



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

# Public Perceptions of Scotland after Devolution

Office of Chief Researcher



**PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF SCOTLAND AFTER  
DEVOLUTION: FINDINGS FROM THE 2004  
SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY**

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Catherine Bromley  
Lisa Given

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey was launched in 1999 following the advent of devolution and has been conducted annually ever since. In 2004, the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey included a Core Module of questions funded, for the first time, by the Scottish Executive's Office of Chief Researcher. The two main aims of the SSA core module are:

- to help inform the Scottish Executive's policy evaluation and policy making functions by providing robust measures of public attitudes towards the key devolved policy areas; and
- to help maintain time series data on key questions of Scottish interest, mainly relating to devolution and broad constitutional issues.

2. The topics covered in the 2004 Core Module addressed the following broad issues:

- How much do people **know** about the Scottish Executive and Westminster governments?
- Who is most **trusted** to look after Scotland's best interests: the Scottish Executive or UK Government?
- In what ways do people get **involved** in the political process and is the system judged to be receptive to their input?
- Is **devolution delivering** what people hoped it might?
- How do people rate the performance of **public services** in Scotland?
- Do the Scottish Executive's **priorities** match those of people in Scotland?
- What do people think about their **local area**?

## KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT

3. People were asked how much they had seen or heard about the work of both the Scottish Executive and the UK Government over the past year. Awareness of both was fairly low - three in ten people (29%) said they had heard "a great deal" or "quite a lot" about the Scottish Executive, while slightly more (34%) said this about the UK Government. Awareness of the Scottish Executive's activities was highest amongst people with a high level of interest in politics generally, those with higher education, managers and professionals, and men.

4. People were generally more knowledgeable about the Scottish Executive's responsibilities than about the process of how devolution operates. For example, over half (56%) correctly identified that decisions about health spending are largely taken in Scotland whereas just 13% knew that there are more than 70 Members of the Scottish Parliament.

## TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

5. More people expressed trust in the Scottish Executive to look after Scotland's best interests than trusted the UK government to do this. Half (52%) trusted the Executive to look after Scotland's interests "just about always" or "most of the time", while less than a quarter (22%) said the same of the UK government. Since 2000 the proportion who say they trust the

Scottish Executive “just about always” or “most of the time” has fluctuated between around six in ten and five in ten people in alternate years.

6. Trust in the Scottish Executive was highest amongst supporters of devolution (as opposed to independence or direct rule from Westminster), Liberal Democrat supporters, people with higher education, 18-24 year olds, and people with a high level of awareness of the Scottish Executive’s activities.

## **VOTING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

7. Despite declining levels of turnout in recent years, a large majority of people considered voting to be “very” or “fairly important.” Nearly eight in ten (78%) considered it “very” or “fairly important” to vote in Scottish Parliament elections and similar proportions said the same for Westminster and local council elections. Fewer people (64%) considered European elections to be important.

8. The view that it is “very important” to vote in Scottish Parliament elections was particularly likely to be held by people with high levels of political interest, older people, Liberal Democrat supporters, people who support devolution, those who trust the Scottish Executive, and women.

9. The survey asked whether people had ever registered their views about an issue (people were given 14 possible ways of doing this, such as contacting a Member of the Scottish Parliament or going on a demonstration). A quarter (26%) said they had not done any of them. Signing a petition was the most common thing people had done (59%) followed by attending a public meeting (31%) and giving money to a campaign or organisation (27%). The people who were least likely to have registered their views in these ways were: 18-24 year olds, people with low levels of political interest, people with no qualifications, people who do not support any political party and those in routine or semi-routine occupations.

10. People were also asked how good the Scottish Executive and UK Governments are at listening to people’s views. Twice as many people said the Scottish Executive was “very good” or “good” at listening to people before taking decisions (32%) than said this about the UK Government (15%).

## **EVALUATIONS OF DEVOLUTION**

11. Since 1999 SSA has asked people who they think *should* have most influence over how Scotland is run, and who in fact *does* have most influence. In each year since 2000, clear majorities of between three-quarters and two-thirds said that the Scottish Executive should have the most influence. However, no more than one in five has ever said that it does have most influence (19% in 2004).

12. SSA has also asked people annually whether they think devolution is strengthening Scotland’s voice within the UK. In 1997 and 1999 70% thought that devolution would result in Scotland having a stronger voice in the UK. Since 2001 the proportion who believe Scotland now has a stronger voice in the UK has fluctuated between a half (52%) and a third (35%), while the proportion who believe devolution has made no difference on this front has increased from four in ten (40%) in 2001 to and over half (55%) in 2004.

## **EVALUATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

13. The survey asked people to say whether the standards of the following had increased or fallen over the previous year: the standard of the health service, the quality of education service, the general standard of living, public transport and the strength of the economy.

14. There was little notable change in people's evaluations of the health service, education and the general standard of living between 2001, 2003 and 2004.

15. With the exception of the health service, more people on balance said that standards had increased than said they had fallen, though in most cases the margin was quite small (the most common answer given was that things had stayed the same). In contrast, 41% said that health service standards had fallen while 18% said they had increased. Women and older people were more likely than men and younger people to say that health service standards had fallen.

16. The groups most likely to have given a favourable evaluation of education quality were: young people, Labour supporters, people in remote rural areas and those with children aged 4-15 living in their household. Transport standards were most likely to be judged to have increased by young people and those who use public transport on most days, while those living in small remote towns were the group most likely to say standards had fallen.

17. When evaluating the economy, Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters, and young people were more likely to say that it had strengthened, whereas people having difficulty coping on their income were much more likely to say that economy had weakened than people living comfortably.

18. In 2004 people gave the Scottish Executive the credit for increases in the quality of education, transport and a stronger economy. The UK Government was given the credit for increased health service standards. Responsibility for declining standards was generally attributed to the UK Government, with the exception of the economy, where the Scottish Executive was most commonly held responsible for its weakening.

## **POLICY PRIORITIES**

19. To see whether the Scottish Executive's priorities matched the public's people were asked to say what was the most important thing the Scottish Executive should try and achieve. The top three answers given were: improve people's health (27%), cut crime (22%), and improve standards of education (17%). While improving health was the top priority for most people those living in remote rural areas stood out as the most likely to choose this (39%). Those under 25 were the group least likely to choose the economy (4%). Those having difficulty coping on their income were twice as likely to choose housing compared to people living very comfortably (19% compared with 11%).

## **PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL AREAS**

20. When asked to choose from a list three things people thought make an area a good place to live the most popular options were: a low level of crime (25%), strong community spirit (17%) and good quality affordable housing (13%). Having established the kinds of attributes people thought important for a local area, people were then asked what they thought was most in need of improvement in their own area. Facilities for young children (16%) and the amount of good quality affordable housing (15%) were most commonly cited. People's views about their own area were more strongly related to the areas they lived in than their individual characteristics (such as age or socio-economic group). When asked who should be responsible for improving the aspect they had identified as most in need of improvement people tended to pick bodies with primary service delivery functions, such as the Health Board for GP services or the police for crime rates.

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## Aims and Objectives

1.1 This report presents the findings from the first year of the Scottish Executive's Core Module. The two main aims of the module are:

- to help maintain time series data on key questions of Scottish interest, mainly relating to devolution and broad constitutional issues, and
- to help inform the Scottish Executive's policy evaluation and policy making functions by providing robust measures of public attitudes towards the key devolved policy areas.

1.2 Some of these topics have been covered by the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey on a number of occasions since it began in 1999<sup>1</sup>. Funding for earlier questions about devolution mainly came from research councils and foundations and the core module was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Office of Chief Researcher (OCR) to ensure that the topics would continue to be covered after this initial grant funding came to an end. The topics covered in this report address the following broad issues:

- How much do people **know** about the Scottish Executive and Westminster governments?
- Who is most **trusted** to look after Scotland's best interests: the Scottish Executive or Westminster?
- In what ways do people get **involved** in the political process and is the system judged to be receptive to their input?
- Is **devolution delivering** what people hoped it might?
- How do people rate the performance of **public services** in Scotland?
- Do the Scottish Executive's **priorities** match those of people in Scotland?
- What do people think about their **local area**?

1.3 The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey typically covers around five main topics a year. The other topics included in the 2004 survey were: family law, environmental justice, young people and crime, and drinking and smoking.

## Reporting conventions

### *Chapter structure*

1.4 The chapters within this report follow a similar format. Each starts by stating the key questions addressed within it. This is followed by an introduction which provides a brief overview of the topic matter and presents the survey questions on which the analysis is based. A set of key points highlighting the chapter's main findings can be found at the end of each.

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2 for more details about the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey.

### ***Data analysis and presentation***

1.5 Two types of analysis are presented in the report. The tables and figures present the findings from simple bivariate analyses between two variables. To keep the presentation simple, for some variables (chiefly age, education and social class) the tables only show the results for a selection of categories. For example, the views of 18-24 year olds and those over 65 are shown but the intervening age groups have been omitted. Full versions of the tables are available from the *Scottish Centre for Social Research* on request.

### ***Appendices***

1.6 In many instances the decision as to what to present in each table was taken after multivariate modelling using logistic regression had been carried out. Annex 1 of this Report presents the full results of these analyses while the main body of the report simply comments on their findings. Annex 2 contains a description of logistic regression.

1.7 Annex 2 describes the technical details of the 2004 survey on which this report is based and has further descriptions of the analysis techniques used. Details of some of the classification variables used in the analysis, such as social class and urban / rural residence, are also included here. Annex 3 contains the 2004 survey questions and responses.

## CHAPTER TWO KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses three key questions:

- How much do people know about the Scottish Executive's activities and how does this compare with knowledge of the UK government?
- How much do people know about Scottish governance and politics more generally?
- What factors are related to knowledge levels?

### Introduction

2.1 The study looked at people's knowledge of Scottish political institutions in two ways. The first set of questions simply asked:

*How much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the UK government over the last twelve months?*

*And how much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the Scottish Executive over the last twelve months?*

These questions had two main purposes. Firstly, they can be used to evaluate the success of the Scottish Executive's attempts to promote awareness of its existence and activities. Secondly, by asking about both the Executive and UK Government they can be used to assess whether either body is more successful at capturing the attention of the public.

2.2 The second set of questions were presented as a quiz and people were invited to say whether each statement was "definitely true", "probably true", "probably not true" or "definitely not true". The statements were:

*The Scottish Executive makes most decisions about how money should be spent on health service in Scotland [True]*

*The Scottish Executive decides level of unemployment benefit paid to people in Scotland [False]*

*Scottish Parliament has around 70 elected members [False]*

*Scottish Executive is just another name for Scottish Parliament [False]*

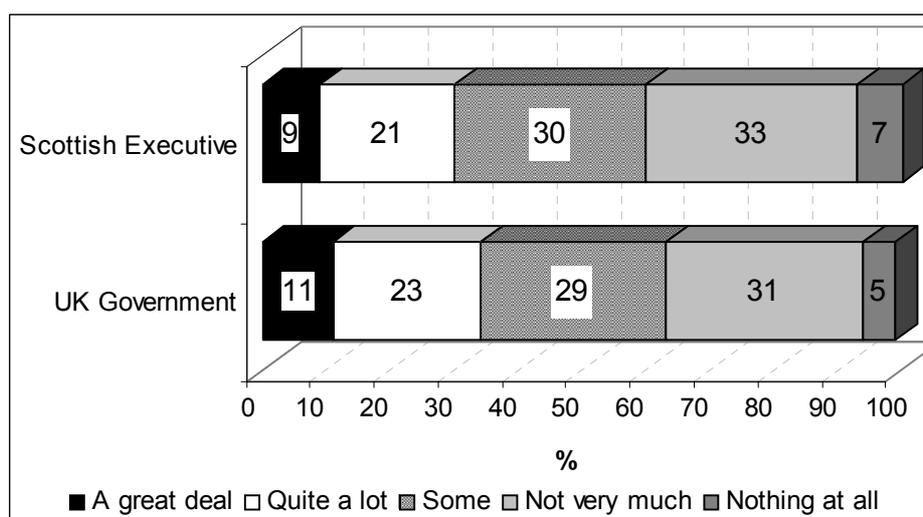
These questions were designed to measure people's understanding of the context within which Scottish governance and politics operates. It is also possible to use them to test the extent to which knowledge of the Executive's activities is related to other perceptions and evaluations of the Executive. Therefore, while this chapter focuses on knowledge itself, other chapters examine the relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards other issues.

## Knowledge of the Scottish Executive's and UK Government's recent activities

2.3 As Figure 2.1 illustrates, awareness of the work carried out by the Scottish Executive over the past year was fairly low. In total around three in ten (29%) said they knew “a great deal” or “quite a lot” about what the Scottish Executive had been doing. At the opposite end of the scale four in ten (41%) said they had heard “not very much” or “nothing at all”<sup>2</sup>. Although this may seem like a low proportion, as a relatively new institution it could simply be the case that the Executive has yet to attract the kind of attention that more established bodies command.

2.4 When this is compared with knowledge of the UK Government's activities, however, it is clear that governments in general, and not just the Scottish Executive, face difficulties competing for public attention. A third (34%) said they had heard a “great deal” or “quite a lot” about the UK Government's activities, while a similar proportion (36%) said they had heard “not very much” or “nothing at all”. So, although awareness levels were slightly higher for the UK government than for the Scottish Executive these differences are relatively small.

**Figure 2.1 Knowledge of Scottish Executive and UK Government activities over past year**



## Who is most likely to have heard about the Scottish Executive's recent activities?

2.5 Investigating who is most likely to have heard “a great deal” or “quite a lot” over the past year about the Scottish Executive (from here on referred to as people with a “high level of awareness”) reveals some interesting patterns. For example, half (48%) of regular broadsheet newspaper readers had a high level of awareness compared with around one in four people who do not read any paper (24%), *Daily Record* readers<sup>3</sup> (23%), and readers of

<sup>2</sup> The small differences between the results reported in Figure 2.1 and those commented on in the text are due to rounding.

<sup>3</sup> This distinction was made for two reasons. The *Daily Record* is significant because it is the paper most commonly read by respondents, and it is the only tabloid that is produced within Scotland. The other tabloids are all Scottish editions of London based papers (e.g. *The Sun*, *Daily Mail*, *Express*, *Mirror*) so while their editorial and news content has a Scottish focus they are not exclusively Scottish papers.

other tabloids (27%). It is also clear that awareness increases with age: people aged over 65 were twice as likely to have a high level of awareness than people aged 18-24 (33% and 17% respectively).

2.6 Whether type of employment affected their awareness of the Scottish Executive was also considered. The survey revealed that people employed in the public sector had a higher level of awareness than people in the private sector. Over a third (35%) of people working for public sector employers, voluntary organisations or charities had high levels of awareness compared with a quarter (25%) of private sector employees<sup>4</sup>. However, the group with the highest level of awareness was the self-employed (40%). So while being employed in the public sector is clearly an important driver of awareness it is not the most significant.

2.7 To establish which factors were significantly and independently associated with high levels of awareness of the Scottish Executive's activities some multi-variate analysis was conducted using logistic regression (see Annex 1 of this Report for the results of this analysis and Annex 2 for a more detailed description of the method). The analysis looked at the factors discussed above, as well as items such as education level, social class, sex, and party political identification<sup>5</sup>. Table 2.1 contains all the factors that were found to be significantly related to having a high level of awareness of the Scottish Executive's activities, presented in order of how strongly they were related.

2.8 The first thing to note is that neither newspaper readership or employment sector are related to awareness once other factors are controlled for. This means that the differences discussed above, while significant when looked at in isolation, disappear once education level, age and social class are also taken into account.

2.9 Perhaps unsurprisingly, a high level awareness was most likely to be found amongst people with a high level of interest in politics generally (54%). While people with very little political interest had particularly low levels of awareness (13%). It is also clear that awareness increases with education level. Four in ten (41%) of people with degrees had a high level of awareness compared with just under a fifth (18%) of those with no qualifications.

2.10 Men had higher levels of awareness than women (37% and 23% respectively). People who say they were living very comfortably on their income (32%) were more likely to be highly aware than people whose economic circumstances were more difficult (18%)<sup>6</sup>. The views of people in small remote towns also stand out – just 16% of people from these parts of Scotland had a high level of awareness. This figure was twice as high in most other types of area (typically around 30%), and was even greater still for those in remote rural areas (41%).

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<sup>4</sup> For those not currently in work the employment sector of their most recent job was collected.

<sup>5</sup> See Annex 2 for a description of the social class measure used throughout this report.

<sup>6</sup> This question asked people to rate their perceptions of their household's income using a scale ranging from "living very comfortably" to "finding it very difficult". See Table 1 in Annex 3 for full details of the question wording and responses given.

**Table 2.1 Knowledge of Scottish Executive and UK Government activities by age, sex, education, party identification, and interest in politics**

<b>% who say they heard ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ about what the Executive / UK Government did over past year</b>	<b>Scottish Executive</b>	<b>UK Government</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>All</b>	29	34	1637
<b>Interest in politics</b>			
Great deal / quite a lot	54	68	480
Not very much / none at all	13	12	611
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	17	26	125
65+	33	39	408
<b>Education</b>			
Degree / Higher Education	41	51	456
None	18	21	463
<b>Social class</b>			
Managerial / professional	44	52	493
Semi-routine / routine	18	21	496
<b>Urban / rural</b>			
Large urban	29	33	557
Other urban	27	33	432
Small accessible towns	30	37	160
Small remote towns	16	31	110
Accessible rural	33	39	224
Remote rural	41	41	154
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>			
Living very comfortably	32	47	138
Finding it difficult / very difficult	18	24	223
<b>Sex</b>			
Men	37	44	687
Women	23	27	950

***Are the patterns the same for the Scottish Executive and the UK Government?***

2.11 As already discussed, awareness of the UK government was slightly higher than for the Scottish Executive, although the difference was no more than five percentage points. Another interesting point to note from Table 2.1 is that the gap between the groups most and least likely to have a high level of awareness is much greater for the UK Government than it is for the Scottish Executive for some factors. For example, for the Scottish Executive the gap between the most and least politically interested is 41 points whereas for the UK Government it is 56 points. This is because people who have high levels of political interest are more likely to have a high level of awareness of the UK Government than of the Scottish Executive while people with very little political interest had very similar levels of awareness of both governments. This pattern is evident elsewhere in the table, for example people with

degrees have higher levels of awareness for the UK Government than for the Scottish Executive while those with no qualifications have similarly low awareness levels for both. This could suggest that while the overall difference in awareness levels between both bodies is not particularly large, the Scottish Executive finds it somewhat harder to engage the interest of certain groups than does the UK Government.

### Knowledge of Scottish governance and devolution

2.12 As already mentioned people’s broader knowledge of the workings of devolution and Scottish governance was also explored. The questions were designed to test awareness of the Scottish Executive and UK Government’s responsibilities as well as the mechanics of how devolution operates (for example, how many Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) sit in Holyrood). Table 2.2 presents the responses people gave with the proportions giving the correct answer for each item highlighted in bold text. It is clear that people have greater understanding of the actual work that both bodies carry out, than of the way in which it is done. Just over half correctly identified that decisions about health spending are largely taken in Scotland while unemployment benefit levels are set elsewhere. In contrast, almost half incorrectly said that the Scottish Parliament has 70 MSPs (the figure is in fact 129). Quite tellingly, a very large proportion (39%) simply could not answer this at all. There was also considerable confusion over the labels attached to the devolved institutions with four in ten (41%) thinking that the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament are a single entity.

**Table 2.2 Responses to the knowledge of devolution quiz**

% who say	Definitely / probably true	Definitely / probably <u>not</u> true	Can’t choose
The Scottish Executive makes most decisions about how money should be spent on health service in Scotland [T]	<b>52</b>	26	22
The Scottish Executive decides level of unemployment benefit paid to people in Scotland [F]	19	<b>56</b>	23
The Scottish Parliament has around 70 elected members [F]	46	<b>13</b>	39
The Scottish Executive is just another name for the Scottish Parliament [F]	41	<b>31</b>	26
<i>Sample size: 1514</i>			

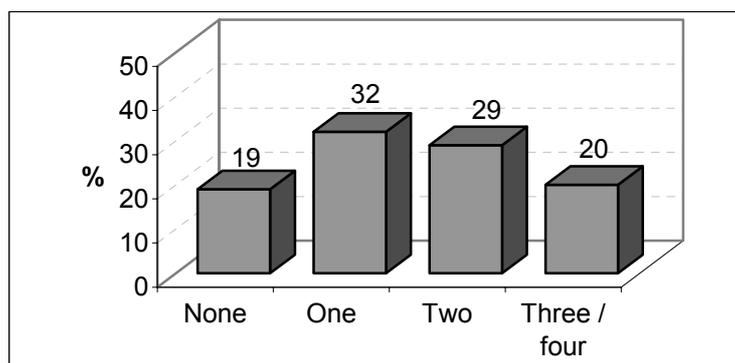
### *How is knowledge of devolution related to awareness of the Scottish Executive’s activities?*

2.13 Having established how much people said they had heard about the activities of the Scottish Executive it is important to set this in the context of people’s wider knowledge of devolution. For example, 44% of those who said they had heard a “great deal” or “quite a lot” about the Scottish Executive’s activities also said that the Scottish Executive is just another name for the Parliament, while a similar proportion (42%) said that it was not. This suggests that – for some people - a question about awareness of the Scottish Executive actually elicits responses about a somewhat broader set of institutions than was originally intended. This is not to say that the original measure is invalid, but it does mean that the extra illumination provided by the knowledge questions needs to be borne in mind when considering people’s responses.

## Who is most likely to have high levels of knowledge about devolution?

2.14 Instead of looking at each individual question, the quiz items can be used to create a scale of knowledge with those people who failed to answer any questions correctly at one end and those with higher levels at the other. As Figure 2.2 shows, one in five people got none of the items correct, around three in ten answered one or two correctly, and one in five got three or four correct.

**Figure 2.2 Number of items correct in the knowledge quiz**



2.15 The groups most likely to score highly on the quiz follow a very similar pattern to that found in Table 2.1 which looked at awareness levels in general. Understandably, self-reported interest in politics is strongly associated with knowledge levels. Over one in three (36%) of the most politically interested scored highest on the scale compared with just one in ten (9%) of those with low levels of interest. Similar patterns are evident for education, social class, and age.

2.16 Younger people are half as likely to have a high level of knowledge compared to those over 65, and twice as likely to have a low level. It will be interesting to see whether this changes over time as more young people learn about the mechanics of devolution as they go through school.

2.17 It has long been the case that women have lower levels of interest in politics than men (Verba *et al*, 1997; Hinds and Jarvis, 2000) and as this is such an important determinant of knowledge it is likely that this explains the difference seen here between men and women in terms of their knowledge of devolution. It should be noted, though, that the difference between the sexes is not as great as the differences between different age groups or education levels.

**Table 2.3 Knowledge of devolution, by interest in politics, age, education, social class, and sex**

	Level of knowledge of devolution		Sample size
	Low	High	
<b>All</b>	19	20	1637
<b>Interest in politics</b>			
Great deal / quite a lot	7	36	480
Not very much / none at all	33	9	611
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	33	9	125
65+	17	20	408
<b>Education</b>			
Degree / Higher Education	12	32	456
None	22	15	463
<b>Social class</b>			
Managerial / professional	9	32	493
Semi-routine / routine	28	11	496
<b>Sex</b>			
Men	13	26	687
Women	24	15	950

### Key points from this chapter

- Awareness of the government’s activities over the past year was fairly low: 29% had heard a “great deal” or “quite a lot” about the Scottish Executive and 34% said the same about the UK Government.
- People with a high level of interest in politics generally, those with higher education, managers and professionals and men were the groups most likely to have high levels of awareness of the Scottish Executive.
- The groups with the lowest levels of awareness were: young people, women, people with no qualifications, people in routine or semi-routine occupations, people living in small remote towns and those who say they are having difficulty coping on their income.
- The kinds of people who had high levels of awareness of the Scottish Executive’s activities tended to have even greater levels of awareness of the UK Government. Whereas, people with low awareness of the Executive generally tended to have low awareness of the UK Government too.
- People’s knowledge of devolution was generally higher in relation to questions about the responsibilities of the Scottish Executive than it was for questions about the process of how devolution operates.
- 56% correctly identified that decisions about the health budget are taken in Scotland, whereas just 13% correctly assessed that there are more than 70 MSPs in the Scottish Parliament.

- Confusion exists around the devolved institutions in Scotland: 41% thought that the Scottish Executive is just another name for the Scottish Parliament.
- Knowledge of devolution was higher amongst people with high levels of political interest, those with higher education, managers and professionals, older people, and men.

## CHAPTER THREE TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses four key questions:

- How much do people trust the Scottish Executive to work in Scotland's best interests and how has this changed since the advent of devolution?
- How does trust in the Scottish Executive compare with trust in the UK Government?
- What factors are related to trust?
- What role does the media play in accounting for levels of trust?

### Introduction

3.1 Some believe that for a democracy to function effectively its political institutions need to be both trusted by the public and perceived to be responsive to public participation (Almond and Verba, 1963). The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey has asked two questions about trust every year since it began in 1999. These questions ask:

*How much do you trust the UK government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?*

*How much do you trust the Scottish Executive to work in Scotland's best interests?*

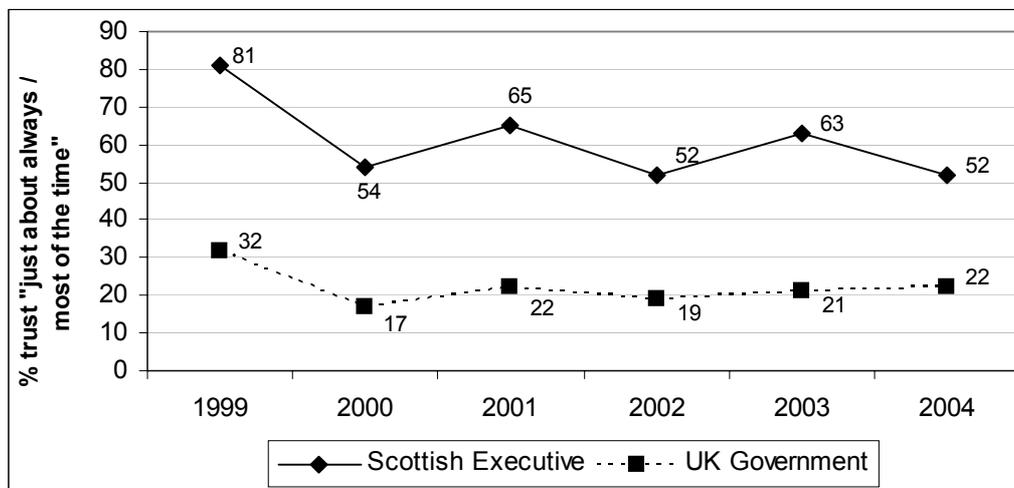
Between 1999 and 2003 the second question actually asked about the "Scottish Parliament". In response to criticism that the two questions were not comparing two alike bodies (the UK Government is an executive, the Scottish Parliament is a legislature) an experiment was conducted in 2004 where a random half of the sample was asked about the Parliament and half about the Executive. Views were almost identical regardless of the wording and it is therefore safe to conclude that any differences in trust between the two bodies recorded in the preceding years can not be explained by the fact the survey asked about different types of institutions. Indeed, the knowledge questions discussed in Chapter Two confirm that, five years into devolution, for a significant minority of the population the terms are interchangeable.

### Trust in government

#### *The Scottish Executive and UK Government compared*

3.2 The first thing that is clear from Figure 3.1 is that people consistently place more trust in the Scottish Executive than in the UK Government to look after Scotland's best interests. In 2004, around half (52 per cent) say they trust the Scottish Executive to do this "just about always" or "most of the time", while just over a fifth (22 per cent) say the same of the UK Government.

**Figure 3.1 Trust in the UK Government and Scottish Executive, 1999-2004**



### *Levels of trust over time*

3.3 Figure 3.1 also illustrates the fact that while levels of trust in the UK Government have been stable at around one in five since 2000 there is a slightly less clear trend when it comes to the Scottish Executive<sup>7</sup>. Since 2000 the level of trust in the Scottish Executive has alternated each year by around ten percentage points, moving between just over half and just over six in ten. A possible explanation for this variation in trust is that elections took place during the years when higher trust levels were recorded. Britain-wide levels of trust in the UK Government, recorded in the *British Social Attitudes* survey and *British Election Study* series, follow a similar pattern whereby general election years seem to increase trust while the intervening years register lower levels overall (see Bromley and Curtice, 2000). The trend in Scotland is, however, distinct in one important way: trust does not appear to be on the decline. Each peak and trough is very similar, give or take a couple of percentage points, whereas Britain-wide trust in the UK Government has seen long-term decline with each of the peaks (coinciding with general elections) being progressively lower each time. The other key point worth considering is that if elections are the cause of these biennial fluctuations in trust in the Scottish Executive then it is perhaps curious that both Scottish Parliament *and* UK Government elections appear to have a similar effect.

<sup>7</sup> While the five percentage point increase in the proportion who trust the UK Government recorded between 2000 and 2001 was statistically significant, the small variations between 2001-2004 do not constitute any clear trend.

## **Who is most likely to have high levels of trust in government?**

3.4 Once again a range of factors were explored using logistic regression (see Annex 2 of this Report for more details of this method) to see which were significantly and independently associated with high levels of trust in the Scottish Executive. The kinds of factors that are generally found to be related to trust include party political identification, constitutional preference and education levels. It has long been shown that people with higher levels of education are more trusting, while supporters of the political party in power at the time tend to be more trusting than supporters of the opposition (Bromley and Curtice, 2002). In Scotland, people's constitutional preferences also play a part in understanding levels of trust.

3.5 Table 3.1 demonstrates that all these factors are highly associated with trust in the Scottish Executive. The table shows all the factors that were found to be significant in the regression model and these are presented in order of their strength of association. The table also shows how these factors relate to trust in the UK Government, though it should be noted that multivariate analysis only explored trust in the Scottish Executive. Newspaper readership was also found to be significant, this is not presented in the table as it is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

3.6 Supporters of devolution are the most trusting of both governments, for example six in ten (62 per cent) trust the Scottish Executive compared to just over one in three (36 per cent) of those who would prefer a return to direct rule from Westminster. The story for the UK Government is, perhaps unsurprisingly, rather different. Devolution supporters are still the most likely to trust the UK Government (27%), and supporters of independence have the least trust (15%).

3.7 The relationship between trust and awareness of the Scottish Executive's activities over the past year was also examined (see Chapter Two for a full discussion of this issue). It is quite clear that awareness and trust are closely linked. Six in ten (62%) of those with a high level of awareness also had a high level of trust whereas fewer than half (39%) of those with low awareness had high levels of trust. It is not possible to draw any conclusions about the direction of this relationship; it is not clear whether higher levels of trust lead to higher awareness or vice versa.

**Table 3.1 Trust in the Scottish Executive and UK Government, by constitutional preference, awareness of government activities, party identification, education, age, and self-rated hardship**

<b>% who trust each institution 'Just about always' or 'most of the time'</b>	<b>Scottish Executive</b>	<b>UK Government</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>All</b>	52	22	1637
<b>Constitutional preference</b>			
Independence	51	15	498
Devolution	62	27	749
Direct rule	36	24	297
<b>Awareness of government activities over past year*</b>			
A great deal / quite a lot	62	29	466 / 565
Not very much / nothing at all	39	15	667 / 597
<b>Party identification</b>			
Labour	55	31	555
SNP	53	12	211
Liberal Democrat	70	25	179
Conservative	51	21	232
None	36	13	231
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	65	30	125
65+	42	21	408
<b>Education</b>			
Degree / HE	65	28	456
None	39	18	463
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>			
Living very comfortably	55	27	138
Finding it difficult / very difficult	42	17	223

**Notes to table**

\*The figures in the Scottish Executive column relate to knowledge of Scottish Executive activities, the figures in the UK Government column relate to knowledge of UK Govt activities.

3.8 Liberal Democrat supporters have the greatest trust in the Scottish Executive (70%), in contrast to around half of all the other parties' supporters, while just over a third (36%) of those with no party identification have a high level of trust. Given its position as the party of government in Westminster at the time of the survey, it is unsurprising that Labour supporters have higher levels of trust in the UK Government than any of the other parties' supporters – though it is still only a minority of Labour party identifiers who hold this view.

3.9 As already mentioned, the relationship between high levels of education and trust is long established and the findings here confirm the relationship. Another interesting feature of trust is that younger people are no less trusting of governments than older people (Bromley and Curtice, *ibid*). Interestingly in Scotland it appears that younger people are actually more

trusting than older people. Two-thirds (65%) of 18-24 year olds have a high level of trust in the Scottish Executive, compared with less than half (42%) of those aged 65 and over. A similar relationship between age and trust in the UK Government is also evident but is less pronounced.

3.10 Table 3.1 also shows that people who say they are having difficulty coping on their income are less trusting than people who are more comfortable. Though the difference in opinion between these two groups is not as large as for some of the other factors shown in the table.

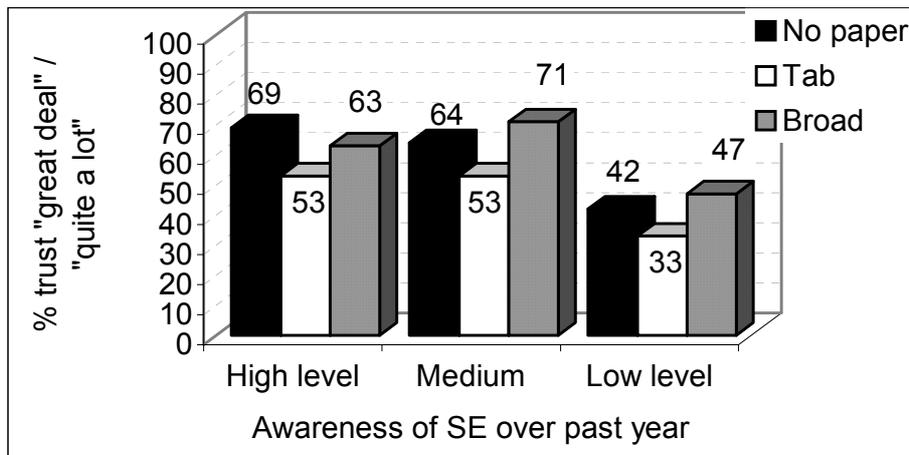
### **The role of the media**

3.11 The role of the media is another interesting factor related to trust. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey routinely asks whether people read a newspaper regularly and if so which one they read most often. Newspapers have long been of interest to political analysts largely because of their editorialised content and the social segmentation of newspaper circulation.

3.12 A simple analysis of newspaper reading habits and trust shows that 61% of broadsheet readers have high levels of trust in the Scottish Executive compared with 44% of tabloid readers. At 55%, people who do not read any paper (a group which now constitutes 39% of the population) have higher levels of trust than tabloid readers but slightly less than broadsheet readers. Newspaper readership is, of course, related to many other factors, such as education, social class and even the political party people support, all of which are also significantly related to trust. As noted above, newspaper readership was one of the factors found to be significant in the multivariate analysis which was discussed in relation to Table 3.1.

3.13 Figure 3.2 presents a simple illustration of the findings in relation to newspaper readership. This chart focuses on people with a high level of trust in the Scottish Executive and looks at the relationship between their level of awareness of the Scottish Executive and the newspaper they read. It shows that even when people's level of awareness is controlled for, the kind of newspaper they read is still related to their level of trust. For example, amongst those with a high level of awareness, 53% of tabloid readers have a high level of trust compared with 63% of broadsheet readers.

**Figure 3.2 Trust in the Scottish Executive, awareness of government activities, and newspaper readership**



### Key points from this chapter

- Half (52%) trust the Scottish Executive to look after Scotland's interests compared with just over a fifth (22%) who trust the UK Government.
- Since 2000 those who trust the Scottish Executive a great deal or quite a lot has fluctuated from between roughly six in ten and five in ten people in alternate years.
- In the same period trust in the UK Government has remained constant at around one in five.
- It is possible that the increased number of elections that now occur in Scotland could in part explain why trust levels are changing like this.
- The groups most likely to have a high level of trust in the Scottish Executive were: supporters of devolution (as opposed to independence or direct rule from Westminster), people with high levels of awareness of what the Scottish Executive had done over the past year, Liberal Democrat supporters, people with higher education, people aged 18-24, and people who say they are living comfortably on their income.
- Readers of tabloids were less likely to have high levels of trust in the Scottish Executive than broadsheet readers or people who do not read any paper even when their level of awareness of the Executive's activities is taken into account as well as factors such as education level, social class and party political identification.

## CHAPTER FOUR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND VOTING

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses four key questions:

- Do people think voting is important and are some elections seen as more important than others?
- Who is most likely to think voting matters?
- In what other ways have people registered their views about issues of concern and what kinds of people are more likely to do this?
- To what extent is *devolved* government perceived to be *more open* government?

