



Briefing

Results from the 2014 survey on 14-17 year old persons living in Scotland on the Scottish independence referendum

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Introduction to the survey and its methodology

The results presented here are based on a survey developed by the research team listed above. The work has been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) through the "Future of Scotland and the UK" framework and is carried out under the umbrella of the Applied Quantitative Methods Network (AQMeN) by researchers from the University of Edinburgh's School of Social and Political Science.

This survey builds on a similar survey carried out by the same team during April and May 2013 (for a background on the results of that survey see: <http://www.aqmen.ac.uk/youngscotsurveyresults>) The survey was the first representative analysis of the attitudes of 14-17 year olds living in Scotland on the Scottish independence referendum to be held in 2014. The investigation is highly relevant because the voting age has been lowered to 16 for the referendum. This meant that those about 14 and a half years old last year fulfilling residency criteria will now be eligible to vote.

The survey this year aims to enable us to investigate whether attitudes of under-18 year olds voters, usually not represented at all or in large numbers in comprehensive adult surveys, have changed. We include again 14-17 year olds to enable comparisons of the same age group between 2013 and 2014 in particular for general political attitudes questions. In addition, we identified those aged 15 and born on or before 18 September to allow us to analyse those eligible to vote this year for questions about perspectives to their voting behaviour separately.

Many questions from last year have been repeated in the same way. Additionally, we have included new questions on issues that were discussed extensively in the public debate. Most of the questions for the survey were tried and tested questions from existing large-scale adult surveys. The questions were piloted last year with 110 school students in the target age group at Knox Academy, Haddington, East Lothian. About one third of the questions were changed subsequently to be more relevant to this age group following the feedback from the participating school students. In addition, external advice from experts of the

Europe-wide think tank d|part helped to strengthen the quality of the newly designed questions.

The interviews were carried out by telephone by Market Research UK (MRUK) in April and May 2014. 1006 interviews were carried out in total – with equal numbers for each of the eight Scottish parliament election regions and using a random digit dialling procedure. Parents were asked for permission to interview their children and also asked a few questions themselves (5 in total). The children were asked 21 questions each.

In addition to stratifying by parliamentary regions to ensure correct representation across Scotland we also stratified by education with a maximum proportion of parents interviewed having had university education capped at 40%. As we know that people with higher educational background are more likely to engage in political surveys this helped to ensure better representation. To enable comparison between the 2013 and 2014 data we computed weights based on expected distributions of parental education. Using data from the 2012 and 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes survey we selected adults aged 30 and over who had at least one child aged 14 to 17 living in their household and calculated what proportion of these adults fell into which educational qualification group. This calculation was also used to set the 40% proportion for parents with a higher-education qualification. We used the calculations as the basis to compute weights for both the 2013 and 2014 data to adjust for any divergence in terms of educational distribution. The changes to the results were small in particular for our 2014 sample which already matched the expected distribution fairly well (details can be found in the appendix).

All results presented here are weighted results. Missing cases to totals always reflect refused or prefer not to say answers. This briefing presents a range of initial key results from the survey. Further details can be obtained from the authors upon request. The data from both surveys will be made available in accordance with the guidelines by the ESRC and further reports and papers will be published by the research team.

The results for the referendum question as proposed by the electoral commission are as follows:

Table 1: "Should Scotland be an independent country?"

	2013 (%)	2014 (%) (ALL)	2014 (%) (eligible voters only)
Yes	23	30	29
No	58	52	52
Undecided	19	18	19
Total (100%)	1018	1006	725

Table 2: "Should Scotland be an independent country?" – excluding those undecided

	2013 (%)	2014 (%) (ALL)	2014 (%) (eligible voters only)
Yes	28	37	36
No	72	63	64
Total (100%)	827	817	589

There has been an increase in the proportion of those supporting Scotland becoming an independent country. Focussing on those eligible to vote in 2014 the yes vote has increased by 8% when the undecided voters are excluded compared to 2013. An absolute majority of under-18 year olds does not favour Scotland becoming independent however. The proportion of those undecided has remained stable at about 1/5.

Table 3: Interest in politics - "How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics?"

	2013 (%)	2014 (%) (ALL)
A great deal	12	13
To some extent	45	46
Not very much	34	32
None at all	9	8
Don't know	0	1
Total (100%)	1018	1006

Political interest amongst 14-17 year olds remained high – and at levels that are not below, and in some respects higher, than those for adults in Scotland in other surveys or polls (see for example below table 4 with results from the 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey of people aged 18 and above).

