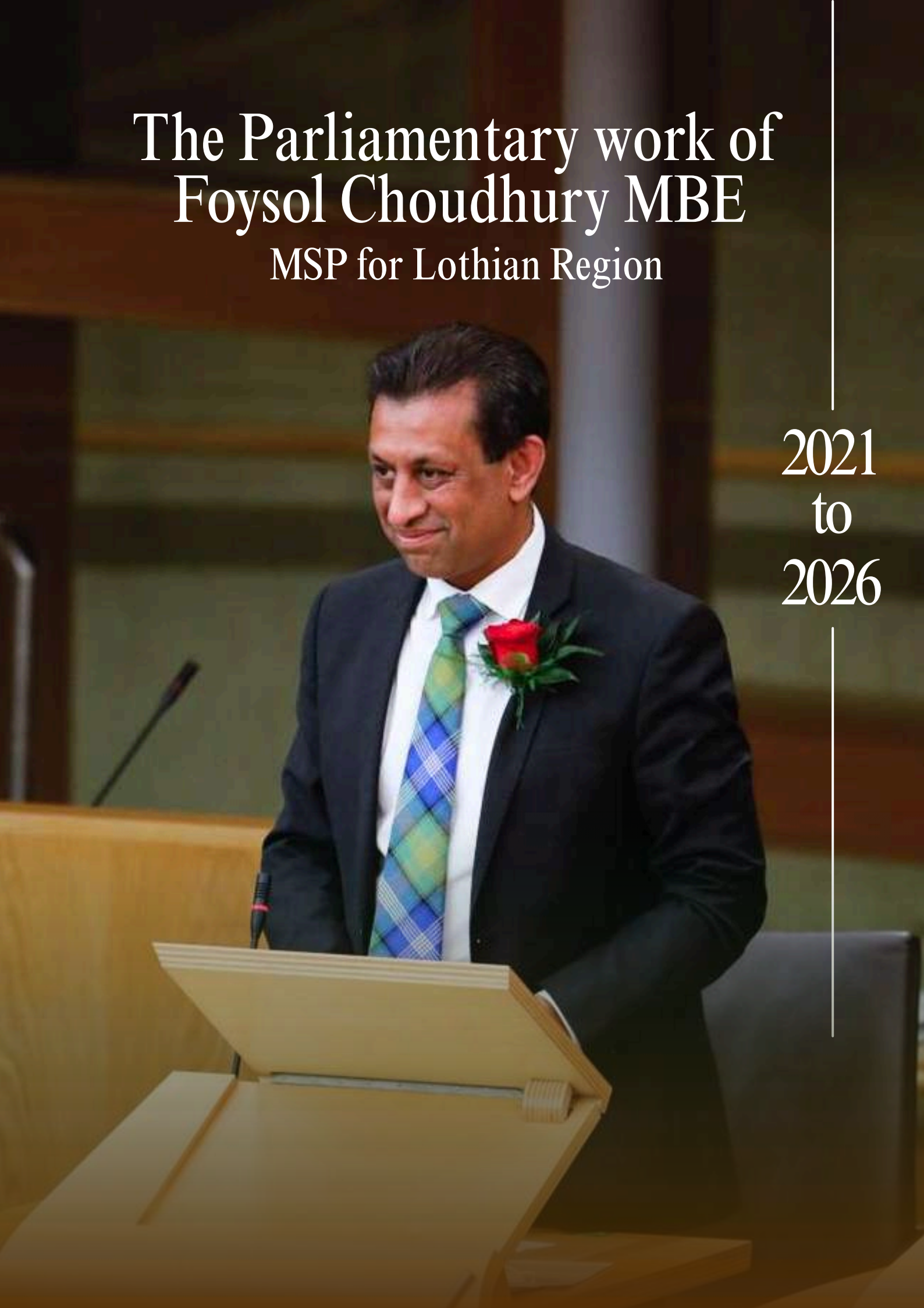
The Parliamentary work of Foysol Choudhury MBE

MSP for Lothian Region

2021
to
2026





"It has been a true privilege to represent the people of the Lothians."

Throughout my tenure as a Lothian MSP, I prioritised visits and engagement activities that reflected both local interests and my responsibilities within the Culture, Europe and International portfolio. These visits helped inform my parliamentary work while providing opportunities to celebrate the organisations, volunteers and communities that contribute so much to Scotland's cultural life.



"I am deeply grateful to everyone who placed their trust in me, shared their stories, and allowed me to champion their causes."















Culture & Heritage

As a Shadow Minister for Culture, I consistently highlighted the importance of culture, heritage and the creative industries to Scotland's economy and communities.

The cultural sector contributes far more than economic value alone. Festivals, music, film, heritage sites and public art help bring people together, improve wellbeing and strengthen social cohesion. Throughout my parliamentary work, I advocated for sustained support for Scotland's cultural sector and for the organisations and workers who help it thrive.

I also took a particular interest in Scotland's historic environment, including heritage conservation, traditional skills and the role historic buildings can play in supporting Scotland's net-zero ambitions.

Newhailes House & Gardens, Musselburgh

One of my first visits as an MSP was to Newhailes House & Gardens in Musselburgh as Scotland's cultural venues gradually reopened following the Covid-19 pandemic. Exploring the historic Palladian house, which played an important role during the Scottish Enlightenment, was a reminder of the value of our heritage sites. The visit also highlighted how cultural spaces contribute to community wellbeing, particularly at a time when many people were reconnecting with local attractions and outdoor spaces after lockdown restrictions.

Leith Heritage

I was pleased to support the launch of the Old Leith Rediscovered Project at Ocean Terminal, part of the Wee Museum of Memory initiative led by The Living Memory Association in partnership with Spirit of Leithers and the National Library of Scotland. The project celebrates the rich history of Leith and preserves the stories, memories and experiences of local people. It was particularly encouraging to see different generations coming together to learn about the area's unique heritage and the role community-led projects can play in strengthening local identity.



Celebrating South-East Asian Culture

As a Bangladeshi-born MSP, I was proud to support and celebrate Scotland's diverse cultural communities.

Throughout my time in Parliament, I organised and sponsored cultural events while also attending celebrations across Scotland. These occasions provided opportunities for people from different backgrounds to come together, share traditions and build stronger community relationships.

Culture has always been a powerful tool for bringing people together. By celebrating our differences and learning from one another, we strengthen the social fabric of our communities and create a more inclusive Scotland.

I also lodged parliamentary motions recognising important cultural and religious celebrations, including Diwali, Dussehra and Eid, helping to ensure these events received recognition within Scotland's national Parliament.







DUSSEHRA & DIWALI

I was delighted to attend a number of Dussehra and Diwali celebrations during my time as an MSP.

One particularly memorable event was the Scottish Indian Arts Forum's Dussehra celebration on Calton Hill, which brought together thousands of people to enjoy Scottish and Indian music, dance and cultural performances. The event demonstrated how cultural celebrations can bring communities together while showcasing Scotland's diversity.

I also attended Diwali celebrations organised by Edinburgh Hindu Mandir and the Edinburgh Diwali Parade. These events provided valuable opportunities to celebrate with local communities and learn more about the traditions, values and heritage associated with one of the world's most important festivals.

International Mother Language Day



International Mother Language Day became one of the most important annual events I supported during my parliamentary career.

Established by UNESCO, the day celebrates linguistic diversity and highlights the importance of protecting languages for future generations. Each year I lodged parliamentary motions recognising the occasion and supporting its annual themes.

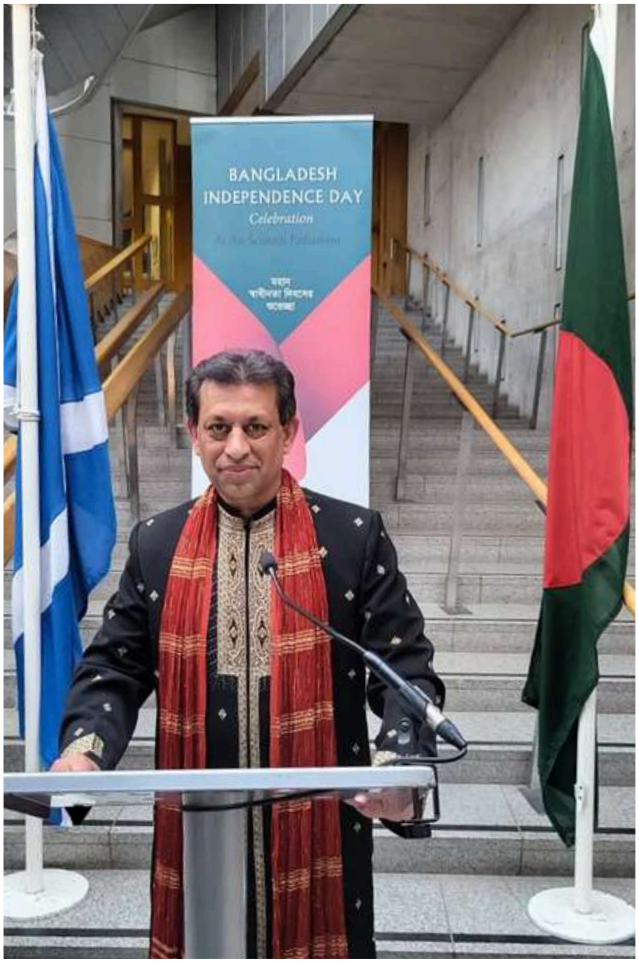
I also organised discussions exploring language preservation, multilingualism and cultural identity. In 2025, discussions focused on linguistic diversity and language loss prevention, reflecting growing concerns about the decline of minority languages across the world.

I was pleased to support the Scottish Languages Bill and welcomed its unanimous passage through the Scottish Parliament in 2025. The legislation represented an important step in recognising and supporting Scotland's linguistic heritage.

Alongside parliamentary events, I worked with organisations including ELREC, the Scottish Bangladeshi Welfare Association and Thistle Shapla Cultural Group to celebrate International Mother Language Day within communities across Edinburgh and Scotland.







Bangladesh Independence Day

Following the establishment of the Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh, I was pleased to sponsor parliamentary celebrations marking Bangladesh Independence Day.

The event commemorated Bangladesh 's independence in 1971 while recognising the strong cultural, economic and community links that exist between Bangladesh, Scotland and the wider United Kingdom.

It was particularly rewarding to see members of Scotland's Bangladeshi community come together with parliamentarians and guests from across Scotland to celebrate Bangladesh's history, culture and contribution to Scottish society.

Celebrating Eid in the Scottish Parliament

I was delighted to co-sponsor the Muslim Council of Scotland's Eid with Parliamentarians event alongside former MSP Kaukab Stewart.



The event brought together people from different faiths, communities and political backgrounds to celebrate Eid and reflect on the values of compassion, community and service. It was especially meaningful to see members of the Muslim community gathering in the Scottish Parliament to share their faith and traditions with colleagues and visitors. Throughout my parliamentary tenure, I was proud to support cross-party efforts to celebrate Eid and strengthen understanding between communities across Scotland.

Recognising South Asian Communities

I was honoured to attend a reception hosted by Their Majesties at the Palace of Holyroodhouse recognising the contribution of Scotland's South Asian communities. The event celebrated individuals who have made significant contributions across healthcare, education, business, the arts, media and public service, reflecting the important role South Asian communities continue to play in Scottish society.



Heritage and History

Linlithgow Palace



Scotland's historic environment is a valuable national asset that connects communities with their past while supporting local economies and tourism.

I was pleased to visit Linlithgow Palace to learn more about Historic Environment Scotland's climate strategy, restoration work and commitment to traditional skills training. The visit highlighted how heritage conservation can contribute to Scotland's wider environmental and economic ambitions. I later sponsored a parliamentary event showcasing Historic Environment Scotland's climate action work and its efforts to protect Scotland's historic environment for future generations.

Supporting Scotland's Heritage Workforce

I was honoured to sponsor "The Perfect Storm: A Crisis in Heritage", a parliamentary event organised by Prospect as part of its campaign highlighting challenges facing Scotland's heritage workforce.

The event reinforced the importance of investing not only in heritage sites themselves but also in the skilled workers responsible for preserving and maintaining them. Scotland's heritage sector plays a significant role in supporting tourism, education and local economies, making its long-term sustainability an important policy priority.



Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe

Throughout my time as Shadow Culture Minister, I regularly attended Edinburgh International Festival launches, performances and stakeholder events.

The Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe remain among Scotland's greatest cultural assets, attracting visitors from around the world while providing a platform for artists, performers and creative talent.

I consistently advocated for sustainable investment in arts and culture, recognising the sector's contribution to Scotland's economy, international reputation and community wellbeing.









Sports



Sport plays an important role in promoting physical health, mental wellbeing and community participation.

I attended the Commonwealth Volleyball Qualifiers at Portobello Beach in summer 2021 and was impressed by the commitment and talent demonstrated by Scotland's athletes. The event reinforced the importance of investing in grassroots sport and supporting young people to participate in physical activity from an early age.



Visits to local sporting projects and youth programmes also highlighted the positive role sport can play in providing opportunities, building confidence and helping young people develop valuable life skills.





Football Clubs

During my first months as an MSP, I made a point of visiting football clubs and community projects across the region, including organisations linked to Hibernian, Livingston and Hearts.

These visits demonstrated that football clubs contribute far more than what happens on match day. Through community outreach programmes, youth initiatives, employability projects and health and wellbeing activities, clubs play a valuable role in supporting local communities.



My engagement with local clubs and charitable foundations also informed contributions I made in Members' Business debates in the Scottish Parliament, including a debate on the contribution that football clubs and their fans make to society.

Drawing on examples from across the Lothians, I highlighted the work of organisations such as the Hibernian Community Foundation, Spartans Community Foundation and the Big Hearts Community Trust, and the important role they play in supporting young people, tackling social isolation and strengthening communities.

The experience reinforced my belief that investment in grassroots sport and community programmes remains an important part of building healthier, more active and connected communities.











Libraries and Community Learning

Throughout my tenure as an MSP, I consistently highlighted the importance of libraries across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scotland. While many people still associate libraries primarily with books, modern libraries have evolved into vital community hubs that provide a wide range of services and support.

Libraries offer access to e-books, audiobooks, digital newspapers, family history resources and internet services, while also providing assistance with practical matters such as bus pass applications, digital skills training and community events. For many residents, particularly those who may be digitally excluded, libraries remain a trusted and accessible source of information and support.

Beyond these services, libraries play an important role in promoting health and wellbeing, tackling loneliness and social isolation, and creating welcoming spaces where people from all backgrounds can come together. In many communities, they provide an essential lifeline and help alleviate pressure on other public services.



Championing Libraries in Parliament

I regularly raised the importance of libraries in the Chamber and highlighted the challenges facing the sector. At a time when public libraries across the UK have faced increasing financial pressures, I consistently argued that libraries should be recognised as community assets rather than simply buildings containing books.

I have long believed that access to libraries should not depend on where someone lives or their ability to pay for services elsewhere. The closure of local libraries risks widening inequalities by reducing access to educational resources, digital services and community spaces, particularly in areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation.

Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities



As Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities, I was pleased to host a number of discussions focusing on the value of libraries and their contribution to communities across Scotland.



One particularly memorable meeting took place in June 2025, shortly before the summer recess. We welcomed poet Katharine Macfarlane, who shared her poem The Library, a powerful reflection on the many roles libraries play in people's lives and the important place they hold within communities.

The meeting also featured a presentation from Éadaoín Lynch of the Scottish Book Trust, who introduced the organisation's report, The Value and Impact of Scotland's Public Libraries. Drawing on evidence from librarians and library users across Scotland, the report highlighted both the benefits libraries provide and the challenges they continue to face.



The discussion explored the role of librarians as trusted professionals and signposts to local services, as well as the importance of libraries as spaces where people from different backgrounds can connect, learn and participate in community life.



We also considered the relationship between social cohesion and deprivation, and how libraries can help strengthen communities by providing inclusive, accessible spaces for everyone.

At a time when dozens of libraries have closed across Scotland and the wider UK, these conversations reinforced the importance of protecting and investing in these valuable public assets.

Engaging with local libraries

Throughout my time as an MSP, I made a point of visiting libraries across the region and speaking directly with librarians, volunteers and library users. These visits provided valuable insight into the challenges facing the sector and the innovative ways libraries continue to adapt to meet community needs.

What stood out during these visits was the dedication of library staff and volunteers, who often go far beyond their traditional roles to support local residents. Whether helping someone develop digital skills, access information or simply providing a welcoming environment, libraries continue to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.



Inspiring a Love of Reading

One particularly memorable visit was learning more about Dolly Parton's Imagination Library programme. The initiative is built on a simple but powerful idea: encouraging a lifelong love of reading by ensuring children have access to books from an early age. Working through community partners, the programme provides free books to children and helps foster positive reading habits that can have lasting educational and social benefits.



It was inspiring to see how such initiatives help strengthen literacy, support families and encourage children to discover the joy of reading. The visit served as a reminder that libraries and reading programmes are not simply about education; they are about creating opportunities, building confidence and helping young people reach their full potential.

Libraries remain one of the most accessible and inclusive public services we have. Throughout my parliamentary career, I was proud to support them and to champion the important role they play in strengthening communities, promoting learning and improving wellbeing across Scotland.

Supporting the Third Sector & Community Organisations

Throughout my time as an MSP, I was fortunate to meet many third-sector organisations and community groups whose work often goes unseen but makes an enormous difference to people's lives every day.



These organisations are frequently the first point of support for individuals facing hardship, isolation or barriers to employment, and they play a vital role in strengthening communities across Scotland.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent cost-of-living crisis demonstrated just how important community organisations are. Time and again, local charities, volunteers and social enterprises stepped up to support those most in need, often with limited resources but an unwavering commitment to helping others.











Food Train

One of my early visits as an MSP was to Food Train in West Lothian. I was deeply impressed by the organisation's work and the impact it has had over more than three decades.

Food Train provides practical support to older people by helping them access essential shopping and household supplies while also creating opportunities for social interaction and companionship. During the pandemic, when many older people were experiencing isolation and uncertainty, services such as Food Train became even more important.

The visit reinforced the importance of investing in preventative community support. Organisations like Food Train not only help older people remain independent for longer but also contribute to tackling loneliness and improving wellbeing, helping reduce pressure on health and social care services.

Stronger Communities Through Local Action

Visits to organisations such as Food Train and The Larder reinforced a lesson that remained consistent throughout my parliamentary career: some of the most effective solutions to social challenges are often found within our communities themselves.