### Introduction

#### *Voting*

4.1 This chapter looks at the issue of public involvement in three ways. First it examines people's attitudes to the most formal and long-standing way of registering views – voting in elections. The survey asked people to rate the importance of voting in four types of elections:

- Scottish Parliament elections
- elections to the UK House of Commons
- local council elections
- European Parliament elections

4.2 Declining levels of turnout at all types of election in recent years have led some to raise the possibility that civic duty is perhaps on the wane and that voting is becoming a minority pastime (Bromley and Curtice, 2002). Such concerns have been particularly notable in Scotland; with turnout at the second set of elections to the Scottish Parliament in 2003 falling to just 49%, more people abstained than actually voted (Bromley, 2005 forthcoming).

#### *Registering views*

4.3 There is more to political engagement than voting, however. The survey also presented people with a list of fourteen possible means of registering their views about an issue and asked if they had ever done any of them. The list included a mixture of both direct and indirect activities such as contacting a politician, signing a petition, responding to a consultation document, or giving money to a campaign. One of the stated aims of devolution was to allow greater public participation in the decision making process (Scottish Office, 1999) and this question is one way of measuring the extent to which people engage in such activities at a local, Scottish or UK level.

### ***Perceptions of openness***

4.4 To understand whether people feel the Scottish Executive is meeting its objectives in terms of having a more consultative and open style of operating than the UK Government the following questions were asked:

*In general how good would you say the Scottish Executive is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions ...*

*And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions ...*

*...very good,  
quite good,  
not very good,  
or, not at all good?*

Following a similar theme, the next question was asked in 1997, 1999 and 2000 to tap people's expectations:

*Will a Scottish Parliament give ordinary people ...  
... more say in how Scotland is governed,  
less say,  
or, is it making no difference?*

It was then replaced in 2001 (and asked annually since) by a slightly different format of wording which asked people to evaluate devolution's performance in this respect:

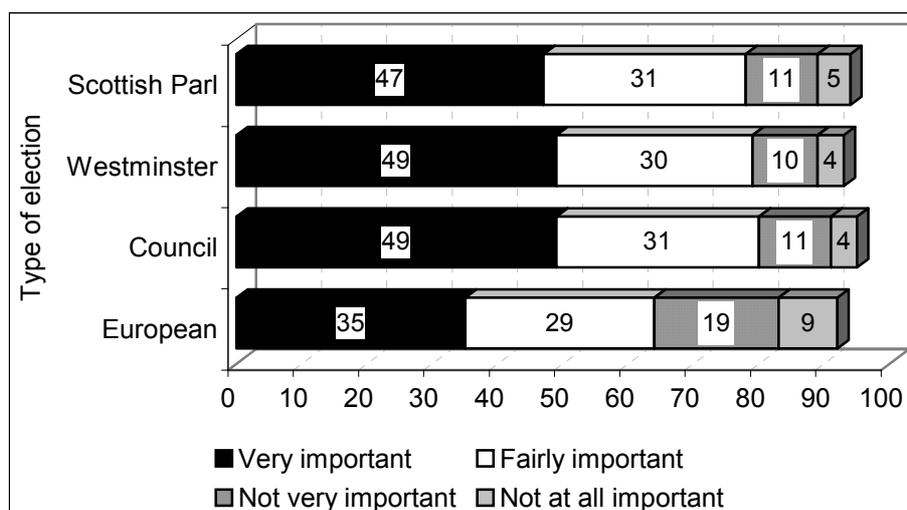
*Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people ...  
... more say in how Scotland is governed,  
less say,  
or, is it making no difference?*

In these questions the term "having a Scottish Parliament" is used as a proxy for "having devolved government".

### **Perceptions of the importance of voting in elections**

4.5 Figure 4.1 presents the answers people gave in relation to the four types of election mentioned in the introduction. The first point to note is that, with the exception of European elections, a large majority judge voting to be either "very" or "fairly important". The second thing to note is that views about the Scottish Parliament, Westminster and Council elections are very similar. In each case the answers people gave vary by no more than two points which suggests that for these elections at least what sense of civic duty exists does so in equal measure. European elections clearly fare less well. Fewer people think they are important and, conversely, at the other end of the scale people are in fact twice as likely to judge these elections as "not very" or "not at all" important as say this about the other types. The fact that people were less likely to say that voting in European elections was important suggests that these questions also measured people's feelings about the institutions in question and not just their attachment to the principle of voting.

**Figure 4.1 Importance of voting in elections**



***Are some elections more important than others?***

4.6 It is clear from Figure 4.1 that for three of the four elections people did not seem to differentiate between them in terms of their importance. But are some people more likely to judge voting to be important than others? And do some people view certain elections to be more important than other types? Table 4.1 makes it possible to investigate both these questions. It presents the proportions of people who said it was “very important” to vote in Scottish Parliament and Westminster elections. These have been selected because they are arguably of greatest interest in terms of comparing actual turnout and voting patterns. Multivariate analysis using logistic regression (see Annex 2 for a full description of this method) was used to explore which factors were significantly and independently associated with the view that voting in Scottish Parliament elections is “very important”. The table presents the factors that were found to be significant in order of the strength of their association.

4.7 Table 4.1 looks at those who believe it is very important to vote in Scottish Parliament and House of Commons elections. Table 4.1 shows that there is a gulf in attitudes to voting between certain groups, the most notable of these being political interest, age, and party identification. The relationship between people’s level of political interest and their commitment to voting is particularly stark. Eight in ten (79%) people with a high level of political interest say that voting is very important compared to around one in six (15%) of politically uninterested people.

4.8 Much has been written about turnout in recent years and in particular about young people’s voting levels and interest in politics (see for example Park, A. 1999; Children and Young People’s Unit, 2002; Russell, et al 2002). It has always been the case that younger people are less likely to vote than older people but as younger generations age they eventually get into the habit of voting. However, in recent elections the declining number of young people voting has lead some commentators to express concern that this might no longer be the case (*ibid*). Table 4.1 illustrates the stark difference that exists between

younger and older people when it comes to their attitudes to voting: just a quarter (24%) of 18-24 year olds and three in ten (31%) 25-34 year olds<sup>8</sup> say that voting in Scottish Parliamentary and Westminster elections is “very important” compared with almost two thirds (63%) of people over 65. These questions were asked for the first time in 2004, so there are no earlier measures against which to compare change over time.

**Table 4.1 Importance of voting in elections, by sex, age, education, party identification, constitutional preference, interest in politics and trust in government**

<b>% who say it is ‘very important’ to vote in elections</b>	<b>Scottish Parliament</b>	<b>House of Commons</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>All</b>	47	49	1514
<b>Interest in politics</b>			
Great deal	79	85	131
None at all	15	15	186
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	24	28	117
65+	63	64	364
<b>Party identification</b>			
Conservative	49	63	222
Labour	55	58	510
Liberal Democrat	63	66	171
SNP	56	48	192
None	7	7	199
<b>Constitutional preference</b>			
Independence	46	42	457
Devolution	53	56	692
Direct rule	39	53	285
<b>Social class</b>			
Managerial / professional	57	63	493
Semi-routine / routine	41	42	496
<b>Trust in government*</b>			
Just about always / most of the time	54	63	764 / 297
Some of the time / never	40	46	721 / 1186
<b>Sex</b>			
Men	44	52	624
Women	49	47	890

**Note to table**

\*The figures in the Scottish Parliament column relate to trust in the Scottish Executive, the figures in the House of Commons column relate to trust in the UK Government.

4.9 As elections are highly politicised events it is perhaps not surprising that there is a relationship between the parties people support and their views about voting in elections.

<sup>8</sup> The figures for 25-34 year olds are not shown in the table.

Almost two-thirds (63%) of Liberal Democrat supporters say that voting is important while barely anyone with no party identification says this (7%).

4.10 The other main differences that can be drawn from the table follow fairly predictable patterns. For example, supporters of devolution are the most likely to say that voting in elections to the Scottish Parliament are important while people who would prefer the parliament not to exist in the first place are the least emphatic. In a similar vein, those with high levels of trust are also more likely to rate elections as important than people with low levels.

4.11 Of greater interest, perhaps, is the second question – that is whether certain people rate some elections as more important than others. There is very strong evidence that this is indeed the case. For example, almost two-thirds (63%) of Conservative identifiers say that voting in a Westminster election is very important whereas just half (49%) say this about Holyrood. The views of Labour and Liberal Democrats are pretty similar for both elections. In contrast, more SNP supporters say that Holyrood elections are important than say this about Westminster elections. Constitutional preferences clearly play a part in mediating such views. Independence supporters are the least likely to say that Westminster elections are important while those who would prefer Scotland to be governed from Westminster (as it was prior to devolution) are the least likely to say that Holyrood elections are important.

4.12 People with little or no interest in politics make no distinction between these two types of election, whereas more people with high levels of interest say that Westminster matters than say this of Holyrood. This perhaps echoes Chapter Two where it was shown that people with greater levels of political interest were more likely to have heard about the activities of the UK Government over the past year than the Scottish Executive.

### **Registering views**

4.13 Turning to look at other ways of having a say about an issue apart from voting. Table 4.2 shows the options presented to respondents in descending order of how commonly they were reported. (See Table 30 in Annex 3 for the list in the order shown to respondents).

**Table 4.2 Different ways of registering views about an issue**

<b>Have you done any of these things as a way of registering what you thought about an issue?</b>	
	<b>%</b>
No, have not done any of these	26
Signed a petition	59
Attended a public meeting	31
Given money to a campaign or organisation	27
Contacted an MP or MSP	24
Spoken to an influential person	15
Responded to a consultation document	13
Gone on a protest or demonstration	13
Contacted a government department directly	11
Attended an event organised as part of a consultation exercise	10
Joined an existing organisation	9
Actively took part in a campaign (e.g. leafleting, stuffing envelopes etc)	9
Contacted radio, TV or a newspaper	9
Raised the issue in an organisation I already belong to	8
Formed a group of like-minded people	5
Mean number of activities mentioned	2.4
<i>Sample size: 1637</i>	

**Note to table**

The column does not sum to 100% as people could choose as many options as applied to them.

4.14 Table 4.3 looks at the proportion of people who said they had not registered their views in any of these ways and, by way of contrast, the proportion who mentioned having done three or more. The pattern is very clear – people with no political interest, young people, those with no qualifications, people with no party identification and those with routine or semi-routine occupations are the most likely to have never done any of these things. So, although the number of initiatives aimed to encourage people to express their views has increased in recent years, certain sections of the population have yet to register their views in these ways.

**Table 4.3 Number of ways people had registered their views by interest in politics, age, education, party identification and social class.**

		Number of ways people had registered their views		
		None	Three or more	<i>Sample size</i>
<b>All</b>	%	26	35	<i>1514</i>
<b>Interest in politics</b>				
Great deal	%	11	63	<i>131</i>
None at all	%	53	11	<i>186</i>
<b>Age</b>				
18-24	%	39	33	<i>117</i>
65+	%	15	30	<i>364</i>
<b>Education</b>				
Degree / HE	%	14	40	<i>456</i>
None	%	52	22	<i>463</i>
<b>Party identification</b>				
Conservative	%	21	40	<i>222</i>
Labour	%	28	33	<i>510</i>
Liberal Democrat	%	12	53	<i>171</i>
SNP	%	21	35	<i>192</i>
None	%	43	18	<i>199</i>
<b>Social class</b>				
Managerial / professional	%	15	49	<i>493</i>
Semi-routine / routine	%	31	22	<i>496</i>

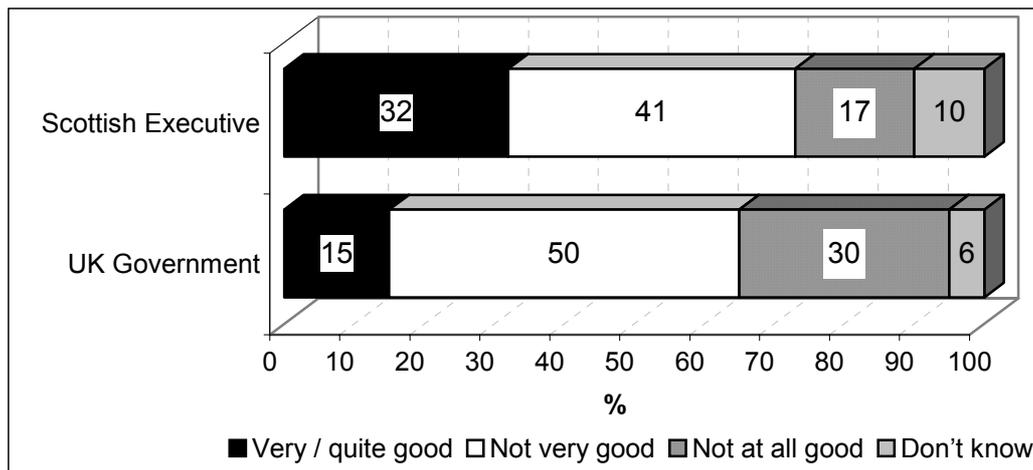
### **How good are the Scottish Executive and UK Government at listening to people's views?**

4.15 Chapter Two discussed the fact that slightly fewer people said they had heard about the work of the Scottish Executive over the past year than had heard about the UK Government. In Chapter Three it was shown that many more people trust the Scottish Executive to work in Scotland's best interests than trust the UK Government. Here, perceptions of how well each body listens to people's views before taking decisions are examined. As with trust, people tend to perceive that the Scottish Executive is better at listening to people before taking decisions than the UK Government. As Figure 4.2 illustrates, twice as many people rated the Scottish Executive to be "very good" or "quite good" than did so for the UK Government (32% and 15% respectively)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that these categories have been combined because in both cases just one per cent chose "very good".

4.16 Prior to devolution there was a belief that devolution could lead to a more open and consultative style of government and as discussed above in comparison with the UK Government, the Scottish Executive has performed well. However, when asked how good the Scottish Executive was at listening to people’s views 58% of respondents felt that the Scottish Executive is either “not at all good” or “not very good”.

**Figure 4.2 How good is the Scottish Executive / UK Government at listening to people’s views?**



4.17 Table 4.4 presents some of the key differences found in people’s views about this issue. Multivariate analysis using logistic regression was used once more to identify the factors that were independently associated with the view that the Scottish Executive was “very good” or “quite good” at listening to people’s views.

4.18 Trust in the Scottish Executive is by far the most significant factor associated with the belief that the Executive is good at listening to people – almost half (48%) of this group took that view, the highest proportion for any of the groups in the table. The regression analysis showed that the odds of someone who has a high level of trust saying this were five times that for people with low levels of trust once other factors (including education, age, party identification) had been controlled for. This kind of study cannot determine the direction of the relationship between two variables so it is not possible to conclude whether having a high level of trust leads people to think governments listen to people’s views, or whether the reverse is the case (people who think governments listen, also trust them). And while it is highly unlikely that a government that puts specific effort into being seen to listen to public opinion will be rewarded by declining levels of trust, this alone might not be enough to actually boost levels of trust.

4.19 Those with degree or higher education qualifications are more likely to say the Scottish Executive is good at listening compared to those with fewer qualifications, though this is not the case when assessing how well the UK Government listens.

**Table 4.4 Perceptions of how good the UK Government / Scottish Executive are at listening to people, by trust in government, party identification, education, and sex**

<b>% who say the SE / UK govt is 'very' or 'quite good' at listening to people's views</b>	<b>Scottish Executive</b>	<b>UK Government</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>All</b>	32	15	1637
<b>Trust in government</b>			
Just about always / most of the time	48	38	827 / 330
Some of the time / never	15	9	774 / 1270
<b>Party identification</b>			
Conservative	25	15	232
Labour	38	22	555
Liberal Democrat	41	12	179
SNP	29	9	211
None	22	11	231
<b>Education</b>			
Degree / HE	40	14	456
None	24	15	463
<b>Sex</b>			
Men	35	17	687
Women	30	14	950

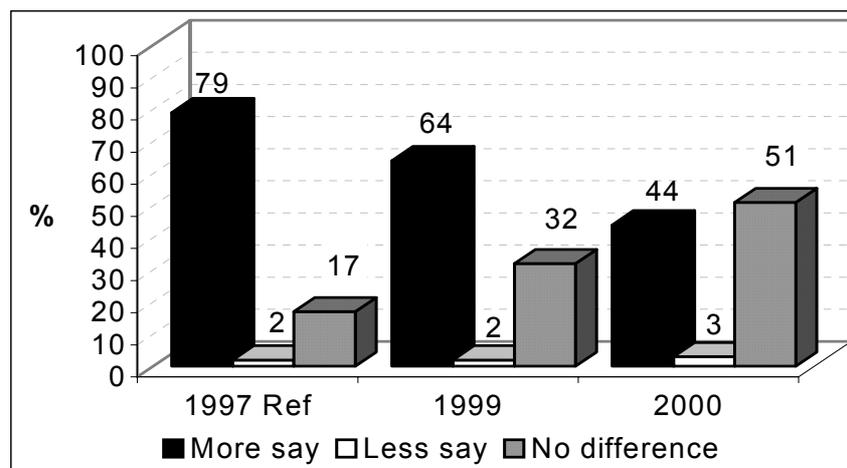
**Note to table**

\*The figures in the Scottish Executive column relate to trust in the Scottish Executive, the figures in the UK Government column relate to trust in the UK Government.

**Has devolution given people more say in how Scotland is run?**

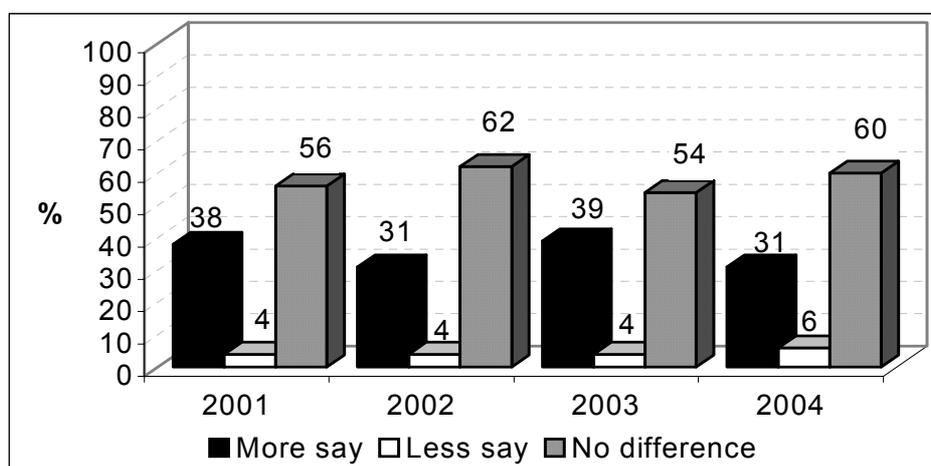
4.20 Figure 4.3 presents the findings from the early years of devolution. The first point to note is that aspirations about this aspect of devolution (and indeed about all the items asked about) were particularly high in 1997. At that time eight in ten people (79%) believed devolution was going to deliver on this front. By 2000 this almost halved to 44%. However, while these high aspirations declined they were not matched by an equivalent growth in the belief that devolution would give people *less* say. Instead there is a steady increase in the perception that devolution was simply going to make no difference to how much say ordinary people have in the governance of Scotland.

