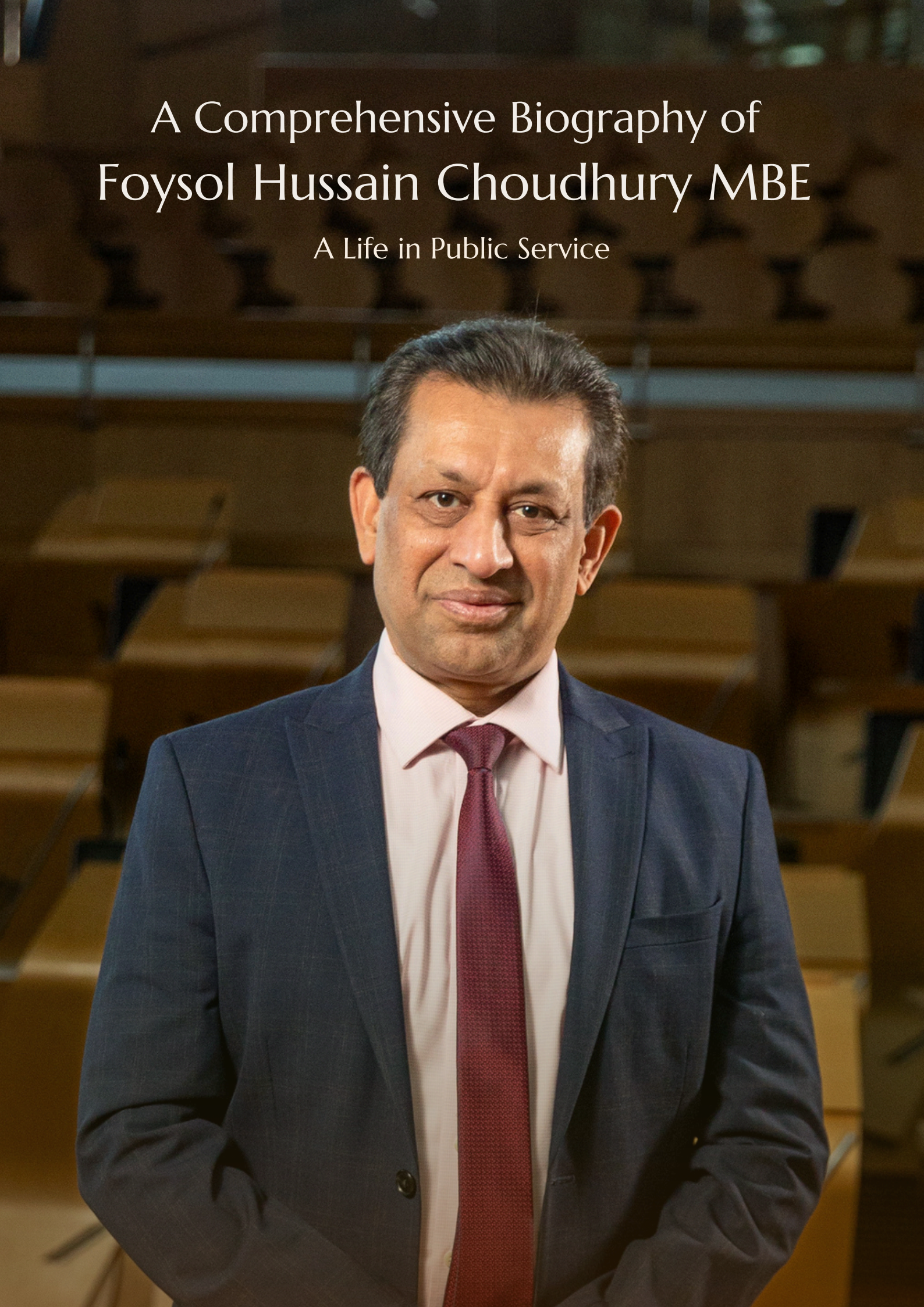


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about FOYSOL

Born in Bangladesh and raised in Edinburgh, Foysol Hussain Choudhury MBE would go on to be to become the first Bangladeshi-born person elected to to the Scottish Parliament and the first ethnic minority MSP to represent Edinburgh and the Lothians. Politics was, however, just one chapter in a longer life spent building business, serving communities, and championing equality.

For more than three decades, Foysol has been a familiar figure across Edinburgh - bringing people together, ensuring that those whose voices are often overlooked are heard, and building organisations that outlasted any single cause or campaign.

His involvement has spanned leadership roles within the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC), Bangladesh Samity Edinburgh, Labour Friends of Bangladesh in Scotland, the Scottish Alliance of Regional Equality Councils (SAREC), and the Council of Bangladeshis in Scotland. He was also among the founders of the Edinburgh Mela and has represented Scotland's Bangladeshi catering industry through the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs Scotland. Long before entering Parliament, he had established a reputation as a community organiser and equality campaigner.

When he was elected to Holyrood in 2021, it marked an important moment not only for Foysol personally, but for Scotland itself. His election reflected a Parliament becoming more representative of the diverse communities it served.



During his time as an MSP, he championed issues ranging from health and equality to culture, international development, and community empowerment, while remaining closely connected to the people and organisations that had shaped his journey.

Looking back across the different chapters of his life, a clear pattern emerges. Whether in business, community activism, or politics, Foysol was drawn not by status or recognition, but by the opportunity to make a practical difference in the lives of others. The roles changed over the years, but the purpose remained much the same: to help people overcome barriers, strengthen communities, and leave opportunities behind for those who came next.

Early life



Foysol Hussain Choudhury was born in Badardi village, Nabiganj Upazila, in the Habiganj district of Sylhet Division, Bangladesh. He lived in there until the age of three, but the country of his birth – and the family legacy rooted in its soil – would shape him for the rest of his life.

He hails from a family with a strong tradition of leadership and community service. The Choudhury name was well-known and respected both in Bangladesh and among British Bangladeshi communities. The family was dedicated to philanthropy and public service, with several members playing key roles in social and economic development in their community.



In 1972, the family relocated from Bangladesh to Manchester, England, where they established themselves in the hospitality sector. They later settled in Edinburgh in 1981, and it was there that Foysol grew to adulthood. Many of his formative years were spent in Leith, Edinburgh's historic port district. He first came to live with family on Montgomery Street, a street that would later fall within his parliamentary constituency.

Growing up, Foysol followed his uncle closely, accompanying him on visits, observing meetings, and learning, without yet knowing it, how community leadership worked.

It was during his teenage years that Foysol first encountered the Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council through family connections. He had fond memories of seeing his father and close friend Sir Geoff Palmer engaged in equalities work through ELREC and began his own involvement early – serving over the years as Trustee, Company Secretary, Vice-Chair, and eventually Chair, a position he would hold for more than a decade. These formative years directed him towards a lifetime of community leadership, and ultimately to the Scottish Parliament itself.

Family background



He is married to Mirza Tahmina Mahbub (Moni), from Moulvibazar, Bangladesh, and the couple have two children: a son, Ikram Hussain Choudhury, who has pursued a career in accountancy, and a daughter, Madiha Jannath Choudhury. Madiha has followed her father into civic life in her own right, having been elected a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament in 2021. She went on to graduate from the University of Edinburgh with a First-Class Honours degree in Law, a step closer to her ambition of qualifying as a solicitor.



The Choudhury family have contributed greatly to their communities in Bangladesh and beyond. His father, the late Al-Haj Gulam Rabbani Choudhury MBE, was a respected community leader whose legacy of social and economic development continues to be felt both in Bangladesh and in Scotland.



His father had four brothers, all of whom have since passed away, each contributing to the family's legacy of community service: the late Al-Haj Gulam Mustafa Choudhury MBE, the late Gulam Isdani Choudhury, the late Gulam Mohammed Choudhury, and the late Gulam Kibria Choudhury.



His mother, Mrs Rukeya Rabbani Choudhury, has been a vital pillar of support throughout Foysol's life and remains so today. Her side of the family carried that same tradition forward. Her three brothers – Fakhrul Islam, Shorof Uddin, and Dr Wali Tasar Uddin MBE – were prominent figures in both business and community leadership.

Dr Wali Tasar Uddin holds a particular distinction: he was the first Bangladeshi to serve as Honorary Consul General for Bangladesh in Scotland – a renowned businessman and community leader whose mentorship profoundly shaped Foysol. Through his example, Foysol came to understand what it looked like to lead with integrity

He has five sisters – Nurun Nahar (Ripa), Kamran Nahar (Rema), Foyjun Nahar (Sheema), Mujibun Nahar (Ema), and Amirun Nahar (Eipa) – and one brother, Mufazzal Hussain Choudhury.



Education

Schooling & Early Community Work

Foysol's formal education began at Ramcharan Primary School in Puran Munsif Quarter, Habiganj, before his family's move to the United Kingdom. He went on to attend Habiganj Government High School, where he studied until Grade 9, and it was there, among classmates, that another side of him began to emerge. Sport, it turned out, was in his blood. On the football pitch and the badminton court, Foysol was in his element. He was consistently one of the best players on the team, earning the respect of those around him through effort and sportsmanship – qualities that would serve him just as well off the field as on it.



He carried his love of football with him when the family moved to England, and it never left him. To this day, Foysol holds a supporter's loyalty to two clubs that reflect the two cities that made him: Edinburgh Hearts, the team of his new home, and Manchester United, whose city gave his family their first foothold in Britain.

After the family settled in Edinburgh, he attended Drummond Community High School. Although his father had hoped he might attend Edinburgh Academy, Foysol felt drawn to remain closer to the community he was already becoming part of. It was at Drummond that he first began to challenge inequality and discrimination.



One incident, in particular, solidified his convictions. During a class, he witnessed a girl being bullied because her accent was different from most of her peers. Seeing her distress, he knew he could not stand by in silence. That moment instilled a conviction that would define his entire public life: the duty to stand up for those who are marginalised, regardless of the personal cost.



In his second year, he began organising Friday clubs – informal gatherings in which students from all ethnic backgrounds could come together after school to talk, share food, and listen to each other's concerns. Foysol organised these clubs specifically to help his peers better understand the cultures of children from ethnic minority backgrounds, creating a space where every student could feel safe and recognised.

He went further still, establishing a multicultural youth club after encountering Muslim and Arab girls who were struggling at school because of discrimination related to their religious dress. The club operated along similar lines to the Friday gatherings, providing a welcoming space for students to integrate into Scottish life while celebrating their own cultures. An English teacher was made available for those who needed language support. Foysol himself, fluent in English, Hindi, and Bangla, became a natural spokesperson for his fellow students and for the wider community.



He had ambitions to become a doctor and began studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh, a remarkable achievement and source of enormous pride for his family. However, a serious illness struck in the family, and Foysol faced a defining decision. As the eldest sibling, he felt the weight of responsibility on his shoulders.

Without hesitation, he set aside his studies and stepped into his father's place, supporting the family through one of the most difficult periods of their lives. His father insisted he continue his studies, but Foysol had already made up his mind. His family needed him and that was enough.