Whether tackling isolation, supporting employability, addressing food insecurity or improving wellbeing, community organisations continue to play a critical role in creating opportunities and supporting those who need help most.

Throughout my tenure, I remained committed to highlighting their work, supporting their campaigns and ensuring their voices were heard within Parliament.



The Larder

Another memorable visit was to The Larder and its Skills Academy, where I met staff, trainees and volunteers and saw first-hand the life-changing work being undertaken.

The organisation combines employability support, skills development and community engagement, helping individuals gain confidence, discover talents and build pathways into employment. Alongside its training programmes, The Larder promotes locally sourced food and creates opportunities for people who may otherwise struggle to access the labour market.

What impressed me most was the organisation's belief in people's potential and its commitment to helping individuals overcome barriers and transform their lives. The visit highlighted the value of community-led solutions and demonstrated how targeted support can help individuals build brighter futures while strengthening local communities.

In recognition of this outstanding work, I was proud to nominate Angela Moohan of The Larder as my Local Hero for the official opening of the Scottish Parliament in 2021.



Business, Hospitality & Economic Recovery

Having previously worked within the catering and restaurant industry, I understood first-hand the challenges faced by businesses during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout my parliamentary career, I worked closely with businesses across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Scotland, particularly those operating within the hospitality sector. While many businesses demonstrated remarkable resilience during the pandemic, the recovery period brought further challenges including rising energy costs, inflation, labour shortages and increasing operating expenses.



Asian Restaurant Awards Scotland

I was proud to help support the 6th and 7th Annual Asian Restaurant Awards Scotland at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh.

The awards recognise excellence within Scotland's Asian hospitality sector and celebrate the businesses, entrepreneurs and staff who contribute significantly to Scotland's food and tourism industries.

The events also provided an opportunity to highlight the challenges facing the sector during the post-pandemic recovery period and to encourage greater engagement between policymakers and business leaders.

Throughout this period, I continued to press the Scottish Government to provide meaningful support for hospitality businesses and to recognise the important role they play within Scotland's economy and communities.

Supporting South Asian Businesses

I worked closely with the Asian Catering Federation (ACF) and supported networking events both within and outside Parliament, bringing together business owners, MSPs and stakeholders to discuss the challenges facing the sector.

These events created opportunities for businesses to raise concerns directly with policymakers and highlighted issues including business rates, staffing shortages, food inflation and rising energy costs.
As a former businessman, I had first hand understanding of the contribution these businesses make to Scotland's economy and cultural life, I was pleased to help ensure their concerns were represented and heard.



Johnnie Walker Princes Street

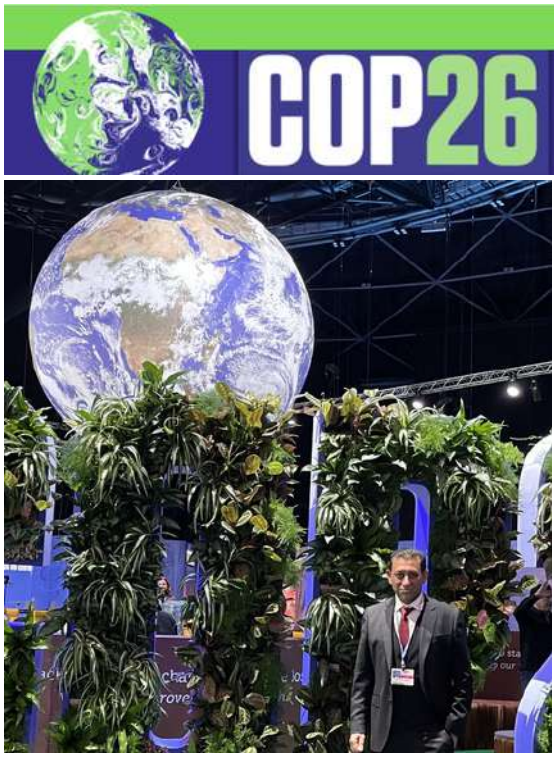
In 2022, I visited the Johnnie Walker Princes Street visitor attraction following its opening in 2021. The visit provided an opportunity to learn more about Scotland's whisky industry, one of the country's most internationally recognised sectors and an important contributor to tourism, exports and economic growth.

Alongside discussions about the industry's recovery from the pandemic, I was particularly interested in learning about the Learning for Life Academy programme. The initiative helps young people and adults gain skills and experience in hospitality, retail, entrepreneurship and customer service.

Programmes such as these demonstrate how businesses can contribute not only to economic growth but also to workforce development and skills training, helping create opportunities for future generations.

The visit highlighted the close relationship between Scotland's tourism, hospitality and cultural sectors and the importance of ensuring they receive the support necessary to thrive in an increasingly competitive environment.

Climate Change, COP26 & International Engagement



COP26 in Glasgow was one of the most significant international events hosted in Scotland during my time in Parliament. It provided a global platform to discuss the climate emergency and highlighted both Scotland's role and responsibility in supporting climate action at home and abroad.

Throughout COP26, I attended a range of events and discussions involving parliamentarians, policymakers, businesses, trade unions and international delegations. These engagements reinforced the importance of ensuring that climate policies are ambitious, practical and fair, particularly for communities and industries facing significant change.

One discussion that particularly resonated with me focused on the concept of a Just Transition. At an event examining the future of the steel and energy sectors, industry experts highlighted the need to balance environmental ambitions with economic realities. Scotland must continue its transition towards a low-carbon economy, but it is equally important that workers, families and communities are not left behind in the process. Lessons from previous industrial transitions demonstrate the importance of long-term planning, investment and support for affected communities.

I also attended a number of COP26 fringe events, including discussions with representatives from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and frontline workers who highlighted the growing impact of climate change through increased risks of flooding, extreme weather and wildfires. These discussions reinforced the importance of ensuring that those responding directly to climate-related emergencies are included in policy conversations.

As a Bangladeshi-born MSP, one of the most meaningful aspects of COP26 was welcoming members of the Bangladeshi delegation to the Scottish Parliament. Bangladesh is widely recognised as one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change despite contributing relatively little to global emissions.

Discussions during COP26 highlighted the importance of climate adaptation, resilience and international cooperation, particularly for countries on the frontline of climate impacts. The conversations also demonstrated the valuable role that Scotland can play in fostering international partnerships and sharing expertise.

Food, Sustainability & Climate Policy

During COP26 week, I participated in a Members' Business debate examining the relationship between food systems and climate change.

The debate highlighted the importance of the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration and the role local authorities can play in reducing emissions through sustainable food policies. I argued that national climate ambitions must be matched by practical local action and that communities should be supported in developing solutions that improve both environmental outcomes and food security.

The discussions reinforced my belief that tackling climate change requires collaboration across all sectors of society and that local communities must be empowered to play their part in delivering change.

These engagements ultimately inspired me to establish the Scottish Parliament's first Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh. While climate policy remained a key focus, the group also created opportunities to strengthen dialogue around education, trade, tourism, culture and economic development, while ensuring the Scottish Bangladeshi diaspora had a voice in these discussions.







Equality, Anti-Racism & Social Justice



Throughout my parliamentary career, I remained committed to promoting equality, tackling discrimination and ensuring that Scotland continues to become a fairer and more inclusive society.

As someone who understands the importance of representation, I have consistently spoken about the need for decision-making bodies to reflect the diversity of modern Scotland. Progress has undoubtedly been made, but there remains much work to do in addressing inequalities and barriers experienced by minority communities.

Black History Month & Representation


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MSP for Lothian, Shadow Minister for Culture
Why Black History Month is important
Teaching BAME history also highlights the contributions of ethnic individuals and communities

Black History Month provides an important opportunity to celebrate achievements, recognise contributions and reflect on the work still required to tackle racism and discrimination.

During my first summer as an MSP, I participated in the Festival of Politics alongside fellow parliamentarians and civic leaders. The discussion explored representation within Scottish public life and reflected on the progress that had been made in increasing ethnic minority representation within the Scottish Parliament.

While positive changes have taken place in recent years, the discussion also highlighted the importance of continuing efforts to address structural barriers and ensure that people from all backgrounds can participate fully in public life.

Challenging Racial & Religious Prejudice

As Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice, I worked with organisations, stakeholders and communities to examine the causes and consequences of discrimination and to identify practical solutions.

The group provided a platform for discussions on anti-racism strategies, workplace equality, public services and community relations. We heard evidence from a range of organisations working to address prejudice and improve inclusion across sectors including education, healthcare and policing.

These conversations reinforced the importance of moving beyond statements of intent and focusing on practical actions that deliver meaningful change.





Tackling Racism in Sport

Sport has the power to unite communities and inspire future generations, but it must also be inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

Following the publication of Plan4Sport's independent review into Scottish cricket, I contributed to a Members' Business debate addressing institutional racism within sport. During the debate, I called for meaningful reform and highlighted the need for organisations to strengthen governance, accountability and support mechanisms.

I supported measures aimed at improving diversity and inclusion within sporting organisations and argued that everyone should be able to participate in sport free from discrimination.


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


Evening News

Opinion

Empowering women and girls through netball - Foysol Choudhury

Women, Diversity & Sport

In a debate marking International Women's Day in 2023, I highlighted the importance of increasing opportunities for women and girls from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to participate in sport.

While progress has been made, barriers to participation remain and greater efforts are required to ensure that sport is accessible and welcoming to all communities. Encouraging wider participation benefits not only individuals but also communities and society as a whole.



Arts, Culture & the Creative Sector

One of the privileges of serving as Shadow Minister for Culture was the opportunity to engage with artists, cultural organisations and creative practitioners across Scotland.

Throughout my parliamentary career, I consistently highlighted the value of arts and culture, not only as contributors to Scotland's economy but also as powerful tools for improving wellbeing, supporting communities and enriching everyday life.

I have long believed that access to arts and culture should be recognised as an important part of a healthy society. Creative activities can reduce isolation, improve mental wellbeing and provide opportunities for self-expression and personal growth.



Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop

It was a pleasure to visit Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop and meet artists working across a variety of disciplines and backgrounds.

Visits such as these reinforced the importance of supporting grassroots creative spaces and ensuring artists can continue to develop and share their work.

The organisation provides valuable opportunities for artists to develop their practice, collaborate with others and engage with local communities.

Scotland's artists contribute enormously to our cultural identity and international reputation, and it is important that public policy recognises and supports their contribution.

Supporting Local Artists

I met with many artists and creative organisations who shared concerns about rising costs, studio rents and financial pressures affecting the sector.

A number of these concerns were raised with me by artists working within WASPS Studios and other creative spaces across Scotland. Like many sectors, artists faced significant challenges as energy prices and operating costs increased.

I consistently highlighted the importance of ensuring that creative practitioners receive the support they need to continue producing work and contributing to Scotland's cultural landscape.



Edinburgh International Culture Summit

In August 2022, I attended the Edinburgh International Culture Summit at the Scottish Parliament.

The summit brought together ministers, cultural leaders and policymakers from more than 30 countries to explore the role of culture in addressing global challenges and supporting economic, social and environmental development.

It was a particular privilege to meet representatives from Bangladesh and to discuss the opportunities that cultural exchange creates for building stronger international relationships.

The summit demonstrated how culture can serve as a bridge between nations and highlighted the important role creative industries play in shaping the future of societies around the world.







New Scottish Galleries

The opening of the New Scottish Galleries represented a significant investment in Scotland's cultural future and provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase the country's artistic heritage.

I was pleased to attend the launch and explore the newly transformed galleries, which display some of Scotland's most celebrated artworks, including works by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow Boys.
The project demonstrated the value of investing in cultural infrastructure and ensuring that Scotland's artistic heritage remains accessible to future generations.

Beyond their cultural significance, galleries and museums contribute to tourism, education and local economies while providing spaces where people can connect with creativity and history.

Securing Support for Scotland's Cultural Sector

One of the most significant developments during my time in Parliament was the decision to provide Creative Scotland with multi-year funding.



This followed sustained campaigning by artists, cultural organisations and parliamentarians who highlighted the need for greater financial certainty across the sector.

I repeatedly raised concerns regarding cultural funding in Parliament and welcomed the announcement as an important step towards providing stability for organisations planning future projects and programmes.

The outcome demonstrated the value of constructive engagement between government, cultural organisations and the wider creative community. It also reinforced the importance of continuing to advocate for long-term support that allows Scotland's cultural sector to thrive.











Student Housing & Cost of Living Pressures

Throughout my tenure, students regularly contacted me regarding the growing challenges associated with housing costs and access to accommodation.

Concerns about affordability, availability and rising living costs became increasingly common, particularly as students faced wider economic pressures resulting from inflation and the cost-of-living crisis.

To help address these concerns, I convened discussions bringing together students, universities, housing stakeholders and parliamentarians. These conversations provided an opportunity for students to share their experiences directly and to highlight the challenges they were facing.

The discussions reinforced the need for coordinated action to improve housing availability and affordability while ensuring students have access to appropriate support services.

Supporting Constituents Through the Cost of Living Crisis

The cost-of-living crisis was one of the defining challenges of this parliamentary session. Throughout the period, I regularly raised concerns regarding rising food prices, energy costs and financial pressures affecting households across Edinburgh and the Lothians.

I met with community organisations, foodbanks and charities supporting those facing hardship and saw first-hand the remarkable efforts being made by volunteers and local organisations.

I also engaged with organisations such as the Trussell Trust and visited local initiatives supporting foodbank collections and community food programmes. These visits highlighted both the challenges facing many families and the strength of community solidarity during difficult times.

Meeting volunteers, community workers and constituents affected by rising costs served as a constant reminder of the importance of ensuring support reaches those who need it most. The experience reinforced my commitment to raising these issues in Parliament and advocating for measures that help individuals and families navigate challenging economic circumstances.

These experiences demonstrated that while public policy is important, community action remains one of Scotland's greatest strengths. Across Edinburgh and the Lothians, countless individuals and organisations stepped forward to support their neighbours, reflecting the resilience, compassion and community spirit that exists throughout our region.



International Engagement, Human Rights & Cross-Party Group Activity

Justice for Gaza

The conflict in Gaza has been one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of my time in Parliament. Like many people across Scotland, I was deeply shocked by the horrific attacks of 7 October 2023 and the tragic loss of innocent lives that followed.

Throughout this conflict, I have consistently maintained that every civilian life has equal value and that lasting peace can only be achieved by recognising our shared humanity. The suffering endured by civilians in both Gaza and Israel has been immense, but it is impossible to ignore the scale of devastation experienced in Gaza and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences for ordinary families.

From the outset, I called for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages, unrestricted humanitarian access, an end to violence against civilians, and renewed international efforts towards a lasting political solution.

I have repeatedly raised concerns regarding compliance with international humanitarian law and have consistently argued that collective punishment and the targeting of civilians can never be justified.

My position remains that peace, security and dignity for all people in the region can only be achieved through a negotiated two-state solution, with both Israelis and Palestinians able to live in peace, security and freedom.



THE SCOTSMAN Perspective

Staying silent over Gaza risks complicity in war crimes, even in Scotland

As public subsidies are directed to arms manufacturers, our own institutions may be complicit, writes Feysal Choudhury

Many are deeply shaken and feel abandoned by institutions they once trusted to stand for justice





Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh

One of the most rewarding initiatives during my time in Parliament was establishing and convening the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh.

The Group was created to strengthen relationships between Scotland and Bangladesh and to promote collaboration across a range of policy areas including climate change, education, trade, culture, tourism and international development.







Visit to Bangladesh

A particular highlight was leading a parliamentary delegation to Bangladesh alongside colleagues Miles Briggs MSP and Evelyn Tweed MSP. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to strengthen ties, exchange ideas and explore how both nations can work together to address shared global challenges.

Throughout the visit, one message emerged consistently: today's challenges increasingly require international cooperation. Whether tackling climate change, supporting displaced populations, strengthening labour rights or expanding educational opportunities, collaboration across borders is more important than ever.

Climate Change and Climate Justice

Our delegation met senior government representatives and policymakers to discuss climate resilience, adaptation and opportunities for greater cooperation between Scotland and Bangladesh.

As one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, Bangladesh faces significant environmental challenges despite contributing only a small proportion of global emissions. Seeing these realities first-hand reinforced the urgency of climate action and strengthened my belief that wealthier nations have a responsibility to support those disproportionately affected by climate change.

The discussions built upon conversations that had begun during COP26 in Glasgow and highlighted the importance of international partnerships in delivering meaningful climate solutions.

Visit to Cox's Bazar Refugee Camps

Another memorable visit was to The Larder and its Skills Academy, where I met staff, trainees and volunteers and saw first-hand the life-changing work being undertaken.

The organisation combines employability support, skills development and community engagement, helping individuals gain confidence, discover talents and build pathways into employment. Alongside its training programmes, The Larder promotes locally sourced food and creates opportunities for people who may otherwise struggle to access the labour market.

What impressed me most was the organisation's belief in people's potential and its commitment to helping individuals overcome barriers and transform their lives. The visit highlighted the value of community-led solutions and demonstrated how targeted support can help individuals build brighter futures while strengthening local communities.

In recognition of this outstanding work, I was proud to nominate Angela Moohan of The Larder as my Local Hero for the official opening of the Scottish Parliament in 2021.



Strengthening Scotland-Bangladesh Relations

The delegation also met senior political leaders and parliamentary representatives to discuss areas of mutual interest including education, skills development, economic cooperation and climate policy.

Discussions focused on future opportunities for collaboration between Scotland and Bangladesh and explored ways in which both countries could strengthen educational, cultural and economic links.
The visit demonstrated the enormous potential for future cooperation and highlighted the positive role Scotland can play in supporting international partnerships built on mutual respect and shared objectives.



International Development & Global Partnerships

In line with my responsibilities within the shadow international development portfolio, I was honoured to meet President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia alongside the late Sir Geoff Palmer.The engagement reflected Scotland's longstanding relationship with Zambia and our shared commitment to supporting international development and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Scotland and Zambia have enjoyed historic connections for generations, and it is important that these relationships continue to develop through education, knowledge-sharing, economic cooperation and cultural exchange.

International partnerships remain essential in addressing global challenges and creating opportunities that benefit communities both in Scotland and overseas.

Fair Trade and Ethical Supply Chains

Following the visit, the Cross-Party Group organised a joint meeting with the Cross-Party Group on Fair Trade to examine issues affecting Bangladesh's garment industry and international supply chains

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The session brought together academics, industry experts and fair-trade representatives to discuss workers' rights, ethical sourcing and sustainable production.

