

TOP LINES

People in Scotland have given a clear mandate for a referendum on independence.

- In repeated elections both to the Scottish Parliament and to Westminster – in 2016, 2017, 2019 and most recently in May 2021 – people in Scotland have elected majorities of MSPs and MPs that support a referendum.
- In May 2021, 72 of the 129 MSPs were elected on manifestos that commit them to a referendum on Scottish independence during this Parliament.
- I am pleased that a majority of members elected to this Parliament by the people of Scotland backed a motion in January 2023 calling on the UK Government to respect the right of people in Scotland to choose their constitutional future.
- I stand ready to engage at any point with the UK Government to begin talks about the change to the Scottish Parliament's powers to allow the Scottish people to choose their future.
- In fact, polling also shows considerably more people believe that we should not need permission from the UK Government to hold a referendum at all, than think that we should need to (Source: YouGov, June 2023 – 50% say should not need permission; 40% say should; 10% don't know).

The Scottish Government accepts and respects the Supreme Court's judgment.

- The Supreme Court was not asked to decide, and cannot decide, whether the Scottish Parliament should have the power to hold an independence referendum.
- All it was asked to rule on was the law relating to one route to a referendum: legislation in the Scottish Parliament.
- Responsibility for this outcome lies with Westminster and the design of the devolution legislation, not with the Supreme Court.

I have made clear that I am ready and willing to negotiate the terms of a section 30 order with the Prime Minister.

- The UK Government has already accepted that a mandate for an independence referendum can be given to the Scottish Parliament. It accepted that in 2011 and agreed the process that led to the 2014 Referendum.
- If people in Scotland's right to choose is to mean anything, it must allow the people of Scotland, as an electorate, to decide to have a referendum.