Public attitudes:

What are the most important issues facing Scotland / the economy / GB, and what should the SG's priorities be

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Contact: [Redacted]

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Overview

- These slides collate and summarise available high level data (including trends over time) from internally and externally funded surveys and opinion polling on what people in Scotland:
 - think are the main issues facing Scotland, Scotland's economy, and Great Britain (GB-level data for latter)
 - Includes what different age groups think are the main issues facing Scotland
 - are most concerned about thinking about the year ahead
 - think should be the SG's highest priorities
 - Includes what different age groups think should be the SG's highest priorities
 - think about <u>taxation and spending</u>
- More detailed attitudes data are available separately on:
 - Cost of living / Covid / Ukraine (contact: [Redacted]
 - Attitudes to government and democracy (contact: [Redacted]
 - Attitudes related to prospectus themes (contact: [Redacted]
- If you have any queries / comments, please contact [Redacted]. Please also get in touch if you are intending to use the data in briefings, etc. to confirm you have the most recent version of the slides.

Sources

- The slides include the most recent polls and surveys that ask issues / priorities questions on a (semi) regular basis and in the same way over time, so have a time series
- While some GB-level polls, such as those from <u>lpsos</u> and <u>YouGov</u> publish their trend data going back over many years, the Scotland-level polls have not usually done this, so the slides are intended as a repository and will be updated as new data are published. The slides pull together time series data for Scotland going back to 2020/21 for most polls. If older data is needed, please get in touch

The sources of data presented are:

Survey	Source / funder	Data presented
Scottish Political Tracker	Savanta for The Scotsman	14 polls: Dec 20 – Feb 23
Scottish Political Monitor	Ipsos	3 polls: Nov 21 – Dec 22
Scottish Opinion Monitor (SCOOP)	YouGov for Scottish Election Study	5 surveys: Dec 21 – Feb 23
Understanding Scotland	Diffley Partnership	6 polls: Oct 21 – Feb 23
-	YouGov for the Scottish Government	Weekly to monthly polls: Jun-20 – Feb-23
Scottish Social Attitudes Survey	ScotCen for the Scottish Government	1999 - 2021/2022
-	YouGov for The Times	5 polls on priorities: May 21 - Feb 23
-	Survation for Scotland in Union	5 polls on priorities: May 21 – Jan 23
GB Issues tracker	YouGov	2011-2023
GB Issues Index	Ipsos	2013-2023 (and much further back on some issues)
Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (GB data)	Office for National Statistics	9 polls from Oct 22 to March 23

Notes re variation among issues trackers

- Polling companies take a range of approaches to asking about issues / priorities, which can lead to some considerable variations in their findings
- When interpreting findings across different polls, please therefore note the information provided on how the question was asked, and what (and how many) response options respondents had to choose from
- If you are looking to understand trends over time, it is best to look at each poll in the context of its own time series, rather than comparing findings between different polls
- Some variations to note include:
 - Ipsos is the only Scotland / GB issues tracker presented where the data is based on what respondents have spontaneously mentioned as the
 most important (and other) issue(s) facing Scotland / GB (i.e. responses are not influenced by which categories are provided to choose from).
 Ipsos then code the spontaneous responses into categories for reporting
 - Other polling companies provide respondents with a list of response options to choose from, but the range, wording and number of options
 respondents can choose from varies between trackers, and sometimes over time within the same poll, which of course affects how people
 respond. For example:
 - some polls include poverty and/or inequality as a response option, some do not. So it can be reported as an important issue in some
 polling reports, and completely absent from others over the same time period
 - similarly some polls provide one option for 'the economy' whereas in others where respondents can choose 'cost of living' and/or 'inflation' as well as 'the economy', the latter appears lower down the list of issues
 - Some polls ask about the single most important issue/priority, while others ask respondents to select (up to) three from a list or (in the case of ONS) allow respondents to pick as many issues as they think are important
 - While there is considerable read across between findings from 'most important issues facing Scotland' and 'what should the SG's priorities be' questions, their focus is obviously slightly different, and the response options provided can vary. For example, while some issues trackers pick up almost a quarter of respondents thinking EU exit is one of the top three issues facing Scotland, it is not included as a response option in polls asking what the SG should prioritise

Most important issues facing Scotland: Summary

- **Economic issues** (including cost of living and inflation) and **health / NHS** have consistently been mostly likely to be selected / mentioned among the most important issues facing Scotland over the last couple of years. These issues were the two most frequently selected by all age groups, although the youngest respondents tended to most frequently select economic issues, while the oldest respondents most frequently selected health / NHS.
- The rise in concern over 'cost of living / inflation' is evident in those polls where it is included as a separate category to 'the economy'. From being spontaneously mentioned by only 3% of Ipsos respondents in Nov 21, it was the second most frequently mentioned issue by the end of 2022 (mentioned by 28%). The proportion selecting 'cost of living/inflation' as one of the main issues facing Scotland has approximately doubled in Diffley polling since late 2021 while, in both polls, the proportion mentioning / selecting 'the economy' over the same period has remained fairly stable.
- While 'health / NHS' has consistently been the first or second most likely issue to be mentioned among the most important issues over the last couple of years, the end of the pandemic is reflected in the almost complete drop off of mentions of 'COVID-19/pandemic' as one of the most important issues over the same period
- Education is consistently selected / mentioned in the top 5 most important issues facing Scotland
- Poverty/inequality is not always included as a response option in issues polls. Where included as a category in Diffley polls, it has
 tended to be the third most frequently selected issue. In Ipsos polling (of spontaneous mentions) it tends to be the sixth or seventh
 most frequently mentioned issue
- In both Scotland and GB-level polls where respondents are restricted to choosing up to three 'most important issues', **the environment / climate change** is chosen by around 10-20% of respondents. In the <u>ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey</u> (GB data), which does not restrict how many 'most important issues' respondents can choose, around 60% select 'climate change and the environment' as one of the most important issues facing the UK today
- Independence / devolution has ranged between the third and fifth most important issue in Ipsos polling of spontaneous mentions (since Nov 2021). It is worded differently as a category in other polls, but has broadly ranged between the third and eighth most likely to be selected in respondent's top three important issues