The discussion reinforced the importance of ensuring that economic growth is accompanied by fair working conditions and responsible business practices. It also highlighted the shared responsibility of consumers, businesses and governments in promoting fair trade and protecting workers throughout global supply chains.

The Cross-Party Group continues to provide an important platform for dialogue, cooperation and relationship-building between Scotland and Bangladesh, and I remain grateful to all members, stakeholders and supporters who contributed to its success.

Supporting Volunteering and Community Action

Volunteering has played a significant role throughout my life and remains one of the strongest foundations of community resilience across Scotland. I was delighted to co-convene the Cross-Party Group on Volunteering alongside former MSP ,whose longstanding commitment to supporting volunteers and disability organisations has been widely recognised and respected.

Throughout my parliamentary career, I worked closely with charities, community groups and volunteer organisations to understand the challenges they faced, particularly regarding funding, sustainability and increasing operating costs.

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the extraordinary contribution made by volunteers. Across Edinburgh and the Lothians, volunteers stepped forward to deliver food parcels, support vulnerable residents and maintain vital community services during unprecedented circumstances.

One particularly significant achievement of the Cross-Party Group involved raising concerns regarding proposals that would have introduced additional costs for volunteers through PVG membership arrangements. Through engagement with stakeholders and policymakers, these concerns were successfully highlighted and addressed.

The experience reinforced the importance of ensuring that volunteering remains accessible and that barriers to participation are minimised wherever possible.



During my time in Parliament, I was pleased to host discussions as part of the Scottish Parliament's Festival of Politics programme. One of the most significant panels I organised focused on climate justice and the disproportionate impact of climate change on low-lying countries and developing nations.

The event brought together leading experts including the late Professor Saleemul Huq, Dr Elizabeth Cripps, Jelina Berlow Rahman and Dr Ben Wilson to discuss the realities facing countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The discussion highlighted how communities that have contributed least to global emissions are often experiencing some of the most severe consequences.

It also reinforced the importance of climate justice, international cooperation and stronger commitments to achieving net-zero targets.

The Festival of Politics continues to provide an important platform for informed discussion and public engagement on issues affecting Scotland and the wider world.

Supporting the Third Sector

Throughout my parliamentary career, I consistently supported Scotland's third sector and highlighted the essential role community organisations play in supporting individuals and families.

To better understand the challenges facing the sector, I hosted a roundtable discussion in the Scottish Parliament bringing together organisations including Citadel Youth Centre, ELREC, EVOC, North Edinburgh Arts and The Larder.

The discussion focused on funding pressures, barriers facing smaller organisations and the need for more sustainable funding arrangements.

Participants highlighted the uncertainty many organisations face due to short-term funding cycles and emphasised the importance of providing long-term stability to allow organisations to plan effectively and continue delivering vital services.

A key message emerging from the roundtable was that smaller organisations often deliver significant impacts within their communities and must not be overlooked in national funding decisions.

I remain committed to ensuring that the voices of community organisations are heard within Parliament and that the sector receives the recognition and support it deserves.











Scotland's History, Anti-Racism & Social Justice

Understanding Scotland's History

Throughout my parliamentary career, I have believed that understanding our history is an important part of building a fairer future.

I welcomed efforts by institutions across Scotland to examine historical links to slavery, empire and colonialism and to encourage informed public discussion about our shared past.

I was particularly interested in the work of Sir Geoff Palmer and the Independent Steering Group on Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums, which encouraged institutions to engage openly with these complex historical issues.

Visits to organisations such as the Museum on the Mound demonstrated how museums and cultural institutions can play an important role in educating the public and promoting understanding of Scotland's place within wider global histories.









Anti-Racism & Equality

The fight against racism and prejudice has been a lifelong commitment and remains one of the issues closest to my heart.

Throughout my parliamentary career, I worked with communities, campaigners, public bodies and organisations to challenge discrimination and promote equality. I chaired conferences, sponsored events and participated in discussions focused on tackling racism in workplaces, public services and wider society.

I was particularly pleased to support the work of organisations including North Edinburgh Arts, Passion4Fusion and Project Esperanza, which have played important roles in developing anti-racist initiatives and strengthening community cohesion.

Within Parliament, I consistently raised concerns regarding hate crime, discrimination and the impact of divisive rhetoric on communities. I firmly believe that education remains one of the most powerful tools available in combating prejudice. By promoting understanding, encouraging dialogue and creating opportunities for meaningful interaction between communities, we can build a more inclusive and cohesive society.



Art as a Tool for Inclusion

Art can also play a powerful role in bringing communities together. I was pleased to support organisations such as Art27, which use creative expression to promote inclusion, encourage participation and celebrate diversity. Their work demonstrates how cultural engagement can help strengthen community connections and create spaces where people from all backgrounds feel welcome and valued.





Remembering Sir Geoff Palmer

One of the greatest privileges of my life was knowing Sir Geoff Palmer.

Sir Geoff was not only a pioneering academic and human rights advocate but also a mentor, friend and source of inspiration to countless people across Scotland and beyond.

His commitment to justice, equality and truth never wavered. Through his work, he challenged institutions to confront difficult histories while always promoting understanding, dialogue and positive change.

His intellect, wisdom and humility earned him admiration across political, academic and community life.

His passing was a profound loss, but his legacy will continue to inspire future generations to challenge injustice, promote equality and build a more inclusive society.

My thoughts remain with his family, friends and all those whose lives he touched. His contribution to Scotland will not be forgotten.







Importance of Close & Local Community Engagements

One of my priorities throughout my five years in Parliament was maintaining close engagement with community organisations, charities and local groups across the Lothians.

Drawing on my own background in community and third-sector work, I have always believed that effective policymaking must be informed by the lived experiences of those working directly within our communities.



Health & Social Care

Throughout my tenure, I engaged regularly with healthcare organisations, charities and frontline providers to better understand the challenges facing patients and staff across the region.

I was pleased to meet organisations such as RNIB Scotland, which provides invaluable support to blind and partially sighted people, helping individuals maintain independence and access essential services.

I also worked closely with community pharmacies, which continue to play an increasingly important role in delivering local healthcare services and relieving pressure on GPs and hospitals. Community pharmacists are often the first point of contact for people seeking advice on minor illnesses and long-term conditions, providing accessible and trusted healthcare within local communities.



During visits to local pharmacies, including Barnton Pharmacy, I met pharmacists, clinicians and staff to discuss the challenges facing the sector and the vital contribution they make to preventative healthcare and early intervention. These conversations reinforced my view that community pharmacies should receive the support needed to continue serving as local health hubs and helping reduce pressure on wider NHS services.

East Calder Health Centre Campaign

One of the most prominent local campaigns I supported was the campaign for a new East Calder Health Centre.



For many years, local residents have expressed concerns about the condition and capacity of the existing facility. The health centre was originally designed to serve around 4,000 patients but now supports a population of more than 16,000, with further housing developments expected to increase demand significantly in the coming years.

Following discussions with local residents and campaigners, I visited the health centre alongside colleagues, including Gregor Poynton MP, to see first-hand the challenges facing patients and healthcare professionals. During the visit, we observed concerns regarding the condition of the building and the increasing pressure being placed on services by a rapidly growing population.

In response, I organised and participated in meetings and roundtables with local stakeholders, raised the issue in Parliament, corresponded with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and repeatedly called for greater action from NHS Lothian and the Scottish Government.

A key ask from campaigners has been the allocation of funding to progress the business case for a replacement facility. Access to healthcare is a fundamental public service and communities experiencing significant population growth must have healthcare infrastructure that keeps pace with demand.

While progress has been slower than many local residents would wish, I remain committed to supporting the campaign and continuing to press for a long-term solution that delivers modern healthcare facilities for East Calder and the surrounding communities.







Celebrating Community Collaboration

Throughout my parliamentary tenure, I made it a priority to attend community events and celebrate the achievements of local volunteers, charities and organisations whose work often goes unseen but makes a tremendous difference to people's lives.

Environmental Engagement

Throughout my parliamentary tenure, I made it a priority to attend community events and celebrate the achievements of local volunteers, charities and organisations whose work often goes unseen but makes a tremendous difference to people's lives. These projects demonstrate how local action can contribute to wider environmental goals while strengthening community participation and civic pride.





Supporting Older People

I regularly attended events organised by organisations supporting older people, including NKS, Milan and Age Scotland. These visits provided opportunities to hear directly from older residents about the challenges they face, while also recognising the dedication of staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to reduce isolation and improve wellbeing. As Scotland's population ages, supporting organisations that help older people remain connected and active within their communities will become increasingly important.

Creative Communities

As Convenor of the Cross-Party Group on Culture and Communities, I worked with cultural organisations both within and beyond Parliament to explore how culture can contribute to wider public policy objectives.



Culture is often viewed solely through the lens of arts funding, but its contribution extends much further. Strong cultural participation can improve wellbeing, support mental health, encourage youth engagement, strengthen community cohesion and contribute significantly to local economies.

One parliamentary event I was particularly pleased to sponsor was the Arts and Humanities Research Council Communities Policy event. The event showcased innovative research examining how culture, creativity and community engagement can improve health and wellbeing outcomes. The discussions demonstrated the value of collaboration between researchers, community organisations and policymakers in developing new approaches to some of society's most pressing challenges.



Fair Trade and International Development

Throughout my parliamentary career, I maintained a strong interest in fair trade and ethical international development. I engaged with organisations including World Fair Trade and other fair-trade partners to explore how Scotland can continue supporting sustainable international trade while ensuring producers receive fair compensation for their work.

This interest was further strengthened during the Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh delegation visit, where I saw first-hand the importance of industries such as jute production to local livelihoods and economic development.

In August 2025, I was honoured to welcome delegates attending the 18th International Fair Trade Towns Conference to the Scottish Parliament. The conference brought together international partners, community leaders and policymakers to discuss how local communities can contribute to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The conference theme, "Your Town, Our World", highlighted the growing recognition that local action and international cooperation must work hand in hand if we are to address global challenges effectively.



Faith Communities

Throughout my time in Parliament, I maintained strong relationships with faith communities across the Lothians and Scotland. Building on my work through the Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice, I sought to ensure faith communities had opportunities to engage with policymakers and contribute to public debate.

Church of Scotland Roundtable

I worked with church leaders and representatives from Scotland's diverse Christian communities to facilitate dialogue on matters of shared concern.

The roundtable brought together Scottish church leaders and leaders from diaspora churches to discuss how greater collaboration, inclusion and representation could be encouraged within Scotland's faith communities.

Participants highlighted the important contribution made by Scotland's estimated 200 diaspora churches and discussed opportunities to strengthen relationships across different faith traditions and cultural backgrounds.

The discussions also demonstrated the important role faith communities continue to play in civic life and public policy discussions.

Muslim Community Engagement

For several years, members of Muslim communities across Edinburgh and the Lothians raised concerns with me regarding the shortage of dedicated burial space. Recognising the importance of this issue, I met community representatives, facilitated discussions and engaged with Edinburgh City Council to explore long-term solutions.

I also hosted meetings and discussions within Parliament to ensure community concerns were heard by decision-makers. I was pleased to receive updates confirming progress on the next phase of Craigmillar Castle Park Cemetery, including plans that could provide approximately 500 burial plots for the Muslim community.

While further work remains, this represents an important step towards addressing a long-standing concern raised by many local families. I remain committed to supporting community representatives and continuing engagement with local authorities to ensure future provision meets the needs of a growing and diverse population.





Youth Engagement

As a father, youth engagement was one of the issues I cared most deeply about throughout my parliamentary career.
Our young people are Scotland's future, and I consistently sought opportunities to hear directly from them about the issues affecting their lives, education, communities and aspirations.

Whether visiting schools, meeting students or working with youth organisations, I was continually impressed by the passion, creativity and awareness demonstrated by young people across the region. Many young people spoke about issues including climate change, mental health, educational opportunities, equality and political participation. Their willingness to engage constructively with public policy discussions gives me confidence for Scotland's future.

I strongly believe institutions such as the Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament have an increasingly important role to play in ensuring young voices are heard within political decision-making. Throughout my tenure, I welcomed Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament to engage with parliamentary work and supported discussions on issues including anti-racism, education and community participation.

I also engaged with young carers, university students, nursing and midwifery students from Edinburgh Napier University and students from Queen Margaret University.

In discussions with nursing and midwifery students, concerns were frequently raised about financial pressures, placement support and the rising cost of living. These future healthcare professionals are essential to the sustainability of our NHS and deserve the support necessary to complete their studies and thrive in their careers.

Scottish Apprenticeship Week

Each year I was pleased to support Scottish Apprenticeship Week and meet apprentices from a wide range of industries.

In 2025, I visited Lothian Buses and met apprentices undertaking training across various disciplines. The visit highlighted the positive impact apprenticeships have on individuals, businesses and local communities.

Apprenticeships provide valuable pathways into employment, help address skills shortages and create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to develop rewarding careers. Supporting these opportunities will remain essential to Scotland's future economic success.







Casework Record 2021–2026

A comprehensive record of constituency casework, parliamentary interventions, community campaigns and individual advocacy conducted on behalf of Lothian constituents.

Scottish Parliament, Session 6: May 2021 – May 2026

Labour MSP for Lothian

FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

Lothian Region

Casework Record 2021–2026

A comprehensive record of constituency casework, parliamentary interventions, community campaigns and individual advocacy conducted on behalf of Lothian constituents.

Scottish Parliament, Session 6: May 2021 – May 2026

Labour MSP for Lothian

Section 1: Introduction

Foysol Choudhury was elected as a Labour Member of the Scottish Parliament for the Lothian region in May 2021, serving throughout Session 6. As a regional MSP he represented constituents across Edinburgh and the Lothians, a sprawling and diverse region encompassing the New Town and Old Town of Edinburgh, the coastal communities of Portobello, Musselburgh and Cramond, the towns and villages of West Lothian, and the newer expanding communities at Winchburgh and East Calder.

The role of a regional MSP is in some respects more demanding than that of a constituency MSP: without a single defined patch, a regional member must be prepared to engage with issues wherever they arise across a large geographic and demographic area. Mr Choudhury embraced that breadth from his first week in parliament. He was a former Chief Executive of the Edinburgh and Lothians Regional Equality Council and Vice-Chair of the Edinburgh Mela, arriving at Holyrood with more than thirty years of community activism behind him and an extensive network of contacts across the voluntary sector, healthcare, business, and civic society.

Across five years in parliament, Mr Choudhury lodged 467 parliamentary questions, made 180 contributions in his final year alone, secured multiple Members' Business Debates, chaired and co-convened more than twenty Cross-Party Groups, and engaged with hundreds of individual constituents through formal casework, surgeries, site visits, roundtables, and community events.

This casework record is organised chronologically, year by year, within thematic subsections. It covers housing, health, social care, equality and human rights, the environment, transport and infrastructure, cost of living, the Ukrainian refugee response, COVID-19 casework, and a wide range of community campaigns. Parliamentary questions, press coverage, and formal outcomes are linked throughout.

A defining feature of Mr Choudhury's approach was his willingness to go to where the problem was, attending community meetings rather than waiting for constituents to come to him, conducting joint site visits, and pursuing issues persistently across multiple institutions. That instinct, forged over decades of community leadership before he entered parliament, shaped everything he did at Holyrood.

Foreword

This casework record was prepared at the close of Session 6 of the Scottish Parliament to provide a comprehensive account of the parliamentary and constituency work undertaken by Foysol Choudhury MSP on behalf of Lothian constituents between May 2021 and May 2026.

The record draws on parliamentary question logs, Members' Business Debate records, written correspondence, press coverage, and the direct recollections of Mr Choudhury and his parliamentary team. It is intended as both an account of the work done and a resource for constituents, organisations, and journalists who wish to understand the scope and character of his parliamentary engagement.

Foysol Choudhury entered parliament in 2021 as a figure already deeply embedded in Scottish civic life. The breadth and depth of his community connections, built over more than thirty years of leadership in the equality, refugee, and voluntary sectors, were immediately apparent in the range of casework he attracted and the energy he brought to constituency engagement. From his first weeks in parliament, constituents came to him not just with individual problems but with campaigns they had been trying to advance for years, knowing that they now had an MSP with the knowledge, tenacity, and community network to make a difference.

This record reflects the work of five years. It is not complete, no written record could capture every phone call, every informal meeting, every letter quietly sent on behalf of a constituent who simply needed a

sympathetic ear and a door opened. But it reflects the range, ambition, and human dimension of the work undertaken.

Where outcomes are known, where a planning application was refused, a health centre committed, a transport blockage resolved, a vulnerable patient returned to a waiting list, they are recorded here. Where campaigns are still ongoing at the close of the session, that too is noted. The work of a constituency MSP does not end neatly at the dissolution of a parliament: the cases do not close just because the parliamentary session does.

Mr Choudhury's casework is dedicated to the constituents who trusted him with their problems, the Edinburgh mother too embarrassed to have visitors because of her mouldy home; the families who could not hold their elderly relatives' hands during lockdown; the Long Covid sufferers who had been told their symptoms weren't real; the Winchburgh families promised a train station for a decade; the young people with diabetes who should have had access to life-changing technology years ago. This record is for them.

Section 1b: The Lothian Region, Context

The Lothian electoral region of the Scottish Parliament is one of the most diverse and complex in Scotland. It covers the City of Edinburgh, Scotland's capital and one of the most prosperous cities in the United Kingdom, alongside parts of West Lothian, East Lothian, and Midlothian. As a regional list seat, the Lothian MSP's constituency is not defined by ward boundaries but by the sheer range of communities within the region.

Edinburgh itself contains extraordinary contrasts. The New Town and the west of the city are among the wealthiest urban areas in Scotland; parts of Leith, Wester Hailes, and Craigmillar are among the most deprived. The city's international character, home to large South Asian, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, African, and East Asian communities, as well as thousands of students and researchers from around the world, creates both a richness of culture and a complexity of need that demands a particular kind of representative.

West Lothian presents different challenges: a mix of former industrial communities, newer commuter towns, and expanding development areas like Winchburgh and East Calder, with a significant rural population and a healthcare infrastructure that has not always kept pace with population growth. Issues like the Winchburgh train station and the East Calder health centre reflect the particular combination of rapid growth and infrastructure under-investment that characterises parts of West Lothian.

As a regional MSP with seven representatives for the Lothian region, Foysol Choudhury served the entirety of this area, working alongside constituency MSPs from multiple parties. His approach was to identify the gaps, the communities and issues that were falling between the cracks, and to fill them. That meant being willing to go to West Lothian communities that had not historically expected an Edinburgh-based MSP to take their issues seriously, and being willing to engage with the full diversity of Edinburgh's communities in ways that required cultural knowledge and community trust, not just a parliamentary pass.