EARLY Career

CATERING AND HOSPITALITY



Foysol had not planned a life in business, but circumstance, as it so often does, had other ideas, and what began as an act of family loyalty slowly became the foundation of a remarkable career.

The Choudhury family had a long experience in the hospitality trade. That was the industry that had sustained them since earlier years in Britain, and when they came to establish themselves in Edinburgh, it wasn't different. Their first venture in the city was the Verandah – a Bangladeshi and Indian restaurant that would grow into one of Edinburgh's most well-known dining establishments, attracting a loyal clientele, and in time, famous guests.

As time went on, more and more restaurants were established. At the height of the family's involvement, they were operating in connection with more than twenty restaurants and businesses.

Foysol took leadership, rapidly expanding operations and eventually becoming a successful entrepreneur with interests in catering, hospitality, finance, and real estate across Scotland, the United Kingdom, and Bangladesh. As he opened new restaurants around the city, he contributed to the sector in a number of ways, including investing in local businesses and other operations.





Inspired by his uncle's example, he believed that a successful business should always give back to the community around it. So, he introduced a simple but meaningful practice: every Thursday's takings were donated to a different charity each month.

He also became an annual host of the Asian Catering Federation (ACF) networking dinner, an event that brought together Scotland's communities, parliamentarians, and the catering industry to build relationships and address shared challenges, including the cost-of-living pressures faced by restaurant owners across Scotland and the wider UK.







Foysol's expertise in Bangladeshi cuisine and his vast knowledge of the industry led him to take on a representative role as Chairman of the Guild of Bangladeshi Restaurateurs of Scotland, and as one of the founding members of the Dine Bangladeshi Campaign.

He has been an effective champion for a sector that, over more than sixty years, has become genuinely woven into the fabric of British food culture.

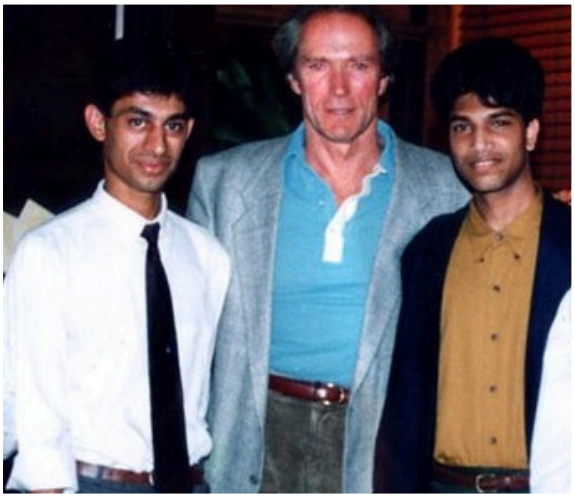
The Guild – established in 1994 – grew under his involvement to a membership of more than 2,500, representing restaurateurs, advocating to government, and working to improve standards and raise public awareness of the contribution the sector makes to British economic and cultural life.






VERANDAH





3rd Sector Work

Foysol is the first one to admit that running a restaurant was never a nine-to-five experience. The hours were long, but they were flexible in ways that conventional career rarely is, and he used that flexibility wisely. While others clocked off, he was turning up: to community meetings, voluntary organisations, fundraisers, and so on.



Over the years, his record of voluntary service grew to span hundreds of organisations across Scotland and Bangladesh. From organising emergency resources for those in need, to leading large-scale charitable initiatives, Foysol has always understood giving back as a fundamental part of life.

His efforts provided direct support to countless individuals and families, while simultaneously building a culture of solidarity and inclusion across the communities he served. That spirit of philanthropy continued to inform his work in parliament, where he consistently sought to create policies that uplifted and empowered communities.



Of all the organisations Foysol has served, it is ELREC (the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council) with which his history is most deeply intertwined. He first encountered it through his family as a teenager and went on to become its youngest ever secretary and, subsequently, its longest-serving chair.

Under his stewardship, ELREC was transformed from a race equality council into a pan-equalities regional body, genuinely representative of the full range of legally protected characteristics. Membership expanded by more than 125 per cent. New programmes were introduced in areas including hate crime prevention, climate change awareness, women's-only activities, refugee support, energy and fuel poverty, free English classes, and general volunteering advice.

Over the years, ELREC has been instrumental in addressing various social issues through collaborative efforts. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the organisation played a significant role in supporting single homeless people in areas such as Grassmarket and Leith, contributing to the establishment of day centres and improved access to primary healthcare. More recently, ELREC has participated actively in community events designed to celebrate diversity and foster cultural understanding, highlighting the voices and stories of women and promoting cultural appreciation more broadly.



Throughout this time, Foysol served ELREC in multiple capacities – as Trustee, Company Secretary, Vice-Chair, and, for more than a decade, as Chair – staying always connected to his roots in community engagement and to the people whose daily challenges he carried with him into public life.





Foysol is the Chair of the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council which works to care and assist in local areas in Leith and beyond through different initiatives such as food banks, food pantries and other helpful ventures.

Foysol proudly speaks at BME community events, celebrating cultural heritage, diversity, and inclusion. From International Mother's Day to advocacy forums, he amplifies voices, supports vital causes, and champions equal opportunities for all.





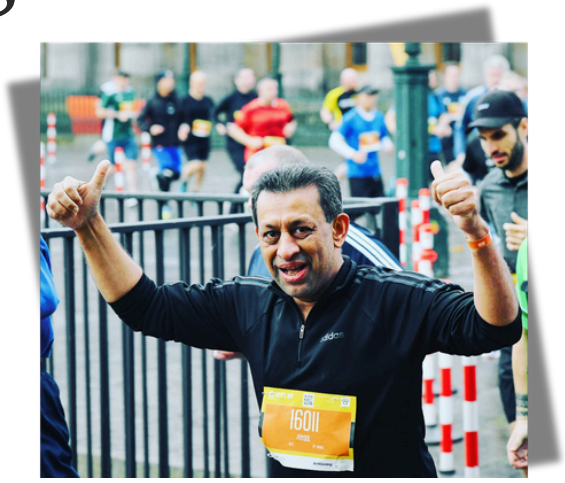
Foysol is a proud member of the Scottish-Bangladeshi diaspora, actively engaging with community members and integrating their voices into his political work. He champions representation, inclusion, and advocacy, ensuring that key issues affecting the diaspora are reflected in policymaking and parliamentary discussions.

Foyso is an active member of multiple cross-party groups and community organizations, advocating for BME rights, heritage preservation, and social equality. Whether convening or attending events, he ensures consistent engagement, amplifying diverse voices and championing key issues across Scotland.



Fundraising

When the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in early 2020, Foysol acted immediately to support the communities most at risk. Throughout the lockdowns, he played a central role in community-led initiatives designed to address food poverty, digital exclusion, and the spread of health misinformation among Edinburgh's BAME, low-income, and isolated families.







In June 2020, he helped launch ELREC's Food Support Project, which provided essential food parcels to families whose livelihoods had been devastated by job losses, furlough, and financial instability. Many community members had no access to traditional food banks due to dietary requirements or the stigma of seeking charity.

ELREC responded by developing a culturally sensitive, free food service. Over the course of the project, more than 2,000 food parcels were distributed, reaching an average of 180 people every week. The initiative was sustained by local businesses, fundraisers, and more than thirty volunteers, ensuring that communities had access to fresh produce, halal meat, essential groceries, and baby supplies. ELREC also partnered with Unity to deliver food parcels directly to elderly and disabled individuals.

The project carried an environmental dimension too, diverting approximately 7,000 kilograms of food from landfill. In February 2021, ELREC received an electric van through the Communities Climate Asset Fund, allowing deliveries to continue with reduced emissions.



Recognising that many marginalised communities lacked access to reliable COVID-19 information – relying instead on foreign-language media sources, with all the risk of misinformation that entailed – Foysol helped establish the Equally Informed initiative. This project ensured that verified health and safety updates were translated and distributed through community networks and social media, providing residents with accurate information directly sourced from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government.





Digital exclusion presented an equally urgent challenge. With schooling, examinations, and social interactions all moving online, many families – often with only one device per household – found themselves unable to access education and essential services. Foysol helped secure funding through the Connecting Scotland programme, distributing eighty-five devices to families in need. Such was the demand that further funding was secured to provide 135 additional devices to low-income, BAME, and single-parent households, ensuring that families could remain connected at the moment they needed it most.



His charitable work during the pandemic bridged gaps in food security, digital inclusion, and public health across Edinburgh, and demonstrated what determined community leadership can achieve.

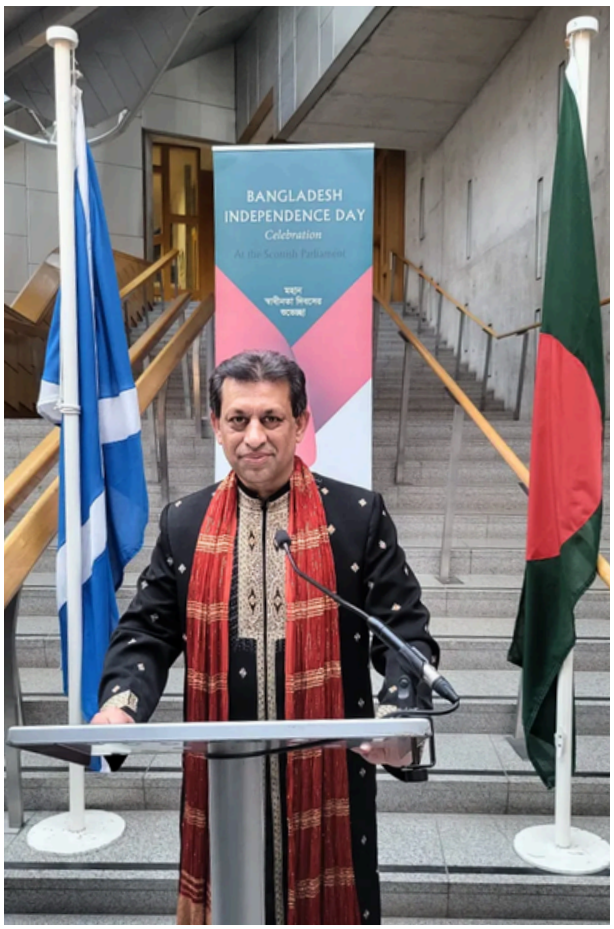


Bangladesh

Foysol's connection to Bangladesh has been a living, active commitment, expressed through decades of charitable fundraising, cultural advocacy, diplomatic engagement, and political leadership.

He was elected Chairman of the Bangladesh Samity Edinburgh in 2010 and has since been an active figure within the Scottish Bangladeshi diaspora, promoting the interests of Bangladeshi restaurants across Scotland and convening a range of Bangladeshi organisations and charities.

He has organised annual Bangladesh Independence Day celebrations and a wide range of events designed to strengthen community relations between Scotland and Bangladesh.



His fundraising for Bangladesh has been extensive. He led campaigns for the Bangladesh Cyclone Appeal in Scotland, and in 2010 was among the organisers who built shelter for the survivors of Cyclone SIDR – constructing forty homes and two cyclone shelters for displaced families. He has continued to support the Daimuddin Orphanage and other educational initiatives in Bangladesh, honouring his family's legacy of community service.



In January 2022, Foysol was one of the forces behind the creation of the Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh at the Scottish Parliament, a platform designed to promote and deepen understanding between Scotland and Bangladesh at cultural, social, academic, political, and economic levels.



The group represented the people of Bangladeshi background living and working in Scotland, bringing together community organisations, government officials, and interested parties to explore the many dimensions of Scotland's relationship with Bangladesh.



In November 2023, Foysol led a parliamentary delegation to Bangladesh, accompanied by Miles Briggs MSP and Evelyn Tweed MSP. The visit strengthened bilateral relations and opened substantive dialogue on matters of shared importance – among them climate change, support for refugees, fair pay and conditions for garment workers, and opportunities for knowledge and skills exchange between both nations.

During the visit, the delegation engaged in high-level discussions on areas of shared interest, including farming and fisheries technologies, climate change, and the legacy of COP26, exploring opportunities for greater cooperation between Scotland and Bangladesh. Climate change was among the most pressing topics discussed: Bangladesh is acutely vulnerable to extreme weather events, from rising sea levels to cyclones, and Foysol has been a consistent advocate for international cooperation on climate action.



Among the most encouraging outcomes of the visit were discussions on expanding educational opportunities and addressing language barriers that can limit access to employment and training abroad. It reflected Foysol's long-held belief that stronger links between Scotland and Bangladesh should deliver tangible benefits for ordinary people, creating opportunities for future generations in both countries.

Foysol's work in celebrating Bangladeshi culture in Scotland has been equally significant. He assisted in ensuring that Edinburgh City Council officially recognised International Mother Language Day for the first time in 2009, followed by a parliamentary motion at Holyrood.



In 2012, he helped organise the Scottish Parliament's first-ever Bangladesh Independence Day celebration, drawing wide participation from the Bangladeshi community. On International Mother Language Day 2025, he laid a wreath at the Shaheed Minar – a Bangladeshi monument symbolising those who gave their lives to protect their language – and has been working towards establishing a permanent Shaheed Minar in Edinburgh.





He is also one of the founding directors of the Edinburgh Mela and has served as its Vice Chair. Since its founding in 1997, the Edinburgh Mela has grown into one of the largest events in the Edinburgh Festivals Programme – a platform for artists from Scotland's diverse communities and from across the world, created with the express purpose of advancing cultural understanding.



Beyond these visible roles, Foysol has served in numerous organisational capacities: as General Secretary of the Bangladesh Welfare Council Scotland, Youth Secretary of the Commonwealth Society Edinburgh, General Secretary of the Council of Bangladeshis in Scotland, and Joint General Secretary of the UK Nabiganj Education Trust. He also plays an informal but valued role in supporting new migrants as they settle into Scottish life – providing guidance, connections, and reassurance to those navigating a new country.

On International Mother Language Day 2025, Foysol laid the wreath on the Shaheed Minar, a Bangladeshi monument symbolising the resilience of the people of Bangladesh who have given their lives to prevent the loss of their language. He is actively establishing a Shaheed Minar in Edinburgh, like many other major UK cities have done.





Foysol serves as the Chair of Bangladesh Samity Edinburgh. They promote Bangladeshi culture and heritage as well as racial harmony through the development of good relationships and increased understanding.



He is an active leader of numerous ethnic minority groups, including the Scottish Bangladeshi Welfare Association, where he speaks on the important topics that the community face.

This society promotes social cohesion and cross-cultural awareness between the Scottish Bangladeshi community and other communities across Scotland.

Political Journey

Foysol Choudhury's political journey was sparked by a pivotal moment at an event hosted by the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC), where Scottish party leaders were addressing an audience of small third-sector organisations and community members.

During the discussion, a member of the audience expressed frustration, stating that people from ethnic minority backgrounds would never be selected or elected as politicians, dismissing political parties as merely seeking to "tick a box." This statement resonated deeply with Foysol, who saw it as a challenge. Though he had never previously considered joining a political party due to his role in community work, he had always maintained close ties with the Labour Party.

It was the Scottish independence referendum that accelerated his engagement. He observed with concern that many people from ethnic minority communities felt their voices were being suppressed. Those who opposed independence reported being targeted for their views. Foysol concluded that having a formal platform would allow those communities to be heard more directly. He joined the Labour Party, shaped not only by his own convictions but by his father's words, which he has often recalled: "Labour is for everyone, and others are for themselves."







He also found himself troubled by a particular question that supporters of the 2014 Yes campaign occasionally posed to members of the Bangladeshi community: why could Bangladeshis celebrate their own country's independence while opposing Scottish independence? He found these comparisons deeply flawed, arguing that the historical circumstances of Bangladesh in 1971 were vastly different from Scotland's situation. The issue struck a personal chord when, years later, after he had been elected as an MSP, a colleague in the Scottish Parliament posed the same question to him in the chamber. This moment reinforced his belief that he needed to enter politics to ensure that diverse perspectives, particularly those from ethnic minority communities, were represented and respected.



His political journey formally began in 2017, when he stood as a Labour Party candidate for Edinburgh Southwest. Despite not winning, his perseverance led him to embark on a new campaign in 2021.

The decision to enter politics came with a cost. Almost immediately after his selection as a candidate, Foysol encountered a level of hostility that shocked even him.

During one campaign event, a man took a leaflet from his hand, set it alight in front of him, and declared that he would never vote for an Asian or Black candidate. He was questioned about his religious beliefs in ways no other candidate would have faced. Others questioned his background, and even whether he truly belonged in Scottish public life.



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The experience was deeply unsettling. Years later, Foysol would describe those early weeks as one of the darkest periods of the campaign. For the first time, he came face-to-face with the reality that simply standing for office challenged assumptions about who was entitled to represent Scotland.

Yet he refused to step back. The hostility strengthened his conviction that representation mattered. If people from minority backgrounds continued to be discouraged from public life, then the barriers would never be broken. Every negative encounter became another reason to continue. When he stood again in 2021, he carried that determination with him. This time campaigning for the Labour Party on the Lothian regional list, he was elected.

Throughout both campaigns, he maintained close contact with constituents, hosting public advice surgeries, listening to local concerns, and canvassing across the Lothian region. His background in hospitality and community work gave him a natural ease with people – and a genuine understanding of the pressures faced by small business owners, by those navigating public services, and by communities whose interests were rarely reflected in the chamber.



Scottish Parliament

Foysol served as MSP for the Lothian region from May 2021 to April 2026. For most of his parliamentary term, he represented the Scottish Labour Party, serving as Deputy Party Spokesperson for Culture, Europe, and International Development. During the final months of the parliamentary session, he sat as an Independent MSP, continuing to represent constituents across the Lothian region until the dissolution of Parliament in 2026.



Over the course of his time at Holyrood, he was involved in eighteen Cross-Party Groups, reflecting the breadth of his engagement across the full spectrum of Scottish public life. He also served on the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, engaging directly with public submissions and championing citizen involvement in the parliamentary process.





Throughout his time at Holyrood, Foysol took particular interest in health and social care. He raised concerns about cancer treatment referral times, GP access, NHS waiting times, and the impact of COVID-19 on the creative industries. He pressed consistently for improved access to services and increased funding across the health portfolio and advocated for patients living with complex conditions who found themselves falling through the gaps between services.

In January 2025, he led a Member's Business debate on access to real-time continuous glucose monitoring technology for patients with diabetes. He argued that many NHS patients could not access the appropriate technology – or were being forced onto products less suited to their clinical needs – and called on the Scottish Government to act. His motion on Type 1 diabetes access received cross-party support from 39 MSPs. He also tabled a motion recognising March 2025 as Brain Tumour Awareness Month, acknowledging the launch of the Scottish Brain Tumour Research Centre of Excellence, a collaboration between the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh focused on glioblastoma research.

Beyond healthcare, Foysol engaged with a wide range of constituency and community issues throughout his term. He campaigned against unsafe housing conditions including damp and mould and worked with residents in Westfield Court when demolition plans threatened their homes, helping to pause the process.



He pressed for faster progress on a new East Calder Health Centre, convening a roundtable at the Scottish Parliament that brought together NHS Lothian officials, local campaigners, and elected representatives, and securing a Scottish Government commitment to develop detailed plans for new primary care infrastructure in the area.



He also challenged proposals to permanently close Marionville fire station, arguing that closure would increase response times in a growing area with expanding activity at Leith docks.

When residents raised concerns about the deteriorating condition of Drylaw Shopping Centre – a long-established local resource that had been under-invested for years – he took up the case and advocated for its revitalisation.

He also championed a petition calling for a consistent national approach to ensuring all children can swim by the end of primary school, emphasising it as a life-saving skill that should not depend on where a child happens to live.

"It has been a true privilege to represent the people of the Lothians. I am deeply grateful to everyone who placed their trust in me, shared their stories, and allowed me to champion their causes."





Foysol believed that effective representation began with listening. Throughout his parliamentary career, he remained visible and accessible to constituents, regularly attending surgeries, engaging with residents, and supporting community groups and local organisations across the Lothians.

He handled thousands of constituency cases over five years, the majority relating to health, housing, and civil law and rights – many of them long-running and complex. He championed infrastructure projects including the development of Winchburgh Station, while advocating on issues ranging from community safety and housing access to the broader goal of ensuring opportunity for everyone living and working in the region.

While parliamentary speeches and committee work formed part of his record, some of the most visible results of his work were found in the everyday issues he pursued on behalf of constituents. Several campaigns in particular illustrate the practical, community-focused approach that defined his time at Holyrood.



Notable Contributions

Over the years, Foysol has had the opportunity to contribute in Parliament, to the local community and the press, which he has used to positively impact not only the lives of his local constituents, but all people across Scotland.



He was honoured with the 'Open All Hours' award at the Holyrood Political Awards 2023 in recognition of his hard work in Parliament and his local constituency. This came after two years of tireless campaigning and constant effort to do what is best for his community. In the Parliament chamber, Foysol has made more than 900 contributions and counting, including but not limited to speeches and questions. These have ranged from questioning the Scottish Government on their response to the housing crisis, and increased waiting times for medical appointments, to advocating for continued support of the Scottish arts and culture sector.



Foysol is also very active in his local constituency of Lothian. During his time in Parliament alone, he has taken on over 1.900 cases and has closed almost 99.7% of them, demonstrating his devotion to working for the people.

Foysol also has written several articles a month on particularly pressing issues, matters of interest to the Lothian region and also uses his media presence to highlight achievements and positive stories from local businesses and groups.