Scottish Political Tracker - Savanta for The Scotsman (2020-2023)

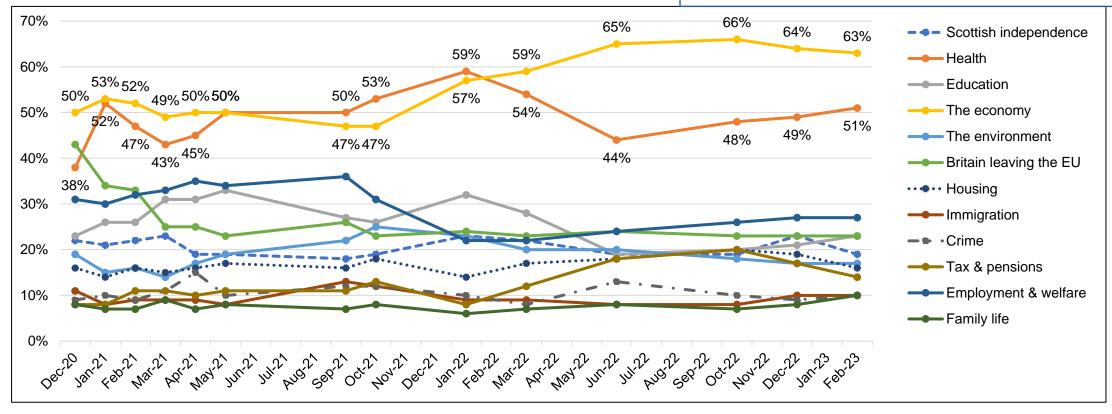
Main findings:

- 'Health' and 'The economy' have consistently been the two issues respondents were most likely to view as among the three most important issues facing Scotland over the last couple of years
- The only exception to this was in December 2020 as the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement negotiations were being finalised, when 'Britain leaving the EU' was the second most selected issue
- 'The economy' is more likely to have been seen as one of the most important issues since Mar-22 (ranging from 59% to 66%) than 'Health' (ranging from 44% to 54%).

Question:

 Which of the following are the three most important issues facing Scotland at the moment?

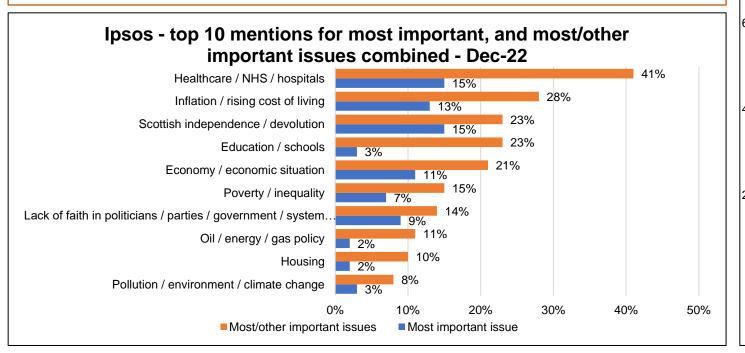
- · Respondents can choose 3 options out of 17 options.
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are
 presented in graph. Options not shown in graph were 'Transport', 'Defence
 & security', 'Other', 'Don't know' and 'None of these'.



Scottish Political Monitor – Ipsos (2021-22)

Main findings:

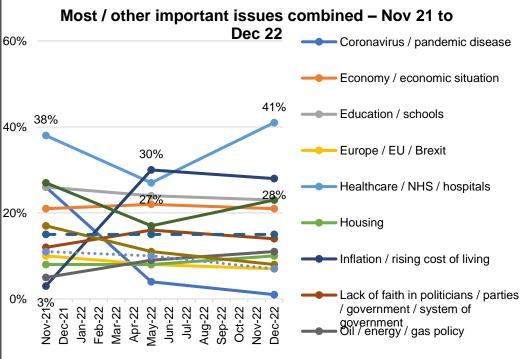
- Asked to spontaneously mention the <u>most</u> important issue facing Scotland, no single issue was identified by more than 1 in 7 respondents in the most recent poll. Healthcare / NHS / hospitals and Scottish independence / devolution were the top mentions (on 15% each) followed by Inflation / rising cost of living (13%) and economy / economic situation (11%)
- Combining mentions of the most and other important issue(s), healthcare / NHS / hospitals
 has the most mentions (mentioned by 41%) followed by inflation / cost of living (28%) and
 independence / devolution and education / schools (both 23%)
- Over time, in the three polls since Nov 21 there has been a reasonable amount of consistency in the mentions of particular issues, with the exception of **inflation / cost of living** which was barely mentioned in Nov 21 but was the top or second top issue in Ipsos' polls in 2022. Conversely mentions of **Coronavirus / pandemic** have plummeted over the same period



Questions:

- What do you see as <u>the most</u> important issue facing Scotland today?
- What do you see as other important issues facing Scotland today?