This is the context in which the casework record that follows was compiled. It is the record of one MSP's attempt, over five years, to serve a region of extraordinary diversity, complexity, and need.

Section 3: 2021, Entering Parliament

3.1 Election and First Days

Foysol Choudhury took his seat at Holyrood on 13 May 2021. He was one of the most experienced community leaders among the new intake of MSPs in Session 6, bringing knowledge of health inequalities, race equality, refugee support, and third sector funding that few newly elected parliamentarians could match. He immediately began registering casework from constituents across the Lothian region and attending community events to make himself known.

In his first weeks he met with a range of community organisations across Edinburgh, including food banks, refugee support groups, disability charities, and housing associations, to understand the priorities he should focus on. He quickly established a pattern of regular constituency engagement that would define his approach throughout the term.

3.2 Forthview Development, Queensferry Road, Transport Scotland Blockage

One of the first major constituency casework issues to reach Mr Choudhury involved the planned Forthview development on Queensferry Road and Ferrymuir Gait in South Queensferry. The development was to deliver 124 new homes, a significant contribution to Edinburgh's housing supply. However, a Transport Scotland objection to the proposed access road at Ferrymuir Gait had blocked the application, leaving the development in limbo and residents frustrated.

Mr Choudhury wrote to the Transport Minister setting out the case for a workable resolution, pressing Transport Scotland to engage constructively with the developer. He raised the matter in correspondence with Transport Scotland directly and began lodging written questions to establish the official position. Residents who had been waiting years for movement on the development contacted him to express their frustration.

In March 2022, with the blockage still unresolved, residents staged a public protest which received STV News coverage. Mr Choudhury was present and was quoted calling on Transport Scotland to find a practical solution. Shortly afterwards, Transport Scotland agreed to allow the access road, unblocking the development, a significant early win for constituents who had been waiting years.

S6W (2021) Forthview development, Transport Scotland objection to access road *parliament.scot*

3.3 Afghan Refugees, Fall of Kabul

The fall of Kabul in August 2021 and the subsequent collapse of the Afghan government prompted an immediate humanitarian response. Mr Choudhury, who had a long personal and professional connection to refugee communities in Edinburgh, was among the first MSPs to raise the situation in parliament. He pressed the Scottish Government and Edinburgh City Council for a clear plan to receive and support Afghan evacuees who were being resettled in Scotland.

He worked directly with local voluntary organisations to identify immediate support needs, including emergency language support, school places for children, and access to housing. He raised questions about the coordination between the UK Home Office resettlement programme and the Scottish Government's own response, pressing for clarity on who was responsible for providing accommodation and when support packages would be in place.

The experience reinforced his conviction that early, proactive parliamentary pressure was essential when humanitarian situations emerged quickly, and he applied the same model a year later when Ukrainian refugees began arriving under the Super Sponsor scheme.

S6W (2022) Afghan refugee support in Edinburgh and the Lothians parliament.scot

3.4 COP26 Food and Climate Members' Business Debate

In November 2021, coinciding with COP26 in Glasgow, Mr Choudhury secured one of his first Members' Business Debates, motion S6M-01310 on food and climate. The debate considered the role of food production and supply chains in Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, and called on the Scottish Government to develop a coherent national food strategy aligned with its net zero commitments.

Mr Choudhury spoke about the particular vulnerability of food-growing communities in the Global South to climate change, drawing on his connections to Bangladesh, one of the world's most climate-exposed countries. He called for Scotland's COP26 commitments to include meaningful support for agricultural adaptation in developing nations as well as domestic action on food waste and sustainable land use.

The debate drew contributions from MSPs across party lines and was one of his clearest early statements of the international dimension he intended to bring to his role.

S6M-01310 (2021) COP26 Food and Climate Members' Business Debate parliament.scot

3.5 Initial Damp and Mould Casework

Before the end of 2021, Mr Choudhury had already begun receiving representations from Edinburgh constituents living in social housing with serious damp and black mould problems. These early cases would develop into one of the defining casework themes of his first two years in parliament. He began corresponding with Edinburgh City Council and raising questions about the adequacy of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for dealing with persistent damp in older tenement stock.

3.6 Small Business COVID-19 Recovery

In 2021 and into early 2022, Mr Choudhury received a significant volume of casework from small business owners in Edinburgh and the Lothians who had encountered problems accessing COVID-19 business support grants and loans. Several constituents reported inconsistent treatment between different businesses in the same sector, confusion about eligibility criteria, and delays in processing that had left viable businesses on the brink. He made representations to the Scottish Government and to Edinburgh City Council on behalf of affected businesses, and raised questions about the consistency and fairness of grant allocation decisions, pressing for an accessible appeals process.

3.7 Care Home Visitor Restrictions

Throughout 2021, the ongoing restrictions on visiting elderly and disabled relatives in care homes remained a source of deep distress for many families in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Mr Choudhury received casework from families who felt the rules were applied inconsistently, and from families who had been unable to visit relatives who were declining in health. He raised the issue in parliamentary questions, pressing the Scottish Government to clarify the rules and to ensure that essential visitor status was being applied compassionately.

S6W (2021–22) Care home visitor restrictions during COVID-19 parliament.scot

3.8 Care Home Closures, Clovenstone, Ferrylee, Ford's Road, Jewel House and Drumbrae

In September 2021, within his first months in parliament, Mr Choudhury wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Humza Yousaf, opposing proposals from the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board to close Clovenstone, Ferrylee, Ford's Road and Jewel House care homes and to remove Drumbrae care home from council control. Constituents had contacted him directly about the proposals, which threatened the loss of resident-based care provision and around 270 care home posts, with a further 160 jobs put at risk. Mr Choudhury set out his concern that, if the proposals proceeded, the City of Edinburgh Council would be left with only three local authority care homes to serve an ageing population, a position he described as untenable, and asked the Scottish Government for its view on the closures.

Humza Yousaf MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

September 2021
Ref: FC/ST/0006

Dear Humza,

Re: Proposed closure of Clovenstone, Ferrylee, Ford's Road and Jewel House care homes and the removal of Drumbrae care home from council control.

Several of my constituents have contacted me regarding the proposed closure of Clovenstone, Ferrylee, Ford's Road and Jewel House care homes and the removal of Drumbrae care home from council control with the loss of provision of vital resident-based care.

I am opposed to the Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board's (IJB) proposals to carry out these actions and am very concerned about the extensive disruption that there will be for the residents of the care homes and the loss of approximately 270 care home posts, with an additional 160 jobs being put at risk.

Additionally, I am also troubled that if the IJB's proposals are successful, the City of Edinburgh Council will only be left with three local authority homes to look after an ageing population, which is an untenable situation.

I would like to know the Scottish Government's views on these important issues and look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Foysol
FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

Section 4: 2022, Expanding the Casework Base

4.1 Mouldy Homes Summit (Housing Damp and Mould)

By early 2022, Mr Choudhury had received representations from dozens of Edinburgh constituents living in properties with serious damp and black mould. The cases ranged from new social housing tenants who had found mould on walls from the first winter, to long-standing tenants who had reported problems repeatedly without resolution. Many described health impacts including respiratory problems, skin complaints, and anxiety.

The case that attracted the most attention involved an Edinburgh mother who told Mr Choudhury she was too embarrassed to have visitors because of the state of her home. Her account was covered by the Edinburgh Evening News, which quoted her saying the damp and mould made the property feel unliveable. Mr Choudhury used the case to call for a Mouldy Homes Summit, a cross-sector gathering of social landlords, tenants, environmental health officers, and public health professionals to develop a coordinated approach.

He lodged written questions pressing the Scottish Government on the scale of the problem in Scotland's social housing stock, the enforcement powers available to local authorities, and the adequacy of funding for improvement works. He also questioned the Scottish Government on whether the existing Social Housing Quality Standard went far enough in requiring landlords to address the causes of damp rather than simply the visible mould.

S6W (2022) Damp and mould in social housing, Mouldy Homes Summit *parliament.scot*

4.2 Racist Landlords and Housing Discrimination

In 2022 and into 2023, Mr Choudhury spoke out publicly about reports of landlords in Edinburgh's private rented sector discriminating against prospective tenants on racial grounds. Cases brought to his attention involved tenants of South Asian, Black African, and East Asian backgrounds who had been turned away from viewings, subjected to additional conditions not applied to white applicants, or told properties had been let when they had not.

He raised the issue in the chamber and in written questions, calling on the Scottish Government to strengthen anti-discrimination provisions in housing law and to provide clearer statutory guidance to local authorities on investigating and prosecuting housing discrimination. He also raised the issue of selective licensing schemes and whether they could be used to sanction discriminatory landlords.

S6W (2022) Racial discrimination in private rented sector, enforcement powers *parliament.scot*

4.3 Ukraine, Super Sponsor Scheme and Refugee Casework

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 transformed Mr Choudhury's casework landscape almost overnight. He immediately began receiving enquiries from Edinburgh families who wanted to host Ukrainian refugees and from Ukrainian families seeking to understand their rights and entitlements.

Scotland's Super Sponsor scheme, under which the Scottish Government acted as collective sponsor for Ukrainian refugees, bypassing the need for individual sponsorship arrangements, was widely praised for its ambition. However, the scheme's success in attracting large numbers of refugees created significant logistical challenges. Mr Choudhury received representations from Edinburgh host families experiencing difficulties navigating the bureaucratic process, and from Ukrainian families who had been placed in

temporary hotel accommodation in Edinburgh and were struggling to access language support, benefits, school places for children, and GP registration.

He raised the Scottish Government's progress on delivering on the Super Sponsor commitments in written questions, asking about the number of refugees in temporary accommodation across Lothian, the timeline for moving families into settled housing, and the funding available to voluntary organisations supporting the refugee community. He also took up individual cases involving visa delays, family separation, and benefit entitlement issues. Much of this work was far less visible than the parliamentary questions themselves: resolving individual visa cases routinely meant his caseworker spending long periods on the phone to the Home Office, often hours at a time on a single case, simply trying to get through to someone who could move a stalled application forward for a family waiting to be reunited or to reach safety.

S6W (2022) Ukraine Super Sponsor scheme, Edinburgh housing provision *parliament.scot*

4.4 Islamophobia Awareness Month

Mr Choudhury has been a consistent and outspoken advocate for the recognition and tackling of Islamophobia throughout his parliamentary term. He participated in Islamophobia Awareness Month events each year from 2021 onwards, spoke in parliamentary debates on the issue, and co-convened the Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice.

In 2022, he called publicly for the Scottish Government to adopt a formal definition of Islamophobia, based on the All-Party Parliamentary Group definition, across all public bodies. He raised the issue in parliamentary questions, asking which public bodies had adopted the definition and what plans were in place for public sector training to embed it in practice. He also raised specific instances of Islamophobic incidents in Edinburgh schools and pressed the Scottish Government on whether religious hate crime was being properly recorded and prosecuted.

S6W (2022) Islamophobia Awareness Month, public sector action *parliament.scot*

4.5 Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh, Inaugural Meeting

In 2022, Mr Choudhury established the Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh in the Scottish Parliament. The inaugural meeting was attended by MSPs from several parties and by representatives of Scotland's Bangladeshi diaspora community. The group provided a formal parliamentary forum for raising issues of concern to British-Bangladeshi constituents, including consular issues, visa delays, development links between Scotland and Bangladesh, and the situation of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Mr Choudhury convened the group throughout the parliamentary session, bringing in speakers from the Bangladeshi High Commission, development organisations, and community groups. The group's establishment was covered by the North Edinburgh News and was welcomed by community organisations across Edinburgh.

Press: North Edinburgh News, Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh inaugural meeting

4.6 Racism Against Ethnic Minority Civil Servants

Following a survey and reporting in the Edinburgh Evening News, Mr Choudhury spoke out in 2022 about the racist treatment of ethnic minority civil servants within the Scottish Government and its agencies. The evidence suggested that ethnic minority staff were more likely to experience harassment, were underrepresented at senior grades, and were less likely to receive promotion despite equivalent performance.

Mr Choudhury, as the first person of Bangladeshi heritage elected to the Scottish Parliament, used his platform to lend particular weight to these concerns. He called for urgent action including mandatory anti-racism training, transparent ethnicity pay gap reporting, and independent review of promotion processes within the Scottish civil service. He questioned the Scottish Government in parliament and wrote directly to the Permanent Secretary.

S6W (2022) Racist treatment of ethnic minority civil servants in Scotland *parliament.scot*

4.7 Winchburgh Train Station Campaign, First Letter

The campaign for a new rail station at Winchburgh, West Lothian, became one of the most sustained multi-year infrastructure campaigns of Mr Choudhury's parliamentary term. Winchburgh was a rapidly expanding community, one of the largest new housing developments in Scotland, with thousands of new homes and a growing population, but no rail connection. Residents were entirely dependent on car travel or infrequent bus services to access Edinburgh.

In 2022, Mr Choudhury wrote his first formal letter to the Transport Minister pressing for a commitment to fund the station and to include it in the Strategic Transport Projects Review. He raised the issue in written questions and in chamber debates, and began building cross-party support by engaging with SNP and Conservative MSPs representing West Lothian constituencies.

S6W (2022) Winchburgh train station, letter to first Transport Minister *parliament.scot*

4.8 Anne Sinclair, Cancer Treatment Casework

Mr Choudhury took up the case of Anne Sinclair, a 64-year-old Edinburgh constituent who had faced seven months of delays in her cancer diagnosis before being told she had an aggressive form of endometrial cancer. The case was covered by the North Edinburgh News and involved Mr Choudhury making direct representations to NHS Lothian on her behalf, pressing for an urgent treatment date and for a clear explanation of the delay. He first raised her case with the First Minister in February 2022, and was told the delays she had faced were "not at all acceptable", an assessment Mr Choudhury said he agreed with entirely.

Mrs Sinclair died in the summer of 2022. Throughout her illness she had been determined that her MSP raise her story in Parliament, seek answers for the delays she had faced, and fight so that no one else would be left in the same position. In October 2022, Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar raised her case directly with the First Minister at First Minister's Questions, with her sons watching from the gallery. They gave Mr Choudhury their permission to continue fighting on their mother's behalf, and the family issued a statement saying they did not wish for any other families to go through what theirs had been through, and that their mother had been a fighter who would have wanted her questions about her late diagnosis answered. Mr Choudhury used the case to press the Health Secretary on the wider cancer waiting times crisis facing NHS Lothian.

Press: North Edinburgh News, Anne Sinclair cancer case: Foysol Choudhury raises NHS Lothian delay » foysolchoudhury.co.uk

4.9 Long Covid Casework Begins

Long Covid emerged as a significant and growing casework theme from 2022 onwards. Mr Choudhury received representations from constituents in Edinburgh and West Lothian who had developed debilitating symptoms following COVID-19 infection and were struggling to access diagnosis, treatment, and support. Symptoms described by constituents included extreme fatigue, cognitive impairment, breathlessness, joint pain, and post-exertional malaise.

Several constituents had been waiting six months or more for a referral to NHS Lothian's Long Covid clinic. Others had been told they did not meet the threshold for referral despite months of symptoms. Mr Choudhury made direct representations to NHS Lothian on behalf of individual constituents and began lodging written questions to establish the capacity and waiting times of Long Covid services across Scotland.

S6W (2022–23) Long Covid clinics, waiting times and referral thresholds parliament.scot

4.10 Modern Apprenticeships, Diversity and Access

In 2022, Mr Choudhury spoke to the Edinburgh Evening News about the need to ensure that young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds had equitable access to Modern Apprenticeship opportunities. He raised concerns about the underrepresentation of young people from minority ethnic communities, young people from deprived areas, and young women in traditionally male-dominated apprenticeship sectors. He pressed Skills Development Scotland on the data it held on apprenticeship diversity and on what actions were being taken to address the gap.

Press: Edinburgh Evening News, Modern Apprenticeships: Foysol Choudhury calls for greater diversity

4.11 Vaccine Access for Minority Communities

Mr Choudhury received casework from Edinburgh's South Asian, Black African, and other minority ethnic communities about barriers to accessing COVID-19 vaccination. Barriers identified included language difficulties in accessing NHS Inform, distrust of state institutions among some newly arrived communities, concerns circulating on social media about vaccine safety, and practical difficulties attending vaccination centres during working hours. Mr Choudhury worked with community organisations and NHS Lothian to identify targeted outreach approaches and pressed the Scottish Government to fund culturally appropriate vaccination promotion.

4.12 Temporary Accommodation, Children at Christmas

In the run-up to Christmas 2022, Mr Choudhury received representations from families in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh. Several families with children described living in hotel rooms or B&Bs with no cooking facilities, no space for children to do schoolwork, and no way to mark Christmas in any meaningful way. He spoke publicly about the unacceptability of children spending Christmas in hotel rooms, raised the issue with Edinburgh City Council, and called for greater urgency in moving families into settled accommodation. He noted that Scotland had declared a housing emergency and yet the most visible symptoms of that emergency, families with children in temporary accommodation, were not being resolved quickly enough.

4.13 A&E Waiting Times, NHS Lothian's 'Year-Round Crisis'

Mr Choudhury spent much of 2022 pressing on A&E waiting times at NHS Lothian, telling anyone who would listen that the health service was now in a year-round crisis rather than the usual winter one. In July, with Public Health Scotland reporting a record 8,993 patients across Scotland waiting longer than four hours, he pointed out that NHS Lothian was managing just 65.5% within that target, and the Royal Infirmary only 49.1%, one of the worst figures anywhere in the country. His call was simple: properly staff and resource A&E, and back the staff trying to cope with the strain.

Things had not improved by October. The Royal Infirmary was down to 40.6% of patients seen within four hours, against a Scottish average of 64.2% and a government target of 95%. Mr Choudhury said the numbers spoke for themselves, two years of decline with no sign of a turnaround, and noted that NHS Lothian had

last averaged above 90% back in March 2021. He put the blame on long-running structural failures rather than the staff themselves, and pushed for urgent action before the next winter made things worse again.

Press: Edinburgh News, Lothian MSP says NHS in 'year-round crisis' as A&E waiting times reach record high, July 2022 » Press: Edinburgh News, Edinburgh A&E waiting times: just 40.6 per cent seen within four hours at Royal Infirmary, October 2022

4.14 Polkemmet Road, Whitburn, Pelican Crossing Campaign

Families in Whitburn had been asking for a safe way to cross Polkemmet Road long before Mr Choudhury got involved. There was no controlled crossing point, and residents, including children walking to school, had to cross a busy road without one. Mr Choudhury backed the local campaign publicly, saying the demand for a safe crossing was essential and that action couldn't wait, and STV News picked the story up.