**Figure 4.3 Will having a Scottish Parliament give ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed? 1997, 1999, 2000**



4.21 Once devolution had bedded in the question wording changed and from 2001 and asked people whether devolution was making any difference to the amount of say ordinary people have. So while Figure 4.3 looked at people's perceptions of what devolution *might* achieve, Figure 4.4 presents evaluations of actual performance.

**Figure 4.4 Do you think having a Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed? 2001-2004**



4.22 Figure 4.4 shows that in each year to date the proportion who believe that devolution has afforded ordinary people more say has fluctuated between around three and four in ten. In contrast the proportion who believe that it is making no difference has moved between 54% and 62%. Again, very few people think that having a Scottish Parliament has given ordinary people less of a say.

4.23 The fluctuating pattern evident in Figure 4.4 is similar to that found with trust in the Executive (see Chapter Three). There is a strong relationship between levels of trust and perceptions of how much say ordinary people have: almost half (46%) of those with high a

level of trust say that devolution is giving ordinary people more say compared with just a sixth (15%) of those with low trust. It is, therefore, unsurprising that levels of trust and attitudes on whether devolution is giving people more say follow a similar pattern.

Chapter Five examines evaluations of devolution more broadly.

### **Key points from this chapter**

- When asked about Scottish Parliament, Westminster and local council elections around half said it was “very important” to vote and a further three in ten said it was “fairly important”.
- European elections were seen as less important, just 35% said it was “very important” to vote in these.
- People with high levels of political interest, older people, Liberal Democrats, supporters of devolution (as opposed to independence or direct rule from Westminster), those who trust the Scottish Executive, and women were the groups most likely to say that voting in Scottish Parliament elections is “very important”.
- The difference between the views of people with high and low levels of political interest, and between political party supporters and those with no affiliation were particularly stark.
- Although the same proportion overall said that voting in Scottish Parliament and Westminster elections was important, some groups saw Westminster voting as more important. These included: people with high levels of political interest, Conservative supporters, people who would prefer Scotland not to have devolution.
- When presented with a list of fourteen possible ways of registering their views about an issue a quarter (26%) said they had never done any of them.
- The most common things people had done were signing a petition (59%), attending a public meeting (31%), and giving money to a campaign or organisation (27%). The average number of things people said they had done was 2.4.
- Certain groups were more likely to have never done any of the things, for example: 18-24 year olds, people with low levels of political interest, people with no qualifications, people who do not support any political party and those in routine or semi-routine occupations.
- 32% said the Scottish Executive is “very” or “quite good” at listening to people’s views before taking decisions, just 15% said this about the UK Government.
- The most common answer given to the question about the Scottish Executive was that they were “not very good” (41%) while a further 15% said they were “not at all good”.
- People with a high level of trust in the Scottish Executive were the most likely to think it is good at listening to views. Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters, people with higher education, and men were also more likely to think this.
- Young people are more likely than older people to think the Scottish Executive is good at listening, but this is in part related to their high levels of trust. It is not yet possible to say whether young people’s views will change as they get older or whether this generation will carry their more positive outlook with them as they age.
- Since 2001 between 31% and 39% of people have said that having Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people *more* say in how Scotland is governed. Between 56% and 62% say that it is making no difference.

- Very few people think devolution has meant that people have *less* say, but it is clear that the high aspirations registered in the years preceding and immediately after the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Executive have not yet been met.

## CHAPTER FIVE EVALUATIONS OF DEVOLUTION

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses three questions:

- Who do people think has most influence over how Scotland is run: the Scottish Executive or the UK Government?
- Which of these institutions *should* have most say over how Scotland is run?
- Has devolution strengthened Scotland's voice in the UK and who is most likely to believe this is the case?

### Introduction

5.1 This report considers two aspects of people's evaluations of devolution. Firstly, it explores people's views about the impact of devolution on the wider process of governing Scotland; for example has it given Scottish institutions greater influence and does Scotland now have a stronger voice? Secondly, it examines what people believe the new system of government has meant for public services and policy delivery. This chapter addresses the first of these issues and chapter six looks at the second.

5.2 The issue of how much influence different institutions exert over how Scotland is run is covered by two questions that have now been asked on five occasions since the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey began in 1999. The first asks:

*Which of the following do you think **has** most influence over the way Scotland is run?*

*The Scottish Parliament*  
*The UK government at Westminster*  
*Local councils in Scotland*  
*The European Union*

As with some of the other questions looked at in this report the question wording has had to be adapted over the years. This question has changed in two ways. In 1999 the wording reflected the fact that the parliament had yet to open and instead asked "When the new parliament starts work, which of the following **will** have most influence...". In 2004 Scottish Parliament was replaced with Scottish Executive so that it would match the UK Government option<sup>10</sup>.

5.3 This question is always followed up by a second which asks (using the same answer options):

*And which do you think **ought** to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?*

---

<sup>10</sup> An experiment was conducted to test whether the wording change affected responses and concluded that it had not.

5.4 In addition to looking at the relative powers of the Scottish Executive and UK Government the survey also asked about the relative power of Scotland within the UK. The following question was asked in 1997, 1999 and 2000 with the intention of tapping this dimension:

*Will a Scottish Parliament give Scotland ...  
...a stronger voice in the United Kingdom,  
a weaker voice in the United Kingdom,  
or, will it make no difference?*

It was then replaced in 2001 (and asked annually since) by a slightly different format of wording which asked people to evaluate performance in this respect:

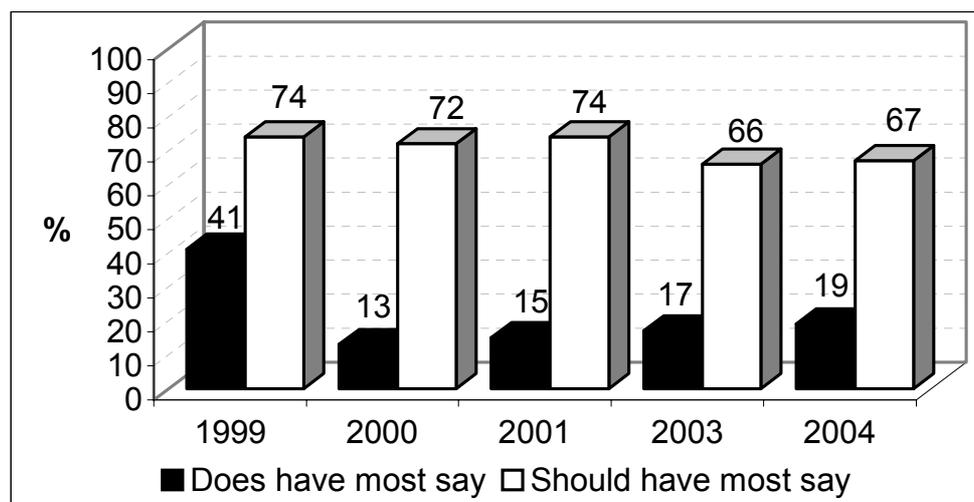
*Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving Scotland...  
...a stronger voice in the United Kingdom,  
a weaker voice in the United Kingdom,  
or, is it making no difference?*

### **Power and influence**

5.5 Figure 5.1 shows the proportions of people over time who have said that the Scottish Executive *does* have most influence over how Scotland is run alongside the proportions who said that it *should* have most say. The different wording used in 1999, as discussed in the introduction, in part accounts for the higher proportion choosing the Scottish Parliament in the first year than did so in later years when the question asked about actuality.

5.6 The most striking pattern evident in this chart is the fact that in every year the proportion who think the Executive should have most say exceeds, by a fairly large margin, those who think this is actually the case. By 2003 the proportion who said the Executive should have most say had declined from three-quarters to two-thirds, and this remained the case in 2004, but despite this drop the gap between people's aspirations and their perceptions of reality is still quite large. It should also be noted that over the same period there was a small but steady increase in the proportion who believe that it does indeed have most influence, from 13% in 2000 to 19% in 2004.

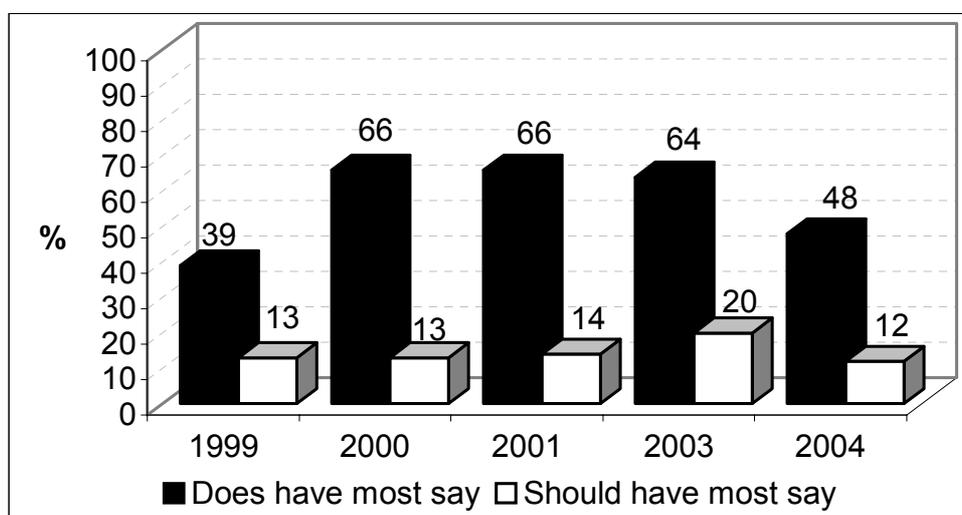
**Figure 5.1 Perceptions of the Scottish Executive's role in how Scotland is run, 1999-2004**



5.7 Although the question gave people a range of four possible institutions to choose from, the only other body which has attracted significant attention over time is the UK Government. Figure 5.2 follows the same principle as Figure 5.1 but this time looks at views towards the UK Government's role.

5.8 Once again the first point to note is the large gap between what people say should be the case and what they think is actually happening. Even at its highest point (20% in 2003) no more than a small minority take the view that the UK Government should have most influence, and even this reading appears so far to be a one off reading. By 2004, it had dropped down to its lowest ever level (12%). As before, 1999 stands out as quite distinct with just four in ten (39%) people during the period immediately after the first Scottish Parliament elections saying that the UK Government had most influence over how Scotland is run. By 2000, however, this jumped to two-thirds, remaining at this level until 2004 when there was a significant drop, to 48%.

**Figure 5.2 Perceptions of the UK Government's role in how Scotland is run, 1999-2004**



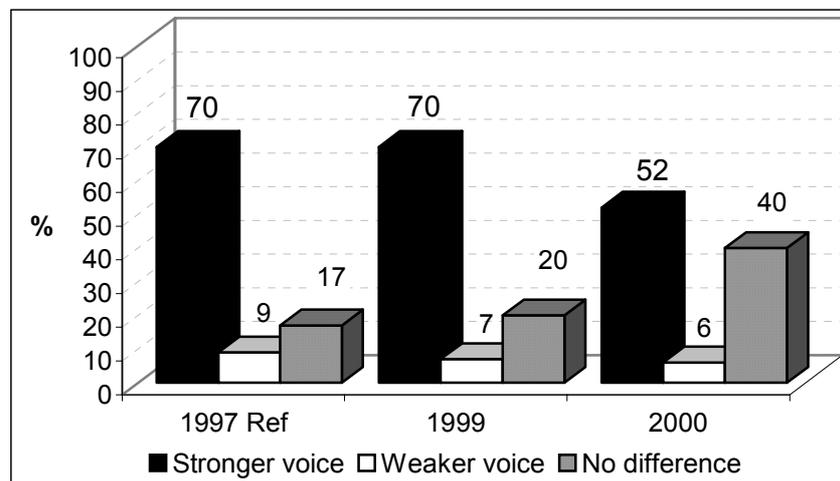
5.9 The fact that the proportion who said the UK Government has most influence dropped to just below half in 2004 cannot be accounted for by the small increase in the proportion saying that the Scottish Executive has (as shown in Figure 5.1). In fact what happened is rather more curious. For the first time since the survey began the proportion saying that local councils have most influence hit double figures – 20% – up from 7% in 2003. Quite why this might have happened is unclear.

### Scotland’s voice

5.10 Prior to 1997 Scottish voting trends were quite different to those in England. Since 1959 Scotland has returned a majority of Labour MPs at each election<sup>11</sup>, so by 1992 (when the Conservatives had won four elections in a row) Scotland had been governed by a party which had only won a minority of seats for an unprecedented period of time. This situation increased concerns about Scotland’s influence within the UK and as a result the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey has asked a question every year about whether devolution is strengthening Scotland’s voice within the UK. As with other questions the wording of this question in the early years asked about aspirations whereas from 2001 onwards people were asked to evaluate devolution’s performance.

5.11 Figure 5.3 looks at people’s views in the years immediately before and after the establishment of devolution. In 1997 and 1999 large majorities of seven in ten (70%) thought that Scotland would have a stronger voice within the UK as a result of devolution, though this dropped to half by the time devolution had been place for a year.

**Figure 5.3 Will having a Scottish Parliament give Scotland a stronger voice in the UK? 1997, 1999 and 2000**

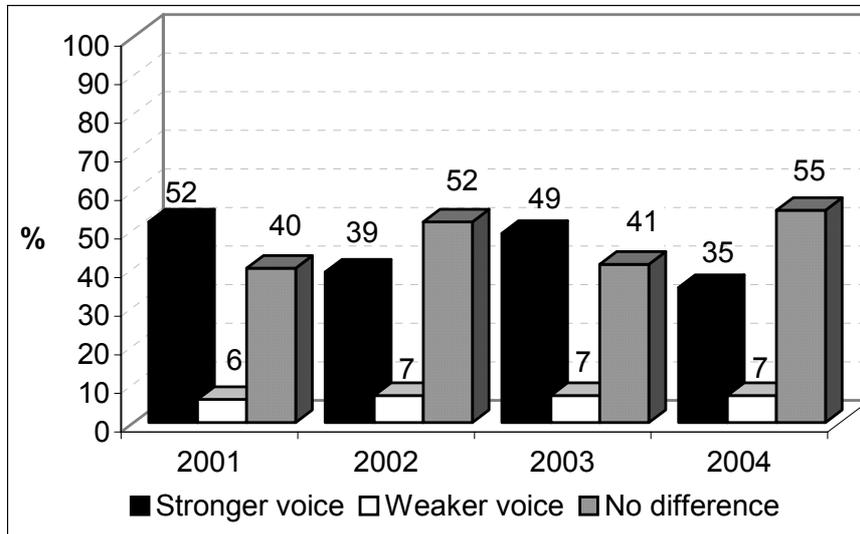


5.12 Figure 5.4 looks at people’s evaluations of the impact of devolution on Scotland’s voice within the UK. In 2001 and 2003 the proportion who thought Scotland has a stronger voice outweighed those who said devolution had made no difference in this respect. In 2002

<sup>11</sup> In 1959 Labour won more seats in Scotland despite not gaining the largest share of the vote, from 1964 onwards it gained both the plurality of votes cast and seats won (see Brown *et al*, 1999).

and 2004 the reverse is the case, which echoes a trend present in a number of the analyses in this report (of views differing in alternate years).

**Figure 5.4 Do you think having a Scottish Parliament is giving Scotland a stronger voice in the UK? 2001-2004**



5.13 Table 5.1 looks at the relationship between whether people think devolution has or has not strengthened Scotland's voice in the UK and trust in government, party identification, and awareness of the Executive's activities. Figure 5.4 indicated that in 2004 more people thought that devolution was making no difference than said it was giving Scotland a stronger voice. People with high levels of trust, however, are more likely to believe that it is having a positive impact (50%) in this respect than not (42%). While there are very strong associations between both party identification and awareness levels and this measure, none of the other groups are more positive than negative overall.

**Table 5.1 Perceptions of the impact of devolution on Scotland’s voice in the UK, by trust in government, party identification, age, and awareness of the Scottish Executive’s activities**

<b>% who say having a Scottish Parliament is giving Scotland...</b>	<b>A stronger voice in the UK</b>	<b>A weaker voice in the UK</b>	<b>Making no difference</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
<b>All</b>	35	7	55	1637
<b>Trust in Scottish Executive</b>				
Just about always / most of the time	50	6	42	827
Some of the time / never	18	9	71	774
<b>Party identification</b>				
Conservative	22	14	62	232
Labour	41	7	51	555
Liberal Democrat	36	7	54	179
SNP	34	3	63	211
None	32	5	58	231
<b>Awareness of Scottish Executive’s activities over past year</b>				
A great deal / quite a lot	41	9	50	687
Not very much / nothing at all	26	7	63	950

**Key points from this chapter**

- Since 1999 clear majorities of between three-quarters and two-thirds have said each year that the Scottish Executive should have the most influence over how Scotland is run.
- However, no more than one in five has ever said that the Scottish Executive does in fact have most influence.
- Between 2000 and 2003 around two-thirds identified the UK Government as the body having most influence, though in 2004 this fell to just under half. It is not possible to conclude from a single year’s results what caused this change between 2003 and 2004.
- The high aspirations recorded in 1997 and 1999 that devolution would give Scotland a stronger voice in the UK do not appear to have been met.
- From 2001 onwards the proportion who believe Scotland now has a stronger voice in the UK has fluctuated between a half (52%) and a third (35%) while the proportion who believe devolution has made no difference on this front has moved between four in ten (40%) and over half (55%).

## CHAPTER SIX EVALUATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICES

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses four key questions:

- How do people rate the standard of the health service, quality of education, the general standard of living, public transport and the economy over the previous year?
- How do recent evaluations compare to the judgements people gave in previous rounds of the survey?
- What factors are associated with people's evaluations?
- Who do people credit – or blame - for performance in these areas: the UK Government, the Scottish Executive or someone else?

### Introduction

6.1 This chapter looks at people's evaluations in 2004 of:

- the standard of the health service
- the quality of education
- the general standard of living
- public transport
- the economy

It then looks at the pattern over time for the first three of these (health service, quality of education and living standards) and compares the proportions who said standards had increased. This is followed by a detailed examination of people's evaluations of each area in 2004 and looks at differences in opinion across a number of groups within the population.