DURING HIS PARLIAMENTARY TERM

467+
PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

550+
CHAMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

1,985+
CASEWORK CASES CLOSED

99.7%
OF RECEIVED CASES CLOSED

20+
CROSS-PARTY GROUPS CHAIRED OR CO-CONVENED

15,287+
CASEWORK EMAILS RECEIVED

POLKEMMET ROAD CROSSING

One of the most tangible results of Foysol's constituency work was the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Polkemmet Road. The crossing had long been called for by local residents, who had raised repeated concerns about speeding vehicles and the risks posed to children walking to and from school. Beginning in September 2021, Foysol advocated persistently for urgent action from Greentown (Heartlands) Limited, engaged with Police Scotland and West Lothian Council on interim safety measures, and pressed developers to honour their original commitment to residents. Through sustained negotiation and community determination, the crossing was secured and installed. Local parents welcomed the result as both a safety improvement and a demonstration of what persistent, community-led advocacy can achieve.



Local parents and residents played a vital role in campaigning for change, refusing to accept the risks posed by the busy and fast-moving road. Their efforts, alongside continued engagement with local authorities, led to the successful installation of this much-needed infrastructure.

This crossing is a significant improvement for the community, offering greater safety and accessibility for schoolchildren and residents. I am pleased to have worked alongside the local community in securing this outcome, and I remain committed to ensuring continued safety measures across the constituency.

FERRYMUIR GAIT, SOUTH QUEENSFERRY



The longstanding dispute over access to new homes at Ferrymuir Gait has been a pressing issue for local residents, with concerns over road closures and restricted entry to the Forthview Housing Development. Constituents voiced frustrations over the lack of clarity, leading to significant community engagement, including direct appeals to Transport Scotland, Ambassador Homes, and parliamentary discussions.

Following persistent advocacy and negotiations, an agreement has been reached to officially designate Ferrymuir Gait as a public road, ensuring pedestrian and vehicular access. Transport Scotland will now manage and maintain the route, resolving concerns over connectivity for local families and new residents.

This result reflects the determination of the community and sustained efforts to secure a fair and practical solution. Residents welcomed the decision, expressing appreciation for the perseverance and engagement that led to this outcome. With access now secured, Ferrymuir Gait will provide safe and reliable passage for those living in and around South Queensferry.



TYPE 1 DIABETES: MEMBER'S BUSINESS

Access to advanced diabetes technology, particularly closed-loop systems, remains a critical issue for people living with Type 1 diabetes in Scotland. Over the past year, parliamentary efforts have focused on improving access, securing funding, and advocating for policy changes to ensure that diabetes patients receive the best possible care. A total of 19 written questions have been submitted on this issue, alongside multiple mentions in the Chamber, including First Minister's Questions (FMQs), where Foysol was the first MSP to raise Diabetes Scotland's Diabetes Tech Can't Wait campaign. His work on the issue led to a Members' Business Motion, which received cross-party support from 39 MSPs, demonstrating broad political consensus on the urgency of addressing diabetes technology access.



Beyond parliamentary action, Foysol hosted a roundtable discussion with Type 1 diabetics, healthcare professionals, and organizations, including Professor Partha Kar, NHS England's National Strategy Advisor for Diabetes. This forum provided invaluable firsthand insights from those directly impacted by the limitations of current diabetes care and reinforced the need for Scotland to develop a long-term funding strategy for closed-loop technology. Additionally, Scotland currently lacks the range of hybrid closed-loop options available in England, despite differing patient needs—reinforcing the importance of personalized diabetes care.

To push for further action, Foysol has engaged directly with NHS Lothian's Chief Executive and the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health, advocating for urgent measures to ensure equitable access to diabetes technology across Scotland. The question remains: Where is Scotland's long-term plan? Without dedicated funding and policy commitments, Scottish patients risk falling behind in access to life-changing diabetes care.

Through continued parliamentary engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and persistent advocacy, Foysol remains committed to ensuring that diabetes patients in Scotland receive the technology, funding, and policy support they need. Addressing this issue is not just about healthcare—it is about ensuring that no patient is left behind in receiving the life-changing innovations that can dramatically improve their quality of life.

EYRE PLACE DEVELOPMENT

The proposed student accommodation development at 72-74 Eyre Place in Edinburgh faced strong opposition from local residents, who raised concerns about the impact of large-scale student housing on their community. Initially, the City of Edinburgh Council rejected the planning application (22/0384/FUL), but the developers appealed the decision to the Scottish Government. After reviewing the case, the Scottish Government Reporter dismissed the appeal, refusing planning permission—a significant victory for residents and community organizers.





Throughout the process, Lothian MSP Foysol Choudhury worked closely with constituents, submitting formal objections, raising parliamentary questions, and urging both the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Government Reporter to consider the concerns of local residents. A key issue was the absence of a public hearing, which meant community voices were at risk of being ignored. Foysol emphasized the importance of local democracy, ensuring that planning decisions reflect the needs and priorities of residents rather than developer interests.

Residents expressed relief and celebration at the final decision, marking it as a testament to the power of community advocacy and persistence. While the rejection of this deeply unpopular planning application is a positive outcome, Foysol has emphasized the need to learn lessons from the process, ensuring that local democracy is not bypassed in future planning appeals. The success of the Eyre Place campaign highlights how organized community efforts can shape local development, protecting residential areas and ensuring that urban planning remains fair and transparent.

Equality
Anti-Racism & Social Justice

Just days after being elected to the Scottish Parliament, Foysol stood outside Holyrood among campaigners, community leaders, and activists marking the anniversary of George Floyd's death. For Scotland's first Bangladeshi-born MSP, it was a symbolic beginning.



"The Parliament must truly be a Parliament for all the people of Scotland," he told those assembled. "Education plays an essential role in rooting out discrimination and making for a fairer and more just society. We cannot change the past, but we can make a difference."