It still took years. Repeated correspondence with West Lothian Council kept the pressure on, and a pelican crossing was eventually installed on Polkemmet Road, proof that even a fairly simple local ask can take a long time to actually deliver.

Press: STV News, Whitburn families' demand for a safe crossing on Polkemmet Road » foysolchoudhury.co.uk

Section 5: 2023, Deepening Engagement

5.1 Holyrood Political Awards, Open All Hours Award

HOLYROOD POLITICAL AWARDS 2023, Open All Hours Award, in association with the Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF). Winner: Foysol Choudhury MSP.

Awarded to the MSP who goes the extra mile to help their constituents, colleagues and staff, whose door is always open and for whom the words "business closed" never feature. This is a parliamentarian who can be relied upon to get a job done and whose tenacity to get a problem fixed knows no bounds.

At the Holyrood Political Awards 2023, Foysol Choudhury was named winner of the Open All Hours Award, in association with the Scottish Grocers' Federation. The award recognises the MSP whose door is always open, an elected representative who goes above and beyond for constituents, colleagues, and staff, and who is known across parliament as someone who can always be relied upon to get a job done.

The award reflected five years of relentless community engagement: attending residents' meetings in Canonmills and Portobello, conducting site visits to Winchburgh and East Calder, hosting roundtable after roundtable at Holyrood, and responding personally to constituents who had been failed by other institutions. Colleagues in parliament noted that Mr Choudhury was consistently one of the most approachable MSPs on the backbenches, willing to listen, willing to act, and willing to pursue an issue long after others had moved on.

The recognition from Holyrood magazine and the political community underscored what his constituents had known from the beginning: that in Foysol Choudhury they had an MSP who understood that the job was never truly done.

5.2 NHS Lothian Paediatric Audiology Audit

In June 2023, an audit of NHS Lothian's paediatric audiology services produced deeply troubling findings: concerns were identified in 88% of cases reviewed. The audit raised questions about waiting times, diagnostic accuracy, follow-up procedures, and the support provided to children and families waiting for

hearing assessments and interventions. For families of children with suspected hearing difficulties, delays in diagnosis could have serious impacts on language development and educational outcomes.

Mr Choudhury wrote an opinion piece for the Edinburgh Evening News calling for urgent action and for NHS Lothian to publish a clear improvement plan with measurable milestones. He also raised the audit's findings with the Health Secretary in written questions, asking what oversight the Scottish Government was exercising over NHS Lothian's remedial plans and what assurance there was that the audit's recommendations would be implemented in full.

S6W (2023) NHS Lothian paediatric audiology audit, improvement plan *parliament.scot*

5.3 Save Our Pools, West Lothian Leisure Closures

In September 2023, West Lothian Leisure announced the closure of three swimming pools across the region, Armadale, Bathgate and Craigswood, citing financial pressures that had been exacerbated by energy cost inflation. The closures threatened to remove vital community leisure facilities from areas with high levels of deprivation and limited alternative provision.

Mr Choudhury participated in the Save Our Pools Members' Business Debate in the Scottish Parliament, which drew cross-party support. He called on the Scottish Government to provide emergency funding to leisure trusts facing financial collapse, and argued that the public health value of community swimming provision, including for children's water safety, older people's physical and mental wellbeing, and disability rehabilitation, made it a public service, not a discretionary amenity.

He took up individual casework from affected families in West Lothian, including disabled swimmers who had no alternative facility within reasonable travelling distance, and pressed West Lothian Council to engage with Scottish Government on a funding solution.

S6W (2023) Save Our Pools, West Lothian Leisure closures and funding *parliament.scot*

5.4 Seafield Sewage Works and Water Quality

Seafield Sewage Works on the Firth of Forth was a consistent source of constituent complaints across the parliamentary term. In 2023, Mr Choudhury intensified his scrutiny of Scottish Water's management of the facility following renewed reports of sewage odours affecting Portobello, Leith, and Musselburgh, and of sewage overflows into the Firth of Forth during storm events.

He lodged written questions asking Scottish Water for data on the frequency and volume of sewage overflows at Seafield, pressing SEPA on whether enforcement action was being taken, and questioning the Scottish Government about the investment timeline for upgrading the Seafield facility. He received the support of local community groups and the Portobello to Musselburgh coastal community campaign in raising this issue.

S6W (2023) Seafield Sewage Works, overflow frequency and Scottish Water investment plan *parliament.scot*

5.5 Water of Leith, Combined Sewer Overflows

Alongside his Seafield casework, Mr Choudhury raised constituent concerns about combined sewer overflow discharges into the Water of Leith. Residents who used the Water of Leith Walkway and those living close to the river raised concerns about visible sewage pollution, impacts on river biodiversity, and the safety of children and dogs who played near the water. He lodged written questions asking SEPA and the Scottish Government to provide data on the frequency and volume of CSO discharges, and asking what investment Scottish Water had committed to reducing CSO events.

S6W (2023–24) Water of Leith, combined sewer overflow frequency and investment parliament.scot

5.6 E-Bikes and E-Scooters

In 2023 and into 2024, Mr Choudhury received a rising volume of casework from Edinburgh constituents about the operation of e-bikes and e-scooters, both hired and privately owned. Concerns included: riders mounting pavements at speed, near-misses involving elderly pedestrians and people with visual impairments, hired e-bikes abandoned in doorways and on dropped kerbs, and privately owned e-scooters being ridden illegally on public roads.

He raised the issue in parliament and pressed the Scottish Government on the regulatory framework, including the legal status of privately owned e-scooters on public roads, the responsibilities of hire companies for pavement riding, and whether Police Scotland had sufficient powers to enforce against dangerous use. He received particular representations from disability organisations about the impact of abandoned hire bikes on accessible pedestrian routes. This casework would intensify rather than ease over the remainder of the parliamentary term, culminating in a further Members' Business Debate in December 2025 on the organised, antisocial use of these vehicles (Section 7.12).

S6W (2023) E-bikes and e-scooters, regulatory framework and enforcement parliament.scot

5.7 Teaching Scotland's Role in the Slave Trade

Mr Choudhury raised the question of whether Scotland's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade was being adequately and honestly taught in Scottish schools. He drew attention to evidence that Scottish merchants, landowners, and institutions had played a significant role in the slave trade and in slavery in the Caribbean, and that this history was not consistently or rigorously covered in the Curriculum for Excellence.

He lodged parliamentary questions asking the Scottish Government what specific guidance had been issued to schools on teaching Scotland's role in the slave trade, whether the issue was adequately covered at all stages of secondary education, and what professional development was available to teachers to support them in teaching this history effectively and sensitively.

S6W (2023) Teaching Scotland's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade parliament.scot

5.8 Investing in Communities Fund, Food Security

When the Scottish Government announced changes to the Investing in Communities Fund, which provided grants to community organisations across Scotland, Mr Choudhury raised urgent concerns about the impact on food security organisations in Edinburgh and the Lothians. He highlighted that reductions in fund allocations threatened the viability of community food banks, community larders, and soup kitchens that had seen a dramatic increase in demand as the cost-of-living crisis intensified.

He argued in parliament and in written questions that at a time when child poverty in Edinburgh was rising and families were increasingly dependent on emergency food provision, cutting the funding that kept those services running was a false economy that would cost more in downstream health and social care costs than it saved. He called on the Scottish Government to ringfence community food security funding within any revised fund allocation.

S6W (2023) Investing in Communities Fund, food security organisations at risk parliament.scot

5.9 Eyre Place Lane Development, Community Campaign Victory

One of the most significant community campaign victories of Mr Choudhury's parliamentary term came in 2023, when Edinburgh City Council rejected the planning application for a proposed residential development at Eyre Place Lane in Canonmills. The development had attracted more than 350 letters of objection from residents across Canonmills and Inverleith, who raised concerns about the height and density of the proposed building, the loss of a cherished community green space, and the impact on the character of the surrounding conservation area.

Mr Choudhury had engaged directly with the Eyre Place Residents' Association, attended community meetings, written to the Council's planning committee, and lodged parliamentary questions about planning policy in conservation areas. He spoke at a public meeting attended by all four Inverleith ward councillors. His advocacy was acknowledged by residents as an important factor in demonstrating to the planning committee that community opposition had cross-party parliamentary support, not just local organiser energy.

The refusal of the application was widely celebrated and was noted in Mr Choudhury's end-of-term report as one of the clearest examples of parliamentary advocacy producing a tangible result for constituents.

5.10 ASN Reform Scotland, Drop-In Session

Mr Choudhury hosted a drop-in session at Holyrood for ASN Reform Scotland, a campaign group of parents and carers of children with additional support needs who were struggling to access the support to which their children were legally entitled under the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act. Parents described years-long waits for Educational Psychologist assessments, difficulty obtaining coordinated support plans, and persistent battles with local authority education departments.

The session gave parents the opportunity to tell their stories directly to an elected parliamentarian. Mr Choudhury used the evidence gathered to inform a series of written questions on ASN waiting times, funding for additional support, and the adequacy of the Additional Support for Learning Act's implementation across Lothian local authorities.

S6W (2023–26) ASN provision, waiting times for assessments and support in Lothian *parliament.scot*

5.11 Portobello Beach Water Quality

The quality of bathing water at Portobello Beach was a recurring issue throughout Mr Choudhury's term. Portobello is Edinburgh's urban beach and heavily used by local families, swimmers, and dog walkers. Constituents raised concerns about bathing water quality, particularly following heavy rainfall when combined sewer overflow events degraded the water. Mr Choudhury raised the issue with Scottish Water, SEPA, and the Scottish Government, calling for greater transparency about when bathing was unsafe, improvements to achieve and maintain the Good or Excellent bathing water classification, and a long-term investment plan to separate combined sewers in the catchment area.

5.12 Human Trafficking, Constituent Roundtable

On 25 October 2023, Mr Choudhury hosted a roundtable at Holyrood for constituents and organisations working with victims of human trafficking and modern slavery in Edinburgh. The session brought together frontline workers from organisations including TARA (Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance), Migrant Help, and the Salvation Army, alongside survivors of trafficking and representatives from Police Scotland.

Participants discussed the persistent gaps in support for trafficking victims, including the inadequacy of the National Referral Mechanism, poor access to legal aid, the barriers faced by victims with insecure

immigration status, and the absence of long-term support once the immediate recovery period had ended. Mr Choudhury used the evidence gathered at the roundtable to inform a series of written questions on the Scottish Government's approach to tackling trafficking and supporting survivors.

S6W (2025) Human trafficking, support services, prosecution rates and NRM reform parliament.scot

5.13 Damp and Mould in the Private Rented Sector, Motion S6M-07511 and the Death of Awaab Ishak

Building on his earlier work on social housing, Mr Choudhury turned increasing attention during 2023 to damp and mould in privately rented homes. In February 2023, he was contacted by an Edinburgh family in West Pilton who had been forced to leave their home after mould ran rampant through the property, and by a couple in Elliot Street who feared for the health of their two-year-old daughter because of damp and mould in their privately rented house. In both cases he pressed Edinburgh City Council and called on the Scottish Government to consider a dedicated grant scheme to tackle dampness across council, housing association and private sector properties, alongside investment in a whole-house retrofitting programme.

On 20 April 2023, Mr Choudhury secured a Members' Business Debate on motion S6M-07511, on damp housing in Scotland, citing the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, whose death a coroner ruled had been caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his family's housing association flat, as a stark warning of the consequences of inaction. He told the chamber that the Scottish Government's own House Condition Survey had found 40,000 homes across Scotland below tolerable standards, a third of them due to rising or penetrating damp, equivalent to roughly 80,000 residents living in housing their own government considered intolerable. Conservative MSP Miles Briggs supported the debate, citing a tenfold rise in reported damp and mould cases in Edinburgh's social rented homes between 2019 and 2022.

Mr Choudhury continued to press the issue in columns for the Edinburgh Evening News through 2023 and into 2024, repeatedly highlighting that almost half of privately rented homes in Scotland were estimated to fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, and calling for landlords to be held accountable for poor conditions regardless of tenure. By early 2026, with the Scottish Government bringing forward the Investigation and Commencement of Repair (Scotland) Regulations 2026 to implement 'Awaab's Law' in the social rented sector, Mr Choudhury used his role on the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee to press for the same protections to be extended to private tenants, writing to the Scottish Government to ask what engagement it had had with the private rented sector and what plans existed for statutory intervention requiring damp and mould repairs to be carried out to defined standards.

S6M-07511 (2023) Damp housing in Scotland, Members' Business Debate → parliament.scot » Press: Edinburgh News, Edinburgh family forced to leave West Pilton home after mould runs rampant through house, February 2023 » Press: Edinburgh News, Edinburgh couple fear for two-year-old daughter over damp and mould in Elliot Street house, February 2023 » Press: Edinburgh Evening News, Scotland's housing crisis: horrific tales of damp, mould and racist landlords demand action, May 2023 » Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, Petition PE2143, extending Awaab's Law to private tenants parliament.scot

5.14 RAAC in West Lothian Schools, St Kentigern’s Academy

Following the discovery of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in school buildings across Scotland in 2023, a lightweight construction material prone to sudden structural failure, Mr Choudhury raised the position of West Lothian's school estate with the Scottish Government. By September 2023, RAAC had been identified in 40 school buildings across the country, including at St Kentigern's Academy in West Lothian, where dining and kitchen areas had to be closed as a mitigation measure. Mr Choudhury pressed ministers on the funding available to West Lothian Council through the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) to address the issue, and on whether capital constraints arising from rising construction

costs would delay essential remedial works. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged his concerns and confirmed that local authorities where RAAC had been identified, including West Lothian, would have that factored into decisions on the next phase of LEIP funding.

Meeting of the Parliament, September 2023, RAAC in the school estate *parliament.scot*

Section 6: 2024, Major Campaigns Come to a Head

6.1 Housing Emergency Debate

In 2024, the Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency, a recognition of what many councils and housing campaigners had been saying for years: that Scotland's housing system was in crisis, with soaring waiting lists, a severe shortage of social housing completions, and record numbers of households in temporary accommodation. Mr Choudhury contributed to the parliamentary debate on the housing emergency, using the opportunity to set out in detail the impact on Lothian constituents.

He raised the specific position of Edinburgh, which had one of the longest social housing waiting lists in Scotland, with tens of thousands of households waiting for a home. He called particular attention to the position of disabled people, older people, and families with children in temporary accommodation, and questioned the Scottish Government on what additional resources it would direct to local authorities to speed up social housing delivery.

S6W (2024) Housing emergency, impact on Lothian region and Edinburgh waiting list *parliament.scot*

6.2 East Calder Health Centre, Campaign Launch

The campaign for a new health centre in East Calder, West Lothian, became one of the most significant multi-year health casework campaigns of the parliamentary term. East Calder and the surrounding area had grown substantially through new housing development, but the existing GP and primary care provision was widely regarded as inadequate for the expanding population. The community campaign group had been pressing for a dedicated health facility for several years before Mr Choudhury took up the cause.

In May 2024, Mr Choudhury met with the East Calder Health Centre Campaign Group and committed to taking the issue forward at the highest level. He wrote to NHS Lothian, the Scottish Government, and West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership to press for a clear commitment to develop the site. He hosted a roundtable at Holyrood in November 2024, bringing together the campaign group, local councillors, NHS Lothian representatives, and politicians from across parties. In December 2024, he wrote jointly with Gregor Poynton MP (Labour, Livingston) to NHS Lothian, signalling the combined parliamentary pressure behind the campaign.

S6W (2024) East Calder Health Centre, commitment to develop new facility *parliament.scot*

6.3 Post Office Horizon Scandal

In 2024, following the ITV drama Mr Bates vs the Post Office and the explosion of public attention on the Horizon IT scandal, Mr Choudhury raised the issue specifically in the context of sub-postmasters in Edinburgh and the Lothians who had been wrongfully prosecuted or financially ruined by the defective Horizon software. He called for swift and full compensation for all affected sub-postmasters, including those who had not been criminally prosecuted but had suffered financial loss through false accounting allegations.

He raised questions about the Scottish Government's engagement with the UK-wide inquiry chaired by Sir Wyn Williams, and about whether the Scottish Government was doing everything it could to ensure that the interests of Scottish victims were represented in the compensation process and the public inquiry. He met with a constituent affected by the scandal and took up their case with the compensation scheme directly.

S6W (2024) Post Office Horizon scandal, sub-postmaster compensation and Scottish victims parliament.scot

6.4 EIJB Budget Cuts, Third Sector Impact

When the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board proposed a £29 million savings programme in 2024–25, Mr Choudhury raised urgent concerns about the potential impact on Edinburgh's third sector organisations. He identified that 64 organisations funded by the EIJB faced the prospect of losing some or all of their funding, including organisations providing vital services to disabled people, older people, people with mental health conditions, and those with complex care needs.

He questioned the Health Secretary in parliament about the adequacy of the EIJB's consultation with affected organisations, and raised the issue directly with EIJB. He highlighted the particular vulnerability of organisations working with communities who had no alternative provision and for whom the loss of a service could mean direct harm to their health and wellbeing.

S6W (2024) EIJB budget cuts, 64 third sector organisations at risk of losing funding parliament.scot

6.5 Stonemasonry Apprenticeships, Heritage Skills

In 2024, Mr Choudhury raised the issue of stonemasonry apprenticeships in Edinburgh, following concerns raised by heritage construction employers that there were insufficient apprenticeship places to maintain the traditional building skills needed to look after Edinburgh's historic building stock. Edinburgh's UNESCO World Heritage Site status means that the city has an unusually high concentration of listed and heritage buildings requiring specialist maintenance, and the stonemasonry skills needed for that work are not easily substitutable.

He pressed the Scottish Government on whether the Modern Apprenticeship funding system adequately reflected demand for traditional building trades, whether the curriculum for stonemasonry apprenticeships was fit for purpose, and what plans were in place to grow the pipeline of qualified stonemasons. He called for greater engagement between Skills Development Scotland and the heritage construction sector.

S6W (2024) Stonemasonry apprenticeships, heritage skills funding and curriculum parliament.scot

6.6 Dementia as a Public Health Priority

In 2024, drawing on constituent casework involving families of people with dementia, Mr Choudhury wrote a column for the Edinburgh Evening News calling for dementia to be treated as a public health priority in Scotland. He highlighted the growing prevalence of dementia, the inadequacy of community support services for people in the early stages of diagnosis, and the intense pressure placed on unpaid carers, the majority of whom were women, who were providing the bulk of care for people with dementia in their own homes.