- Spontaneous / open text response (no list to select from), coded by Ipsos
- The lefthand chart presents the 10 issues that respondents were most likely to mention when only mentioning the <u>most</u> important issue (in blue) against the combined data for most / other important issues (in red) for the most recent poll
- The righthand chart shows the time series for the most / other issues combined data. Only issues mentioned by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented



Scottish Opinion Monitor (SCOOP) – YouGov for Scot Elec Study (2021-23)

Main findings:

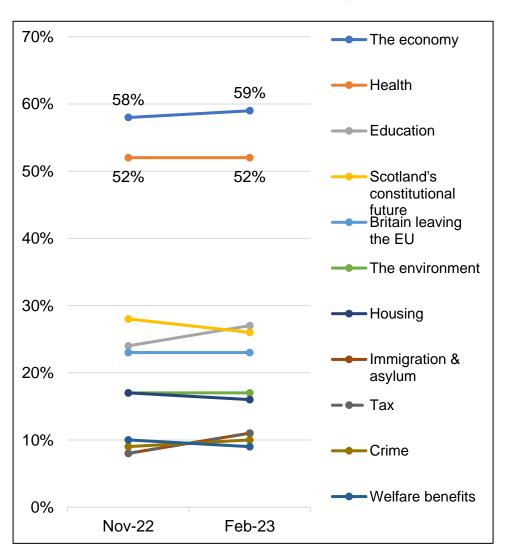
• In both Nov-22 to Feb-23, 'The economy' was the most likely issue to be seen as one of the most important facing Scotland (58% and 59%), followed closely by 'Health' (52% and 52%).

Note – awaiting data from first three surveys in the SCOOP series

Question:

• Which of the following are the three most important issues facing Scotland at the moment? Please pick up to three issues.

- Respondents choose up to 3 options out of 18 options.
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented in graph.



Understanding Scotland - Diffley Partnership (2021-23)

Main findings:

- Since Jan-22, 'Cost of living/inflation' and 'Healthcare & the NHS' have been the two issues respondents were most likely to view as one of the most important facing Scotland.
- From Jan-22 to Feb-23, 'Healthcare & the NHS' has become more likely to be viewed as one of the most important issues (increasing from 39% to 52%)
- From Aug-22 to Feb-23, 'Cost of living/inflation' has become marginally <u>less</u> likely to be viewed as one of the most important issues (decreasing from 51% to 45%).

Question:

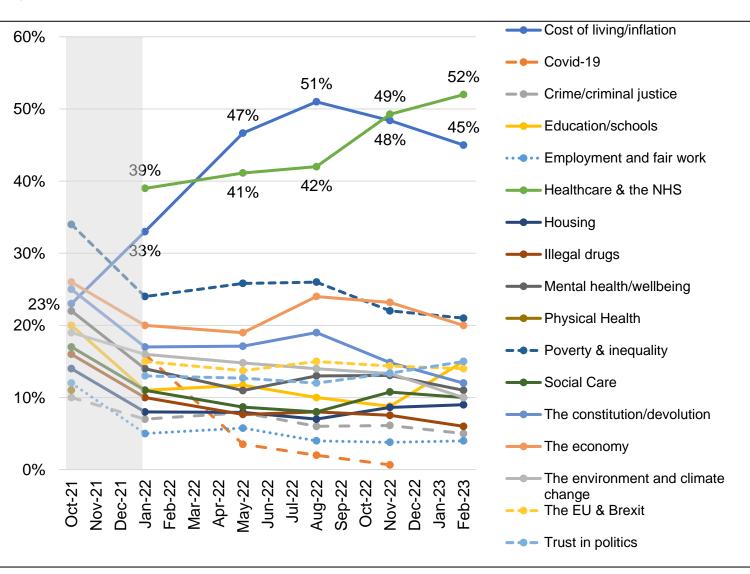
 Which of the following are the three most important issues facing Scotland at the moment?

Response options:

- Respondents choose 3 options out of around 30 options the options presented have varied slightly across polls (which might affect percentages when compared across time).
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented in graph.

Notes:

'Healthcare & the NHS' and 'Covid-19' were not included in the Oct-21 poll, but were added to the Jan-22 and subsequent polls. It is likely that the addition of these options (in place of 'Physical Health') explains why respondents in Jan-22 were less likely to select most of the options presented in Oct-21



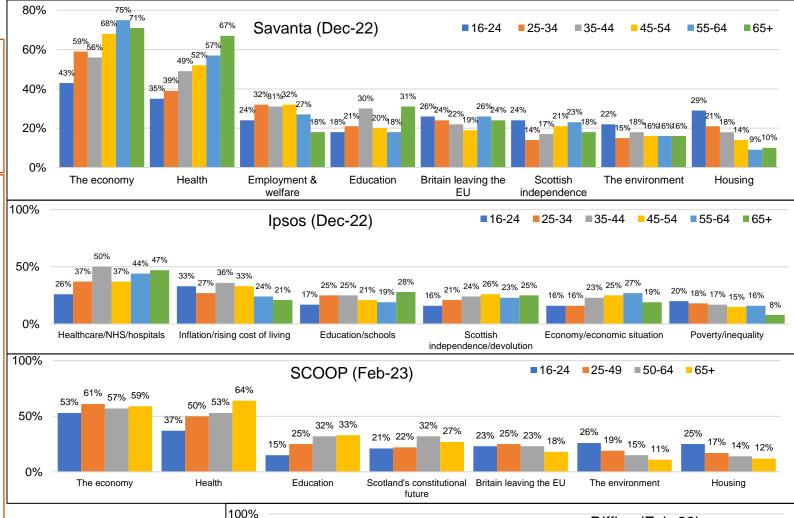
Findings across age groups

Main findings:

- Across all polls, the two most frequently indicated issues for all age groups tended to include health / healthcare, and either economy or inflation / cost of living
- The likelihood of indicating these two issues tentatively varies age:
 - For the youngest age group (16-24 in all polls), economy or inflation / cost of living was the most frequently indicated issue in all four polls
 - For the oldest age group (65+ in all polls), health / healthcare was the most frequently indicated in three of the four polls (although proportions in the other Savanta poll were similar for each issue – 67% 'health', 71% 'the economy')

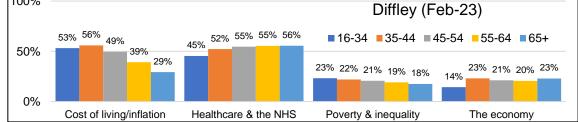
Summary of poll findings (righthand graphs present all priorities selected by at least 20% of one age group):

- Savanta (Dec-22):
 - For all age groups, 'the economy' was the issue most likely to be seen as the most important facing Scotland, and 'health' the second most likely
- Ipsos (Dec-22; most/other important issues):
 - For all age groups 'healthcare/NHS/hospitals' was the issue most likely to be seen as one of the most important issues facing Scotland, except those aged 16-24 who were most likely to see 'inflation/rising cost of living' as one of the most important issues followed by 'healthcare/NHS/hospitals'
 - 'Inflation/rising cost of living' was the second mostly frequently mentioned issue for those aged 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54, but third for those aged 55-64 (after 'economy/economic situation') and fourth for those aged 65+ (after 'education/schools' and 'Scottish independence/devolution')
- SCOOP (Feb-23):
 - All age groups except those aged 65+ most frequently selected 'the
 economy' as one of the most important issues facing Scotland, with 'health'
 being the second most frequently selected
 - For adults aged 65+, 'health' was the most frequently selected followed by 'the economy'
- Diffley (Feb-23):
 - Those aged 16-24 and 35-44 most frequently selected 'cost of living/inflation' as one of the most important, with 'healthcare & the NHS' being their second most frequently selected
 - For those aged 45-54, 55-64 and 65+, 'healthcare & the NHS' was the most frequently selected issue, followed by 'cost of living/inflation'



Other notable differences between age groups:

- Across all four polls, the youngest age group (16-24 in all polls) were more likely than the other age groups to indicate the
 environment / climate change as being one of the most important issues facing Scotland
- Across all four polls, the oldest age group (65+ in all polls) were more likely than the other age groups to indicate education / schools as being one of the most important issues facing Scotland (although the differences between those aged 65+ and other age groups were often marginal)



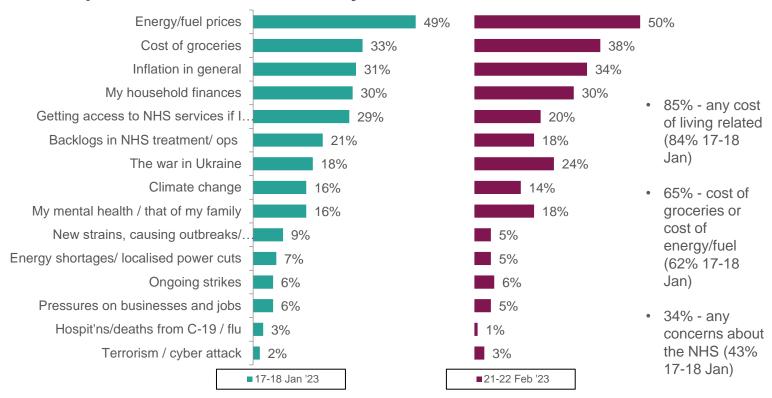
Top concerns for the year ahead

Slide included from **Public Insight Bulletin (Cost of living, Ukraine, Covid-19)** (contact: [Redacted])

YouGov - Scottish Government polling

Financial issues still dominate concerns for the year ahead, and while concern about getting access to NHS services has decreased since January, there has been an increase in concern over the war in Ukraine

Proportion mentioning each as a top three concern from a list of possible concerns for the year ahead



Main findings:

- Looking to the year ahead, more than four in five (85%) mention cost of living related issues among their top three concerns (whether energy/fuel prices (50%), cost of groceries (38%), inflation (34%) or household finances (30%)).
- Access to NHS services as a top three concern has decreased since January (34% compared with 43% in January), largely driven by a decrease in mentions of concern about accessing NHS services (20% vs 29%) rather than NHS backlogs (18% vs 21%).
- There has been an increase in concern over the war in Ukraine with around a quarter mentioning this as one of their top three concerns for the year ahead (24% compared with 18% in January), although this often fluctuates thought to be due to varying levels of media coverage

Time-series findings:

- The list of pre-codes has changed over time. While the questions are therefore not directly comparable, results from previous months can be examined.
- In August and September, the concern most likely to be mentioned was rising energy/fuel prices (albeit declining from 65% in August to 60% in September), followed by inflation (40% and 38% respectively), rising cost of groceries (39% each month) and household finances (36% each month). Concern about the war in Ukraine increased from a low of 17% in August to 23% in September.
- In November and December, rising energy/fuel prices (56% each month) continued to be the concern most likely to be mentioned, followed by rising cost of groceries (41% in November and 37% in December), inflation in general (39% and 38% respectively) and household finances (35% and 34% respectively). Concern about the war in Ukraine decreased from 25% in November to 20% in December.

Q144. Thinking about the year ahead (from now until February 2024), which of the following are you most concerned about? (Please select up to three responses)

Most important issues facing Scottish economy

Understanding Scotland - Diffley Partnership (2022-23)

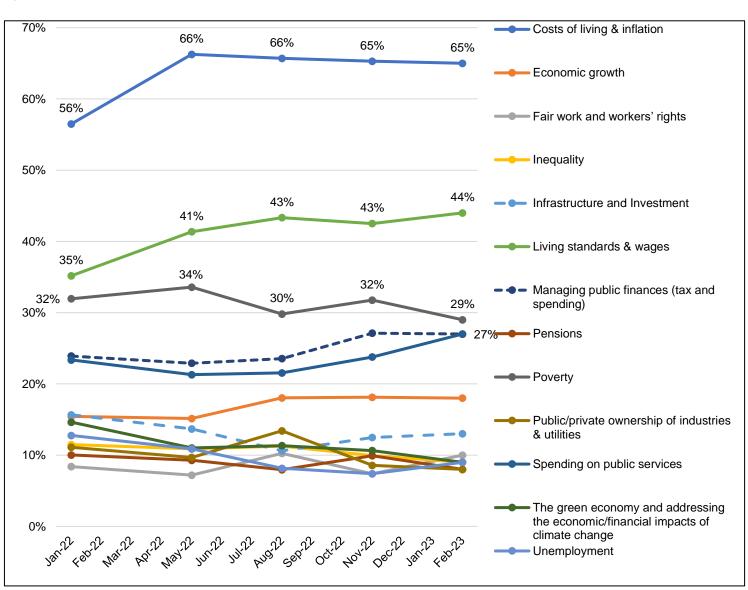
Main findings:

- 'Costs of living & inflation' has been the most likely issue to feature in respondents top three issues facing the Scottish economy since the question began being asked in Jan 22 (selected by between 56% and 66% of respondents), followed by 'Living standards and wages' (selected by between 35% to 44% of respondents)
- 'Poverty' has been the third most likely issue to be viewed as one of the three most important issues facing the Scottish economy (selected by 29% to 34%), closely followed by 'Managing public finances (tax and spending)' and 'Spending on public services'

Question:

 Thinking (specifically) about economic and financial issues, which of the following do you think are the three most important issues facing the Scottish economy?

- · Respondents choose 3 options out of 19 options.
- Wording for 'The green economy and addressing the economic/financial impacts of climate change' changed from 'The green economy and meeting climate targets', which was used in Jan-22 and May-22.
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented in graph.



Priorities for SG: Summary

- Following the 2008 financial crash, the most likely issue to be seen as the highest priority for SG between 2009 and 2015 was 'improve the economy'
- 'Improve the standards of education' was more likely than 'improve the economy' to be seen as the highest priority for SG in 2017, although this pattern reversed in 2019
- The highest priorities for SG became less clear in 2021/2022:
 - Four issues were similarly likely to be seen as the highest priority for SG in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey: 'improve standards of education', 'reduce inequality', 'improve the economy' and 'improve people's health'
 - Across 4 polls conducted by Survation in 2021/2022, the highest priorities for SG were most likely to be seen as 'NHS', 'economy and jobs' and 'Covid-19 recovery'
 - Across 3 polls conducted by YouGov in 2021/2022, the highest priorities for SG were most likely to be seen as 'Health' and 'The
 economy'
- The most recent polls in early 2023 indicate that 'NHS / health', 'economy and jobs', 'cost-of-living crisis', and 'energy bills' are the issues most likely to be seen as the highest priorities for SG
- In each poll since 2016, over half of the respondents have supported increasing taxation and public spending, rather than keeping these the same or decreasing them
- As with the most important issues facing Scotland, younger respondents tended to most frequently select economic issues as the priority for SG, while older respondents most frequently selected health / NHS.

What should be the SG's highest priority

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (2004 - 2021/22)

Main findings:

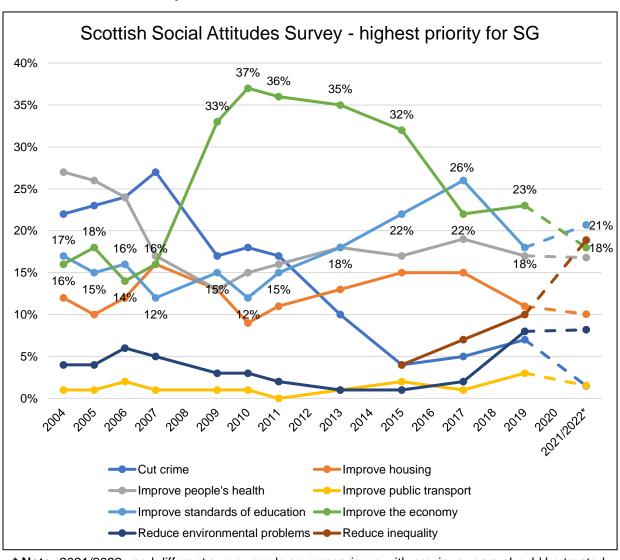
- Throughout the period that this question has been asked since 2004, the spread of opinion re what should be the SG's <u>highest</u> priority (respondents can select only one option), has been such that no single area has been chosen by a majority (i.e. >50%) of respondents in any year.
- In the mid-2000s, the two priority areas most frequently selected were 'improve people's health' and 'cut crime'.
- From being the most frequently selected priority in 2007 (27%), '**cut crime**' has steadily dropped down the list and was the joint least frequently selected priority (selected by 2%) in 2021/22
- 'Improve the economy' was the 3rd or 4th most frequently selected priority in each year that the question was asked up to the 2008 financial crash. In each year following the crash until 2015 it was the most likely selected priority by a significant margin
- 'Improve standards of education' was the most frequently selected priority for the first time in 2017, and then again in 2021/22
- 'Improve people's health' was consistently the third most likely selected priority between 2010 and 2019, but was overtaken by 'reduce inequality' in 2021/22
- 'Reduce inequality' was introduced as a response option in 2015. It has shown a significant upward trend and was the second most likely issue to be selected as what should be the SG's highest priority in 2021/22

Question:

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

Response options:

 Respondents choose 1 option out of a list of 8. Options were designed to reflect core areas of devolved responsibility in early years of devolution and have remained relatively unchanged to enable monitoring of change over time. 'Reduce inequality' was added as an option in 2015



^{*} **Note:** 2021/2022 used different survey mode so comparisons with previous years should be treated with caution

What should be the main priorities for the SG

YouGov for Sunday Times (2023)