His first major public appearance as a parliamentarian was not centred on party politics or parliamentary procedure. Instead, it focused on equality, representation, and the continuing struggle against racism. Issues that had shaped much of his life long before he entered politics. It was a fitting introduction to his time at Holyrood.

Over the next five years, Foysol would bring the same priorities into Parliament that had guided his community work for decades: widening opportunity, amplifying underrepresented voices, and ensuring that public institutions remained accessible to the people they served. Long before he entered politics, Foysol had spent decades working to challenge discrimination, strengthen community relations, and create opportunities for people whose voices were too often overlooked. Parliament had given him a larger platform, but the values behind his work had been shaped many years earlier.



Growing up in Edinburgh, he experienced first-hand the barriers faced by minority communities and developed an early conviction that a person's opportunities should never be determined by their race, faith, background, or circumstances. That belief would become one of the defining principles of his public life.

Much of that work was carried out through the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council (ELREC), an organisation with which he would remain closely associated for decades. Beginning as a young volunteer and later serving as Trustee, Company Secretary, Vice-Chair, and ultimately its longest-serving Chair, he helped transform ELREC into a leading voice for equality and inclusion across Scotland. Through its programmes, he worked to challenge discrimination, strengthen community relations, and expand support for some of the most marginalised groups in society.



It was also through ELREC that Foysol developed a close relationship with Sir Geoff Palmer, whose friendship with the Choudhury family stretched back many years. More than a colleague, Sir Geoff became a mentor and father figure. His commitment to equality, education, and social justice left a profound impression on Foysol's own approach to public service. Foysol admired Sir Geoff's willingness to challenge Scotland to confront difficult truths about racism, history, and inequality while always encouraging dialogue and understanding. Following Sir Geoff's passing, he reflected on the immense contribution his mentor had made to Scottish public life and the inspiration he had provided to generations of campaigners and community leaders.





For Foysol, tackling racism has never been simply about condemning prejudice when it appears. He has consistently argued that lasting change must be rooted in education, representation, and institutional accountability. Whether through multicultural youth initiatives, equality campaigns, community organisations, or parliamentary advocacy, he has maintained that people must be equipped with the knowledge and understanding needed to challenge discrimination wherever it exists.

As an MSP, he continued to champion these principles, welcoming increased ethnic minority representation at Holyrood while arguing that genuine progress required confronting deeper structural inequalities. As Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice, he brought together community organisations, academics, faith groups, public authorities, and campaigners to address issues ranging from hate crime and racism to exclusion in education, employment, healthcare, and public services.


THE SCOTSMAN

Racism in Scottish cricket: The game's governing body needs to do more to tackle discrimination and prejudice – Foysol Choudhury

By Foysol Choudhury 3 Comments

He also spoke out against institutional racism in sport, supporting calls for reform following the independent review of Scottish cricket and advocating for greater opportunities for women and minority ethnic communities to participate and lead. Throughout his public life, he returned repeatedly to the role of education in building a more inclusive society, supporting efforts to improve racial literacy in schools and ensure that young people developed a deeper understanding of Scotland's diverse communities.



That commitment extended into educational policy itself. He questioned the Scottish Government on its progress in embedding anti-racist education within Scottish schools and advancing the decolonisation of the curriculum, arguing that these issues should be treated not as annual discussions during Black History Month, but as ongoing responsibilities of public institutions.



Legacy and recognition

Foysol has received notable awards and recognition for his contributions to the community and public service.
In 2004, he was awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, for his outstanding contributions to society.

In 2023, he received the Open All Hours Award from the Holyrood Political Awards. Additionally, in 2024, Choudhury co-hosted the Asian Restaurant Awards (Scotland) at the Scottish Parliament, recognizing excellence in the Asian culinary industry.

He has been instrumental in founding youth clubs and spearheading multicultural initiatives that foster inclusivity and engagement. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he organized food distribution programs to support vulnerable families across Scotland, ensuring that those in need had access to essential supplies.







Foysol Hussain Choudhury's journey from Badardi village to the halls of the Scottish Parliament is a powerful testament to resilience, leadership, and community service.

Inspired by the contributions of his family and mentors, such as his uncles, Dr. Wali Tasar Uddin MBE, Al-Haj Gulam Mustafa Choudhury MBE, and his father Al-Haj Gulam Rabbani Choudhury, Foysol has become a trailblazer for the Bangladeshi diaspora in Scotland. His dedication ensures a legacy that will inspire future generations for years to come.

VALUES, SERVICE & LEGACY

He was a businessman, community organiser, equality campaigner, charity fundraiser, cultural advocate, and parliamentarian. He became the first person of Bangladeshi heritage elected to the Scottish Parliament. None of those titles, on their own, explain what he leaves behind.

The thread running through every chapter of his life has been service – not as an idea he held, but as something he did. Delivering food parcels during a pandemic. Helping new migrants find their footing in Scottish life. Sitting with constituents through their hardest casework. Raising money for communities in Bangladesh he had never stopped thinking of as home. The settings changed. The instinct underneath them did not: show up, listen, help where he could.

The positions changed. The purpose did not. As Foysol himself has often reflected:

"My late father and my uncle taught me that success means very little if it only benefits yourself. They used every opportunity they were given to help others, and that is the example I tried to follow throughout my life. If there is one thing I hope people remember, it is not the positions I held, but the difference I was able to make in the lives of others."

That, in the end, may be the truest measure of his life. Not the offices he held, but the doors he opened for everyone who came after him.