He called for greater investment in community dementia services, a more robust approach to dementia prevention including physical activity and social connection programmes, and a proper support package for unpaid carers including improved access to respite care. He subsequently lodged written questions on the Scottish Government's dementia strategy and whether it had adequate implementation funding.

S6W (2024–26) Dementia as a public health priority, Scottish Government strategy and funding parliament.scot

6.7 Active Travel Cuts

When the Scottish Government announced significant cuts to its active travel budget in 2024, Mr Choudhury was among the MSPs who challenged the decision most forcefully. He received casework from constituents who were directly affected, including cycling advocacy groups, walking infrastructure campaigners, and disabled people who depended on accessible active travel routes. He raised the health and equality implications of the cuts, the disproportionate impact on people without access to private transport, and the apparent contradiction between cutting active travel spending and the Scottish Government's own climate and public health commitments.

6.8 Winchburgh Train Station, Second Letter

By 2024, the campaign for a Winchburgh train station had been running for several years. Mr Choudhury wrote to his second successive Transport Minister, pressing for the station to be included in the finalised Strategic Transport Projects Review and for a clear funding commitment. He continued to conduct cross-party site visits with MSPs from other parties to demonstrate that support for the station was not a partisan issue, and hosted a community event in Winchburgh to maintain momentum for the campaign.

6.9 Dalmeny Street Park, Antisocial Behaviour

Residents around Dalmeny Street Park in Leith contacted Mr Choudhury about persistent and escalating antisocial behaviour in and around the park, including late-night disturbance, littering, and intimidation of residents. He made representations to Police Scotland and Edinburgh City Council, attended a community meeting to hear residents' concerns directly, and subsequently raised the issue in written questions about the adequacy of antisocial behaviour resources and the deployment of Community Safety Wardens in Edinburgh.

6.10 Royal Botanic Garden, Carbon Research Funding

Mr Choudhury raised questions about the Scottish Government's support for carbon research at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), including RBGE's internationally significant research into Scotland's peatland ecosystems and the role of plant biodiversity in carbon sequestration. He pressed for sustained long-term funding for this work in the context of Scotland's legally binding net zero targets, arguing that scientific research infrastructure was a public good that should not be subject to short-term budget pressures.

6.11 Sustainable Aviation Fuel

As part of his broader interest in the decarbonisation of transport, Mr Choudhury raised questions about the Scottish Government's position on sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), particularly in relation to Edinburgh Airport. He asked about the Scottish Government's engagement with the UK Government on the SAF mandate, the implications for jobs at Edinburgh Airport and in the Scottish aerospace supply chain, and what the Scottish Government was doing to position Scotland as a potential producer of SAF from renewable energy sources.

S6W (2024–25) Sustainable aviation fuel, Scottish Government position and Edinburgh Airport [parliament.scot]

6.12 Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion, Temporary Closure and the Case for a New Facility

The Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion, serving an estimated 45,000 people with sight loss across Edinburgh and the Lothians, had been declared unfit for purpose for over a decade by the time Mr Choudhury entered parliament, with outpatient waiting times having more than quadrupled since 2014. Alongside fellow Edinburgh MSPs Sarah Boyack, Daniel Johnson, Miles Briggs, Jeremy Balfour, Ben Macpherson, Sue Webber, Alex Cole-Hamilton and Ash Regan, Mr Choudhury signed a joint letter to the then Cabinet Secretary for Health, Michael Matheson, pressing for a firm commitment to replace the facility after the Scottish Government appeared to step back from an election commitment to do so.

The position deteriorated further in September 2024, when NHS Lothian announced the Eye Pavilion would close for around six months from late October for critical maintenance, including work related to asbestos in the building. At a statement to parliament on 26 September 2024, Mr Choudhury raised concerns about the disruption facing patients with rearranged appointments in unfamiliar locations, and queried where patients experiencing eye emergencies would be directed for urgent care during the closure, given that the Royal Infirmary's general A&E department was not equipped to meet specialist ophthalmic needs. The Cabinet Secretary acknowledged the concerns Mr Choudhury and his colleagues had raised earlier that day at a meeting held at the Eye Pavilion itself. The facility reopened to all patients once the maintenance work was complete, with services that had been temporarily relocated moving back to Chalmers Street.

Press: North Edinburgh News, Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion: joint MSP letter to the Cabinet Secretary » Meeting of the Parliament, 26 September 2024, Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion statement *parliament.scot*

Section 7: 2025, A High-Volume Final Full Year

7.1 Diabetes Technology Members' Business Debate, January 2025

On 7 January 2025, Mr Choudhury secured a Members' Business Debate on diabetes technology, a subject that had emerged as a priority through his Holyrood roundtable work. The debate focused on access to hybrid closed loop (HCL) insulin delivery systems and continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), technologies that can transform the lives of people living with type 1 diabetes by automating insulin delivery and dramatically reducing the risk of dangerous blood sugar episodes.

Mr Choudhury used the debate to expose the stark inequity in access to these technologies across Scotland. Some health boards had implemented hybrid closed loop systems for eligible patients; others had not. People living with type 1 diabetes in some parts of Scotland were accessing potentially life-changing technology while those in NHS Lothian and other boards were still waiting. He called on the Scottish Government to publish a national implementation plan for HCL technology and to set a deadline for achieving universal access.

The debate drew contributions from MSPs across party lines and received significant coverage in the diabetes advocacy community. Diabetes charities and patient groups cited the debate as an important step forward in securing political commitment to equitable access. In his closing remarks the Minister for Public Health and Women's Health acknowledged the scale of the waiting lists facing constituents a year earlier and set out the progress made since, while colleagues across the chamber, including Miles Briggs, Sarah Boyack, Emma Harper, Jackie Dunbar and Brian Whittle, thanked Mr Choudhury for securing a debate they described as timely and well evidenced.

S6W (2025) Diabetes technology, Members' Business Debate and national implementation plan *parliament.scot*

7.2 Diabetes Technology Roundtable at Holyrood

Prior to the January 2025 debate, Mr Choudhury had hosted a dedicated roundtable at Holyrood on diabetes technology. The session brought together people living with type 1 diabetes, including children and young people and their parents, alongside diabetes specialists, clinical nurses, and representatives from Diabetes Scotland and JDRF. Participants shared evidence on the clinical and quality-of-life benefits of HCL technology, the barriers to access, and the disparities in provision across Scottish health boards.

The roundtable was instrumental in shaping the cross-party motion that underpinned the Members' Business Debate, and in ensuring that the voices of people actually living with diabetes were placed at the heart of the parliamentary debate rather than treated as an afterthought.

7.3 Diabetes Technology, Continued Advocacy and Petition PE2031

Mr Choudhury did not treat the January debate as the end of his diabetes technology advocacy. Through February and March 2025 he continued to press the case publicly, highlighting NHS Lothian's projected waiting list of around 1,200 patients for an insulin pump and arguing that the absence of a funded, multi-year rollout plan, of the kind already committed to in England and Wales, left patients facing waits of several years for technology that was already transforming outcomes elsewhere.

Writing on his own website in March 2025, he argued that financial constraints were being allowed to dictate clinical decisions in diabetes care, and called for investment in early intervention and life-saving technology to be treated as the cost-effective choice rather than a discretionary one. He was widely quoted making the point that access to hybrid closed loop systems should not depend on a patient's postcode or income, and that managing type 1 diabetes well already demands dozens of daily decisions from patients without technology being withheld on top of that.

Separately, Mr Choudhury engaged with the Scottish Parliament's Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on Petition PE2031, which raised concerns about a postcode lottery in insulin pump and continuous glucose monitoring provision for children across different health boards. He pressed for the Committee to write to the responsible minister and to individual health boards for comparative data on provision, and raised the position of NHS Lothian specifically in that context.

Press: The Scotsman, 'Accountants are making clinical decisions': diabetes patients slam NHS service, February 2025 » foysolchoudhury.co.uk, The Fight for Fair Access to Diabetes Technology in Scotland, March 2025 » Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, Petition PE2031, insulin pump provision for children [parliament.scot]

7.4 NHS Waiting List 21-Day Removal Letters, FMQ December 2025

In December 2025, Mr Choudhury raised at First Minister's Questions the practice of NHS Lothian sending letters to patients on waiting lists requiring them to confirm within 21 days that they still wished to remain on the list, on pain of being removed without further contact. He highlighted constituent cases where vulnerable patients, including people with cognitive impairments, severe mental health conditions, or communication difficulties, had received such letters, failed to respond within the deadline, and been removed from waiting lists for treatment they urgently needed.

In one case brought to Mr Choudhury's attention, a constituent with dementia had received such a letter, had been unable to process or respond to it, and had been removed from a waiting list for a procedure that their GP considered medically necessary. The removal had then required a fresh referral and a further months-long wait. Mr Choudhury pressed the First Minister on whether the Scottish Government had sanctioned this practice, whether it was aware of its impact on vulnerable patients, and whether it would undertake to review it as a matter of urgency.

FMQ Dec 2025 NHS waiting list 21-day removal letters, impact on vulnerable patients [parliament.scot]

7.5 Fair Trade Conference, September 2025

In September 2025, Mr Choudhury attended and addressed the annual Fair Trade conference, speaking about the importance of fair trade purchasing by Scottish public bodies and the role of the Scottish Government's ethical procurement policies in creating demand for fairly traded goods. He highlighted the particular importance of fair trade for small-scale producers in the Global South, including in Bangladesh, and called for greater ambition in Scotland's public sector procurement commitments.

Following the conference, he lodged written questions asking the Scottish Government for an update on its progress toward the procurement targets set out in its fair trade strategy, and asking how many Scottish public bodies had achieved or were working towards Fair Trade Status.

S6W (2025) Fair Trade public procurement, Scottish Government progress and targets [parliament.scot]

7.6 Real Living Wage, Social Care Workers

Mr Choudhury was a consistent advocate throughout the parliamentary term for ensuring that all social care workers were paid at least the Real Living Wage. In 2025, he posted an open letter on social media setting out the gap between the Real Living Wage and the pay actually received by social care workers in Edinburgh and the Lothians, particularly those employed in the third sector. He argued that the Scottish Government's commitment to the Real Living Wage was being undermined by insufficient funding to providers, which left third sector care organisations unable to absorb increased wage costs without reducing services.

He used parliamentary questions to press the Scottish Government on the scale of the funding gap, the number of social care workers still not receiving the Real Living Wage, and the timeline for closing the gap. He also raised the workforce retention crisis that low pay was driving, and its direct impact on care quality for Edinburgh's elderly, disabled, and vulnerable population.

S6W (2025) Real Living Wage, social care funding gap and workforce retention [parliament.scot]

7.7 Bidfood Workers, Fair Work

Mr Choudhury took up the case of workers at the Bidfood distribution centre in Edinburgh, who were involved in an industrial dispute over pay and conditions. He made representations to Bidfood management and raised the issue in the context of the Scottish Government's Fair Work commitments, questioning in parliament whether a company in receipt of public contracts could be considered compliant with Fair Work principles while engaged in a dispute with its workforce over poverty pay. He called on the Scottish Government to review its procurement relationship with Bidfood in light of the dispute.

7.8 Rising Tide of Racism, Column Series

In 2025 and into 2026, Mr Choudhury contributed a series of columns to the Edinburgh Evening News and the North Edinburgh News about what he described as a rising tide of racism in Scottish public life. Drawing on constituent casework, including cases of workplace discrimination, racist online abuse, anti-Muslim incidents in Edinburgh schools, and the targeting of asylum seeker accommodation, and on his own experience as the first Bangladeshi person elected to Holyrood, he called for stronger political leadership in challenging racist language and behaviour.

He argued that the normalisation of anti-immigration rhetoric in mainstream political discourse created a permissive environment for street-level racism, and that political leaders across all parties had a

responsibility to push back clearly and consistently rather than equivocating. He called for greater investment in community cohesion programmes in Edinburgh, and for robust implementation of the Scottish Government's race equality strategy.

Press: Edinburgh Evening News, Rising tide of racism: Foysol Choudhury calls for political leadership » Press: North Edinburgh News, Foysol Choudhury on racism in Edinburgh communities

7.9 Unpaid Carers, Respite and Assessment

Mr Choudhury received a consistent and growing volume of casework from unpaid carers throughout the parliamentary term. In 2025, he focused particular attention on the failure of Edinburgh City Council and NHS Lothian to meet their statutory duties under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 in relation to adult carer support plans and short breaks services. Cases included carers who had been waiting over a year for a carer support plan, carers who had never been offered a respite break, and carers of adults with complex needs who were reaching crisis point because there was no alternative provision if they became ill themselves. He raised the adequacy of carer support across Lothian in parliamentary questions and spoke in debates on the implementation of the Carers Act.

7.10 Scotland-Bangladesh Relations, Rohingya Crisis

Mr Choudhury used his convening role in the Cross-Party Group on Bangladesh to raise awareness of the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, where over a million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were living in the world's largest refugee camp. He called for increased UK and Scottish Government engagement with humanitarian organisations working in the camps, pressed for Scotland's diaspora connections to Bangladesh to be leveraged in raising funds for humanitarian relief, and raised the political situation in Bangladesh itself following the political upheaval of 2024.

7.11 Knife Crime, First Minister's Questions, May 2025

In May 2025, following a wave of stabbing incidents involving young people across Scotland, Mr Choudhury raised the issue directly with the First Minister at First Minister's Questions. He noted that, in the wake of the death of a 16-year-old boy from East Kilbride, three young people had been killed in stabbing incidents in the preceding year, and that since March alone there had been eleven stabbings involving young people, including multiple incidents on Portobello beach, within his own region. He told the First Minister that police had seized 248 weapons in schools the previous year, and asked what the Scottish Government was doing to intervene, including whether it would ask the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to intensify its work. The First Minister responded by setting out the Government's approach, education on the dangers of carrying a knife, effective punishment when offences were committed, and sustained school and community engagement, while acknowledging that the violence in Portobello and elsewhere was unacceptable and that, despite a longer-term fall in knife crime, one such incident was always one too many.

This sat alongside Mr Choudhury's wider community safety casework, including his engagement with the petition relating to the case of Lewis Condy (Section 9.7) and his representations on antisocial behaviour around Dalmeny Street Park in Leith (Section 6.9), reflecting a consistent pattern of pressing for both an immediate police response and longer-term prevention work in communities affected by youth violence.

FMQ, 22 May 2025, knife crime prevention, S6F-04110 parliament.scot

7.12 Dangerous and Antisocial Use of E-Bikes and E-Scooters, Members' Business Debate, December 2025

Building on the casework he had raised since 2023 (Section 5.6), Mr Choudhury secured a further Members' Business Debate on 9 December 2025, this time addressing what he described as one of the fastest-growing threats to public safety on Scotland's streets: the organised, antisocial use of e-bikes, e-scooters, and modified e-motorbikes such as Sur-Ron bikes. He told the chamber that groups of riders, often dressed entirely in black with balaclavas and other face coverings to conceal their identity, were being seen riding in swarms through Edinburgh and other Scottish cities, weaving through traffic, mounting pavements at speed, and using machines that had been illegally modified to exceed legal speed and power limits. He highlighted the particular danger these near-silent, fast-moving vehicles posed to people with sight loss, drawing on evidence from Guide Dogs Scotland's Scoot Aware campaign, including the account of a guide dog owner who had been knocked to the ground by a rider who gave no warning of their approach.

Mr Choudhury continued to press the Scottish Government on enforcement, including in a written question asking for a timetable for its review, alongside Police Scotland and the Association of Vehicle Recovery Operators, of the statutory charges and vehicle recovery legislation applying when illegal e-bikes and e-scooters were seized.

Meeting of the Parliament, 9 December 2025, dangerous and antisocial use of e-bikes and e-scooters → parliament.scot » S6W (2025–26) E-bikes and e-scooters, statutory charges and vehicle recovery legislation review timetable *parliament.scot*

Section 8: 2026, Final Year and Legacy

8.1 East Calder Health Centre, Scottish Government Commitment

In February 2026, Mr Choudhury hosted a further roundtable on the East Calder Health Centre campaign, bringing together the campaign group, local councillors, NHS Lothian, West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership, and Gregor Poynton MP. He also conducted a joint site visit to East Calder with Mr Poynton and Dame Jackie Baillie MSP to maintain visible cross-party pressure on the issue. Shortly after the roundtable, the Scottish Government confirmed that detailed plans would be developed for a new health centre at East Calder, a significant breakthrough after years of community campaigning, representing substantial progress toward the construction of a facility the community had been promised for over a decade.

S6W (2026) East Calder Health Centre, Scottish Government commitment to develop detailed plans *parliament.scot*

8.2 Winchburgh Train Station, Third Letter to Transport Minister

In the final months of his parliamentary term, Mr Choudhury wrote to his third successive Transport Minister pressing for a firm commitment to fund the Winchburgh station. Despite progress in the Strategic Transport Projects Review process, a formal funding commitment had still not been given. He raised the issue in chamber debates and in correspondence, warning that continued delay was damaging the credibility of commitments made to communities that had been promised infrastructure improvements for years. He called on whoever succeeded him as Lothian MSP to continue the campaign and to hold the Scottish Government to account on the delivery timeline.

S6W (2026) Winchburgh train station, letter to third Transport Minister pressing for commitment *parliament.scot*

8.3 Dementia Update, Final Parliamentary Questions

In his final parliamentary questions of the session, Mr Choudhury returned to the issue of dementia as a public health priority. He asked the Scottish Government for an update on the implementation of its Dementia Strategy, on the proportion of people living with dementia in Lothian who were receiving post-diagnostic support, and on the funding available for community dementia services and carer support. He used the opportunity to place on record the experiences of the many families who had contacted him over five years about the inadequacy of dementia support.

S6W (2026) Dementia strategy, implementation progress and post-diagnostic support funding parliament.scot

8.4 ASN, Final Advocacy

In the final months of the session, Mr Choudhury continued to press on additional support needs, hosting a final drop-in session for ASN Reform Scotland and lodging written questions asking for an update on waiting times for educational psychology assessments across Lothian local authorities. He called on the Scottish Government to set statutory maximum waiting times for ASN assessments, mirroring the approach taken for NHS waiting times, and to provide councils with the resources needed to clear the backlog.

S6W (2026) ASN provision, waiting times and statutory maximum timescales parliament.scot

8.5 End-of-Term Report and Reflections

In the final weeks of Session 6, Mr Choudhury published his end-of-term report, covered by The Edinburgh Reporter and the North Edinburgh News. The report reflected on five years of casework, campaigns, and community engagement across the Lothian region, setting out the outcomes achieved, the campaigns still in progress, and the issues he hoped his successor would continue to champion.

He reflected publicly on what it had meant to be the first person of Bangladeshi heritage elected to the Scottish Parliament, the responsibility it brought, the communities it gave him a particular duty to serve, and the message he hoped it sent to every young person from an ethnic minority background in Scotland who wanted to go into public life.

Press: The Edinburgh Reporter, Foysol Choudhury end-of-term report: five years in parliament » Press: North Edinburgh News, Foysol Choudhury reflects on five years as Lothian MSP

8.6 RAAC, Continued Engagement with West Lothian Council

Mr Choudhury's engagement on RAAC in West Lothian's school estate continued through to the final months of his parliamentary term. In January 2026, he visited the West Lothian school most affected by RAAC to see at first hand the work being carried out by the council in response, and continued to press the Scottish Government on the additional funding being made available to West Lothian Council to address the structural challenges facing its school estate. The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills acknowledged Mr Choudhury's sustained engagement with the local authority on the issue over the preceding year.

Meeting of the Parliament, 8 January 2026, RAAC funding for West Lothian school estate parliament.scot

Section 9: Community and Cultural Casework

9.1 Edinburgh International Festival, Accessibility

Mr Choudhury raised questions throughout the parliamentary term about the accessibility of Edinburgh's major cultural festivals for disabled people and for people on low incomes. He pressed the Scottish Government, as a significant public funder of the Edinburgh International Festival, to make access and inclusion conditions a formal requirement of its funding agreements, including affordable ticketing schemes, BSL interpretation at key events, and physical access improvements.

9.2 Royal Blind School

Mr Choudhury visited the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh and met with pupils, staff, and management to discuss the school's resource needs and the broader policy question of specialist school provision. He subsequently raised questions about funding for specialist provision for children with visual impairments and the importance of maintaining a dedicated specialist school as part of Scotland's continuum of educational provision rather than requiring all children with visual impairments to be educated in mainstream schools without adequate support.

9.3 Edinburgh Mela

As a founding director and former Vice-Chair of the Edinburgh Mela, Mr Choudhury maintained a close connection to this important celebration of multicultural Scotland throughout his parliamentary term. He raised questions about Scottish Government and local authority funding for the Mela and for multicultural community events more broadly, and participated in the festival each year. He argued consistently that events like the Mela were not luxuries but essential expressions of Scotland's diversity and important tools for community cohesion.

9.4 India FinTech Delegation

Mr Choudhury hosted an India FinTech delegation at Holyrood in 2024, bringing together representatives of India's growing financial technology sector with Scottish business contacts, enterprise agencies, and government representatives. The visit reflected his ongoing role in building economic and cultural connections between Scotland and South Asia, and complemented his parliamentary work on Scottish-Bangladeshi relations through the Cross-Party Group.

9.5 Marionville Fire Station

Constituents in the Marionville area raised concerns with Mr Choudhury about plans affecting Marionville Fire Station. He made representations to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and to the Scottish Government, asking about the strategic rationale for any proposed changes, the impact on emergency response times in the east of Edinburgh, and whether an equalities impact assessment had been conducted on proposals that might affect response times in more deprived areas.

9.6 Newkirkgate Shopping Centre, Leith

Mr Choudhury received representations from constituents in Leith about the condition and future of Newkirkgate Shopping Centre, a local retail and community facility of particular importance to older, disabled, and less mobile residents in the area. He raised questions about the management of the centre, the adequacy of maintenance, and options for its regeneration, and pressed Edinburgh City Council and the

Scottish Government to consider the role of neighbourhood shopping centres in supporting community cohesion and access to services in deprived urban areas.

9.7 Youth Violence, Lewis Condy Petition

Mr Choudhury engaged with a petition presented to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee relating to youth violence and community safety, stemming from the case of Lewis Condy. He met with the petitioner, engaged with organisations working on youth violence prevention in Edinburgh, and raised questions about the Scottish Government's approach to early intervention in youth violence, the adequacy of funding for community-based prevention programmes, and whether the approach being taken in Edinburgh was consistent with the evidence base on effective youth violence prevention.

Section 10: Thematic Analysis, Five Years in Review

10.1 Direct Community Presence

The most consistent feature of Mr Choudhury's approach to the role of regional MSP was his physical presence in communities. He did not limit his engagement to parliamentary correspondence and written questions. He attended residents' meetings in Canonmills and West Lothian. He visited East Calder, Winchburgh, and the Water of Leith. He was at the Marionville Fire Station community consultation, the Eyre Place Lane public meeting, the Save Our Pools campaign events, and the Portobello beach water quality demonstrations. This pattern of direct engagement, rooted in thirty years of community activism before he entered parliament, made him a visible and trusted figure across the Lothian region.

10.2 Cross-Party Working as a Deliberate Strategy

Mr Choudhury's casework was characterised by a deliberate and principled willingness to work across party lines. His Winchburgh campaign involved cross-party site visits with SNP and Conservative MSPs. His East Calder campaign was conducted jointly with Labour MP Gregor Poynton and SNP MSP Dame Jackie Baillie. His Eyre Place advocacy drew support from Inverleith ward councillors of all parties. His damp housing work found support from MSPs across the chamber. This cross-party approach was not naivety about politics but a strategic recognition that the most urgent problems facing Lothian constituents, housing, health, transport, the environment, could not wait for political alignment. Where issues transcended party, he sought to build coalitions that transcended party too.

10.3 Breadth of Representation

A notable feature of Mr Choudhury's casework was the breadth of communities it served. His work on behalf of Edinburgh's minority ethnic communities, on racism in housing, the civil service, and schools; on Islamophobia; on vaccine access; and on Bangladesh diaspora issues, sat alongside casework on behalf of elderly constituents in care homes, disabled swimmers in West Lothian, Long Covid sufferers in Musselburgh, small business owners in Leith, and families in temporary accommodation in central Edinburgh. This breadth reflected both the diverse character of the Lothian region and his own background, which gave him entry points into communities that other MSPs might not have reached.

10.4 Persistent Institutional Accountability

Mr Choudhury demonstrated throughout the parliamentary term a willingness to hold institutions accountable wherever the problem resided, not just the Scottish Government, but NHS Lothian, Edinburgh City Council, Scottish Water, SEPA, Transport Scotland, Skills Development Scotland, the EIJB, private companies, and the UK Government. The breadth of institutional engagement meant that constituents with

problems that crossed administrative boundaries found in him an advocate who would follow the issue wherever it led, rather than stopping at the first point where the problem could be passed to another party.

10.5 Parliamentary Statistics

Across five years in the Scottish Parliament: 467 parliamentary questions lodged; 180 contributions in the final year alone (2025), his highest annual total; multiple Members' Business Debates secured, including on food and climate (2021), diabetes technology (2025), and swimming pool closures (2023); 20+ Cross-Party Groups chaired or co-convened; Holyrood Political Awards 2023, Open All Hours Award winner; hundreds of individual constituency cases taken up across housing, health, equality, environment, transport, and community safety.

10.6 Multifaceted Casework, When One Problem Is Several

One thing that doesn't come across from a list of case titles is how rarely a constituent's problem turned out to be just one problem. A housing complaint usually arrived with a health complaint, a benefits complaint and sometimes a child welfare issue all bundled into the same conversation.

Take the family in temporary accommodation over the winter of 2022 to 2023. On paper it was a housing case, but it was also a child's schooling being disrupted, a younger child's cough that the GP linked to damp, and a household trying to feed four people on £15 a day, which meant writing to the council's housing department, the school and the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board all at the same time rather than one after another. The Long Covid teacher from late 2022 started as a health case and became an employment case within weeks, once her sick pay ran out and a disciplinary process began, and then a benefits case once Personal Independence Payment came into the picture, each one needing a different letter to a different body. The 2021 care home closures were billed as a health and social care decision, but underneath that were around 270 jobs directly and another 160 at risk, which needed raising just as hard as the impact on residents. And the West Pilton and Elliot Street mould cases were filed as housing complaints, but were really child health cases, with GPs linking coughs and worsening symptoms straight back to the state of the property.

This matters in practice. A case that really is just one issue can usually be closed with a single letter to a single body. A case like the ones above has to be worked on several fronts at once, often with each institution pointing at another as the one actually responsible, and no guarantee that sorting one part moves the rest along. The sheer amount of correspondence behind some of these cases, a school, a health board and a council department all being chased for what looks on paper like one constituent's problem, reflects that, rather than anything being done inefficiently.

Section 10a: Selected Case Studies in Detail

The following three case studies illustrate in greater depth the character of Mr Choudhury's casework, the complexity of the problems constituents brought to him, the persistence required to resolve them, and the human stories behind the parliamentary questions and written interventions.

Case Study One: A Family in Temporary Accommodation

In the winter of 2022–23, a family of four, two parents and two children aged six and nine, were referred to Mr Choudhury's office by a local food bank in Edinburgh. The family had been placed in temporary accommodation by Edinburgh City Council following the loss of their private rented tenancy, and had been in a city-centre B&B for seven months. The B&B had no cooking facilities, no washing machine, and a

single room for the entire family. The children were sharing a bed. The family was being given £15 a day for food for four people.

The elder child was falling behind at school. The school had not been informed that the family was in temporary accommodation, and the child had no space at the B&B to do homework or to decompress after school. The younger child had developed a persistent cough that the GP attributed at least in part to the damp conditions of the room.

Mr Choudhury wrote to Edinburgh City Council's housing department pressing for immediate rehousing. He raised the case at a meeting with the Council's housing convener and followed up in writing three times over the following six weeks. He also wrote to the school to ensure support was in place for both children, and raised the case with the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board in the context of its commissioning of temporary accommodation services. After ten weeks of sustained pressure, the family was moved into a temporary but self-contained flat with cooking facilities and separate sleeping spaces, far short of the permanent housing they needed, but a significant improvement on the B&B. Mr Choudhury continued to press for a permanent housing allocation and raised the case as an anonymised example in a parliamentary debate on the housing emergency.

Case Study Two: A Long Covid Constituent

In late 2022, Mr Choudhury was contacted by a constituent, a former secondary school teacher in West Lothian, then aged 48, who had developed Long Covid following a COVID-19 infection in the spring of 2021. She described symptoms including extreme fatigue that left her bedridden for several days each week, cognitive impairment that made it impossible to read or follow a conversation, persistent chest pain, and episodes of palpitations. She had been unable to work for eighteen months.

She had been referred by her GP to NHS Lothian's Long Covid clinic but had been told the waiting time was over six months. While she waited, she was receiving no specialist support and had been told by the clinic that she could not be given a firm appointment date. Her employer, a secondary school, had begun a disciplinary process after exhausting its sick pay provision. She faced losing her job, her income, and potentially her home.

Mr Choudhury wrote directly to NHS Lothian pressing for urgent review of her case and asking whether an earlier appointment could be offered given the circumstances. He also wrote to the school on her behalf, requesting that the disciplinary process be paused pending her medical assessment. NHS Lothian offered a telephone assessment within four weeks, which resulted in a formal Long Covid diagnosis and a management plan. The school agreed to pause the disciplinary process. She did not return to full-time teaching, but the formal diagnosis allowed her to access Personal Independence Payment and to begin a phased return to work on reduced hours. She wrote to thank Mr Choudhury, saying his intervention had prevented her from losing everything at a time when she had felt completely abandoned by the health and social security systems.

Case Study Three: Winchburgh Residents, A Decade of Waiting

Among the most consistent and emotionally resonant casework contacts of Mr Choudhury's parliamentary term were residents of Winchburgh, West Lothian, who had been promised a train station for their community for the better part of a decade before he took up the cause. Winchburgh sits approximately sixteen miles from Edinburgh city centre. When new housing development began accelerating in the early 2010s, residents were told that a train station would be delivered as part of the infrastructure package. Year after year, the commitment was restated but no funding was committed and no construction began.

By the time Mr Choudhury became their regional MSP in 2021, Winchburgh had thousands of new homes, a growing population including many young families who had moved there on the basis that rail links to Edinburgh would be forthcoming, and still no station. The nearest rail station was at Linlithgow, requiring a car or bus journey, or at Edinburgh Park, even further by road. The community was entirely dependent on car travel for commuting, making it inaccessible to residents who could not drive or could not afford a car, and contributing to significant traffic congestion on the A89.

Mr Choudhury took up the campaign with characteristic persistence. He wrote to the first Transport Minister in 2022, conducted a cross-party site visit with SNP and Conservative MSPs, hosted community events in Winchburgh to maintain momentum, raised the issue in the Strategic Transport Projects Review consultation, and lodged parliamentary questions pressing for a funded commitment. When that minister left office, he wrote to the second. When the second left office, he wrote to the third. Each letter was more specific than the last, citing the timeline of commitments already given, the population growth that had taken place in the meantime, and the fairness argument that residents of Winchburgh were being asked to live with the consequences of development without the infrastructure investment that development had been premised on.

By the close of Session 6 in 2026, a formal funding commitment had still not been given, a reminder that some of the most important campaigns produce progress rather than resolution within a single parliamentary term. But the issue was firmly on the parliamentary agenda in a way it had not been before 2021, cross-party support had been built that would survive the election, and Mr Choudhury's correspondence created a paper trail that his successor could use to hold the Scottish Government to account for its repeated promises.

Section 10b: Equality, Anti-Racism and Human Rights, Detailed Record

Racism in Housing, A Consistent Thread

Throughout his term, Mr Choudhury was one of the most outspoken voices in the Scottish Parliament on racism in the housing system. Beyond the headline cases of discriminatory landlords in 2022–23, he received ongoing casework from constituents who had experienced racism from housing association staff, from letting agents, and from private landlords. He raised these cases individually with the relevant bodies and collectively in parliamentary questions pressing the Scottish Government to strengthen the enforcement role of local authority housing officers and to require annual equality reporting from all registered social landlords.

He also raised the particular housing vulnerability of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in Edinburgh. A number of his casework clients from the Ukrainian and Afghan refugee communities found themselves in temporary accommodation that was wholly inadequate for their needs, properties with no cooking facilities, poor heating, and no space for children to study. He made direct representations to Edinburgh City Council's housing service on behalf of individual families and raised the systemic inadequacy of temporary accommodation provision in parliamentary questions and debates.

Islamophobia, A Multi-Year Campaign

Mr Choudhury's advocacy on Islamophobia was sustained and multifaceted across the parliamentary term. He participated in Islamophobia Awareness Month events every year, typically speaking at community events in Edinburgh as well as contributing to parliamentary activity. He co-convened the Cross-Party Group on Challenging Racial and Religious Prejudice, which held regular meetings at Holyrood and hosted evidence sessions with community organisations, academics, and frontline workers.

He raised specific incidents in Edinburgh, including cases of anti-Muslim abuse at Edinburgh schools, online Islamophobic harassment of Edinburgh Muslim community leaders, and the targeting of Edinburgh mosques during periods of heightened community tension, and pressed Police Scotland and Edinburgh City Council for clear responses. He also raised the representation of Muslims in Scottish public life, including in the Scottish civil service and in public appointments, and called for positive action to address underrepresentation.

His advocacy extended to the legislative sphere: he called for Scotland to adopt a formal working definition of Islamophobia, recommended by the All-Party Parliamentary Group, across all public bodies, and questioned the Scottish Government on its progress in achieving this.

Racial Equality in Education

Mr Choudhury raised the issue of racial equality in Scottish education on multiple occasions across the parliamentary term. Beyond the slave trade curriculum question, he raised concerns about the experience of ethnic minority children in Edinburgh schools, including cases of racist bullying inadequately addressed by school management, the underrepresentation of ethnic minority teachers in Edinburgh schools, and the absence of diverse authors and perspectives in the school curriculum.

He called on the Scottish Government to ensure that the anti-racism actions it had committed to following the Black Lives Matter movement of 2020 were being implemented in Scottish schools, and that Curriculum for Excellence materials reflected Scotland's diverse society and history. He pressed Education Scotland on what guidance had been issued to schools on anti-racism education and what support was available to teachers who lacked confidence or training in this area.

Disability Rights and Independent Living

Alongside his social care casework, Mr Choudhury raised the broader issue of disability rights and independent living across the parliamentary term. He received representations from disabled constituents in Edinburgh and West Lothian who were struggling to access the support they needed to live independently, including cases involving delays to social care assessments, inadequate personal assistant hours, inaccessible housing, and problems with accessible transport.

He raised these issues in parliamentary questions on the implementation of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act and in debates on disability equality. He also attended events hosted by disabled people's organisations in Edinburgh and used the evidence gathered to inform his parliamentary questions and contributions.

Section 10c: Environment and Climate, Extended Record

Scotland’s Peatlands and Nature-Based Solutions

Alongside his casework on Seafield and the Water of Leith, Mr Choudhury maintained a sustained interest in Scotland's wider environmental responsibilities. He raised questions about the Scottish Government's peatland restoration programme, noting that Scotland's peatlands, one of the most significant carbon stores in Europe, were being degraded by drainage, burning, and overgrazing, and that restoration investment was well below what was needed to meet net zero targets.

He pressed the Scottish Government on the coordination between its peatland restoration programme and its agricultural support framework, arguing that the transition to a system of agricultural payments that

rewarded nature recovery as well as food production was essential to meeting both climate and biodiversity commitments.

Air Quality in Edinburgh

Mr Choudhury received casework from constituents in Edinburgh city centre, Leith Walk, and other areas affected by poor air quality about the health impacts of traffic-related pollution. He raised the issue of Edinburgh's Air Quality Management Areas in parliamentary questions, pressed the Scottish Government on whether its support for low emission zones was adequate, and called for greater ambition in Edinburgh City Council's bus and taxi fleet electrification commitments.

He raised the particular impact of poor air quality on children attending schools in high-traffic areas and on older people and people with respiratory conditions who lived in the most polluted parts of the city. He called for regular, publicly available air quality monitoring data and for annual reporting by Edinburgh City Council on progress towards meeting legal air quality standards.

Edinburgh's Green Spaces, Planning and Access

Alongside the Eyre Place Lane campaign, Mr Choudhury raised the broader issue of the protection of Edinburgh's green spaces and the planning framework that governed development on them. He received representations from community groups across Edinburgh who were concerned about the loss of green space through infill development and about the adequacy of planning policies for conservation areas and green belt land.