6.2 The 2001 and 2003 *Scottish Social Attitudes* surveys asked people to evaluate the standard of the health service, the quality of education, and general living standards. These were initially designed to be asked with reference to election cycles so in 2001 people were asked to think back to the previous general election in 1997 and make their assessment, in 2003 they were asked to think back to 1999 (the time of the first Scottish Parliament elections). In 2004 two new areas were added, transport and the economy (the latter had been asked about once before in 1999 though in a slightly different format). The question wording was also altered and people were asked to think about performance over the past twelve months with the intention that these would now be repeated annually. Taking the example of the question about the health service, the following question was asked:

*Thinking back over the last twelve months, that is since (month) 2003, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?*

*Increased a lot*

*Increased a little*

*Stayed the same*

*Fallen a little*

### *Fallen a lot*

The same format was used for the other areas with the exception of the economy where the answer categories ranged from “a lot stronger” to “a lot weaker”.

6.3 Evaluations of performance are just one half of the story – Scotland’s political context means that it is also necessary to ask people to whom they apportion credit or blame for performance. A follow-up question was asked for each area:

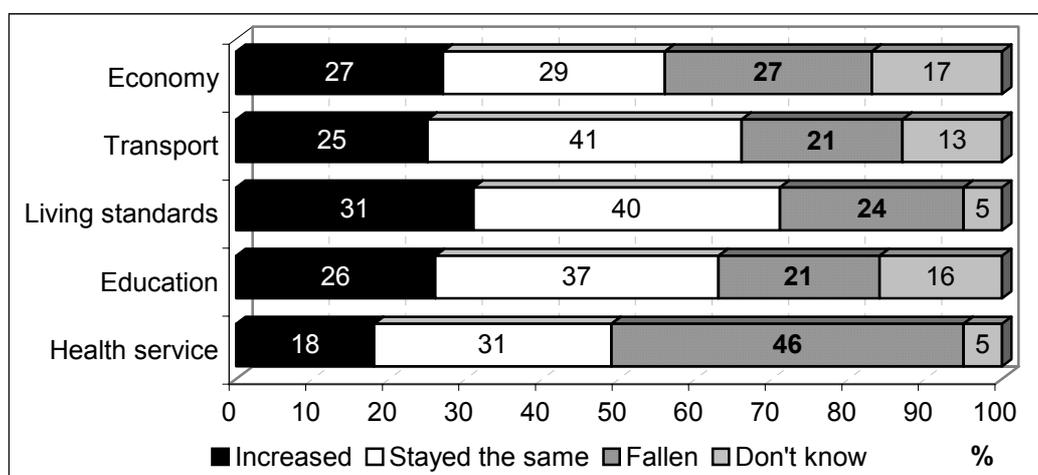
*What do you think this has been mainly the result of?*  
*Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster*  
*Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies*  
*For some other reason*

The final part of the chapter looks at the trends over time in who people credit and blame for performance.

### **Performance over the past year**

6.4 Figure 6.1 presents the proportions in 2004 who said that standards have either increased or fallen. The first point to note is that none of the areas were judged by anywhere near a majority to have increased their standards. Three in ten (31%) said that their living standards had gone up and just under one in five (18%) said the standard of the health service had increased. The second point to note is that, with the exception of the health service, two common patterns emerge. The most common answer given for every other area was that things had stayed the same while, on balance, the proportion of people who said standards had fallen was never any higher than the proportion who said they had increased. True, the largest ‘net increase’, for living standards, is only seven percentage points while for the others the balance is often only just on the increase side. In this respect the health service stands out as quite distinct from the other areas. More than twice as many said standards had fallen (46%) as said they had increased (18%).

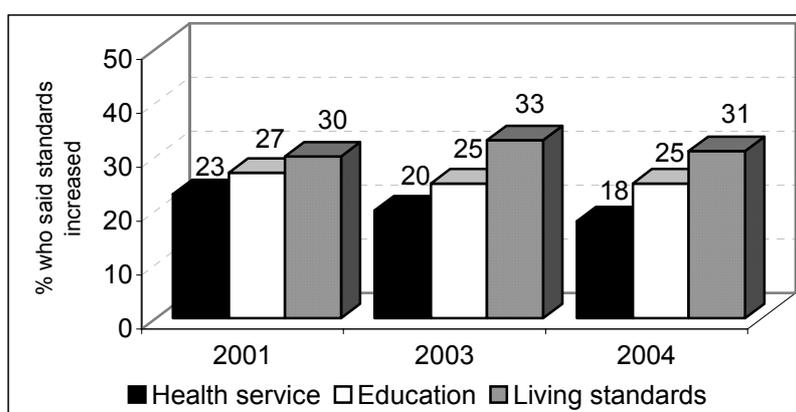
**Figure 6.1 Evaluations of public services over past twelve months, 2004**



## Evaluations over time

6.5 But how do the 2004 results compare with results from previous years? Figure 6.2 looks at the proportions who said standards had increased in 2001, 2003 and 2004 to illustrate the trends<sup>12</sup>. The first point to note is that the shortening of the recall period in 2004 (as discussed in the introduction) does not appear to have altered judgements enormously. In fact, each year's readings are remarkably similar, though there has been a five percentage point decline in the proportion saying that health service standards increased (from 23% to 18%).

**Figure 6.2 Evaluations of the health service, quality of education and the standard of living, 2001, 2003 and 2004**



## The Health Service

6.6 Table 6.1 explores the relationship between evaluations of the health service and a number of key factors. Its fifth column shows the overall balance of opinion by subtracting the percent who said standards had fallen from the percent who said they had increased. This makes it easier to quickly identify the groups most and least likely to have passed a favourable judgement and gives a sense of the strength of their opinion. Positive numbers indicate that more people within a group said standards had increased than had fallen whilst a negative number shows the opposite. In this instance all of the numbers in this column are negative, but the size is a useful guide to how strongly people felt.

6.7 Three groups stand out from this table as being much more likely to say that standards had fallen than increased: women, people who do not identify with any political party, and people living in small remote towns. It is not surprising that supporters of the two parties in government in Scotland (Labour and the Liberal Democrats) were less likely than supporters of the other parties to express that standards had fallen; a similar relationship between satisfaction with the NHS and political identification has long been identified in analyses of the British Social Attitudes survey (see, for example, Bromley and Hewson, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Due to space constraints, Figure 6.2 only looks at the trends in the proportions saying standards had increased. The full results for each year are shown in Tables 2, 4 and 6 in Annex 3.

6.7 Table 6.1 also looks at personal experience of the NHS and evaluations and in fact finds that there is very little difference between the views of people who had used the NHS in the past year themselves and people who had not. This is in part due to the fact that only a very small proportion of the population have no contact with the NHS in any given year (in 2004 just 10% said this) so direct experience is not a hugely useful means of understanding attitudes to the NHS in general. Though it should be noted that when asked about specific services, such as General Practitioners (GPs) or in-patients, users of these services generally rate them more highly than non-users (Bromley and Hewson, 2005).

6.8 The relationship between newspaper readership and evaluations of the health service was also explored but not found to be significant, nor were the views of people employed in the private sector any different to those in the public sector.

**Table 6.1 Evaluations of health service standards, by sex, age, education, party identification, urban / rural residence, and recent experience of NHS services**

<b>% who say health service standards have...</b>	<b>...increased</b>	<b>...stayed the same</b>	<b>...fallen</b>	<b>Net balance (increased – fallen)</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
All	18	31	46	-28	1637
<b>Sex</b>					
Men	23	32	39	-16	687
Women	14	30	52	-38	950
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	19	40	32	-13	125
65+	21	30	46	-25	408
<b>Education</b>					
Degree / HE	21	32	40	-19	456
None	19	26	51	-32	463
<b>Party identification</b>					
Conservative	11	42	43	-32	555
Labour	23	30	44	-21	211
Liberal Democrat	21	32	42	-21	179
SNP	18	28	51	-33	232
None	13	32	49	-36	231
<b>Urban / rural</b>					
The four cities	19	33	43	-24	557
Other urban	20	26	50	-30	432
Small accessible towns	15	36	46	-31	160
Small remote towns	14	33	52	-38	110
Accessible rural	17	30	50	-33	224
Remote rural	16	39	40	-24	154
<b>Recent use of NHS services</b>					
In person	19	30	47	-28	1033
Family member only	15	34	46	-31	312
No recent experience	18	31	43	-25	153

## Quality of Education

6.9 Table 6.2 looks at quality of education in more detail. It follows the same format as Table 6.1 and also includes a ‘net balance of opinion’ column. It compares the views of people who have a school aged child (4-15) in their household with those who do not as a proxy measure of use of education services<sup>13</sup>. Looking back to Figure 6.1, one in six (16%) people said “don’t know” to this question. In many instances, therefore, the differences found in views about education quality in part reflect the fact that some groups, most notably the over 65s and people without school aged children, simply did not offer an opinion here. However, when the analysis was carried out using only those people who gave an answer the patterns are very similar. Table 6.2 presents the views of all respondents.

**Table 6.2 Evaluations of the quality of education, by age, education, party identification, urban / rural residence, and presence of school age child within household**

% who say the quality of education has...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Net balance (increased – fallen)	Sample size
All	25	37	21	+4	1637
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	32	39	14	+18	125
65+	30	27	22	+8	408
<b>Education</b>					
Degree / HE	23	41	20	+3	456
None	29	30	24	+5	463
<b>Party identification</b>					
Conservative	22	37	24	-2	555
Labour	31	37	19	+12	211
Liberal Democrat	17	47	15	+2	179
SNP	29	35	25	+4	232
None	27	35	23	+4	231
<b>Urban / rural</b>					
The four cities	27	36	22	+5	557
Other urban	26	31	23	+3	432
Small accessible towns	24	42	22	+2	160
Small remote towns	23	52	19	+4	110
Accessible rural	25	41	19	+6	224
Remote rural	34	46	11	+23	154
<b>Child in household aged 4-15</b>					
Yes	31	46	17	+14	1334
No	25	35	22	+3	303

<sup>13</sup> This is an imperfect measure as it excludes parents of school children who do not live with their children, and others whose children have continued their education beyond the school leaving age. It also includes parents of children being educated privately (a fairly small group overall), though it is entirely plausible that their views about state education will have informed their decision to use private schooling in the first place.

6.10 In contrast to Table 6.1, the net balance of opinion is, in almost all cases, in a positive direction; more people said that quality had increased than had fallen. Young people, Labour party supporters, people in remote rural areas and those with a school-aged child in their household were the groups for which this is most commonly the case. Again views about public services are very much linked to party political identification. The only group amongst whom more people said the quality of education had fallen than had increased was Conservative Party supporters.

### **Public transport**

6.11 Table 6.3 explores evaluations of public transport. As the proportion who did not know how to answer this question was also quite high (13%) the analysis was conducted twice, once with all respondents' views and then with just the views of people who expressed an opinion. In both instances the pattern was quite similar so Table 6.4 includes the views of all respondents.

6.12 Once more a fairly mixed picture emerges. Young people and daily public transport users were the most likely to say that standards had increased (38% and 36% respectively), but in neither case was the proportion who said this particularly large. Of course, there is some degree of overlap between these two groups, but not as much as might be expected – 34% of young people use public transport daily.

6.13 Other notable findings include the fact that the views of people in cities were, on balance, the most positive while people in small towns (and in particular, in small *remote* towns) were the least.

6.14 Party political identification was significantly associated with views about transport, as with the health service and education. SNP supporters stand out as being distinct – as a third (33%) said that the standard of transport had increased compared with between a fifth and a quarter of supporters of all the other parties. However, it is not clear from these results why this difference exists.

**Table 6.3 Evaluations of the standard of public transport, by sex, age, urban / rural residence, party identification, and use of public transport**

<b>% who say standards of public transport have...</b>	<b>...increased</b>	<b>...stayed the same</b>	<b>...fallen</b>	<b>Net balance (increased – fallen)</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
All	25	41	21	+4	1637
<b>Sex</b>					
Men	27	40	19	+8	687
Women	23	41	22	+1	950
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	38	42	17	+21	125
65+	29	38	23	+6	408
<b>Urban / rural</b>					
The four cities	31	40	19	+12	557
Other urban	23	40	22	+1	432
Small accessible towns	20	36	27	-7	160
Small remote towns	14	52	27	-13	110
Accessible rural	18	41	24	-6	224
Remote rural	18	49	16	+2	154
<b>Party identification</b>					
Conservative	19	42	20	-1	555
Labour	24	42	23	+1	211
Liberal Democrat	22	49	17	+5	179
SNP	33	33	21	+12	232
None	23	38	25	-2	231
<b>Personal use of public transport in past year</b>					
Every day	36	38	25	+11	230
2-5 days a week	29	46	21	+8	181
Once a week	31	37	28	+3	141
Once a month	27	42	20	+7	228
Less often or never	18	42	18	0	716

## Living standards

6.15 Now looking at standards of living, Table 6.4 shows more varied patterns than either of the previous two. Once more the balance of opinion is positive for more groups than not, though here some key differences emerge. The most significant being in relation to people's self-rated economic hardship. People who say they are living comfortably were twice as likely to say that living standards in general had increased over the past year than people who say they are having difficulty coping on their income (42% and 19% respectively).

6.16 Men were more likely than women to say that standards of living had increased, while older people were more likely to say this than their younger counterparts. People with higher education were more likely to think the general standard of living had increased than people with no qualifications.

6.17 Unlike the health service and education, the relationship between party political identification and evaluations of living standards was fairly weak so this is not shown in the table, though people with no party identification were on the whole less likely to believe that standards have improved compared to supporters of the four main parties.

**Table 6.4 Evaluations of the general standard of living, by sex, age, education, urban / rural residence, and self-rated hardship**

% who say the general standard of living has...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Net balance (increased – fallen)	Sample size
All	31	40	24	+7	1637
<b>Sex</b>					
Men	37	40	20	+17	687
Women	27	40	27	0	950
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	26	49	19	+7	125
65+	39	35	19	+20	408
<b>Education</b>					
Degree / HE	37	38	21	+16	456
None	27	35	33	-6	463
<b>Urban / rural</b>					
The four cities	32	39	22	+10	557
Other urban	31	36	28	+3	432
Small accessible towns	27	45	24	+3	160
Small remote towns	31	53	14	+17	110
Accessible rural	33	39	25	+8	224
Remote rural	28	54	13	+15	154
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>					
Living very comfortably	42	36	17	+25	138
Finding it difficult / very difficult	19	34	44	-25	226

## The economy

6.18 The final area considered was the strength of the economy. As shown in Figure 6.1, exactly the same proportion of people said that the economy had grown as said it had weakened and Table 6.5 illustrates the extent to which views on this matter varied. Starting with party identification a familiar pattern is repeated once more. Supporters of the parties in government in Scotland were, on balance, more likely to say the economy had grown stronger than say it had weakened while the reverse is true for all other party supporters. In fact the views of Conservative supporters had almost the exact opposite views of those of Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters.

6.19 Younger people were also more likely to judge the economy to have grown stronger than older people, and were much less likely to say it had weakened. Unsurprisingly, people's own perceptions of their economic standing was clearly linked to their views on the

economy as a whole. A third (33%) of people living comfortably said the economy had grown stronger compared to almost a quarter (23%) of people struggling on their income.

6.20 People in urban areas were more likely to feel that the economy had grown than people in remote or rural parts of Scotland. Over half of Scotland's Gross Domestic Product is made in Edinburgh, Glasgow and the surrounding areas that feed into the two cities so it is unsurprising that residents of large urban areas are more likely to perceive growth in the economy than people living in more remote and less economically productive areas (Glaeser, 2004).

**Table 6.5 Evaluations of the strength of the economy, by sex, age, urban / rural residence, party identification, and use of public transport**

% who say the economy got...	...stronger	...stayed the same	...weaker	Net balance (stronger – weaker)	Sample size
All	27	29	27	0	1637
<b>Sex</b>					
Men	34	29	29	+5	687
Women	22	30	25	-3	950
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	34	26	19	+15	125
65+	27	29	29	-2	408
<b>Urban / rural</b>					
The four cities	30	30	24	+6	456
Other urban	29	26	28	+1	257
Small accessible towns	19	31	32	-13	454
Small remote towns	25	40	29	-4	463
Accessible rural	22	31	31	-9	224
Remote rural	23	34	27	-4	154
<b>Party identification</b>					
Conservative	24	28	37	-13	555
Labour	32	30	20	+12	211
Liberal Democrat	34	30	24	+10	179
SNP	32	29	34	-2	232
None	19	29	30	-11	231
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>					
Living very comfortably	33	30	21	+12	138
Finding it difficult / very difficult	23	25	36	-13	226

## Evaluations and responsibility

6.21 Part of the reason for looking at perceptions of public services and factors such as the economy and living standards is to assess the extent to which people feel the apparatus of devolved government is making a difference. However, as mentioned in the introduction, the fact that a number of the items asked about are largely the Scottish Executive's responsibility does not necessarily mean that either credit or blame for performance in these areas will automatically be directed to that institution.

6.22 Table 6.6 looks at those people who said that standards had increased and where they place the credit for this. It is quite a mixed picture. The Scottish Executive was given the credit for improvements to education, transport and the economy (even though the latter is, to a very large extent, arguably the UK Treasury's domain). In contrast, the UK Government was given the credit for improvements to the health service, despite this being the Scottish Executive's single largest area of expenditure. One in five (21%) credited the Scottish Executive for their increased living standards, the smallest proportion to do so for any item. One in three credited the UK Government or attributed this to some other reason (35% and 33% respectively).

**Table 6.6 Credit for increased standards, 2004**

	<b>Health service</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Standard of living</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>Economy</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
UK Government	43	28	35	13	25
Scottish Executive	32	46	21	44	46
Other reason	13	15	33	31	20
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>399</i>	<i>421</i>

6.23 Table 6.7 shows that the UK Government was mainly held responsible for falling standards in each area except public transport, where falling standards were most commonly attributed to some other reason. The highest responsibility for decreasing standards attributed to the Scottish Executive was for the economy (30%). Again, it is surprising that so few people believe the Scottish Executive is responsible for perceived falls in standards of the health service or the quality of education given that these are such major components of the Scottish Executive's remit.

**Table 6.7 Responsibility for falling standards, 2004**

	<b>Health service</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Standard of living</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>Economy</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
UK Government	51	50	48	29	42
Scottish Executive	17	20	18	24	30
Other reason	18	21	23	37	15
	<i>754</i>	<i>337</i>	<i>389</i>	<i>341</i>	<i>456</i>

## Changing responsibilities over time

6.24 Given that awareness levels of the way different responsibilities are shared between the Scottish Executive and UK Government are, on the whole, quite low (see Chapter Two for a more detailed discussion of this) it is worth exploring the extent to which people's readiness to apportion responsibility to what on the surface might seem the "wrong" body has changed over the past few years. This section discusses the trends in how people have apportioned responsibility for the performance of the NHS, education and living standards since 2001 when this question was first asked. That is not to say that everyone who blames the UK Government for a fall in the standards of the NHS in Scotland does so out of ignorance – it is entirely possible that they could, for example, be passing judgement on the size of the budget allocated to Scotland from Westminster.

6.25 Table 6.8 shows that the proportion who credited the UK Government for increased standards of the health service has varied over time. In 2001, over half (54%) gave credit to the UK Government for increasing NHS standards, by 2003 this dropped to 30% while in the same time the proportion crediting the Scottish Executive almost doubled. In 2004, however, this pattern reversed and once again the credit was more likely to land at the door of the UK Government. Interestingly, this change is only found amongst those who think standards have increased, and while the proportions in both years who said standards had increased were quite small the change is statistically significant. In contrast, the proportion who blamed the UK Government or Scottish Executive for falling standards was much the same in 2003 as in 2004. Quite why this shift might have occurred is unclear, particularly because this pattern is not evident for either education or standard of living assessments.

**Table 6.8 Responsibility for changes in the standard of the health service, 2001, 2003, 2004**

	% who said the standard of the health service has...					
	...increased			...fallen		
	2001	2003	2004	2001	2003	2004
<b>Who is responsible:</b>						
UK Government	54	30	43	64	48	51
Scottish Executive	24	46	32	8	16	17
Some other reason	10	11	13	17	19	18
Both UK & SE	3	5	4	5	8	8
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>375</i>	<i>304</i>	<i>303</i>	<i>643</i>	<i>689</i>	<i>754</i>

6.26 Table 6.9 shows that between 2001 and 2003 the proportion who gave credit to the UK Government for an increase in the quality of education fell from 45% to 30%, while the proportion crediting the Executive increased from 35% to 43%. This is similar to perceptions about responsibility for health service standards between 2001 and 2003. In 2004 views about education were very similar to those found in 2003, for example 46% in 2004 credited the Executive compared with 43% in 2003. So, whereas the credit for increased health service standards switched from Executive to the UK Government between 2003 and 2004, this was not the case for education quality where views remained fairly consistent. Views as to who is to blame for a decline in education quality saw little consistent variation between 2001 and 2004.

**Table 6.9 Responsibility for changes in education quality, 2001, 2003, and 2004**

Who is responsible:	% who said the quality of education had...					
	...increased			...fallen		
	2001	2003	2004	2001	2003	2004
UK Government	45	31	28	51	45	50
Scottish Executive	35	43	46	18	25	20
Some other reason	11	11	15	21	16	21
Both UK & SE	2	7	5	5	9	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>410</i>	<i>365</i>	<i>435</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>434</i>	<i>337</i>

6.27 When it comes to living standards, however, there has been quite a large shift towards people saying that any increases were due to reasons outwith either the Executive's or the UK Government's control. Table 6.10 shows that in both 2001 and 2003 fewer than one in five said that some other reason accounted for increased standards whereas in 2004 as many as one in three said this. There was also a twelve percentage point decline in the proportion holding the UK Government responsible for falling living standards and an increased number of people place responsibility for this with either the Scottish Executive or some other reason than did so previously. When the question has been asked once more in 2005 it should be possible to see whether these changes represent a consistent pattern.

**Table 6.10 Responsibility for changes in the standard of living, 2001, 2003, 2004**

Who is responsible:	The general standard of living has...					
	...increased			...fallen		
	2001	2003	2004	2001	2003	2004
UK Government	54	36	35	64	60	48
Scottish Executive	21	31	21	7	12	18
Some other reason	15	18	33	18	16	23
Both UK & SE	4	9	6	6	9	7
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>509</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>307</i>	<i>382</i>	<i>389</i>

**Key points from this chapter**

- Evaluations of standards of the health service were not as favourable as those for the quality of education, the general standard of living, public transport or the economy.
- 18% said health service standards has increased over the past year and 41% said they had fallen.
- For each of the other four areas more people, on balance, said standards had increased than said they had fallen, though in many cases the margin was very small. In fact, the most common answer given in relation to these four areas was that standards had stayed the same.
- There was little notable change in people's evaluations of the health service, education, and the general standard of living between 2001, 2003 and 2004.
- The only difference was that the proportion saying health service standards had increased fell from 23% in 2001 to 18% in 2004.
- 52% of women said health service standards had fallen compared with 39% of men, while 46% of people over 65 said this compared with 32% of 18-24 year olds.

- The views of people with recent experience of using the NHS were no different to those who did not have any experience.
- The groups most likely to have given a favourable evaluation of education quality were: young people, Labour supporters, people in remote rural areas and those with a child aged 4-15 living in their household.
- 42% of people who said they were living comfortably said the general standard of living had increased compared with 19% of people having difficulty coping on their income.
- The other groups more likely to think living standards had increased were: men, people over 65, and people with higher education.
- Transport standards were most likely to be judged to have increased by young people and those who use public transport on most days. People in urban areas were also more likely to say this while people in small remote towns were the group most likely to say standards had fallen as opposed to increased.
- The economy was more commonly judged to have grown stronger by Labour and Liberal Democrat supporters, and by young people. Once again personal hardship shaped views: people having difficulty coping on their income were much more likely to say the economy had weakened than people living comfortably.
- In 2004 people credited the Scottish Executive for increases in the quality of education, transport and for a stronger economy. The UK Government was given the credit for increased health service standards while a rise in the general standard of living was credited equally to the UK Government or some other reason.
- Declining standards were all blamed on the UK Government, with the exception of the economy where the Scottish Executive was blamed for its weakening.
- Between 2001 and 2003 the proportion crediting the UK Government for increased health service standards fell from 54% to 30%, while those crediting the Scottish Executive grew. This changed in 2004 when the UK Government was once again more likely to be credited.
- For education the pattern was consistent across the years: fewer people credited the UK Government in 2003 than in 2001, while the figures for 2004 were very similar to 2003's.
- The proportion crediting some other reason for increased living standards more than doubled between 2001 and 2004 (from 15% to 33%).
- Between 2003 and 2004 the proportion holding the UK Government responsible for falling living standards fell from 60% to 48%. The Scottish Executive or some other reason appear to have been held responsible in equal measure.

## CHAPTER SEVEN POLICY PRIORITIES

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses three key questions:

- What do people think the Scottish Executive should be trying to achieve?
- To what extent is there consensus around people's priorities?
- How do the priorities chosen for the Executive compare with similar questions asked in other surveys in Scotland and Britain-wide?

### Introduction

7.1 The two previous chapters looked at people's evaluations of the performance of devolution, both as a process and as a means of delivering public services. Another interesting issue is whether the policy priorities pursued by Scotland's devolved government mirror those of the public. The nature of political competition generally means that parties who win elections tend to do so in part as a result of matching their manifesto commitments to public concerns. It is also true, however, that public concerns are in turn moulded by long-established and high-profile government activities.

7.2 This chapter looks first at people's stated priorities for the Scottish Executive as a whole, then looks at how these vary across the population. The question about priorities asked:

*Here is a list of things the Scottish Executive could try and achieve. Which do you think should be its highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?*

*Improve standards of education*  
*Improve housing*  
*Help the economy to grow faster*  
*Improve people's health*  
*Cut crime*  
*Improve the environment*  
*Improve public transport*

7.3 These results are also compared with the results from the 2003 survey, when people were asked which issue had mattered most to them when voting in the election to the Scottish Parliament. Finally the results will be compared to a question in the *British Social Attitudes* survey which asks people which area of government spending they would like to see increased.

### Priorities for the Scottish Executive

7.4 Respondents were presented with a list of seven possible things the Scottish Executive could aim to achieve and asked them to say what their first priority would be. Table 7.1

presents people’s responses and reveals that the most commonly chosen item was “improve people’s health” (27%), followed by “cut crime” (22%) and “improve standards of education (17%). The least commonly chosen option was “improve public transport” picked by just one in a hundred. As the proportion choosing this was so low the more detailed analysis presented in Table 7.2 combines the two least commonly chosen options (the environment and transport).

**Table 7.1 What should be the Scottish Executive’s highest priority?**

What should be the Scottish Executive’s highest priority?	%
Improve people’s health	27
Cut crime	22
Improve standards of education	17
Help the economy to grow faster	16
Improve housing	12
Improve the environment	4
Improve public transport	1
<i>Sample size: 1637</i>	

**Note to table**

The table is presented in order of the most common responses given. The order which was presented to respondents is shown in the introduction to this chapter.

**Is there a consensus around priorities for the Scottish Executive?**

7.5 Table 7.2 looks at the extent to which priorities are common across different social groups. The first thing to note is that the choices people made were fairly varied and this is underlined by the fact that even the most commonly mentioned item, health, was picked by only around one in four (27%). Health was the top priority for almost all groups, however, there are some notable exceptions highlighted in the discussion below..

7.6 When considering the Scottish Executive’s priorities, men and women have broadly similar views. With the exception of the economy, where men are slightly more likely to choose this than women, no other differences are statistically significant. Age, on the other hand, makes quite a difference to people’s views. There is little variation when it comes to health, public transport or the environment, but for the four remaining areas quite clear patterns emerge. Older people are more likely to prioritise cutting crime and help for the economy than are younger people, for example those aged over 65 are five times as likely to choose the economy as those aged 18-24. In contrast, younger people are more likely to choose improving education and housing than are their older counterparts.

7.7 Such patterns undoubtedly reflect people’s differing concerns over the life-cycle; in many instances housing and education are critical issues for young people whereas concerns about crime and the economy probably loom larger for older people many of whom will have pensions and investments whose performance will depend in part on the strength of the economy. Another example of this pattern is in relationship to economic hardship. People who said they were having difficulty coping on their income were twice as likely to choose housing compared to people who said they were living comfortably.

7.8 People's highest educational qualification is also important, but not in as many ways as age. The two areas where education appears to make an impact are crime and, perhaps unsurprisingly, education standards. People with no qualifications are twice as likely as those with degrees to prioritise cutting crime, and are half as likely to choose improving education standards.

7.9 What kind of community people live in makes a difference to their views about cutting crime, education, the economy and, to a limited extent, transport and the environment, though the relationships did not follow any clear patterns. For example, people in small remote towns and in remote rural areas are the least likely to prioritise cutting crime or education compared with all the other groups (though note that for education the views of those in 'other urban' areas were very similar to those in the remote locations). In contrast, people in large urban areas and in small accessible towns are the least likely to prioritise the economy. Those most likely to prioritise the environment or public transport are to be found in small accessible towns, where 7% pick this option. In contrast, 3% in 'other urban' areas choose this.

7.10 By far the largest variation found is, however, in relation to health. People in small remote towns are twice as likely to name this as their top priority than those in small accessible towns (39% and 20% respectively). As noted above, people in remote areas are also the least likely to say that cutting crime or improving education should be the Executive's top priority.

**Table 7.2 Priorities for the Scottish Executive, by sex, age, education, self-rated hardship, and urban / rural residence**

% who say the Executive's highest priority should be...	Improve Health	Cut crime	Educ-ation	Economy	Housing	Transport / environ-ment	Sample size
All	27	22	17	16	12	5	1637
<b>Sex</b>							
Men	26	22	16	18	10	6	687
Women	28	22	17	14	13	4	950
<b>Age</b>							
18-24	26	21	24	4	17	6	125
65+	25	30	11	21	8	5	408
<b>Education</b>							
Degree / HE	29	15	23	16	7	6	456
None	25	28	11	16	13	4	463
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>							
Living very comfortably	34	20	13	16	11	4	138
Finding it difficult / very difficult	26	19	17	14	19	5	226
<b>Urban / rural residence</b>							
The four cities	29	21	19	13	12	5	557
Other urban	26	26	13	18	13	3	432
Small accessible towns	20	25	23	12	11	7	160
Small remote towns	39	12	12	19	12	6	110
Accessible rural	27	18	17	21	9	5	224
Remote rural	30	13	10	19	13	6	154

**Note to table**

The policy areas are presented in order of the priority people gave them, not by the order in questionnaire. The two least commonly chosen options (public transport and the environment) have been combined.

7.11 These results are similar to findings in previous years. For instance, when asked what issue had mattered most to them when deciding how to vote in the 2003 Holyrood election the 2003 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey found that the same issues occupied the top four places, though in a different order, health, education, the economy and law and order then transport. Additionally the *British Social Attitudes* survey has asked people to nominate their first and second priorities for extra government spending since the survey began in 1983 and health has been the public's number one priority for extra spending every year (Bromley and Hewson, 2005).

**Key points from this chapter**

- The areas most commonly chosen as priorities for the Scottish Executive to try and achieve were: improve people's health (27%), cut crime (22%), and improve standards of education (17%).

- Improving health was the top priority for most, but people living in remote rural areas stood out as the most likely to choose this (39%), they were also much less likely to prioritise cutting crime or improving education standards.
- 21% of people aged over 65 chose the economy compared to just 4% of 18-24 year olds.
- People having difficulty coping on their income were twice as likely to choose housing as people living very comfortably (19% compared to 11%).
- 28% of people with no qualifications chose cutting crime compared with 15% of people with degrees.
- When asked what was important when deciding how to vote in 2003 voters prioritised health, education, the economy and law and order – a fairly similar pattern to that found in relation to priorities for the Scottish Executive.
- Looking at Britain-wide trends, health has consistently been chosen as the number one priority for extra government spending followed by education for over twenty years now.

## CHAPTER EIGHT PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL AREAS

### Chapter aims

This chapter addresses four key questions:

- What makes an area a good place to live?
- What factors are perceived to be in most need of improvement in local areas?
- How do perceptions of what needs to be improved vary across Scotland?
- Who do people think should be responsible for making improvements to local areas?

### Introduction

8.1 Perceptions of quality of life in local areas was asked about in three ways. Firstly, respondents were presented with the following list of thirteen items and were asked to choose three things that they thought make an area a good place to live:

- Low level of crime
- Access to GPs and local health services
- Good quality affordable housing
- Good shopping facilities
- Access to good public transport
- Good schools
- Good jobs
- Facilities for young children
- Strong sense of community spirit
- Clean local environment
- Public spaces in good condition (e.g. pavements, parks, roads)
- Family and friends close by
- Access to places to go out (e.g. pubs, restaurants, galleries)

8.2 They were then asked which one of these elements was most in need of improvement where they lived (see table 28 in Annex 3 for full details of the question format). Finally they were asked who they thought should be responsible for making such improvements. The options presented were:

- People who live in the area
- Local council
- Scottish Parliament
- Scottish Executive
- UK Government
- Local health board
- The police
- Local businesses
- Other

## What makes an area a good place to live?

8.3 As Table 8.1 shows, views about what makes an area a good place to live were quite evenly distributed. The table shows the responses people gave when asked for their first choice as well as the results of their first and second choices combined. This latter measure gives an indication of how people prioritised certain items. For example, one in four (25%) opted for a low level of crime as their first choice, however over four in ten (42%) mentioned this as either their first or second choice.

**Table 8.1 Perceptions of what makes an area a good place to live**

	1 <sup>st</sup> choice	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> choices combined
	%	%
Low level of crime	25	42
Good quality affordable housing	13	27
Strong sense of community spirit	17	25
Good schools	6	19
Clean local environment	7	16
Access to GPs and local health services	6	15
Good jobs	6	13
Family and friends close by	9	14
Facilities for young children	3	8
Access to good public transport	1	6
Good shopping facilities	2	5
Public spaces in good condition (e.g. pavements, parks, roads)	1	5
Access to places to go out (e.g. pubs, restaurants, galleries)	2	4
<i>Sample size: 1637</i>		

### Note to table

The results are presented in descending order of the first and second choices combined, not in the order presented to respondents in the survey.

8.4 Table 8.2 looks at five of the more commonly selected factors presented in Table 8.1,<sup>14</sup> and contrasts the views of different people according to four key factors: age, hardship, rurality, and area deprivation (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, see Annex 2 for further information). These factors were chosen to reflect a mixture of both individual and area level aspects that might be related to people's views. Perceptions of what makes an area a good place to live might, in part, be related to issues associated with their own individual experiences but could also be dependent on the kind of community or area in which they live. Though it is likely that the balance between individual and area level determinants of people's perceptions will vary depending on the aspect in question. For example, older people were much more likely to say that access to GPs and health services is important than young people, while people in remote rural areas were more likely to say this than people in large urban areas. The former is likely to be because older people make greater use of health services than young people, whereas the relationship between rurality

<sup>14</sup> Table 8.2 includes a selection of the more commonly chosen items as well as some which, although not chosen by large proportions of people (such as "good jobs"), revealed interesting variations between different groups.

and views about access to health services is likely to reflect concerns about the availability of local health services in rural areas (see Farmer *et al* (2004)).

8.5 Younger people were more likely to say that good quality affordable housing was important than older people; people living in large urban areas were more likely to say this than those in rural areas. The fact that people tend to enter the housing market when they are younger, and that prices are on the whole higher (though not exclusively) in Scotland's cities, are likely explanations of why this might be<sup>15</sup>.

**Table 8.2 Perceptions of what makes an area a good place to live (first and second choice combined), by age, self-rated hardship, urban / rural residence and SIMD quintiles**

	Low level of crime	Good quality affordable housing	Access to GPs / health services	Good jobs	Facilities for young children
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	40	33	7	9	15
65+	33	21	26	11	6
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>					
Living very comfortably	49	24	13	13	6
Having difficulty	39	24	11	20	13
<b>Urban / rural residence</b>					
Large urban	42	31	10	12	9
Remote rural	35	23	21	21	1
<b>SIMD quintiles</b>					
Least deprived 20%	48	28	12	9	4
Most deprived 20%	44	26	13	12	16

8.6 Table 8.2 highlights some interesting differences between the perceptions of different groups, however, there are also some notable points of consensus. For example, the belief that good quality affordable housing is important was just as likely to be chosen by people living comfortably on their income as by people having difficulty. People in the most and least deprived communities also had very similar views about what makes an area a good place to live. It is also interesting to note that the difference between the proportions in the most and least deprived who said a low level of crime is important was only four percentage points. As the next section illustrates, the prevalence of concern about the level of crime was quite different in both communities.

### **What is most in need of improvement in local areas?**

8.7 Having established the kinds of attributes people thought important for a local area Table 8.3 illustrates what people thought was most in need of improvement in their own area. A low level of crime was generally considered the most important quality for an area to have,

<sup>15</sup> See [http://www.hbosplc.com/economy/includes/Scotland\\_2005\\_Q1.doc](http://www.hbosplc.com/economy/includes/Scotland_2005_Q1.doc) for information about Scottish house prices in the twelve months up to March 2004 and March 2005.

however when it came to what most needed to improve two other factors were more commonly cited: facilities for young children and the amount of good quality affordable housing. Surveys often show that for many people fear of crime is often greater than people's own experience of victimisation (Zedner, 1997), so the fact that fewer people said the crime rate in their area needed improvement (11%) than said a low level of crime was important for an area (25%) possibly reflects this phenomenon. In contrast, similar proportions said good quality affordable housing makes an area a good place to live (13%) and that this aspect was in need of improvement (15%). The differences between the responses in Tables 8.1 and 8.3 will also in part reflect the fact that Table 8.1 covered slightly more generalised concepts, about which a greater level of consensus might be expected, whereas Table 8.3 looks at specific aspects about individual areas or neighbourhoods.