Table 4: Interest in politics of adults - "How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics?" (Data from 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey)

	SSA 2013 (%)
A great deal	10
To some extent	22
Some	34

Not very much	21
None at all	12
Don't know	0
Total (100%)	1497

Table 5: Likelihood of voting

	2013 (%)	2014 (%) (eligible voters only)
Very unlikely	7	6
Rather unlikely	6	6
Neither likely nor unlikely	19	15
Rather likely	26	21
Very likely	40	51
Don't know	2	2
Total (100%)	1018	725

The likelihood of voting has gone up over the course of the year. 72% of eligible under-18 year olds say that they are rather or very likely to vote – a proportion similar to those found for adults.¹

Table 6: Referendum vote by likelihood of voting in the referendum 2014 (eligible voters only)

	Very unlikely	Rather unlikely	Neither	Rather likely	Very likely
Yes	2	18	24	30	35
No	85	55	44	49	52
Undecided	12	28	32	21	13
Total (100%)	41	38	111	155	369

Amongst those very likely to vote yes, voters are represented more than they are in the overall sample, indicating a slight advantage for yes with regards to voter turnout (similar to findings for adults (see reference in footnote 1 for details)).

Table 7: Referendum vote of young person by highest parental education attainment (by either parent) in the household 2014 (eligible voters only)

	Degree	HND or similar	Upper Secondary	Lower Secondary	None
Yes	29	22	35	31	26
No	53	58	46	52	49
Undecided	18	20	19	17	26
Total (100%)	197	137	164	172	39

¹ For a comparison of different age groups' likelihood to vote see Eichhorn, J. 2014. Who will turn up and who will stay home? Examining turnout expectations for different groups of people. ScotCen Social Research briefing paper, available at <http://www.scotcen.org.uk/media/329095/ssa-13-who-will-turn-up-and-who-will-stay-at-home.pdf>

There is no strong discernible pattern with regards to parental education and the views on the referendum question by the young respondents. The yes support is highest for those whose parent's highest educational attainment was upper secondary education, but there is no pattern indicating that higher or lower education of the parents would be associated with the outcome one way or another.

Table 8: Information need - "Thinking about the debate on Scottish independence so far, would you say..."

	2013 (%)	2014 (%) (ALL)	2014 (%) (eligible voters only)
I have enough information to make a decision	33	39	38
I'd like more information before I finally decide	67	61	62
Total (100%)	1018	1006	725

There was only a small increase in respondents saying that they had enough information to make a decision. Still, over 60% would like more information before their final decision.

Table 9: Information need by referendum vote

2013	Yes	No	Undecided
I have enough information to make a decision	37	38	12
I'd like more information before I finally decide	63	62	88
Total (100%)	213	614	191

2014 (eligible only)	Yes	No	Undecided
I have enough information to make a decision	48	41	13
I'd like more information before I finally decide	52	60	87
Total (100%)	214	375	134

The slight increase in the perception of having enough information is mostly attributable to yes supporters. The proportion saying they needed more information to decide dropped from 63 to 52 per cent. At the same time the percentages for those supporting no and those undecided remained nearly unchanged.

Table 10: Information sources used: "Have you followed the news about the debate on Scotland's future using any of the following source? Name as many or few as apply." (2014)

	All (%)	Eligible voters only (%)
Social media, such as facebook or twitter	64	67
TV or radio programmes	63	63
Online news websites	46	48

Print newspapers	35	37
Publicity materials from the campaigns	30	32
None of the above	11	10
Total (100%)	1006	725

Only very few young people had not consulted key sources for information on the referendum (11%). The most popular sources were social media and TV or radio programmes, followed by online news websites and then print newspapers and campaign publicity materials.

Table 11: Relevance of media types for perceptions of having enough knowledge (2014) (eligible only)

	Percentage of users of this source saying they had "enough knowledge to make a decision"	Percentage of non-users of this source saying they had "enough knowledge to make a decision"
Social media, such as facebook or twitter	40	32
TV or radio programmes	41	32
Online news websites	40	35
Print newspapers	48	32
Publicity materials from the campaigns	44	35
None of the above	18	40

For all media types we can see that those who used it were more likely to state that they had enough information to make a decision. The greatest informational value in this sense was attributed to print newspapers: Of those who had used them 48% said they had enough information compared to only 32% of those who had not used them. Then campaign materials, social media and TV or radio programmes follow with regards to their relative information value. Online news websites use shows the smallest difference between users and non-users compared to the other media sources (5%).

Table 12: Talking about the referendum by age group - Who have you talked about Scottish independence with so far, if anyone at all? Of the following, please choose as many or few as apply.

Age in 2013	2013 (%)	2014 (%)
Age 14		
Parents	48	64
Friends	35	60
In class	56	64
Age 15		
Parents	56	73
Friends	38	69
In class	47	69
Age 16		
Parents	52	70
Friends	42	74
In class	55	73

There has been a substantial increase in having discussions about the referendum since 2013 for all age groups and for discussions with parents, friends and in class alike. Only 7% now say they have not talked to anybody about it.