He pressed the Scottish Government on the review of national planning policy and on whether it gave adequate weight to the social and environmental value of urban green space. He also raised the issue of equitable access to high-quality green space, noting that the distribution of parks and gardens across Edinburgh was unequal and that residents in deprived areas often had access only to lower-quality, poorly maintained green spaces.

Climate Anxiety and Community Responses

In 2023 and 2024, Mr Choudhury received representations from younger constituents, including school students, about climate anxiety and their frustration with the pace of political action on climate change. He raised these concerns publicly, calling on the Scottish Government and local authorities to engage more directly and honestly with young people on climate policy, to create meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in climate decision-making, and to invest in community climate action projects that gave young people a tangible sense of agency.

Section 10d: Health and Social Care, Additional Casework

Mental Health Waiting Times

Mental health casework grew steadily across the whole parliamentary term. Constituents came to Mr Choudhury after waiting months, sometimes years, for talking therapies, a psychiatric assessment, or any kind of specialist support, and there were simply more of these cases each year, mirroring a wider mental health crisis that Lothian was not spared from. The CAMHS cases were often the hardest to sit with, young people referred for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and left waiting well past the 18-week target, sometimes in genuine crisis with nothing to fall back on in the meantime.

Back in 2022, he lodged written questions asking whether the Scottish Government was actually on track to hit its own target, 90% of patients starting CAMHS and psychological therapies treatment within 18 weeks of referral by March 2023, as promised in the NHS Recovery Plan. Even with a record number of children starting CAMHS treatment that year, the picture across NHS boards, Lothian included, kept showing large numbers of children stuck on waiting lists, referrals turned away outright, or families simply left to navigate an overstretched system on their own.

By October 2024, he was writing publicly about what he called a mental health crisis leaving young people in limbo, drawing on the sheer number of accounts he'd heard from students and families unable to get support and stuck waiting for treatment. His argument was straightforward: every young person should be able to get specialist mental health support at school, the CAMHS referral process needed to stop turning people away or leaving them waiting indefinitely, and the staff trying to deliver mental health services were themselves burning out under an under-resourced, overstretched system. He pushed for a mental health professional in every GP surgery and specialist provision in hospital emergency departments, as part of a broader reform of mental health care in both primary care and the community.

He also flagged the 'referral back' practice, where young people who'd been waiting a long time were sent back to their GP because their needs had supposedly changed, resetting the clock entirely, as a particularly cruel way of managing a waiting list that left the most vulnerable patients without help right when they needed it most.

Behind these figures sat a harder reality for the office itself. When mental health and crisis services were unable to offer immediate help, constituents in acute distress, including some expressing suicidal thoughts, often had nowhere else to turn and rang the office directly. His caseworker took those calls as they came, at times staying on the phone for hours with someone in crisis until they were safe or had been connected to proper support, a responsibility well beyond anything a caseworker is trained or resourced for, and a stark measure of how far short statutory mental health provision was falling for people who needed help immediately rather than in months.

S6W (2022) CAMHS and psychological therapies, 18-week waiting time target *parliament.scot*

Ophthalmology Waiting Times

In addition to his general NHS waiting time casework, Mr Choudhury received a number of specific representations about ophthalmology waiting times at NHS Lothian. Constituents described waiting over a year for routine appointments at the Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion, with some reporting that their vision had deteriorated significantly during the wait. He raised the specific position of NHS Lothian's ophthalmology service in parliamentary questions and pressed the Health Secretary on the action being taken to address the backlog. This pattern was at its most acute around the Eye Pavilion's temporary closure in 2024 and the decade-long campaign for a replacement facility, set out in full in Section 6.12.

Oral Health in Deprived Communities

Mr Choudhury received casework and made representations on the issue of oral health inequalities in Edinburgh and the Lothians. Constituents in more deprived areas reported significant difficulty accessing NHS dental care, with many practices closed to new NHS patients and NHS Direct Dental Services unable to meet demand. He raised the issue of dental health inequalities, which disproportionately affected children in deprived communities and older people on fixed incomes, in parliamentary questions and in contributions to health debates.

In 2025, he lodged a written question asking whether any public body held and was able to publish practice-level data on the total number of complaints made about individual dental practices receiving NHS General

Dental Services payments, pressing for greater transparency about the quality of NHS-funded dental care available to constituents.

S6W (2025) NHS dental practices, practice-level complaints data parliament.scot

Social Prescribing and Community Health

In 2024 and 2025, Mr Choudhury engaged with Edinburgh-based organisations working on social prescribing, the practice of connecting people to community activities and services as an alternative or complement to clinical treatment. He hosted a roundtable at Holyrood on social prescribing, bringing together EIJB, NHS Lothian, voluntary sector providers, and GPs to discuss how social prescribing could be embedded systematically in primary care across Lothian. He subsequently raised questions about the Scottish Government's investment in social prescribing and its alignment with the national health inequalities strategy.

Cancer Waiting Times, Systemic Issues

The Anne Sinclair case, while an individual casework matter, reflected a systemic challenge in NHS Lothian's cancer treatment pathways that Mr Choudhury pursued across the parliamentary term. He raised Scotland's cancer waiting time statistics in parliamentary questions on multiple occasions, pressing the Scottish Government on the proportion of patients seen within the 31-day and 62-day cancer treatment targets in NHS Lothian specifically. He called on the Health Secretary to set out a credible plan for clearing the cancer treatment backlog and for ensuring that patients like Anne Sinclair did not fall through the gaps in an overwhelmed system.

Section 10e: Cost-of-Living and Economic Welfare, Extended Record

Fuel Poverty Casework

The cost-of-living crisis that intensified from 2022 onwards generated a substantial volume of casework across all of Mr Choudhury's constituent communities. Fuel poverty was among the most acute manifestations: constituents in older tenement properties with poor insulation described being unable to heat their homes adequately despite spending a disproportionate share of their income on energy. He received representations from pensioners in Edinburgh who were choosing between heating and eating, from families with young children in damp, cold properties, and from disabled people whose health conditions made adequate heating medically necessary.

He raised fuel poverty in parliamentary questions, pressing the Scottish Government on the adequacy of the Fuel Insecurity Fund, the timeline for the Home Energy Scotland grant and loan scheme, and the specific position of tenants in social housing who had little control over the energy efficiency of their homes. He also raised the particular vulnerability of off-gas-grid households in West Lothian who were paying significantly higher energy prices for heating oil or LPG.

Food Bank Usage and Emergency Food Provision

Mr Choudhury received multiple referrals from constituents to food banks in Edinburgh and West Lothian throughout the parliamentary term, and engaged directly with foodbank operators, community larders, and food redistribution organisations across the Lothian region. He consistently used these casework contacts to raise the issue of food bank usage as a political failure in parliamentary debates, arguing that the normalisation of emergency food provision as a permanent feature of Scotland's social safety net was unacceptable in one of the wealthiest nations in the world.

He called for investment in the upstream causes of food poverty, including inadequate benefits, low wages, debt, and inadequate housing, rather than simply funding food banks as a downstream response. He praised the commitment of volunteers and organisations running emergency food provision while insisting that the goal should be to make food banks unnecessary, not to make them more comfortable.

Benefits Advice and Welfare Rights

A steady stream of casework across the parliamentary term involved constituents struggling to navigate the benefits system, both UK-administered benefits such as Universal Credit and PIP, and Scottish Government-administered payments such as the Scottish Child Payment and Adult Disability Payment. Mr Choudhury received representations from constituents who had been wrongly assessed, had had payments stopped without explanation, or had been unable to access the support to which they were entitled.

He raised the adequacy of the Scottish Government's benefits administration, particularly in relation to the roll-out of Adult Disability Payment, and pressed for a stronger network of welfare rights advisers in Edinburgh and the Lothians who could help constituents navigate the increasingly complex dual system of UK and Scottish benefits. He also raised the particular challenges faced by constituents from ethnic minority communities, newly arrived refugees, and people with communication needs in accessing benefits advice.

Real Living Wage, Private Sector Employers

Beyond his social care casework on Real Living Wage implementation, Mr Choudhury raised the broader issue of low pay in Edinburgh's hospitality, retail, and cleaning sectors. He received representations from workers in these sectors, many of whom were from ethnic minority communities or were recent migrants, about below-Real-Living-Wage pay, zero-hours contracts, and the difficulty of challenging employers without losing their jobs. He raised these issues in the context of the Scottish Government's Fair Work First conditionality on public contracts and asked how many companies holding Scottish Government contracts in Edinburgh and the Lothians had committed to the Real Living Wage and other Fair Work principles.

Section 11: Appendix, Parliamentary Questions and Press Coverage

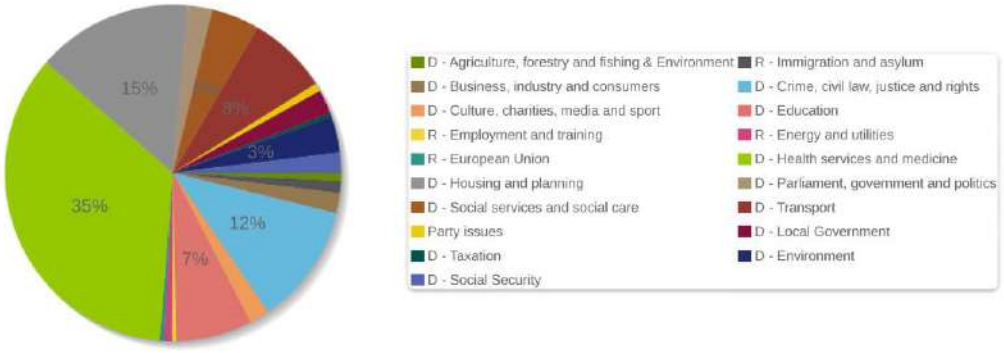
The table below lists all parliamentary questions and significant press appearances referenced in this casework record. The full searchable record of Mr Choudhury's questions is available at *parliament.scot*.

Reference	Topic
S6M-01310 (2021)	COP26 Food and Climate Members' Business Debate
S6W (2021–22)	Forthview development, Transport Scotland objection
S6W (2021–22)	Care home visitor restrictions during COVID-19
S6W (2022)	Afghan refugee support in Edinburgh and the Lothians
S6W (2022)	Damp and mould in social housing, Mouldy Homes Summit
S6W (2022)	Racial discrimination in private rented sector
S6W (2022)	Ukraine Super Sponsor scheme, Edinburgh housing provision
S6W (2022)	Islamophobia Awareness Month, public sector action
S6W (2022)	Racist treatment of ethnic minority civil servants in Scotland

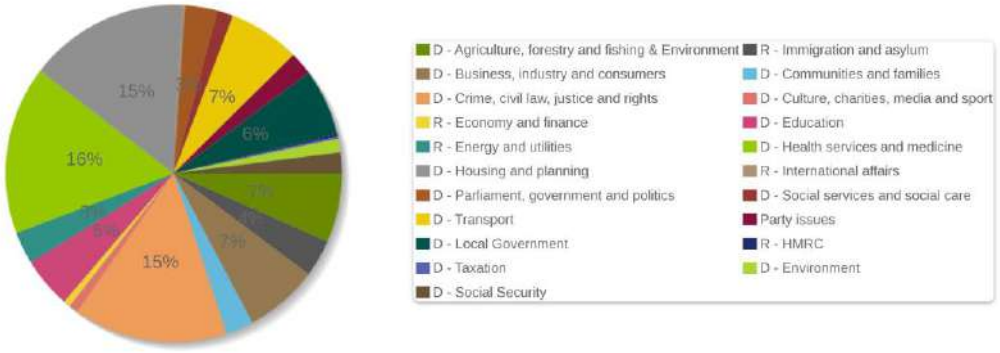
Reference	Topic
S6W (2022)	Winchburgh train station, letter to first Transport Minister
S6W (2022)	Long Covid clinics, waiting times and referral thresholds
S6W (2023)	NHS Lothian paediatric audiology audit, improvement plan
S6W (2023)	Save Our Pools, West Lothian Leisure closures
S6W (2023)	Seafield Sewage Works, overflow frequency and investment
S6W (2023)	E-bikes and e-scooters, regulatory framework and enforcement
S6W (2023)	Teaching Scotland's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade
S6W (2023)	Investing in Communities Fund, food security organisations
S6W (2023–26)	ASN provision, waiting times for assessments in Lothian
S6W (2023–24)	Water of Leith, combined sewer overflow frequency
S6W (2024)	Housing emergency, Lothian region impact
S6W (2024)	East Calder Health Centre, commitment to develop facility
S6W (2024)	Post Office Horizon scandal, sub-postmaster compensation
S6W (2024)	EIJB budget cuts, 64 third sector organisations at risk
S6W (2024)	Stonemasonry apprenticeships, heritage skills funding
S6W (2024)	Dementia as a public health priority, strategy and funding
S6W (2024–25)	Sustainable aviation fuel, Scottish Government position
S6M (2025)	Diabetes technology, Members' Business Debate, 7 January 2025
N/A	Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, PE2031, insulin pump postcode lottery for children (Feb–Mar 2025)
S6W (2025)	Fair Trade public procurement, Scottish Government progress
S6W (2025)	Real Living Wage, social care funding gap and workforce retention
S6W (2025)	Human trafficking, support services and NRM reform (roundtable held 25 October 2023)
FMQ Dec 2025	NHS waiting list 21-day removal letters, vulnerable patients
S6W (2026)	East Calder Health Centre, Scottish Government commitment
S6W (2026)	Winchburgh train station, letter to third Transport Minister
S6W (2026)	Dementia strategy, implementation progress and funding
S6W (2026)	ASN provision, statutory maximum waiting timescales
Letter (2021)	Letter to Cabinet Secretary, Clovenstone, Ferrylee, Ford's Road, Jewel House and Drumbrae care home closures, September 2021
Press (2022)	A&E waiting times, NHS Lothian 'year-round crisis', July and October 2022
S6M-07511 (2023)	Damp housing in Scotland, Members' Business Debate, 20 April 2023

Reference	Topic
Press (2023)	West Pilton and Elliot Street, damp and mould casework, February 2023
N/A	RAAC in West Lothian schools, St Kentigern's Academy, September 2023 and January 2026
N/A	Princess Alexandra Eye Pavilion, joint letter and 2024 temporary closure statement
N/A	Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee, PE2143, extending Awaab's Law to private tenants (2026)
S6W (2025)	NHS dental practices, practice-level complaints data
Press (2022)	Polkemmet Road, Whitburn, pelican crossing campaign
S6W (2022)	CAMHS and psychological therapies, 18-week waiting time target
Press (2024)	Mental health crisis leaving young people in limbo, October 2024
FMQ Oct 2022	Anne Sinclair cancer case raised by Anas Sarwar at First Minister's Questions
S6F-04110 (2025)	Knife crime prevention, First Minister's Questions, 22 May 2025
N/A	Dangerous and antisocial use of e-bikes and e-scooters, Members' Business Debate, 9 December 2025
S6W (2025–26)	E-bikes and e-scooters, statutory charges and vehicle recovery legislation review timetable

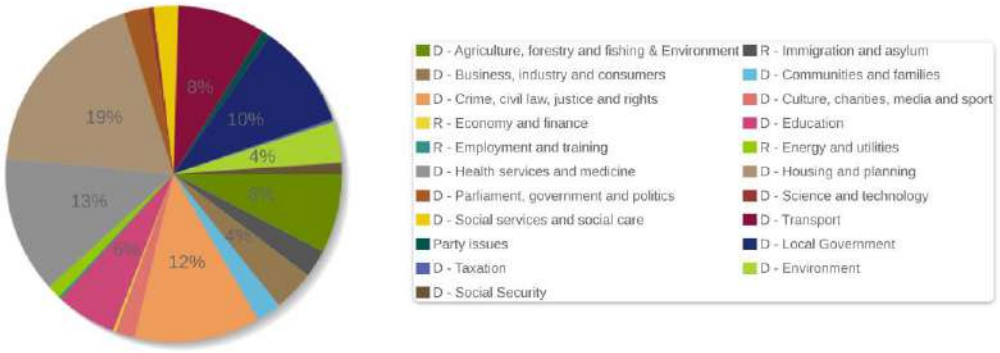
Breakdown of Cases by Type 05-2021 to 12-2021



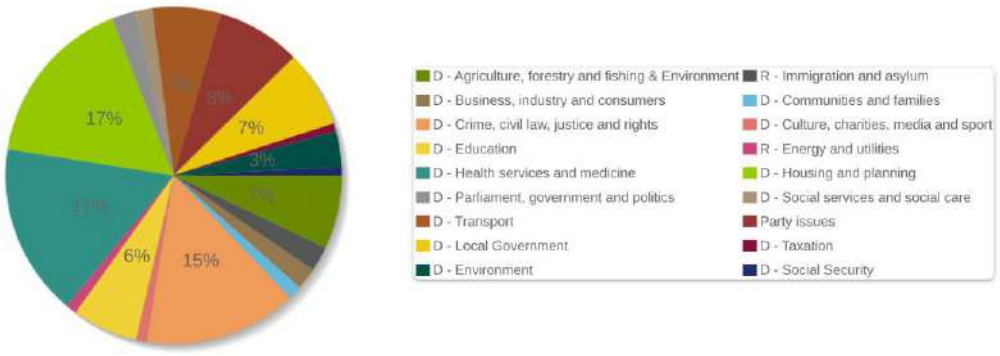
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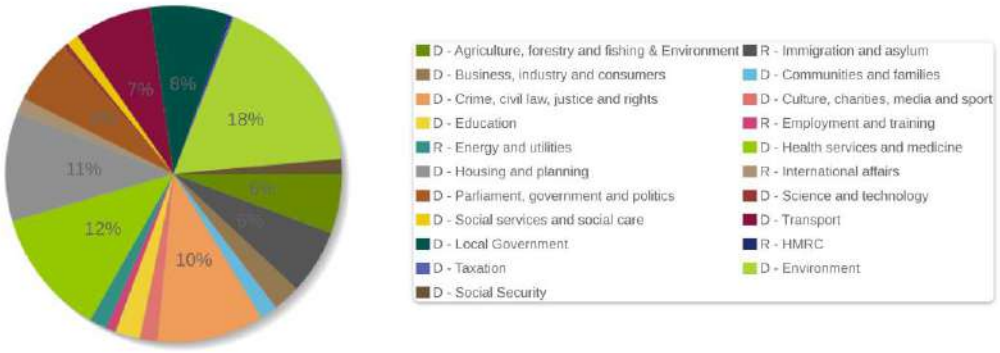
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2024



2025



2026