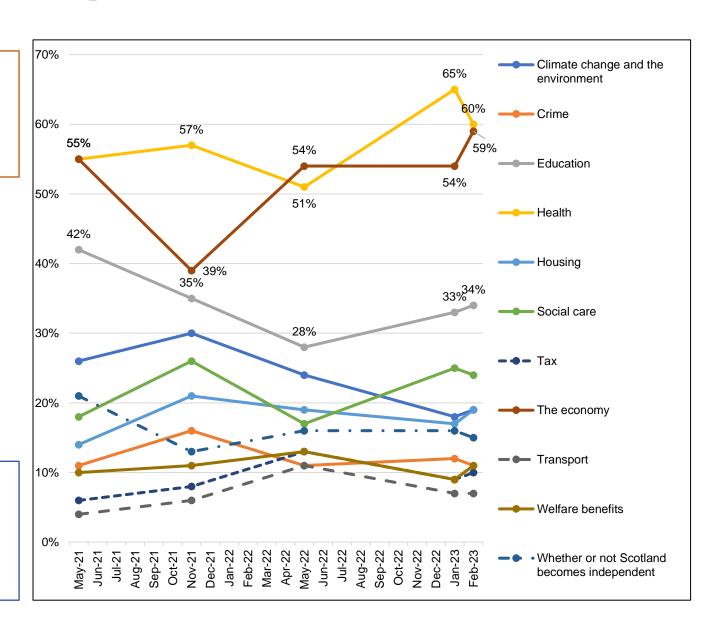
Main findings:

- In all five polls since May-21, 'Health' and 'The economy' were the most likely issues to be seen as one of the main priorities for SG.
- 'Health' was most likely to be seen as one of the main priorities in Jan-23, although a similar proportion of respondents selected 'Health' and 'the economy' in Feb-23.

Question:

 Which of the following do you think should be the main priorities for the Scottish government? Please tick up to three.

- Respondents choose up to 3 options out of 14 options.
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented in graph.



Most important issues that the SG should prioritise

Survation for Scotland in Union (2021-23)

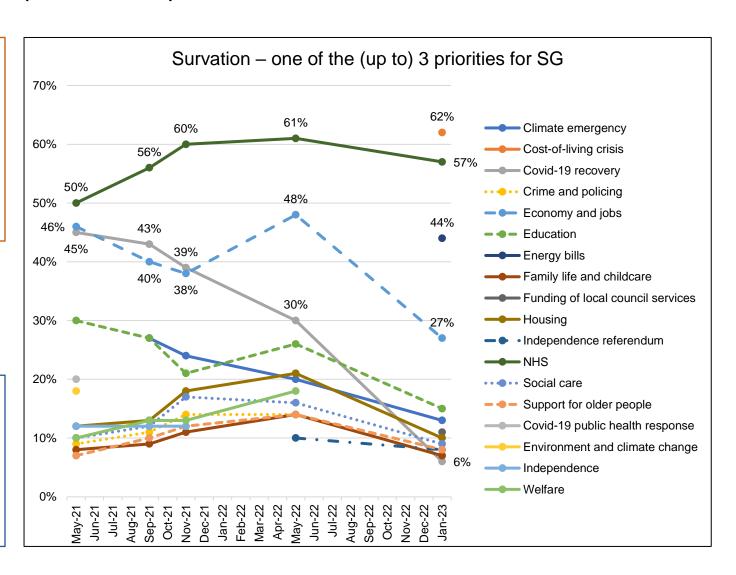
Main findings:

- From May-21 to May-22, the three issues that were most likely to be viewed as one of the highest priorities for SG were 'NHS', 'Economy and jobs' and 'Covid-19 recovery'.
- However, in Jan-23, 'Cost-of-living crisis' was more likely to be viewed as the highest priority for SG than 'NHS' (62% vs 57%), followed by 'Energy bills' (44%).
- The proportion of respondents selecting 'Economy and jobs' and 'Covid-19 recovery' decreased from May-22 to Jan-23 'Economy and jobs', 48% to 27%; and 'Covid-19 recovery', 30% to 6%.

Question:

• Which of the following do you think are the most important issues that the Scottish Government should prioritise?

- Respondents choose 3 or up to 3 (varies between polls) options out of around 19 options the options presented have varied across polls (which might affect percentages when compared across time).
- Issues selected by 10% or more of the respondents in at least one poll are presented in graph.

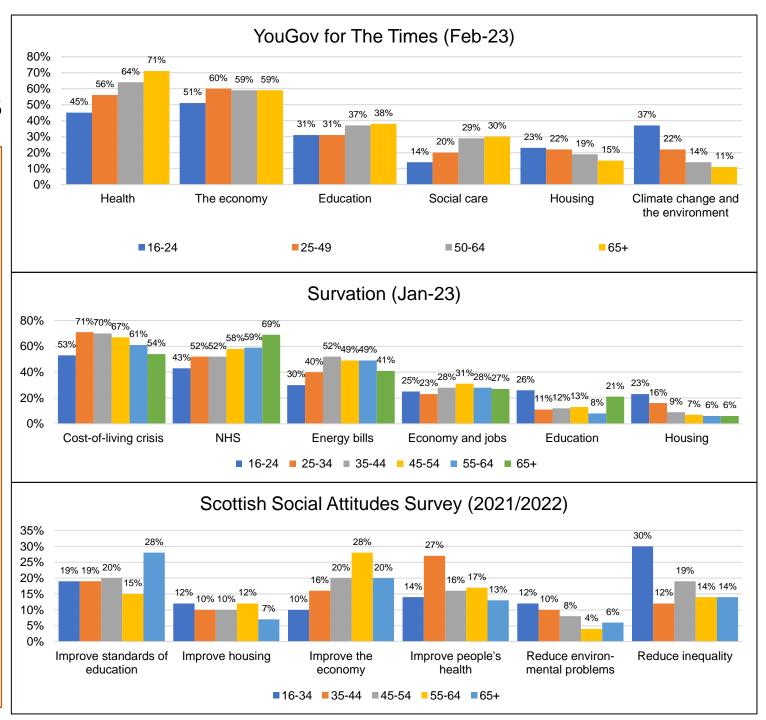


Priorities for SG

Findings across age groups

Main findings:

- In polls conducted in 2023 (YouGov for The Times, Survation; top
 two graphs presenting all priorities selected by at least 20% of one
 age group) the two most frequently selected priorities for SG for all
 age groups tended to include health / NHS, and the economy /
 cost of living crisis. The likelihood of selecting these two
 priorities tentatively varies age:
 - For the two oldest age groups in the YouGov poll (50-64, 65+) and the oldest age group in the Survation poll (65+), health / NHS was the most frequently selected priority for SG, followed by the economy / cost of living crisis
 - In contrast, the economy / cost of living crisis was the
 most frequently selected by those below 50 in the YouGov
 poll (16-24, 25-49) and below 65 in the Survation poll (1624, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64), followed by health / NHS
- In the 2021/2022 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (bottom graph, all priorities selected by at least 10% of one age group):
 - There were few clear age differences, which might be due to the methodology (selecting one rather than more than one priority for SG)
 - Some priorities were much more likely to be selected by specific age groups:
 - Those aged 16-34 were the most likely to select 'reduce inequality' as a priority for SG
 - Those aged 35-44 were the most likely to select 'improve people's health' as a priority for SG
 - Those aged 55-64 were the most likely to select 'improve the economy' as a priority for SG
 - Those aged 65+ were the most likely to select 'improve standards of education' as a priority for SG



Attitudes towards the level of taxation and government spending

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (1999 - 2021/22)

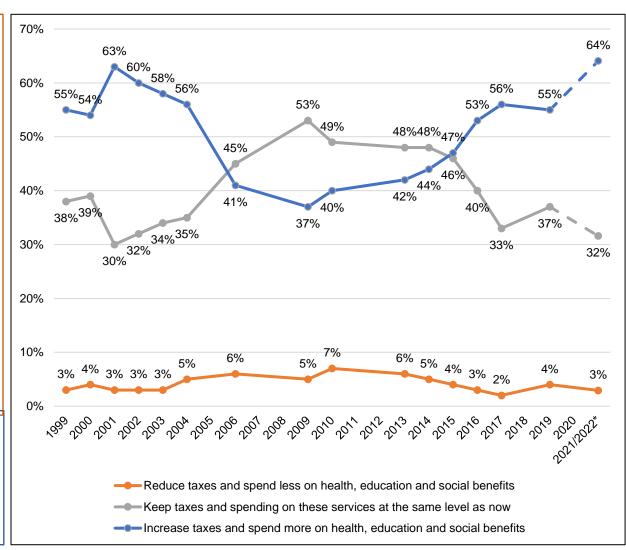
Main findings:

- The majority of people in Scotland think that government should **increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits** in the most recent SSA data. This has been the case since 2016, and was also the case during the early years of devolution
- Throughout the period since devolution, very few people (always less than 1 in 10) have said that they are in favour of reducing taxes and spending
- There has been considerable variation in the proportions who have been in favour of increasing taxation and spending, and the proportion who would like to keep them the same, as shown in the chart on the right
- This pattern over time is the same as seen for GB data in the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, where they describe the pattern "as a 'thermostatic' reaction, as voters respond to changes in public spending that move it above or below the level that people find comfortable" (Wlezian, 1995 in BSA 39)
- BSA 39 describes the high level of support for increasing taxation in the late 90s and early 2000s as a response to attempts to curb taxation and spending in the 90s. Support for increasing taxation and spending began to reduce (and support for keeping them the same increased) as spending increased during the 2000s, before swinging back towards support for increasing taxation and spending from a low point in 2009, during the years of austerity from 2010.
- The most recent data (2021/22) shows even higher support for increasing taxation and spending in the wake of the pandemic, with 64% in favour. It does not yet show a 'thermostatic reaction' to the higher public spending of the pandemic

Question:

• Suppose the government had to choose between the three options on this card. Which do you think it should choose?

- · Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits
- · Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now
- · Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits.



^{*} **Note:** 2021/2022 used different survey mode so comparisons with previous years should be treated with caution

Most important issues facing GB: Summary

- As with Scotland-level polling, GB-wide attitudes data indicate that health / healthcare / NHS, or economy or cost of living / inflation tend to be seen as the most important issues facing Britain (Ipsos, YouGov, Office of National Statistics)
 - Differences between Scotland-level and GB-level polling include immigration, which featured highly in the most recent GB polls (3rd/4th most likely issue to be seen as the most important) compared with Scottish polls (8th to 16th most likely issue)
- The polls indicated the following patterns over recent years:
 - Since early 2020, either health/NHS/healthcare, or the economy or inflation have tended to be seen as one of the most important issues facing GB (YouGov and Ipsos; Office of National Statistics since start of survey in Nov-22)
 - Since early 2022, the economy of inflation have been the most frequently selected issues (YouGov and Ipsos; Office of National Statistics since start of survey in Nov-22)
- See notes sections for methodology details for each poll

The most important issues facing the country (GB data) YouGov (2011 – 2023)

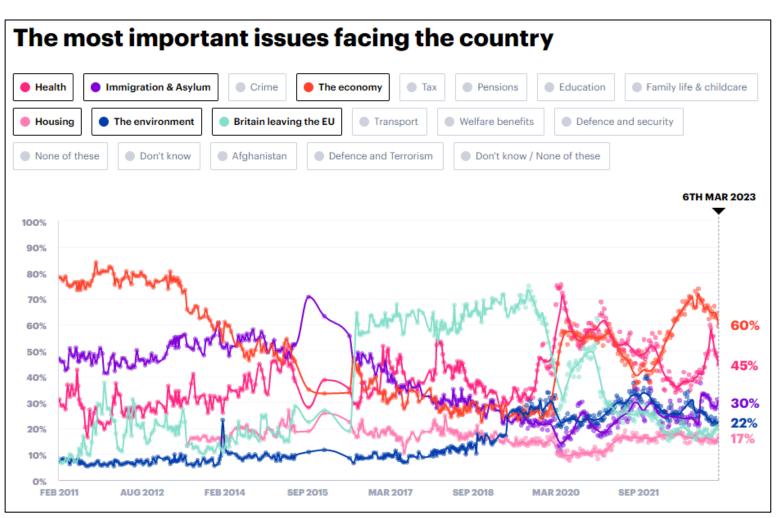
Main findings:

- In YouGov's most recent poll (6 March 23), 'the economy'
 (60% of respondents had this issue in their top 3) and 'health'
 (45%) were the most frequently selected issues when asked
 to choose up to three issues that are the most important
 facing GB
- Across the time series:
 - 'The economy' was the issue most likely to be seen as the most important facing GB from early 2011 to later 2013
 - From early 2014 to mid-2015, 'the economy', 'immigration & asylum' and 'health' became similarly likely to be seen as one of the most important issues facing GB.
 - 'Immigration & asylum' then became the most likely to be selected from mid-2015 to mid-2016 (Brexit referendum), after which 'Britain leaving the EU' tended to be the most likely issue to be chosen until early-2020 (start of pandemic).
 - Since the start of the pandemic, either 'health' or 'the economy' have been the most likely issue to have been seen as one of the most important facing GB, with 'the economy' having been the most likely since early-2022.

Question:

• Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three. (GB sample)

- · Select up to three issues from the list provided
- The time series for the top 5 mentions in March 2023 are shown in the graph

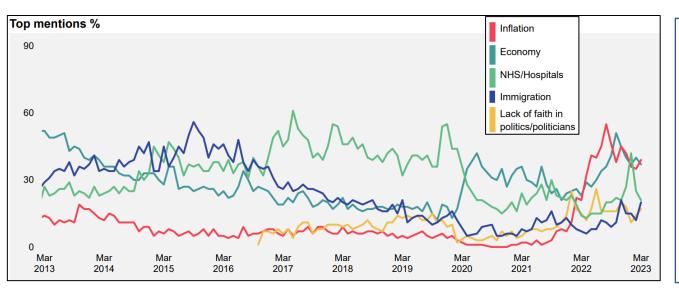


The most important issues facing Britain (GB data)

lpsos (2011-2023) (1974/1999 for some issues)

Main findings:

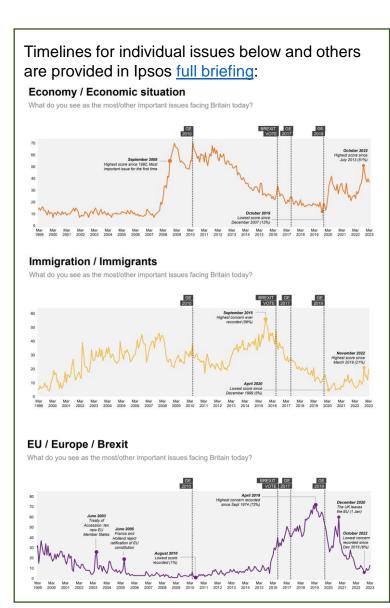
- In Ipsos' most recent poll (Mar 23), the issues that were mentioned most frequently by respondents were: 'inflation/prices' (39%), 'economy/economic situation' (37%), 'NHS/hospitals/healthcare' (21%), 'immigration/immigrants' (20%), and 'lack of faith in politics/politicians/government' (17%).
- · Across the time series:
 - 'Inflation/prices' became much more likely to be seen as one of the most important issues facing Britain over the course of 2022, increasing from less than 10% in late 2021 to a high point of 54% in Aug-22 (highest score since Apr-1980)
 - 'Economy/economic situation' was also at its highest point in Oct-22 (51%), which represents an increase from 12% in Oct-19
 - 'NHS/hospitals/healthcare' was less likely to be viewed as one of the most important issues in Dec-22 (21%) compared with May-17 (61%), and was at its lowest score in Apr-22 (13%). It is possible that 'NHS/hospitals/healthcare' has been less frequently indicated since Dec-19 due to respondents mentioning 'coronavirus/pandemic diseases' instead, which they might have viewed as encompassing healthcare.



Question:

 What do you see as the most/other important issue(s) facing Britain today? (GB sample)

- Spontaneous / open text response (no list to select from), able to indicate one or more issues. Coded by polling company.
- The time series for the top 5 mentions in Mar-23 are shown in the graph



The most important issues facing the UK (GB data)

Office of National Statistics (2022 – 2023)

Main findings:

- The regular Opinions and Lifestyle Survey first asked the GB sample about the most important issues facing the UK in Oct/Nov-22, and the findings have been fairly consistent then
- 'The cost of living' has been the most frequently selected option by respondents (between 91% and 93%), followed by 'the NHS' (between 80% and 89%), 'the economy' (between 74% and 81%) and 'climate change and the environment' (between 56% and 69%)
- 'The economy' and 'climate change and the environment' have both become slightly less frequently selected since the question was first asked
- While environmental issues are not often viewed as one of the most important issues in other polls/surveys, 'climate change and the environment' is the fourth most likely issue to be selected by respondents in this survey. As explained below, respondents in these surveys can select as many options as they want, which suggests that it is an important issue to respondents, but is not selected often in other surveys where respondents are limited in the number of issues they can choose

Question:

• What do you think are important issues facing the UK today? (GB sample)

Response options:

- Can select more than one option from the list provided
- The time series for the 4 most commonly selected options are shown in the graph

Notes:

• Please note that respondents can select as many options as they want in these surveys. As other polls/surveys tend to limit how many options respondents change choose, the percentages reported in this survey tend to be higher

