

# **The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum Voting Guide**

The  
Electoral  
Commission

This booklet has been produced by The Electoral Commission, Lothian Chambers, 59-63 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1RN

The Electoral Commission is an independent body that works across the UK.

The Scottish Parliament has given us a duty to provide public information about voting in the referendum.

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(except for Pages 11–15 and the box on Page 10)

This booklet is also available in alternative languages and formats. Please call 0800 3 280 280 or visit **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)** for more information.

## About this booklet

**On Thursday 18 September 2014, there will be a referendum on independence for Scotland.**

This booklet explains how you can take part.

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- **Pages 14–15** – A joint statement from the Scottish and UK governments on what will happen after the referendum

## Can I vote?

You can vote in the referendum if you are registered to vote in Scotland, are 16 or over on Thursday 18 September 2014 and are:

- a British or Irish citizen living in Scotland, or
- a European Union citizen living in Scotland, or
- a qualifying\* Commonwealth citizen living in Scotland

<p><b>You have to be registered to vote by Tuesday 2 September 2014 to vote in this referendum.</b></p>
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There are special provisions for the registration of members of the Armed Forces, Crown servants (e.g. in the diplomatic service or overseas civil service) and British Council employees. You can find out more at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

\* Qualifying Commonwealth citizens are people who have leave (permission) to enter or remain in the UK, do not need to have such leave or are treated as having such leave.

## Am I registered to vote?

If you're not registered, you won't be able to vote. Most people register by using the form they receive in the post from their local electoral registration office each year.

If you haven't completed one of these forms, you may not be on the electoral register. If so, you will need to complete a voter registration form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by midnight on Tuesday 2 September.

For a voter registration form and details of your local electoral registration office, go to **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

You can also download a form at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**. You will need to print the form, sign it and post it to your local electoral registration office.

If you aren't sure whether you're registered to vote, your local electoral registration office can tell you. You can find their details at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

# How do I vote in the referendum?

You will receive a ballot paper like the one pictured here:

BALLOT PAPER	
Vote (X) <b>ONLY ONCE</b>	
Should Scotland be an independent country?	
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

You show your choice by putting a cross (X) in the 'Yes' or 'No' box on your ballot paper.

Put a cross in only one box or your vote will not be counted.

# Ways of voting

There are three ways you can vote:

## In person on Thursday 18 September:

Most people vote in person at their polling station. It is straightforward and a member of staff will always help if you are not sure what to do.

You will receive a poll card telling you where your polling station is. It is often a nearby school or a community centre. If you do not receive your poll card, contact your local council to find out where your polling station is.

Polling stations are open from 7am to 10pm. Make sure you arrive in plenty of time.

## By post:

You can apply to vote by post. You will need to fill in an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 3 September. You can find their details and get an application form at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

Your local council can send your ballot paper to your home address or any other address you give. A ballot paper can be sent overseas, but you need to think about whether you will have time to receive and return it by 10pm on Thursday 18 September.

If your ballot paper hasn't arrived by Friday 12 September, contact your local council. You can get a replacement up to 5pm on polling day.

## **By proxy:**

If you can't go to the polling station and don't wish to vote by post, you can apply to vote by proxy. This means allowing somebody you trust to vote on your behalf.

You will need to fill in an application form and send it to your local electoral registration office to arrive by 5pm on Wednesday 3 September. You can get an application form at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

When you apply for a proxy vote you have to state why you cannot vote in person. Anyone can be your proxy as long as they will be aged 16 or over on Thursday 18 September 2014 and are a British, Irish, other European Union or qualifying Commonwealth citizen. They must also be willing to vote on your behalf. You will have to tell them how you want to vote.

If you have a medical emergency, or are unexpectedly and unavoidably called away because of your occupation, employment or service, you may be able to appoint an emergency proxy. Contact your local electoral registration office for more information. You can find their details at **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

You must be registered to vote before you can be given a postal or proxy vote.

You have to be registered to vote by Tuesday 2 September 2014.

## How to find out more

If you have any questions, please go to **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)** or call our helpline on **0800 3 280 280**.

You can download further copies of this booklet from **[www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)**.

## **Part 2: Information from lead campaigners and both governments**

The United Kingdom Government and the Scottish Government have agreed that there should be a referendum for you to vote on whether Scotland should be an independent country. Both governments want the referendum to be legal and fair. Both want the result to be decisive. Both have agreed to respect the outcome, whatever it is.

### **What happens after the referendum?**

If more people vote "Yes" than vote "No" in the referendum, Scotland would become an independent country.

If more people vote "No" than "Yes" in the referendum, Scotland would remain a part of the United Kingdom.

You can read more about this on Pages 14–15.

## **What are the arguments?**

Campaigners have been explaining why they think you should vote 'yes' or 'no' in the referendum.

Each of the main campaign organisations has been given a page to put their side of the argument.

The text has been included as it was provided. Please turn over to read it.

# **A message from Yes Scotland**

## **Scotland's Future in Scotland's Hands**



The referendum on September 18th is a choice of two futures.

A Yes vote means a future where we can take our own decisions and build a more prosperous nation, a Scotland where we can all truly flourish.

As one of the richest nations in the world, Scotland can afford to be a successful independent country. We can make this vast wealth work better for everyone who lives here, from looking after older Scots to making life easier for young families.

A No vote means a future stifled by the repeated failures of Westminster governments, governments we didn't even vote for.

September 18th is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a thriving new nation.

Let's grasp it with both hands.

**YesScotland.net**

Promoted by Yes Scotland, 136 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 2TG.

# **A message from Better Together**

## **The Best of Both Worlds for Scotland**



We believe that we can have the best of both worlds in Scotland as part of the UK. We can have a strong Scottish Parliament, with more powers guaranteed, and we can have the strength, security and stability that comes from being part of the bigger UK. We don't need to choose between the two.

Voting for separation would be a huge leap into the unknown. If we leave then we lose the strength of the UK pound. This would mean we would pay more for our mortgages, credit cards and loans. If we leave we are putting our pensions at risk. If we leave we are risking big companies being forced to move south and Scottish jobs being lost.

If we leave the UK there would be no going back. In September we face a choice about our future. Let's say no thanks to all of the risks and uncertainties of independence. Let's say loud and clear that we want the best of both worlds for Scotland.

**[www.nothanks2014.net](http://www.nothanks2014.net)**

Published and promoted by Blair McDougall on behalf of Better Together both at 5 Blythswood Square, Glasgow, G2 4AD.

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# **A joint statement by the Scottish Government and the United Kingdom Government**

**If more people vote "Yes" than vote "No" in the referendum, Scotland would become an independent country.**

This would not happen straight away. There would need to be negotiations between people representing Scotland and people representing the rest of the United Kingdom.

During the negotiations, Scotland would still be part of the United Kingdom and public services would be delivered as they are now. The Scottish Government would continue to be responsible for health, education, justice, rural affairs, housing and transport in Scotland. The United Kingdom Government would continue to be responsible for defence, security, foreign affairs and constitution, most pensions, benefits and most tax powers up to the date Scotland becomes an independent country.

Laws which apply in Scotland now would still apply during the negotiations. During the negotiations, the two governments would continue to discuss any policies of either that affect the responsibilities of the other government. The current Scottish Government would carry on until the next general election to the Scottish Parliament, due to take place in May 2016.

The negotiations would include discussion about the allocation of assets and liabilities.

After the date of independence, the Scottish Government would become responsible for all aspects of government in Scotland.

After the date of independence, the Scottish Parliament would be able to amend or retain the laws that apply in Scotland now to reflect the new circumstances of an independent Scotland.

**If more people vote "No" than "Yes" in the referendum, Scotland would remain a part of the United Kingdom.**

The UK Parliament and Government would continue to be responsible for defence, security, foreign affairs, pensions, benefits and most tax powers. The Scottish Parliament and Government would continue to be responsible for health, education, justice, rural affairs, housing and transport in Scotland in the same way as now.

The present Scottish Government would stay in office until the next general election to the Scottish Parliament, due to take place in May 2016.

The two governments would continue to work together to bring about the changes to the powers of the Scottish Parliament and Government agreed by the two parliaments in the Scotland Act 2012. The main change is that the Scottish Parliament and Government will get new borrowing powers and will set a separate Scottish rate of Income Tax from April 2016.

Any further changes to the responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament and Government would be made by the UK Parliament, seeking the consent of the Scottish Parliament.

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