8.8 As was the case in Table 8.1, there was quite a spread of views about what most needed improvement. This diversity is most likely to reflect the fact that the list of possible options presented was itself quite wide ranging. But it is also unsurprising that a survey covering many different communities across Scotland (and the many different individuals within them) would attract very different views on a matter like this. How views varied between different groups in society is explored in more detail below.

**Table 8.3 Perceptions of what is most in need of improvement**

	%
Facilities for young children	16
The amount of good quality affordable housing	15
The level of crime	11
Quality of jobs	10
Access to good public transport	7
Access to GPs and local health services	6
The amount of good shopping facilities	6
Cleanliness of the local environment	6
The condition of public spaces (e.g. pavements, parks, roads)	6
The sense of community spirit	5
Quality of schools	3
Access to places to go out (e.g. pubs, restaurants, galleries)	2
Family and friends close by	1
<i>Sample size: 1637</i>	

Note to table

The results are presented in descending order of responses given, not in the order presented to respondents in the survey.

8.9 Table 8.4 follows a similar format to Table 8.2. It presents a selection of some of the more commonly chosen factors as well as some which were less common but nevertheless interesting when the views of different groups were explored. On balance, the views of people living in different types of community (urban or rural, least and most deprived) vary to a greater extent overall than the views between different age groups and hardship levels. For example, the largest percentage point differences between any of the groups are in relation to perceptions of crime in the least and most deprived areas (21 points) and in perceptions of the availability of good quality affordable housing between large urban and remote rural areas (also 21 points). This latter point is particularly interesting – when asked what makes an area a good place to live, people in remote rural areas were less likely to pick

affordable housing than people in urban areas, but here the reverse is true when it comes to perceptions of what is in need of improvement. This confirms the complexity of relationship between what people think of in general terms about what makes an area a good place to live, and their concerns about specific local issues.

**Table 8.4 Perceptions of what is most in need of improvement, by age, self-rated hardship, urban / rural residence and SIMD quintiles**

	The level of crime	Amount of good quality affordable housing	Access to GPs / health services	Access to good public transport	Facilities for young children
<b>Age</b>					
18-24	7	21	4	4	24
65+	13	11	5	7	13
<b>Self-rated hardship</b>					
Living very comfortably	4	14	7	8	13
Having difficulty	16	12	4	6	17
<b>Urban / rural residence</b>					
Large urban	15	14	3	4	18
Remote rural	1	35	5	12	6
<b>SIMD quintiles</b>					
Least deprived 20%	5	19	7	6	12
Most deprived 20%	26	8	4	4	18

### Responsibility for improvements to local areas

8.10 The improvement of local communities – and by extension the quality of life of the individuals within them - is at the heart of many of the Scottish Executive’s policies. But do the public see this as a primary responsibility for this level of government? Or do they not consider this to be the responsibility of governments at all, favouring instead action by individuals, business or other public bodies? The evidence presented in Table 8.5 suggests that while a majority of people attributed responsibility to a level of government, people were more likely to choose local councils than either the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Executive or the UK Government at Westminster. A minority (10%) chose local people while the same proportion picked either Health Boards, the police or local businesses.

## 8.5 Who should be responsible for making improvements to the local area?

	%
Local people	10
Council	50
Scottish Parliament	12
Scottish Executive	9
UK Government	7
Health Board	2
The police	5
Local businesses	3
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1593</i>

### Note to table

Some of the answer options in this table have been combined. See table 30 in Annex 3 for full details of the responses given.

8.11 It is not particularly meaningful to look at the figures in Table 8.5 in any great detail in isolation because some of the kinds of improvement cited as necessary were, of course, beyond the scope of some of the bodies (for example the police can do little about the availability of affordable housing in an area). Table 8.6 therefore presents the results in the format of a matrix. It takes a selection of seven aspects thought to be in need of improvement and for each one shows the two bodies people most commonly thought should be responsible for improving matters. So, reading across the table from left to right it is possible to see from the first row that the police were most commonly thought of as the body who should be responsible for improving the level of crime (44% said this), followed by the local council (23% said this)<sup>16</sup>.

8.12 It is interesting to note that the Scottish Executive or Scottish Parliament was chosen only once as the body with greatest responsibility for an area (improving the quality of jobs). But it is clear from the other choices people made about responsibility that the responses people gave were highly dependent on the issue which they felt needed improvement in the first place. For example, the police were mentioned in relation to crime levels, Health Boards in relation to access to medical services, and the council in relation to transport. Most people appear to have focussed most of their attention on the bodies charged with the delivery of services. Slightly fewer took a broader view and chose bodies which could be said to have more over-arching strategic responsibilities, such as councils in relation to crime, or the Scottish Executive or Parliament in relation to health services.

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<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this analysis the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament options have been combined. Although these are clearly different bodies it is doubtful that respondents made a clear distinction between the two when answering this question (see Chapter 2 on knowledge levels for confirmation of the level of confusion that surrounds these two terms).

## 8.6 Perceptions of aspects in need of improvement and who should be responsible for making improvements

Area in need of improvement	Who should be responsible for improving this?	
	Most common choice	Second most common choice
The level of crime	Police (44%)	Council (23%)
Access to GPs / health services	Health board (36%)	Scottish Parl / Exec (30%)
Amount of good quality affordable housing	Council (48%)	Scottish Parl / Exec (35%)
Facilities for young children	Council (83%)	Scottish Parl / Exec (11%)
Quality of jobs	Scottish Parl / Exec (48%)	Council (26%)
Access to good public transport	Council (65%)	Scottish Parl / Exec (24%)
The sense of community spirit	Local people (71%)	Council (26%)

### Note to table

The sample sizes on which this table is based are: level of crime 179, access to GPs 107, affordable housing 246, facilities for children 256, quality of jobs 182, access to public transport 121, sense of community spirit 83.

### Key points from this chapter

- When asked what makes an area a good place to live the top three answers given were a low level of crime (25%), strong community spirit (17%) and good quality affordable housing (13%). Four in ten (42%) mentioned low crime as either their first or second choice.
- People's perceptions of local area qualities were in part dependent on their individual circumstances. For example, older people (26%) were more likely to mention access to GPs and health services than younger people (7%).
- The kinds of areas people live in also makes a difference. People in large urban areas were more likely to pick good quality affordable housing than people in rural areas.
- When asked what was in need of improvement in their local area the top three choices were facilities for young children (16%), the amount of good quality affordable housing (15%) and the level of crime (11%).
- People's views about their own areas were more strongly related to the kinds of area they themselves lived in than to their own individual characteristics.
- For example, people living in the most deprived areas were more likely to say the level of crime needed to be improved than people in less deprived places (26% and 5% respectively).
- Local councils were most commonly chosen as the body with responsibility for making changes to a local area. 83% of people who said their area needed better facilities for young children said the council should do this.
- When asked who should be responsible for improving the aspect they had said was most in need of improvement people tended to pick bodies with primary service delivery functions, such as the Health Board for GP services, the police for crime rates and the council for services for children.

## CHAPTER NINE CONCLUSIONS

9.1 As discussed in the opening chapter of this report, one of the founding principles of the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey was to develop time series data about public attitudes towards a range of social and political issues. This report has presented a number of tables and figures which illustrate how views have been changing over the past six years. One very clear pattern particularly stands out in relation to the issues of trust, influence, and broader perceptions of devolution: views are not static. It is not yet possible to identify possible explanations why views have sometimes been quite different over the year (the most notable being the undulating patterns evident in Figures 3.1, 4.1 and 5.4 ). Chapter 3 suggested that the coincidence of elections (to Holyrood in 1999 and 2003, and Westminster in 2001) might in part explain why views are different in odd and even years. The 2005 survey will provide one more round of data from an election year with which to compare views over time so it might be possible to draw firmer conclusions once that has been conducted.

9.2 Chapter 2 presented interesting results about people's knowledge of the Scottish Executive and Scotland's devolved institutions more generally. This will be interesting to monitor over time as public exposure to the Executive's activities becomes more diffuse. Looking a bit further forward, it will be particularly interesting to see whether young people leaving school in 2011 (who started school in the same year the Scottish Parliament opened) are more or less knowledgeable than young people were in 2004. It will also be possible to establish whether young people in particular have grown more knowledgeable a result of their exposure to issues about Scottish government through schooling, or whether the population as a whole has changed.

9.3 Chapter 7 saw some interesting patterns in relation to people's apportioning of responsibility for standards of public services. People are gradually becoming more likely to apportion responsibility to the Scottish Executive for policy areas directly within their remit such as health and education, though with health people have not yet settled for either the Executive or the UK Government in any consistent way. 2005 has seen a large number of key announcements in relation to Scotland's health service (for example the Kerr Report into hospital services, or problems with NHS 24). It will be interesting to see whether people in 2005 looking back at the performance of the health service over the previous twelve months are more likely than people were in 2004 to apportion responsibility at the door of the Executive.

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## ANNEX 1 RESULTS OF STATISTICAL MODELS

The four logistic regression models commented on in this report are presented below. Logistic regression uses binary dependent variables where the value of interest is coded 1 and the rest of the cases are coded 0. The binary dependent variable coding is shown at start of each table. This analysis method compares the parameter estimates for each category within a variable to a “reference” category. The reference category for each variable is shown in brackets. Two asterisks (\*\*) denote significance at the 1% level, one (\*) denotes significance at the 5% level.

**Table 1 Knowledge of the Scottish Executive’s activities over the past year**

<b>Dependent variable coding: 1= A great deal / quite a lot 0=other answers</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Odds ratio Exp(B)</b>	
<b>Age (18-29)</b>				
30-44	0.433	0.230	1.541	
45-64	1.014	0.224	2.757	**
65+	1.064	0.252	2.898	**
<b>Women (men)</b>	-0.428	0.140	0.652	**
<b>Self-rated hardship (having difficulty)</b>				
Living very comfortably	0.164	0.323	1.178	
Living comfortably	0.559	0.253	1.750	*
Coping	0.680	0.248	1.974	**
<b>NS-SEC (routine occupations)</b>				
Employers, managers & professionals	0.614	0.194	1.848	**
Intermediate occupations	-0.059	0.260	0.943	
Small employers & own account workers	0.506	0.258	1.659	*
Lower supervisory & technical	0.088	0.225	1.092	
<b>Urban-rural (large urban)</b>				
Other urban	-0.299	0.160	0.741	
Small accessible towns	-0.100	0.232	0.905	
Small remote towns	-0.885	0.447	0.413	*
Accessible rural	-0.049	0.224	0.952	
Remote rural	0.493	0.285	1.638	
<b>Highest educational qualification (none)</b>				
Degree / Higher education	0.855	0.231	2.353	**
Highers / A levels	0.994	0.245	2.701	**
Standard grades / O levels	0.796	0.206	2.216	**
<b>Interest in politics (none at all)</b>				
A great deal	2.664	0.383	14.350	**
Quite a lot	2.334	0.347	10.316	**
Some	1.364	0.340	3.912	**
Not very much	0.818	0.355	2.266	*
Constant	-1.328	0.140	0.265	

Number of cases in model: 1460

**Table 2 Trust in the Scottish Executive to work in Scotland's best interests**

<b>Dependent variable coding: 1= Just about always / most of the time 0=other answers</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Odds ratio Exp(B)</b>	
<b>Age (18-29)</b>				
30-44	-0.416	0.188	0.660	*
45-64	-0.596	0.195	0.551	**
65+	-0.850	0.223	0.427	**
<b>Self-rated hardship (having difficulty)</b>				
Living very comfortably	0.305	0.258	1.356	
Living comfortably	0.500	0.195	1.648	**
Coping	0.117	0.190	1.125	
<b>Highest educational qualification (None)</b>				
Degree / Higher education	0.445	0.181	1.560	**
Highers / A levels	0.368	0.200	1.445	
Standard grades / O levels	0.020	0.167	1.020	
<b>Party Identification (None)</b>				
Conservative	0.848	0.246	2.336	**
Labour	0.836	0.199	2.308	**
Liberal Democrat	1.184	0.264	3.268	**
SNP	0.706	0.234	2.025	**
Other party	0.308	0.310	1.361	
DK / Ref / Other ans	0.374	0.249	1.453	
<b>Constitutional preference (Devolution)</b>				
Independence	-0.289	0.136	0.749	*
Westminster rule	-1.064	0.170	0.345	**
Don't know	-1.097	0.306	0.334	**
<b>Awareness of SE activities (Not much / nothing at all)</b>				
Great deal / quite a lot	0.802	0.147	2.231	**
Some	0.601	0.140	1.825	**
<b>Newspaper readership (Tabloid)</b>				
None	0.331	0.133	1.392	**
Broadsheet	0.336	0.167	1.399	*
Constant	-0.200	0.104	0.819	

Number of cases in model: 1450

**Table 3 How good is the Scottish Executive at listening to people's views?**

<b>Dependent variable coding: 1= Very good / quite good 0=other answers</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Odds ratio Exp(B)</b>	
<b>Women (men)</b>	-0.278	0.124	0.757	*
<b>Highest educational qualification (None)</b>				
Degree / Higher education	0.496	0.175	1.642	**
Highers / A levels	0.341	0.198	1.406	
Standard grades / O levels	0.166	0.182	1.180	
<b>Party Identification (None)</b>				
Conservative	-0.073	0.266	0.929	
Labour	0.600	0.221	1.821	**
Liberal Democrat	0.469	0.268	1.598	
SNP	0.105	0.264	1.111	
Other party	0.403	0.338	1.497	
DK / Ref / Other ans	0.143	0.286	1.153	
<b>Trust SE just about always / most of the time (Some of the time / never)</b>	1.614	0.136	5.022	**
Constant	-1.039	0.079	0.354	

Number of cases in model: 1460

**Table 4 Importance of voting in Scottish Parliament elections**

<b>Dependent variable coding: 1= Very important 0=other answers</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Odds ratio Exp(B)</b>	
<b>Age (18-29)</b>				
30-44	0.700	0.222	2.013	**
45-64	1.187	0.218	3.277	**
65+	1.779	0.240	5.922	**
<b>Women (Men)</b>	0.474	0.144	1.607	**
<b>NS-SEC (Routine occupations)</b>				
Employers, managers & professionals	0.278	0.173	1.320	
Intermediate occupations	0.253	0.243	1.288	
Small employers & own account workers	-0.577	0.275	0.561	*
Lower supervisory & technical	-0.267	0.216	0.766	
<b>Party Identification (None)</b>				
Conservative	1.915	0.391	6.789	**
Labour	2.287	0.361	9.850	**
Liberal Democrat	2.055	0.400	7.808	**
SNP	2.518	0.392	12.408	**
Other party	2.258	0.443	9.566	**
DK / Ref / Other ans	1.392	0.409	4.021	**
<b>Constitutional preference (Devolution)</b>				
Independence	-0.103	0.159	0.902	
Westminster rule	-0.876	0.193	0.416	**
Don't know	0.016	0.380	1.016	
<b>Interest in politics (None at all)</b>				
A great deal	2.945	0.374	19.003	**
Quite a lot	2.171	0.306	8.763	**
Some	1.459	0.287	4.301	**
Not very much	0.527	0.294	1.694	
<b>Trust SE just about always / most of the time (Trust some of the time / never)</b>	0.462	0.140	1.587	**
Constant	-0.569	0.134	0.566	

Number of cases in model: 1347

## ANNEX 2 TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY

### Background to the survey

1. The *Scottish Social Attitudes* (SSA) survey was launched by the *Scottish Centre for Social Research*<sup>1</sup> (part of the *National Centre for Social Research*) in 1999, following the advent of devolution. Based on annual rounds of interviews with 1,600 people drawn using random probability sampling its aims are to facilitate the study of public opinion and inform the development of public policy in Scotland. In this it has similar objectives to the *British Social Attitudes* (BSA) survey, which was launched by the *National Centre* in 1983. While BSA interviews people in Scotland, these are usually too few in any one year to permit separate analysis of public opinion in Scotland (see Park, *et al*, 2003 for more details of the BSA survey).

2. SSA is conducted annually and has a modular structure. In any one year it will typically contain four or five modules, each containing 40 questions. Funding for its first two years came from the Economic and Social Research Council while from 2001 onwards different bodies have funded each year's individual modules. These bodies have included the Economic and Social Research Council, the Scottish Executive and various charitable and grant awarding bodies such as the Nuffield and Leverhulme Foundations.

### Sample design, fieldwork and response

3. Much of the data in this report is taken from a module of questions asked in the 2004 Scottish Social Attitudes survey. This survey involved a face-to-face interview with respondents and a self-completion questionnaire, completed by over nine in ten of these people (93%). The numbers completing each stage are shown in Table 1. See Bromley, Curtice and Given (2005) for technical details of the 1999-2003 surveys.

#### *Sample design*

4. The survey was designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over living in Scotland. The sample frame was the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of postal delivery points compiled by the Post Office. The sample design involved three stages:

- 1) 84 postcode sectors were selected from a list of all postal sectors in Scotland, with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector. Prior to selection the sectors were stratified by region, population density, and percentage of household heads recorded as employers / managers (taken from the 2001 Census). The list was also stratified using the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) six-fold classification of urban and rural areas (see below for a description of this), and sectors within rural and remote categories were over-sampled.

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<sup>1</sup> The *Scottish Centre for Social Research* was formed in February 2004 as the result of a merger between The National Centre's existing organisation within Scotland and Scottish Health Feedback an independent research consultancy.

- 2) In order to boost the number of respondents from remote and rural areas, 31 addresses were selected in each sector located within the first three SHS urban-rural classifications (the four cities, to accessible small towns), while 62 addresses were selected from the sectors within the three most rural categories (remote small towns to remote rural areas). The issued sample size is shown in Table 1.
- 3) Interviewers called at each selected address, identified its eligibility for the survey. Where more than one household was present at an address, all households were listed systematically and one was selected at random using a computer generated random selection table. In all eligible households with more than one adult aged 18 or over, interviewers also had to carry out a random selection of one adult using a similar procedure.

### ***Weighting***

5. Data were weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals had the same probability of selection for the survey. For example, adults living in large households have a lower selection probability than adults who live alone. Weighting was also used to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses. All the percentages presented in this report are based on weighted data, the unweighted sample sizes are shown in the tables.

### ***Fieldwork***

6. Fieldwork ran between July and December (with 77% completed by the end of September). An advance letter was sent to all addresses and was followed up by a personal visit from a Scottish Centre for Social Research interviewer. All interviewers attended a one day briefing conference prior to starting work.

7. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing (a process which involves the use of a laptop computer, with questions appearing on screen and interviewers directly entering respondents' answers into the computer). All respondents were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire which was either collected by the interviewer or returned by post. The next table summarises the response rate and the numbers completing the self-completion in 2004.

**Table 1 2004 Scottish Social Attitudes survey response**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Addresses issued <sup>1</sup>	3,007	
Vacant, derelict and other out of scope <sup>2</sup>	308	10.2
In scope	2,699	100.0
Interview achieved	1,637	60.7
Self-completion returned	1,514	56.1
Interview not achieved	1,062	39.3
<i>Refused</i> <sup>3</sup>	698	25.9
<i>Non-contacted</i> <sup>4</sup>	130	4.8
<i>Unknown eligibility</i> <sup>5</sup>	100	3.7
<i>Other non-response</i>	134	5.0

#### **Notes to table**

<sup>1</sup>This includes addresses identified by interviewers during fieldwork.

<sup>2</sup>This includes empty / derelict addresses, holiday homes, businesses and institutions.

<sup>3</sup>Refusals include refusals prior to selection of an individual, refusals to the office, refusal by the selected person, 'proxy' refusals made by someone on behalf of the respondent and broken appointments after which a respondent could not be re-contacted.

<sup>4</sup>Non-contacts comprise households where no one was contacted after at least 4 calls and those where the selected person could not be contacted.

<sup>5</sup>'Unknown eligibility' includes cases where the address could not be located, where it could not be determined if an address was a residence and where it could not be determined if an address was occupied or not.

#### **Analysis variables**

8. A number of standard analyses have been used in the tables in this report. Most of the analysis variables are taken directly from the questionnaire and to that extent are self-explanatory. These include age, sex, household income, and highest educational qualification obtained. The analysis groups requiring further definition are set out below.

##### ***The Scottish Household Survey six-fold urban-rural classification***

9. The six categories used in this classification are: 1) large urban, 2) other urban, 3) small accessible towns, 4) small remote towns, 5) accessible rural, 6) remote rural. For more details see Hope, S. *et al* (2000).

##### ***National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)***

10. The most commonly used classification of socio-economic status used on government surveys is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). SSA respondents were classified according to their own occupation, rather than that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all respondents, with the exception of those who had never worked, were classified. The seven NS-SEC categories are:

- Employers in large organisations, higher managerial and professional
- Lower professional and managerial; higher technical and supervisory
- Intermediate occupations
- Small employers and own account workers
- Lower supervisory and technical occupations
- Semi-routine occupations
- Routine occupations

The remaining respondents were grouped as "never had a job" or "not classifiable".

##### ***Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)***

11. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)<sup>2</sup> 2004 identifies the most deprived areas across Scotland. It is based on 31 indicators in the six individual domains of Current Income, Employment, Housing, Health, Education, Skills and Training and

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/simd2004/> for further details on the SIMD

Geographic Access to Services and Telecommunications. SIMD 2004 is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones are ranked from most deprived (1) to least deprived (6505) on the overall SIMD 2004 and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

12. The SSA analysis used a variable created from SIMD data indicating the level of deprivation of the data zone in which the respondent lived. This allowed us to analyse differences between the attitudes and experiences of those living in the most and least deprived areas of Scotland.

### ***Party identification***

13. Respondents were classified as identifying with a particular political party on one of three counts: if they considered themselves to be a supporter of that party, if they said they were closer to it than to any other party, or if they said they would be likely to support that party in the event of a general election.

### **Analysis techniques**

#### ***Regression***

14. For the more complex analysis in this report logistic regression models have been used to assess whether there is reliable evidence that particular variables are associated with each other.

15. Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a ‘dependent’ variable and one or more ‘independent’ explanatory variables. It shows how well a respondent’s score on the dependent variable can be estimated from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables. This technique takes into account relationships between the different independent variables (for example, between education and income, or social class and housing tenure). Regression is often undertaken to support a claim that the phenomena measured by the independent variables cause the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable. However, the causal ordering, if any, between the variables cannot be verified or falsified by the technique. Causality can only be inferred through special experimental designs or through assumptions made by the analyst. All regression analysis assumes that the relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables takes a particular form. In *logistic regression*, the form of regression analysis used in this report, it is assumed that the relationship can be adequately summarised by an S-shaped curve, where the impact on the dependent variable of a one-point increase in an independent variable becomes progressively less the closer the value of the dependent variable approaches 0 or 1.

## ANNEX 3 SURVEY QUESTIONS AND RESULTS

This section contains question text and results for each of the questions in the module and, where applicable, also contains results from previous years. Variable names are in brackets and can be used to identify questions when using raw data.

**Table 1**

[HincDif2]

Which of the phrases on this card would you say comes closest to your feelings about your household's income these days?

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%
Living very comfortably on present income	n.a.	9
Living comfortably on present income	41	37
Coping on present income	45	41
Finding it difficult on present income	11	10
Finding it very difficult on present income	3	2
(Other answer)		-
(Don't know)		*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1665</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

The answer category "living very comfortably" was added in 2004.

**Table 2**

[SNHSIE12]

Thinking back over the last twelve months, that is since (month) 2003, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?

<b>Has the standard of the NHS increased or fallen in last twelve months?</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	2	2	2	3
Increased a little	21	21	18	15
Stayed the same	35	29	25	31
Fallen a little	20	26	26	23
Fallen a lot	14	15	20	23
(Don't know)	8	7	8	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

**Table 3**

[SNHSWh12]

What do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	53	38	42
Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies	11	21	20
For some other reason	16	17	18
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	4	7	7
(Don't know)	8	8	9
(Not answered)	7	8	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

**Table 4**

[EdStIE12]

And what about the quality of education in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month) 2003?

<b>Has the quality of education increased or fallen in last twelve months</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	3	3	3	3
Increased a little	23	24	22	23
Stayed the same	32	33	27	37
Fallen a little	17	16	18	15
Fallen a lot	7	5	11	7
(Don't know)	19	19	19	16
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

**Table 5**

[EdStWh12]

What do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	40	30	29
Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies	19	25	28
For some other reason	14	12	15
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	3	7	5
(Don't know)	5	7	7
(Not answered)	19	19	16
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

**Table 6**

[SLivIE12]

And what about the general standard of living in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month) 2003?

<b>Has the general standard of living increased or fallen in last twelve months ?</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	2	3	4	4
Increased a little	27	27	30	27
Stayed the same	43	45	36	40
Fallen a little	18	15	17	18
Fallen a lot	6	4	7	6
(Don't know)	5	6	7	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

**Table 7**

[SlivWh12]

What do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	53	43	38
Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies	12	18	18
For some other reason	18	16	24
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	6	10	7
(Don't know)	7	8	9
(Not answered)	6	7	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

**Table 8**

[TranIE12]

And what about the standard of public transport in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month) 2003?

<b>Has the standard of public transport increased or fallen in last twelve months ?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
Increased a lot	5
Increased a little	20
Stayed the same	41
Fallen a little	14
Fallen a lot	8
(Don't know)	13
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 9**

[TranWh12]

What do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	<b>2004</b>
	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	17
Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies	28
For some other reason	29
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	5
(Don't know)	8
(Not answered)	13
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 10**

[EconIE12]

And what about the Scotland's economy? Has it got stronger or weaker since (month) 2003?

<b>Has Scotland's economy got stronger or weaker in last twelve months ?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
A lot stronger	3
A little stronger	25
Stayed the same	29
A little weaker	22
A lot weaker	5
(Don't know)	17
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 11**

[EconWh12]

What do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	<b>2004</b>
	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	28
Mainly the result of the Scottish Executive's policies	28
For some other reason	17
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	6
(Don't know)	5
(Not answered)	17
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 12**

[EdSpnd1b]

Which of the groups on this card, if any, would be your highest priority for extra government spending on education?

Priority for extra government spending on education	BSA 2004*	SSA 2004
	%	%
Nursery or pre-school children	11	14
Primary school children	20	21
Secondary school children	31	26
Children with special educational needs	23	24
Students at colleges or universities	14	12
(None of these)	1	1
(Don't know)		2
<i>Sample size</i>	1327	1637

\* Data for England only.

**Table 13**

[UKTwelv]

How much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the UK government over the last twelve months?

How much seen or heard about the work of the UK government over the last twelve months?	2004
	%
A great deal	11
Quite a lot	23
Some	29
Not very much	31
Nothing at all	5
(Don't know)	1
<i>Sample size</i>	1637

**Table 14**

[ExTwelv]

And how much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the Scottish Executive over the last twelve months?

How much seen or heard about the work of the Scottish Executive over the last twelve months?	2004
	%
A great deal	9
Quite a lot	21
Some	30
Not very much	33
Nothing at all	7
(Don't know)	1
<i>Sample size</i>	1637

**Table 15**

[ExecDo]

Here is a list of things the Scottish Executive could try and achieve. Which do you think should be its highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?

<b>What should be Scottish Executive's highest priority?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
Improve standards of education	17
Improve housing	12
Help the economy to grow faster	16
Improve people's health	27
Cut crime	22
Improve the environment	4
Improve public transport	1
(Other)	2
(Don't know)	*
(Not answered)	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 16**

[ExecList]

In general how good would you say the Scottish Executive is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?

<b>How good is Scottish Executive at listening to people's views before taking decisions?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
Very good	1
Quite good	31
Not very good	41
Not at all good	17
(Don't know)	10
(Not answered)	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 17**

[UKList]

And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?

<b>How good is UK government at listening to people's views before taking decisions?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
Very good	1
Quite good	14
Not very good	50
Not at all good	30
(Don't know)	6
(Not answered)	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 18**

[UKIntNat]

How much do you trust the UK government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest? Please take your answer from this card.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	3	1	2	2	2	2
Most of the time	29	16	20	17	19	20
Only some of the time	52	54	55	51	58	50
Almost never	14	26	22	26	20	26
(Don't know)						2
(Not answered)						*
Sample size	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1637

**Table 19**

[NatInNaC]

Still using the card, how much do you trust the *Scottish parliament/Executive\** to work in Scotland's best interests?

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	26	9	13	9	10	9
Most of the time	55	45	52	43	52	43
Only some of the time	14	34	29	34	31	37
Almost never	2	9	5	11	4	10
(Don't know)						2
(Not answered)						*
Sample size	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1637

\*In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given therefore the combined results are shown here.

**Table 20**

Experiment results:

How much do you trust the...

	...Scottish Parliament to work in Scotland's best interests?	...Scottish Executive to work in Scotland's best interests?
	[NatInNat]	[NatInNax]
	%	%
Just about always	10	9
Most of the time	41	44
Only some of the time	36	37
Almost never	11	9
(Don't know)	1	2
(Not answered)	*	
Sample size	807	830

**Table 21**

[DoesInfC]

Which of the following do you think has most influence over the way Scotland is run?

Which of these <u>has</u> most influence over the way Scotland is run:	1999*	2000	2001	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%
The Scottish Parliament / Executive**	41	13	15	17	19
The UK government at Westminster	39	66	66	64	48
Local councils in Scotland	8	10	9	7	20
The European Union	5	4	7	5	6
(Don't know)	8	8		6	7
(Not answered)					*
Sample size	1482	1663	1605	1508	1637

Note:

In 1999 the question wording was: "When the new parliament starts work, which of the following do you think **will** have most influence over the way Scotland is run"

\*\*In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given therefore the combined results are shown here.

**Table 22**

Experiment results:

Which of these <u>has</u> most influence over the way Scotland is run:	Scottish Parliament	Scottish Executive
	[DoesInfI]	[DoesInfX]
	%	%
The Scottish Parliament / Executive	18	20
The UK government at Westminster	51	46
Local councils in Scotland	20	19
The European Union	5	8
(Don't know)	6	7
(Not answered)	*	
Sample size	807	830

**Table 23**

[OughInfC]

And which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?

Which of these <u>should have</u> most influence over the way Scotland is run:	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%
The Scottish Parliament / Executive*	74	72	74	66	67
The UK government at Westminster	13	13	14	20	12
Local councils in Scotland	8	10	8	9	17
The European Union	1	1	1	1	1
(Don't know)		5			3
(Not answered)					*
Sample size	1482	1663	1605	1508	1637

\*In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given therefore the combined results are shown here.

**Table 24**

Experiment results:

Which of these <b>should have</b> most influence over the way Scotland is run:	Scottish Parliament	Scottish Executive
	[OughInfl]	[OughInfx]
	%	%
The Scottish Parliament / Executive	67	66
The UK government at Westminster	12	12
Local councils in Scotland	17	17
The European Union	1	1
(Don't know)	2	3
(Not answered)	*	
Sample size	807	830

**Table 25**

[VoiceUK3]

From what you have seen and heard so far...

Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is giving Scotland...	1997 Ref	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
...a <b>stronger</b> voice in the United Kingdom	70	70	52	52	39	49	35
...a <b>weaker</b> voice in the United Kingdom	9	7	6	6	7	7	7
...or, is it making <b>no difference?</b>	17	20	40	40	52	41	55
(Don't know)							3
(Not answered)							*
Sample size	882	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1637

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 "Will a Scottish Parliament..."

2000 "Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is going to..."

2001-2004 "Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving..."

**Table 26**

[SayInGv3]

From what you have seen and heard so far...

Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is giving ordinary people...	1997 Ref	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
... <b>more</b> say in how Scotland is governed	79	64	44	38	31	39	31
... <b>less</b> say	2	2	3	4	4	4	6
...or, is it making <b>no difference</b>	17	32	51	56	62	54	60
(Don't know)							3
(Not answered)							*
Sample size	882	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1637

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 "Will a Scottish Parliament..."

2000 "Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is going to..."

2001-2004 "Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving..."

**Table 27**

[AreaQual]

I'd like to ask you what you think makes somewhere a good place to live. If you had to choose just one item from this list, what would it be?

<b>What makes somewhere a good place to live?</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> choice</b>
	%	%	%
Low level of crime	25	17	11
Access to GPs and local health services	6	9	9
Good quality affordable housing	13	14	9
Good shopping facilities	2	3	4
Access to good public transport	1	4	7
Good schools	6	12	11
Good jobs	6	6	8
Facilities for young children	3	5	7
Strong sense of community spirit	17	9	8
Clean local environment	7	9	12
Public spaces in good condition (e.g. pavements, parks, roads)	1	3	6
Family and friends close by	9	5	5
Access to places to go out (e.g. pubs, restaurants, galleries)	2	2	2
Other answer	1	*	*
(None of these)	*	*	*
(Don't know)	*	*	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 28**

[Arealmp1]

Now thinking about your local area, if you had to pick just one, which of the things on this is in most need of improvement around here?

<b>What is in most need of improvement around here?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
The level of crime	11
Access to GPs and local health services	6
The amount of good quality affordable housing	15
The amount of good shopping facilities	6
Access to good public transport	7
Quality of schools	3
Quality of jobs	10
Facilities for young children	16
The sense of community spirit	5
Cleanliness of the local environment	6
The condition of public spaces (e.g. pavements, parks, roads)	6
Family and friends close by	1
Access to places to go out (e.g. pubs, restaurants, galleries)	2
Other answer	2
(None of these)	3
(Don't know)	1
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 29**

[ArealmWh]

Who do you think should mainly be responsible for improving this?

<b>Who do you think should be responsible for improving this?</b>	<b>2004</b>
	%
People who live in the area	9
Local council	49
Scottish Parliament	12
Scottish Executive	8
UK Government	6
Local health board	2
The police	5
Local businesses	3
Other	1
(Don't know)	1
(Not answered)	1
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>

**Table 30**

Have you ever done any of the things on this card as a way of registering what you personally thought about an issue?

Have you done any of these things as a way of registering what you thought about an issue?	Variable name	2004
		%
No, have not done any of these	[donones]	26
Contacted an MP or MSP	[domps]	24
Contacted a government department directly	[dogovs]	11
Responded to a consultation document	[doresps]	13
Attended a public meeting	[domtgs]	31
Contacted radio, TV or a newspaper	[dotvs]	9
Signed a petition	[dosigns]	59
Raised the issue in an organisation I already belong to	[doraiss]	8
Gone on a protest or demonstration	[doprots]	13
Attended an event organised as part of a consultation exercise	[doevents]	10
Spoken to an influential person	[dospks]	15
Formed a group of like-minded people	[dogrps]	5
Joined an existing organisation	[dojoins]	9
Actively took part in a campaign (e.g. leafleting, stuffing envelopes etc)	[doactivs]	9
Given money to a campaign or organisation	[domoneys]	27
<i>Sample size</i>		<i>1637</i>

Note:

Column sums to more than 100 as respondents could pick more than one.

**Table 31**

Knowledge Quiz

	<b>SE makes most decisions about how money should be spent on health service in Scotland</b>	<b>SE decides level of unemployment benefit paid to people in Scotland</b>	<b>Scottish Parliament has around 70 elected members</b>	<b>Scottish Executive is just another name for Scottish Parliament</b>
Variable name	[quizhlth]	[quizuben]	[quizmsp]	[quizesp]
	%	%	%	%
Definitely true	12	2	6	10
Probably true	40	17	41	31
Probably not true	22	29	6	13
Definitely not true	4	27	7	18
Can't choose	22	23	39	26
(Not answered)	1	2	2	2
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1514</i>	<i>1514</i>	<i>1514</i>	<i>1514</i>

**Table 32**

[ImVot]

How important do you think it is to vote in ....

	<b>Scottish Parliament elections?</b>	<b>UK House of Commons elections?</b>	<b>Local Council elections?</b>	<b>European Parliament elections?</b>
Variable name	[imvotsp]	[imvotuk]	[imvotloc]	[imvoteu]
	%	%	%	%
Very important	47	49	49	35
Fairly important	31	30	31	29
Not very important	11	10	11	19
Not at all important	5	4	4	9
Can't choose	6	6	5	7
(Not answered)	1	2	2	2
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1637	1637	1637

**Table 33**

[UsePTran]

How often do you travel by public transport, such as buses, coaches or trains?

	<b>2004</b>
	%
Every day or nearly every day	16
2-5 days a week	13
Once a week	10
Less often but at least once a month	16
Less often than that	22
Never nowadays	22
Can't choose	1
(Not answered)	*
<i>Sample size</i>	1637

**Table 34**

[UseNHS]

In the last twelve months have you or a close family member visited an NHS GP or been to an NHS hospital as an inpatient or outpatient?

	<b>2004</b>
	%
Yes-just me	25
Yes-not me but close family member	23
Yes-both	41
No-neither	10
(Not answered)	1
<i>Sample size</i>	1637

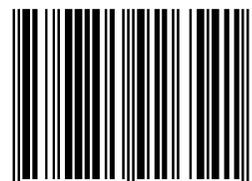
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