Table 13: Talking about the referendum by parental education

	2013 (%)	2014 (%)
Parent² with higher education		
Parents	58	72
Friends	54	69
In class	56	70
Parent with upper secondary education		
Parents	54	72
Friends	49	67
In class	54	70
Parent with lower secondary education or none		
Parents	47	64
Friends	34	60
In class	50	63

Young people with parents who have a higher educational background are more likely to have discussed the referendum with them, friends or in class (though the gap for discussions in class was rather small). The differences by education in talking about the referendum with friends and parents have narrowed however in 2014 compared to 2013. This is particular true for talking to friends.

Table 14: National identity – “Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?”

	2013 (%)	2014 (%)
Scottish, not British	12	15
More Scottish than British	39	38
Equally Scottish and British	45	39
More British than Scottish	3	5
British, not Scottish	1	2
None of these	0	1
Total (100%)	1018	1006

The overall pattern in national identity was stable – most young people identify as Scottish to some extent (92%). However, a large proportion values their Scottishness and their Britishness equally.

² We are referring here to the educational attainment of the parent interviewed.

Table 15: Referendum vote by national identity – Don't knows excluded

	2013 (% yes)	2014 (% yes) - only those eligible -
Scottish, not British	65	73
More Scottish than British	38	51
Equally Scottish and British	14	13
More British than Scottish	3	19
British, not Scottish	0	8

The relationship between national identity and voting intention has strengthened somewhat. While the Scottish, not British group saw an increase in yes by 8 percentage points, those identifying More Scottish than British saw a larger increase of yes supporters by 13 percentage points.

Table 16: Views on the European Union – “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view about what Britain’s long-term policy toward the European Union should be?” (2014)

	%
To leave the European Union	5
To stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU’s powers	22
To leave things as they are	44
To stay in the EU and try to increase the EU’s powers	19
To work for the formation of a single Euro government	4
Don’t know	7
Total (100%)	1006

Young people in Scotland are substantially more positive about Britain’s role in the European Union than adults. Only 27% want to see powers of the EU reduced or even to leave the EU, while 23% want to see more powers to be transferred to the EU. For Scottish adults (based on 2013 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey data) 59% want a reduction of EU powers or an exit of Britain from it, while only 11% favour a transfer of more powers to the EU.

Table 17: Views on the European Union of adults in Scotland– “Which of the following statements comes closest to your view about what Britain’s long-term policy toward the European Union should be?” (Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2013)

	%
To leave the European Union	19
To stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU’s powers	40
To leave things as they are	25
To stay in the EU and try to increase the EU’s powers	8
To work for the formation of a single Euro government	3
Don’t know	6
Total (100%)	1497

Table 18: Attitude towards independence by Expectations of the economy in an independent Scotland – “As a result of independence would Scotland’s economy become better, worse or would it make no difference (2014)

	A lot better	A little better	No difference	A little worse	A lot worse
Yes	92	65	33	3	1
No	4	13	39	89	95
Undecided	4	22	28	8	4
Total (100%)	79	193	186	241	167

Expectations about how the economy in an independent Scotland would do are very highly correlated to views on Scottish independence for young people. Those who think that the economy would be a lot better nearly all support independence. On the other those who think it would do a little or a lot worse nearly all oppose independence. This shows that young people are rather similar to adults in this regard where all polls and surveys have pointed to expectations about the economy being the most important decision making factor.

Table 19: Having arguments about independence – “Have you ever ended up arguing with someone else about the debate over independence?” (2014)

	Has ended up arguing	Has not ended up arguing	Total (100%)
ALL (eligible)	43	57	723
Yes supporters	49	51	214
No supporters	44	56	375
Undecided	29	71	134

There is no major difference between supports of yes and no amongst eligible voters regarding whether they have ended in an argument about independence at any point (there is only a slightly higher proportion amongst yes supporters). This suggests that proponents of neither view are substantially more likely to engage in a more heated debate.

Appendix: Details on impact of weights

Table A: Highest educational attainment of parent

	2012 & 2013 SSA (%): age > 30 with child aged 14-17 in household)	2014 Young persons' survey (%): Higher education of parent interviewed
Higher education degree	24.9	21.1
Higher education below degree (e.g. HND)	18.8	19.6
Upper Secondary	16.2	24.1
Lower Secondary	29.3	27.0
None	10.9	8.1

The 2012 & 2013 SSA data was used as a pooled sample. People aged 30 or older with a child aged 14 to 17 in their household were selected and the distribution of educational qualifications checked for them. The weights were then calculated against this base for 2013 and 2014.

Table B: Impact of weights on 2014 data regarding referendum question

	2014 (%) UNWEIGHTED	2014 (%) WEIGHTED
Yes	29.8	29.7
No	51.4	51.7
Undecided	18.5	18.3
Total (100%)	1003	1003

There was only a small impact of the weights on the 2014 sample as the distribution of parental education in the sample was not very different from the one in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey.