



The Scottish  
Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

# Public Services and Government

## Your Scotland, Your Referendum: An Analysis of Consultation Responses

# **‘YOUR SCOTLAND, YOUR REFERENDUM’: AN ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction (pages 6-7)**

1. In January 2012, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation to gather views on its proposals for undertaking a referendum on Scottish independence. The consultation document, 'Your Scotland, Your Referendum', was published on 25 January 2012, and the public consultation was open until 11 May 2012.
2. The consultation document contained nine open-ended questions, which sought views on a range of issues including: the wording of the referendum question and design of the ballot paper; the timetable; whether there should be one question or two; the arrangements for the operational management and oversight of the referendum; proposals for increasing voter turnout; the franchise; and spending limits for campaigning organisations. The consultation document also addressed a range of other issues that were not the subject of specific questions, including (but not limited to): the powers of the Scottish Parliament to legislate for a referendum; the proposal that the referendum outcome should be based on a simple majority of the votes cast; and the eligibility to vote.

### **Chapter 2: The consultation process and types of response (pages 8-14)**

3. A total of 30,219 responses to the consultation were received, and **26,219** of these formed the basis for the analysis.
4. The 26,219 responses comprised 21,198 from individuals; 164 from organisations or groups; and 4,857 were 'campaign' responses, submitted through three campaigns. The campaigns were organised by: (i) the Scottish National Party, (ii) the Scottish Labour Party, and (iii) a smaller campaign based in and around Lanarkshire. These campaign responses included 4,000 standard responses (containing the exact campaign texts with no modifications), and 857 non-standard responses (which contained relatively minor modifications to the standard campaign texts from two of the campaigns).
5. Seventy-seven per cent (77%) of those taking part in the consultation (just over 20,000 respondents) stated that they were resident in Scotland, while fewer than 5% said they lived elsewhere. No information on residency was available for the remaining respondents.

### **Chapter 3: Approach to the analysis (pages 15-16)**

6. The analysis was primarily qualitative in nature. Its main aim was to identify the key themes, as well as the full range and depth of issues, raised by respondents in their comments on each question in the consultation document.
7. In addition, the Scottish Government decided to explore (through quantitative analysis) the broad balance of opinion in relation to the following issues:
  - The wording of the referendum question
  - The proposed timetable

- The inclusion of a second question in the referendum
- Voting on a Saturday
- Extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year old young people.

#### **Chapter 4: The referendum question and ballot paper (Question 1) (pages 17-21)**

8. Question 1 was: What are your views on the referendum question and the design of the ballot paper?
9. Of those respondents who commented on the proposed referendum question, 64% broadly agreed with the wording of the question and 28% did not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views.
10. Respondents who agreed with the proposed question generally described it as clear, concise, unambiguous, simple, straightforward, to the point and easy to understand. Those who disagreed often expressed diametrically opposed views to those who agreed, describing the proposed question as biased, leading, misleading, loaded, too simplistic, unclear and confusing.
11. Respondents often made suggestions for one or more alternative questions which they believed would be more acceptable to them personally, or to critics. In some cases, these suggestions were relatively minor. However, respondents who did not agree with the proposed question often wanted more substantial changes. There were three main groups: (i) those who believed the question should include a reference to separation, or leaving the United Kingdom; (ii) those who believed the question's proposition should be based on the status quo (that is, remaining in the United Kingdom) and (iii) those who felt that the referendum vote should **not** be a Yes-or-No vote, but rather the propositions for independence and for remaining in the Union should both be stated positively and voters should be asked to vote for the proposition they favoured.

#### **Chapter 5: Timetable and voting arrangements (Question 2) (pages 22-25)**

12. Question 2 was: What are your views on the proposed timetable and voting arrangements?
13. Of those respondents who commented on the proposed referendum timetable, 62% broadly agreed with the timetable and 36% did not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views.
14. Those who supported the proposed timetable argued that it gave the Scottish electorate sufficient time to properly consider the arguments being put forward. The point was also made that the current SNP administration had made it clear prior to the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary election that it would hold a referendum on independence in the latter part of the 2011-2016 parliamentary term.
15. Of those who disagreed with the proposed timetable, almost all wanted the referendum to be held before Autumn 2014. Various alternative dates were suggested, ranging from immediately through to Spring 2014.
16. Those who wanted an earlier referendum commonly made one (or more) of three points: (i) the Scottish economy could suffer due to a perceived uncertainty over Scotland's future; (ii) the referendum was being held later than

necessary because the current administration needs two years to convince the electorate of the case for independence; and (iii) the proposed timetable was part of a political ploy which was intended to capitalise on the “feel good factor” of other key events in 2014.

17. Those who made further comments about the voting arrangements for the referendum generally stated their broad support for the arrangements set out within the consultation document.

#### **Chapter 6: Possible inclusion of a second question (Question 3) (pages 26-32)**

18. Question 3 was: What are your views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum and the voting system that could be used?
19. Of those respondents who commented on the issue of a second question, 32% were broadly in favour of including a second question and 62% were not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views.
20. The three main reasons that respondents gave for wanting a second question in the referendum were that: (i) it would provide a greater choice to the electorate than a simple yes-or-no question on independence; (ii) devo max was felt to be the next logical step for Scotland; and (iii) it would provide the Scottish Government with a stronger negotiating position in any future discussions with the UK Government if the Scottish electorate was to vote no to independence.
21. The main argument against the inclusion of a second question was that it would complicate matters and cause confusion. Among those who did not want a second question, there was a feeling that the vote for independence should be resolved first, and then, depending on the outcome of that vote, further devolution could be considered at a later time. Other respondents argued that a formal vote on devo max was unnecessary as the Scottish Government already has a mandate from the Scottish people to negotiate for additional powers. Still others felt that — while it was appropriate for the people of Scotland to vote on independence (as this was a constitutional matter) — it was not appropriate for the people of Scotland alone to make a decision on what further powers they wished to be devolved from the UK Government.
22. In relation to the voting system that might be used, respondents who advocated the inclusion of a second question argued that the first question — that is, the question on independence — should take precedence over the devo max question. In other words, a simple majority vote for independence should result in Scotland becoming independent, irrespective of whether a greater proportion of voters said yes to devo max.

#### **Chapter 7: The operational management and oversight of the referendum (Questions 4 and 5) (pages 33-36)**

23. Question 4 was: What are your views on the proposal to give the Electoral Management Board and its Convener responsibility for the operational management of the referendum? Question 5 was: What are your views on the proposed division of roles between the Electoral Management Board and the Electoral Commission?

24. The main points made by respondents in relation to the operational management and oversight of the referendum were that it should be — and should be seen to be — fair, independent, impartial, transparent, open to scrutiny, and not subject to political interference.

### **Chapter 8: Saturday voting (Question 6) (pages 37-40)**

25. Question 6 was: What are your views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday or on other ways which would make voting easier?
26. Of those respondents who commented on the issue of Saturday voting, 46% broadly agreed with holding the referendum on a Saturday and 32% did not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views.
27. Comments on Saturday voting generally focused on whether voter turnout would be higher if the vote were to be held on a Saturday. Those who broadly supported the idea of a Saturday vote frequently said that they would support the idea if it increased voter turnout.
28. Those who were opposed to Saturday voting suggested that voter turnout might actually be **lower** on a Saturday for three reasons: (i) Saturday can be the busiest day of the week for many people, particularly for those with children; (ii) some people may have religious beliefs that would prevent them from voting on a Saturday; and (iii) people may be more likely to remember to vote if the vote was on Thursday, the traditional day for voting in Scotland.
29. Some respondents were not opposed in principle to the idea of voting on a Saturday, but felt that it would not be appropriate to introduce this new practice for the first time in the referendum.
30. Respondents' views were mixed in relation to the other specific suggestions set out in the consultation document for making voting easier — including the idea of locating polling stations in a range of non-traditional venues.

### **Chapter 9: Extending the franchise to include 16 and 17 year olds (Question 7) (pages 41-44)**

31. Question 7 was: What are your views on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register?
32. Of those respondents who commented on the issue of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, 56% broadly agreed with extending the franchise and 41% did not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views.
33. Those who favoured extending the franchise frequently pointed out that if 16 and 17 year olds are able, for example, to get married and join the army, they should also be allowed to vote at elections. The other reason repeatedly given for supporting the extension of the franchise was that it is younger people who will live with the outcome of the referendum vote and they should be entitled to have their say on what a future Scotland will look like.
34. Respondents who supported the extension of the franchise for the referendum often suggested that the franchise should be extended for **all** elections. At the

same time, there were also some who felt the franchise for the referendum should **only** be extended if it were to be done for all elections.

35. Those who opposed the extension of the franchise gave one (or more) of the following reasons: (i) they saw the change as politically motivated; (ii) they felt that 16 and 17 year olds are not mature enough and have insufficient life experience to make such an important decision; and (iii) society does not consider 16 and 17 year olds responsible enough to buy alcohol or cigarettes, and therefore it was questioned why society would consider them mature enough to vote.

**Chapter 10: Spending limits for participants in the referendum campaign (Question 8) (pages 45-47)**

36. Question 8 was: What are your views on the proposed spending limits?
37. Respondents frequently focused on the basic principles which should underpin the spending arrangements, rather than on the specific proposals set out within the consultation document. It was suggested that spend should be “equitable”, and that there must be high levels of transparency and accountability, with clear processes in place throughout the referendum campaign.

**Chapter 11: Draft Referendum Bill and other comments (Question 9) (pages 48-51)**

38. Question 9 was: Do you have any other comments about the proposals in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill?
39. Very few of the comments at Question 9 specifically addressed the content of draft Bill. Altogether, just over 50 people made a substantive comment on the draft. These included suggested changes to particular sections of the Bill.
40. In addition, while not directly related to the draft Bill, a small number of respondents suggested that Scotland should have a written constitution, and that this constitution should form the basis for the independence vote.
41. Respondents often used the space provided by this question to give their views (or to ask a series of questions) on a wide range of other subjects not related directly to the questions in the consultation document. Respondents also used this space to make a comment about which Parliament (the Scottish or UK Parliament) should have responsibility for making decisions about the referendum; to reiterate or summarise their earlier comments; or to address issues that were raised in the consultation document, but which were not the subject of a particular question.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In January 2012, the Scottish Government launched a public consultation to gather views on its proposals for undertaking a referendum on Scottish independence. This report sets out the findings of an independent analysis of the consultation responses that were submitted to the Scottish Government.

### **Background to the consultation**

- 1.2 The Scottish Government was elected in 2011 with a mandate to hold a democratic referendum on Scotland's constitutional future during the current (2011-2016) Parliamentary term. The question of Scottish independence has been widely debated by politicians, academics, business leaders and other public figures, north and south of the border and elsewhere.
- 1.3 In preparation for the referendum, the Scottish Government produced a draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill which set out a proposed legal framework for conducting the referendum. The Scottish Government then undertook a consultation to gather views on specific aspects of the draft Bill. The consultation document, 'Your Scotland, Your Referendum', was published on 25 January 2012, and the public consultation was open until 11 May 2012.<sup>1</sup>

### **Description of the consultation document**

- 1.4 'Your Scotland, Your Referendum' sought views on a range of issues including: the timetable for the referendum; the wording of the referendum question and design of the ballot paper; the franchise and proposals for increasing voter turnout; the arrangements for the operational management and oversight of the referendum; and proposals for spending limits for campaigning organisations.
- 1.5 The consultation document contained nine open-ended questions:
- **Question 1:** What are your views on the referendum question and the design of the ballot paper?
  - **Question 2:** What are your views on the proposed timetable and voting arrangements?
  - **Question 3:** What are your views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum and the voting system that could be used?
  - **Question 4:** What are your views on the proposal to give the Electoral Management Board and its Convener responsibility for the operational management of the referendum?
  - **Question 5:** What are your views on the proposed division of roles between the Electoral Management Board and the Electoral Commission?
  - **Question 6:** What are your views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday or on other ways which would make voting easier?

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government (2012) 'Your Scotland, Your Referendum'. 25 January 2012. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0038/00386122.pdf>.

- **Question 7:** What are your views on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register?
- **Question 8:** What are your views on the proposed spending limits?
- **Question 9:** Do you have any other comments about the proposals in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill?

1.6 The consultation document also addressed a range of other issues that were not the subject of specific questions, including:

- The powers of the Scottish Parliament to legislate for a referendum
- The proposal that the referendum outcome should be based on a simple majority of the votes cast, without any requirement for a minimum turnout
- The eligibility to vote (apart from the specific proposal to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds which was the subject of Question 7)
- Provisions to enable people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote
- The costs of the referendum
- The transition arrangements if the outcome of the referendum is in favour of independence.

## **Structure of this report**

1.7 The next chapter (Chapter 2) provides further information about the process by which the consultation was conducted and the number and types of responses received. Chapter 3 describes the approach taken to the analysis of consultation responses. The findings of the analysis are then presented, on a question-by-question basis, in Chapters 4 to 11.

## **2 THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TYPES OF RESPONSE**

### **How responses were received**

#### **On-line submission**

- 2.1 The Scottish Government set up a dedicated website to provide information about the consultation, including the consultation document and the standard response form containing all nine questions.<sup>2</sup> Respondents could submit their responses directly through the response form on this website. In addition, during the period of the consultation, anyone visiting the main Scottish Government website ([www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)) was presented with a pop-up window inviting them to take part in the consultation. This linked directly to the on-line response form.

#### **Submission by email or post**

- 2.2 Respondents could also submit their responses by email or by post to the Scottish Government's Elections and Constitutional Development Division.

#### **Submission through political party websites and other 'campaign' responses**

- 2.3 Both the Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish National Party (SNP) invited their supporters to submit responses through their websites. In both cases, a standard 'campaign' response was provided, covering different subsets of the nine questions in the consultation document. Individuals could simply add their names and email addresses to the standard campaign response and submit it without change. There was also the option for individuals to modify the prepared response before submitting it. Any responses submitted through the Scottish Labour Party and SNP websites were sent directly to the Scottish Government by email.
- 2.4 There was a smaller separate campaign based in and around Lanarkshire.<sup>3</sup> Most of the responses in this campaign were submitted to the Scottish Government by post, although some were also submitted through the Scottish Government's on-line response form. The origin of this campaign is not known.
- 2.5 Throughout the remainder of this report, the three campaigns will be referred to as: the Scottish Labour campaign, the SNP campaign and the Lanarkshire campaign. The standard prepared responses provided by the three campaigns are shown in Annex 1. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the content of each campaign text.

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/scotreferendum/>.

<sup>3</sup> This campaign also included eight responses from respondents from the Falkirk Council area.

**Table 2.1: Overview of content and method of submission for campaign responses**

Organising group	Content	Method of submission
Scottish Labour Party	Questions 1, 2, 3, 5	Email via the Scottish Labour Party website
Scottish National Party	Questions 1, 2, 7	Email via the Scottish National Party website
Lanarkshire campaign	Questions 1-9	Mainly by post with some via the Scottish Government's on-line response form

- 2.6 In addition, both the Scottish Labour and SNP campaign texts included a statement regarding whether the Scottish Parliament or the UK Government should have ultimate responsibility for organising the referendum. These statements do not relate directly to any of the nine questions.<sup>4</sup>

### Number of responses included in the analysis

- 2.7 A total of 30,219 responses to the consultation were received. This included 23,569 that were submitted through the Scottish Government's on-line response form. The remaining 6,650 were received by email, post or through the Scottish Labour and Scottish National Party websites (see Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2: Total responses received through different sources**

Source of response	Number of responses	%
Scottish Government's on-line response form (includes a small number of the Lanarkshire campaign responses)	23,569	78%
Email / Post (includes most Lanarkshire campaign responses)	725	2%
Scottish Labour campaign	1,190	4%
SNP campaign	4,735	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,219</b>	<b>100%</b>

- 2.8 An initial examination of the data indicated that the 30,219 responses were submitted by 29,056 respondents. Of these, 2,837 were removed from the analysis. These comprised:
- 2,828 responses which did not have **both** a name **and** contact details: Any response that did not include both the respondent's name and contact details was not included in the analysis. Names had to include either the full first name and surname or the first initial and surname. Contact details

<sup>4</sup> **Scottish Labour statement:** "I do not want the referendum to be subject to legal challenge or dragged through the courts. Clarity on which parliament has the legal responsibility to call the referendum must be sorted out." **SNP statement:** "I believe the Scottish Parliament rather than the UK Government should decide the arrangements for the referendum."

could take the form of an email address, a postal address or simply a full postcode.

- 9 joke / blank responses: These included responses that were either completely blank (submitted through the on-line response form), or were clearly intended as joke responses (for example, submissions from fictional or cartoon characters).

- 2.9 In addition, it was discovered that 1,098 respondents had submitted more than one response. Most of these had submitted two responses, and in many cases these two responses were exact duplicates.<sup>5</sup> However, a few respondents submitted three, four or five different responses. For these respondents a single composite response was created using all the text from their various submissions. This was to ensure that all of their comments were included in the analysis, but that, taken together, they counted as one response only. The only exception to this procedure was where one of the responses was a standard campaign response and the other a personal response; in these cases, the personal response was retained, and the campaign response was removed. This approach resulted in the removal of a further 1,163 responses.
- 2.10 Following the removal of responses that did not include full contact details, and those that were joke, blank and multiple responses, there were 26,219 records in the database from 26,219 respondents and these formed the basis for analysis (see Table 2.3). **Throughout the remainder of this report, the term ‘responses’ will be used to refer only to those responses that were included in the analysis.**

**Table 2.3: Number of responses included in the analysis**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
<b>Received</b>	29,056	30,219
<b>Removed</b>		
Responses with incomplete contact details	- 2,828	- 2,828
Joke / blank responses	- 9	- 9
Multiple responses from a single respondent	- 0	- 1,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>26,219</b>

- 2.11 Although, overall, there were 26,219 responses included in the analysis, the number of responses to each question varied, as shown in Table 2.4. Questions 1, 2 and 7 received the highest number of responses.

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<sup>5</sup> These were sometimes the result of an individual submitting a response by email and also by post. However, in around three quarters of cases they arose through multiple submissions by the same individual via the SNP or Scottish Labour websites.

**Table 2.4: Number of responses to each question**

<b>Question number</b>	<b>Number of responses*</b>
Question 1: What are your views on the referendum question and the design of the ballot paper?	25,533
Question 2: What are your views on the proposed timetable and voting arrangements?	25,263
Question 3: What are your views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum and the voting system that could be used?	21,712
Question 4: What are your views on the proposal to give the Electoral Management Board and its Convener responsibility for the operational management of the referendum?	18,840
Question 5: What are your views on the proposed division of roles between the Electoral Management Board and the Electoral Commission?	18,481
Question 6: What are your views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday or on other ways which would make voting easier?	20,227
Question 7: What are your views on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register?	25,019
Question 8: What are your views on the proposed spending limits?	18,217
Question 9: Do you have any other comments about the proposals in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill?	15,488

\* It should be noted that not all of the comments made at each question were of relevance to the question being posed – some related to other questions in the consultation document, or other issues not covered by any of the questions in the consultation document. This will be discussed further in the chapters on each of the individual questions (chapters 4-11).

## Type of response

- 2.12 The majority of the 26,219 responses included in the analysis were from individuals (21,198 or 81%). There were also 164 responses from organisations or groups,<sup>6</sup> 4,000 standard campaign responses and 857 non-standard campaign responses (see Table 2.5).

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<sup>6</sup> A complete list of responding organisations / groups is given in Annex 2.

**Table 2.5: Type of response**

	<b>Number of responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Individual response*	21,198	81%
Organisational / group response	164	1%
Standard campaign response**	4,000	15%
Non-standard campaign response	857	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Includes 188 personal responses received via the campaigns — see below.

\*\* Includes two responses submitted by organisations.

- 2.13 All responses received through the three campaigns were categorised as follows:

- Standard campaign: the response contained the exact campaign text with no modifications
- Non-standard campaign: the response contained one or more relatively minor modifications of the standard campaign text, but overall was sympathetic to the campaign through which it was submitted. This includes responses which incorporated the standard campaign statements, but also included comments on other questions or issues.
- Personal responses: these include lengthy responses which may (or may not) have incorporated the original campaign text. These also include responses from individuals who were clearly not sympathetic to the campaign through which they were submitted.

- 2.14 Table 2.6 shows the number of responses received through each campaign, and the numbers in each of the three categories described above.

**Table 2.6: Number of standard campaign, non-standard campaign and personal responses received through the three campaigns**

	<b>Scottish Labour</b>	<b>SNP</b>	<b>Lanark-shire</b>	<b>Total</b>
Standard campaign	615	3,300	85	4,000
Non-standard campaign	139	718	0	857
Personal responses	104	84	0	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>5,045</b>

- 2.15 In the remainder of this report, a distinction is made between individual responses; organisational / group responses; standard campaign responses; and non-standard campaign responses. The 188 personal responses received through the campaigns are included within the ‘individual response’ category.

## Description of respondents

- 2.16 Respondents who submitted their responses directly to the Scottish Government were asked to complete a Respondent Information Form with their response.<sup>7</sup> This collected information on:
- Country of residence (Scotland, rest of the UK or rest of the World)
  - For organisational respondents, the type of organisation (commercial, voluntary, electoral, political party, etc.)
  - For individual respondents, whether they were an academic or an elected representative (e.g. Councillor, MSP, MP, MEP).
- 2.17 More than three-quarters of those taking part in the consultation (just over 20,000 respondents) stated that they were resident in Scotland, while fewer than 5% said they lived elsewhere (see Table 2.7). Note, however, that there was no information about the country of residence for 4,950 respondents (19%), including all of those who submitted responses through the Scottish Labour and SNP websites.

**Table 2.7: Respondent country of residence**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Scotland	20,109	77%
Rest of the UK	779	3%
Rest of the World	381	1%
Not known	4,950	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>100%</b>

- 2.18 Table 2.8 shows the number of respondents who identified themselves as academics or elected representatives. Responses were submitted by 951 academics, and 274 elected representatives.

**Table 2.8: Academics and elected representatives**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	
Academics	951	
Elected representatives, of which...	274	↓
Councillor	191	
Member of Scottish Parliament (MSP)	51	
Member of UK Parliament (MP)	24	
Councillor, Academic	5	
Member of the European Parliament (MEP)	3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,225</b>	

<sup>7</sup> The campaigns did not ask respondents to complete a Respondent Information Form.

2.19 As mentioned above, there were 164 responses submitted by organisations or groups. Nearly one third of these were from commercial organisations and a fifth were from voluntary organisations (see Table 2.9). Political parties and electoral organisations also took part in the consultation, and about a quarter of responses came from other types of organisations or groups, including (among others) a local authority, trade unions, community groups, learned societies, religious organisations, social enterprises and a book group.

**Table 2.9: Organisation / group type**

	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
Commercial organisation	49	30%
Voluntary organisation	32	20%
Political party	15	9%
Electoral organisation	7	4%
Other	45	27%
Not known	16	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **3 APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 In undertaking an analysis of consultation responses, it is important to bear in mind that a consultation is not a vote; neither is it a population survey. It is generally the case that individuals who have a keen interest in a subject — and the capacity to respond — are more likely to participate in a consultation than those who do not. Therefore, even in cases where the response to a consultation has been very large, the findings of that consultation cannot be assumed to be representative of the views of the wider population.
- 3.2 Because of this, the main approach to consultation analysis is generally qualitative in nature.

#### **Qualitative analysis**

- 3.3 The main purpose of the ‘Your Scotland, Your Referendum’ consultation was to gather the range and depth of views that individuals and groups have on the set of issues presented in the consultation paper. Therefore, the paper asked open questions ('What are your views on X?') — rather than asking closed (tick-box) agree / disagree questions. This allowed respondents to record their views in full, rather than simply indicating whether they agreed with the proposed approach or not.
- 3.4 Thus, the main aim of the analysis was to identify (qualitatively) the key themes, as well as the full range of issues, raised by respondents in their comments on each question.
- 3.5 Separate qualitative analytical frameworks were developed for each of the nine questions, with a separate code created to cover each of the main themes arising from the responses to those questions. For example, in relation to Question 2 (What are your views on the proposed timetable and voting arrangements?), two of the main themes relating to the first part of the question were that: (i) sufficient time was needed to allow for debate prior to the referendum and (ii) a delay in holding the referendum could have an impact on the Scottish economy. Both of these main themes, and other main themes identified in the analysis, were given separate codes in the analytical framework for Question 2.
- 3.6 Coding was carried out on a question-by-question basis. Every comment was considered, and one or more codes were recorded as appropriate.

#### **Quantitative analysis**

- 3.7 Although the primary approach to the analysis was qualitative, in order to provide some context for the qualitative analysis, the Scottish Government decided to explore, through quantitative analysis, the broad balance of opinion specifically in relation to the following issues:
  - The wording of the referendum question (the first part of Question 1)
  - The proposed timetable (the first part of Question 2)

- The inclusion of a second question in the referendum (the first part of Question 3)
  - Voting on a Saturday (the first part of Question 6)
  - Extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year old young people (Question 7).
- 3.8 Note that, in relation to Questions 1, 2, 3 and 6, no attempt was made to explore (in quantitative terms) the balance of opinion on the ballot paper, the voting arrangements, the voting system that could be used, or other ways of making voting easier.
- 3.9 In considering the results of the quantitative analysis, it must be remembered that respondents were not specifically asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the Scottish Government's proposals. Therefore, many of the respondents who took part in this consultation did not explicitly indicate whether they agreed or disagreed. Rather, their responses were discursive and, in some cases, ambiguous or inconclusive in relation to their agreement or disagreement with the proposals.
- 3.10 Information on the quantitative coding frameworks, and tables showing the results of quantitative analysis are included in Annex 3.

## **4 THE REFERENDUM QUESTION AND BALLOT PAPER**

- 4.1 This chapter presents an analysis of respondents' comments in relation to Question 1 in the consultation document. Question 1 asked for views about the proposed referendum question and the design of the ballot paper. The proposed referendum question was: 'Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country?' [Yes / No]. A draft of the ballot paper (which showed the layout of the proposed question and the response boxes) was included in the document.

**Question 1: What are your views on the referendum question and the design of the ballot paper?**

- 4.2 A total of 25,533 respondents made a comment at Question 1.<sup>8</sup> Of these, 22,473 respondents made a comment specifically about the proposed referendum question.<sup>9</sup> An analysis of these comments indicated that 64% broadly agreed with the proposed wording of the question and 28% did not; the remainder had unclear or mixed views. The balance of opinion on the proposed referendum question is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

### **Comments on the proposed referendum question**

- 4.3 Respondents who agreed with the proposed referendum question generally described it as "clear", "concise", "unambiguous", "simple", "straightforward", "to the point" and "easy to understand".
- 4.4 Those who disagreed often expressed diametrically opposed views to those who agreed, describing the proposed question as "biased", "leading", "misleading", "loaded", "too simplistic", "unclear" and "confusing".
- 4.5 Those who agreed with the question generally expressed their satisfaction in a single word, or a short sentence or phrase, without further elaborating their response. However, the most common argument given in support of the proposed question was that similar wording (including the 'Do you agree...' construction) had been used for the devolution referendum in 1997.
- 4.6 In contrast, those who disagreed often provided more detailed arguments in support of their views and / or offered suggestions for alternative questions. The 28% of respondents who disagreed with the proposed question generally gave one (or more) of the following four reasons:
- The question was felt to be "biased" or "leading" in several respects. In particular, the 'Do you agree' construction was strongly believed to invite a 'Yes' response. Regarding this point, respondents sometimes cited the opinions of academics, market researchers and others who had publicly

<sup>8</sup> This number includes respondents who made comments on the ballot paper without specific reference to the proposed referendum question itself, and vice versa. It also includes respondents who made comments at Question 1 that did not relate **either** to the proposed referendum question **or** the ballot paper.

<sup>9</sup> No attempt was made to quantify precisely the number of comments made specifically on the ballot paper.

commented on the biased nature of the question. It was also suggested by some respondents that putting independence as the positive option (i.e. the ‘Yes’ choice) further accentuated the bias. Those who suggested this believed that if the positive option were the status quo, there would be a different outcome from the vote. Finally, it was also suggested that having the ‘Yes’ box above the ‘No’ box on the ballot paper could bias the response.

- Some respondents felt the question was “unclear”, since the meaning of ‘independence’ had not been adequately defined. Those who believed the question was unclear sometimes posed a series of questions about the implications of independence for defence, membership of the European Union, the currency, the Queen as head of state, and so on.
- Some respondents felt the question was “misleading” in that it did not specify that independence meant separation from the United Kingdom.
- Finally, there was a view that the proposed question was “confusing” in that it might be possible to **agree** that Scotland should be independent (perhaps at some point in the future), without actually **wanting** independence to become a reality at the present time. The ‘Do you agree’ construction was also seen by some respondents to be potentially confusing (as well as biased) because it was unclear who voters would be agreeing (or disagreeing) with. The point was also made, less often, that in some ways Scotland was already an independent country (for example, in relation to international sporting events), and therefore, it was confusing to ask if Scotland should be an independent country.

- 4.7 Respondents who supported the question sometimes indicated that they were aware of the views of people who believed the question was biased. These views were often, but not always, dismissed as being without foundation.
- 4.8 However, there was a group of respondents (including those who agreed and those who disagreed with the proposed referendum question) who advocated a more consensual approach. These respondents often said they were in favour of independence, but they were concerned that, if the vote for independence was won, it was crucial not to give those who were opposed to independence any reason for challenging the outcome. Therefore, they argued that there needed to be a consensus among all parties about the wording of the question. This point was sometimes linked to an argument for having the Electoral Commission or another independent body closely involved in drafting the question.

### **Respondents’ suggestions for alternative questions**

- 4.9 Respondents often made suggestions for one or more alternative questions which they believed would be more acceptable to them personally, or to critics. A wide variety of alternative questions were suggested. However, those mentioned most frequently were:

“Should Scotland be [or become] an independent country? [Yes / No]”

“Do you think [or believe] that Scotland should be an independent country? [Yes / No]”

"Do you want Scotland to be an independent country [or an independent state]? [Yes / No]"

"Do you agree or disagree that Scotland should be an independent country? [Agree / Disagree]"

4.10 Relatively minor changes to the proposed question included (among others):

"Do you agree that Scotland should be a **fully** [or **totally**] independent country?"

"Do you agree that Scotland should **become** an independent country?"

"Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country **now**?"

4.11 However, the 28% of respondents who did not agree with the proposed question often wanted more substantial changes. There were three main groups:

- Those who believed that the question should include a reference to separation, or leaving the United Kingdom. In some cases, respondents wanted this to be the question's main proposition:

"Should Scotland separate from the United Kingdom?"

In other cases, it was suggested that the concept of separation should simply be included in a question about independence. For example:

"Do you believe that Scotland should become an independent country separate from the United Kingdom?"

- Those who believed that the question's proposition should be based on the status quo. For example: "Should Scotland remain in the United Kingdom? [Yes / No]". Or "Do you agree that Scotland should remain a part of the United Kingdom? [Yes / No]".
- Those who felt that the referendum vote should **not** be a Yes-or-No vote. This group felt instead that the propositions for independence and for remaining in the Union should both be stated positively, and voters should be asked to vote for the proposition they favoured. Respondents who advocated this approach to the question felt this would avoid the potential bias which could result from having independence as the positive proposition (as discussed in paragraph 4.6 above, first bullet point). One example of how this might be done is as follows:

Tick only one:

Scotland should become independent

Scotland should remain part of the United Kingdom

4.12 Other respondents suggested changes along the following lines. However, these two types of suggestions were made much less often than those in 4.11 above:

- Those who argued that a vote in favour of independence only gave the Scottish Government a mandate to negotiate for independence with the

UK Government. These individuals wanted a question such as: “Do you agree that the Scottish government should enter into negotiations with the UK Government to secure independence for Scotland?”. Furthermore, this group felt that, once the terms of independence had been agreed between Scotland and the UK, there should be a second referendum so that the people of Scotland could vote on those terms.

- Those who felt the question should be as simple as possible. For example: “Should Scotland be independent? [Yes / No]”. Or even: “Scottish independence? [Yes / No]”.

## **Comments on the ballot paper**

- 4.13 Around one in six respondents made a comment about the ballot paper. Of these, nine out of ten made a positive comment such as: “The ballot paper is fine”, “The layout is fine”, “The ballot paper is clear and easy to understand”.
- 4.14 However, just over 300 respondents also made some suggestions in relation to the ballot paper. These included:
- Translating it into other languages (Gaelic was mentioned most often)
  - The need to use non-white paper (blue or yellow were mentioned), and to avoid using block capital letters, for people with dyslexia
  - Changing the distance between the Yes / No text and the boxes
  - Changing the font size for one or more of the components of the ballot paper, for example, making the Yes and No text larger.
  - Having the papers printed with No above Yes
  - Having half the papers printed with No above Yes, and half with Yes above No.
- 4.15 It was suggested that the needs of people with learning disabilities, visual impairments or reading difficulties should be taken into account in the design of the ballot paper. One way of doing this might be to use images (i.e. the Saltire for yes and the Union Jack for no; or a ‘thumbs up’ for yes and a ‘thumbs down’ for no) to help those with literacy problems. However, there was also a contrasting view that such visual aids could be seen as leading people to vote in a certain way.
- 4.16 Finally, respondents occasionally commented that voters may need to be educated in advance of the vote so that they understand how to mark their ballot paper in order for it to be counted as valid. A few respondents commented specifically that it should be acceptable for voters to put a tick, rather than an ‘X’, in the box, or to circle their chosen response.

## **Balance of opinion on the proposed referendum question**

- 4.17 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above, 22,473 respondents made a comment about the proposed referendum question. Of these, 64% agreed with the proposed question, and 28% disagreed; the remainder expressed unclear or mixed views about the question. Annex 3 provides details of how responses were classified in relation to the extent of their agreement or disagreement.

- 4.18 The proportion of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the proposed question varied substantially amongst subgroups. (See Table A3.1 in Annex 3 for details.) For example, campaign respondents (both standard and non-standard) were more likely than non-campaign respondents to agree with the proposed question. Among the organisations / groups who expressed a view, the balance of opinion was more evenly split between agreement, disagreement and mixed or unclear views.
- 4.19 Other points to note are that:
- All three of the campaigns included a statement about the referendum question in their campaign texts. The SNP campaign stated support for the proposed question, while the responses received through the Scottish Labour and Lanarkshire campaigns were classed as unclear because their comments focused on the importance of having the Electoral Commission rule on the wording of the question. Neither of these campaigns specifically stated whether they agreed or disagreed with the question proposed. Those who submitted non-standard campaign responses largely expressed similar views as the campaign through which they were submitted.
  - Of the 164 organisations / groups that responded to Question 1, 105 made a comment about the wording of the proposed referendum question. Nearly a quarter of these had unclear or mixed views. Again, this was often because the respondent advocated a role for the Electoral Commission or another independent body in advising on the question, without making their own views clear. Furthermore, some group respondents specifically stated that they had consulted their members and found mixed views on the question.

## 5 TIMETABLE AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 Question 2 of the consultation document asked respondents to comment on the proposed timetable for the referendum and on the voting arrangements. The consultation document set out the timetable from January 2012, with the referendum to be held in Autumn 2014. Other issues covered within this section of the consultation document included how to ensure the Scottish electorate is able to make an informed choice and whether there should be any minimum turnout or approval thresholds for the referendum.<sup>10</sup>

**Question 2: What are your views on the proposed timetable and voting arrangements?**

- 5.2 A total of 25,263 respondents made a comment at Question 2.<sup>11</sup> Of these, 23,897 respondents made a comment specifically about the timetable for the referendum.<sup>12</sup> An analysis of these comments indicated that 62% broadly agreed with holding the referendum in Autumn 2014 and 36% did not; the remaining respondents had mixed or unclear views. The balance of opinion on the timetable for the referendum is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

### Comments on the proposed timetable

- 5.3 Respondents who supported the timetable generally made only limited further comment. Among those who **did** go on to make further comment, one or both of the following issues were frequently raised:
- The referendum was considered to be the most important decision Scotland will make for many years. Hence it will be important to allow sufficient time for both sides of the debate to put their position to the electorate and then for the electorate to have sufficient time to give proper consideration to the arguments being put forward.
  - The timing and arrangements for the referendum must be decided within Scotland. Respondents who made this point often went on to state that the current administration had been given a mandate by the Scottish electorate through the Scottish Parliamentary elections of 2011 to hold a referendum on independence. Furthermore, the SNP had made it clear prior to the election that its intention was to hold the referendum in the latter part of the 2011-2016 parliamentary term. Thus, these respondents saw the proposed timetable for the referendum as the fulfilment of a campaign promise.

<sup>10</sup> The analysis of comments regarding approval thresholds is presented in Chapter 11, rather than in the current chapter. Comments on this topic were made across all questions (not only at Question 2), and often at Question 9, which is discussed in Chapter 11.

<sup>11</sup> This number includes respondents who made comments on the voting arrangements without specific reference to the timetable and vice versa. It also includes respondents who made comments at Question 2 that did not relate to **either** the timetable **or** the voting arrangements.

<sup>12</sup> No attempt was made to quantify precisely the comments on the voting arrangements.

- 5.4 Those who broadly agreed with holding the referendum in 2014 also sometimes suggested that they might have preferred the referendum to be held at a different time (usually earlier), although they were happy to go along with the Scottish Government's proposal.
- 5.5 Of the 36% of respondents who disagreed with the proposed timetable, almost all wanted the referendum to be held before Autumn 2014; it was rare for respondents to express a preference for a later date. Those who wanted the referendum earlier often suggested alternative dates — ranging from immediately through to Spring 2014. Others simply stated that it should be "as soon as possible".
- 5.6 Respondents who expressed a preference for an earlier referendum commonly made one (or more) of the following three points:
- It was felt that the Scottish economy could suffer in the two year period leading up to the referendum — in particular, inward investment could be affected by the (perceived) uncertainty over Scotland's future. Some also thought any concerns felt by the business community could also have a negative impact on the UK economy overall.
  - Others suggested that the referendum was being held later than necessary because the current administration believes Scotland would not vote for independence at this time, and the pro-independence camp needs two years to convince the electorate of its case.
  - There was also a view that the proposed timetable was part of a political ploy: Autumn 2014 had been chosen specifically in order to capitalise on a "feel good factor" after the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, or on the patriotic (and specifically, anti-English) sentiment that might be created by the 700-year anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn.
- 5.7 Among those who wanted an earlier timetable for the referendum, one or more of the following issues were also sometimes raised, though less often than the three above:
- Some respondents thought that two years of debate could have a negative impact on the Scottish electorate, some of whom may already be tiring of the issue. There was a concern that many people may have lost interest entirely by 2014, and there were associated concerns that voter turnout for the referendum could be low as a result.
  - Others argued that the referendum was a distraction. These respondents felt there were many important issues that the Scottish Government needed to prioritise — such as job creation or improving standards across health or education — and the current administration's focus and energy would be diverted from these critical policy areas and on to the referendum campaign.
  - Others believed that many people have already made up their minds on the issue of independence, and that the full and informed debate suggested by the consultation document is not required.

- Finally, some argued that the responsibility for deciding on the timing of the referendum does not, or should not, lie with the Scottish Government and / or any administration that is in power when the referendum is being organised. Respondents who raised this issue suggested a range of other bodies that should make the decision, including the UK Government, the Electoral Commission or another independent third party (such as the European Union or United Nations).

- 5.8 Respondents who said they would prefer the referendum to be held **later** generally suggested that the referendum should be postponed for as long as possible (in essence these appeared to be respondents who favoured the referendum not taking place at all). However, a few suggested that two years allows insufficient time for a referendum of such importance to be arranged and for all the issues to be properly debated.
- 5.9 Other issues raised occasionally by respondents about the timetable were that:
- The vote should not be held until a range of specific issues have been clarified and the electorate equipped with sufficient information to allow them to make a decision based on fact rather than principle. This view was expressed by both those who agreed and those who disagreed with the proposed timetable. Some of the issues about which respondents sought information included (among others) the relationship of an independent Scotland to the EU and arrangements for the currency.
  - The specific date chosen for the referendum should avoid main school holiday periods across Scotland and not just those for the major population centres.

## **Comments on the voting arrangements**

- 5.10 In addition to commenting on the timetable, respondents often also made further comments about the voting arrangements more generally. (It was less common for respondents to make a comment about the voting arrangements only.) These respondents generally stated their broad support for the voting arrangements as set out within the consultation document. Respondents also raised the importance of continuity and sometimes suggested that it would be simplest and fairest to keep the same arrangements that are used for other major votes (such as Scottish or UK Parliamentary elections).

## **Balance of opinion on the proposed timetable**

- 5.11 As mentioned in paragraph 5.2 above, 23,897 respondents made a comment about the proposed timetable for the referendum. Of these, 62% agreed with holding the referendum in Autumn 2014, and 36% disagreed; the remainder expressed mixed or unclear views. Annex 3 provides details of how responses were classified in relation to the extent of their agreement or disagreement.
- 5.12 The proportion of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the proposed timetable varied substantially among different types of respondents. (See

Table A3.2 in Annex 3.) For example, just over half (56%) of individual respondents agreed with the timetable and a similar proportion (53%) of organisational / group respondents also agreed. However, among both standard and non-standard campaign respondents, the percentage agreeing was over 80%.

5.13 Other points to note are that:

- All three of the campaigns included a comment about the referendum timetable. The SNP campaign stated support for the Autumn 2014 date whereas the Scottish Labour and Lanarkshire campaigns both suggested that the referendum should be held earlier. Most of those who submitted non-standard campaign responses also tended to agree or disagree depending on which campaign their response was based on.
- Organisational / group respondents were more likely than other types of respondents to have mixed or unclear views and a number also stated that their organisation had no view or did not consider it appropriate to comment on this issue.

## 6 POSSIBLE INCLUSION OF A SECOND QUESTION

- 6.1 The ‘Your Scotland, Your Referendum’ consultation paper included a section that discussed the possible inclusion of a second question in the referendum ballot. This question would give voters the option to vote for greater powers for the Scottish Parliament short of independence. The Scottish Government’s suggestion was that this second question might, for example, focus on full devolution (often referred to as ‘devolution max’, or simply ‘devo max’).<sup>13</sup> Under devo max, the Scottish Parliament would have (with certain exceptions) responsibility for all laws, taxes and duties in Scotland. However, responsibility for defence and foreign affairs, financial regulation, monetary policy and the currency would continue to be reserved to the UK Parliament.
- 6.2 The Scottish Government stated in the consultation paper that its preferred policy is independence, but that it would be willing to include a second question on further substantial devolution in the referendum if there was sufficient support for this.
- 6.3 In addition, the consultation document states that, for a one-question referendum, the outcome would be determined on the basis of a simple majority. However, in the case of a two-question referendum, a different type of voting system would need to be considered.

**Question 3: What are your views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum and the voting system that could be used?**

- 6.4 A total of 21,712 respondents made a comment at Question 3.<sup>14</sup> In addition, it was discovered during the analysis of Question 1 (which sought views on the proposed referendum question) that respondents often included comments at Question 1 which were relevant to Question 3. While these comments were sometimes repeated at Question 3, they were not in all cases. Therefore, to determine respondents’ views on the issue of a possible second referendum question, their comments on this issue at Question 1 and Question 3 were considered together.
- 6.5 Altogether, 21,281 respondents made a comment specifically about the issue of including a second question in the referendum.<sup>15</sup> An analysis of these comments indicated that 32% were broadly in favour of including a second question in the referendum and 62% were not; the remaining respondents expressed unclear or mixed views about the issue. The balance of opinion on

<sup>13</sup> The Scottish Government has described devo max in some detail in ‘Your Scotland, Your Voice’. Available from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/11/26155932/16>.

<sup>14</sup> This number includes respondents who made comments on the voting system without specifically saying whether they wanted the inclusion of a second question in the referendum, and vice versa. It also includes respondents who made comments at Question 3 that did not relate either to the issue of a second question or the voting arrangements.

<sup>15</sup> No attempt was made to quantify the comments on potential voting systems for the referendum.

the possible inclusion of a second question in the referendum is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

## **Comments on the inclusion of a second question**

- 6.6 Many of the comments made in response to Question 3 were highly complex. Respondents who favoured a second question and those who did not often provided detailed and nuanced arguments in support of their views. In addition, it appeared that respondents often understood, appreciated and sympathised with the other side's arguments. Moreover, irrespective of whether people wanted a second question or not, it was common for respondents to express the view that the Scottish Parliament should have greater powers than it currently does, and that the status quo was not acceptable.

### **Main arguments in favour of including a second question**

- 6.7 Respondents generally gave one (or more) of three reasons for wanting a second question in the referendum. The primary reason was that the inclusion of a second question would provide a greater choice to the electorate than the simple yes-or-no question to independence. Two points were often made about this issue of choice:
- Some respondents believed that many people in Scotland were unhappy with the status quo, but nevertheless had reservations about independence. There were concerns that if the referendum were a straight choice between independence and the status quo, many people would not wish to vote for either, and so may not vote at all. Not only would this have an adverse impact on voter turnout (thus making the outcome of a straight yes-or-no vote potentially open to challenge), but it would also disenfranchise a large portion of the Scottish electorate. Respondents argued that it would be "more democratic" and "more honest" to include a second question, since the result of the vote would then be a true and accurate reflection of the will of the Scottish people.
  - Some respondents also said that, despite the statements of politicians, the question of Scotland's constitutional future was **not** a black and white issue, that the reality was more complex, and that a simple vote for or against independence did not adequately reflect the Scottish public's thinking.
- 6.8 This point was linked to another main reason that respondents gave for wanting a second question in the referendum: namely, that they considered devo max to be the next logical step for Scotland. These respondents suggested that, at this stage, particularly when the world economy was so uncertain, independence felt like a step too far too fast. There was a feeling that a progression to devo max would give the devolved Scottish Parliament an opportunity to demonstrate over a period of years that it can successfully manage increased responsibility.
- 6.9 The third main reason that respondents gave for wanting a second question in the referendum related to concerns they had about what would happen if the

Scottish electorate voted no to independence. Those respondents said that they did not trust the UK Government to keep its promises to devolve further powers to Scotland if the Scottish people were to vote no to independence, and they felt a majority vote for devo max would give the Scottish Government a stronger negotiating position in any future discussions with the UK Government. However, others in this group questioned whether the UK Government would take any notice of a substantial yes vote for more powers. These individuals argued that the UK Government would need to agree in advance the specific powers which would be transferred to the Scottish Parliament in the event of a yes vote for devo max.

- 6.10 Another argument in favour of a second question — sometimes used in conjunction with one of the three above — was that it would be more efficient and economical to ask a question about devo max and independence in the same referendum. Respondents suggested that the alternative would be to have a second referendum (on devo max) if the outcome of the (first) referendum vote did not show support for independence. However, they argued that this would be costly, and that there would also be a potential for a low voter turnout in the second referendum.
- 6.11 In their comments, respondents in favour of a second question sometimes challenged the perception that including a second question would cause confusion among voters. These respondents believed that being asked to answer two questions was not complicated, and that Scottish voters would not have a problem with this.

### **Request for a second question (or more) on other subjects**

- 6.12 Around 150 respondents commented that they would like a second question on something other than devo max. The suggestions made most often were:
  - Whether to dissolve the Scottish Parliament and return to pre-devolution arrangements
  - Membership of the European Union (those who suggested this were largely opposed to Scotland's membership in the EU)
  - Whether Scotland should adopt the Euro or continue to use sterling as its currency
  - Whether the Queen should remain as head of state in an independent Scotland.
- 6.13 Less commonly it was suggested that the Scottish electorate should be given a menu of options to vote on. The aim would be to identify what degree of autonomy Scottish voters wanted for their country.

### **Arguments against a second question**

- 6.14 The principal argument against the inclusion of a second question in the referendum was that it would complicate matters and cause confusion. Respondents repeatedly stressed the need to avoid "clouding the issue". Several points were made in relation to this argument:

- The inclusion of a second question could introduce a lack of clarity about the result of the vote. If the vote for independence received a slim majority, but the vote for devo max received a larger majority, there would be potential for disagreement about whether the independence vote should be carried or not.
- The inclusion of a second question would also complicate the campaign for independence. Respondents who made this point argued that it would be hard enough for people in Scotland to fully engage with and understand the implications of independence before voting on it. Adding a campaign for devo max into the mix would merely confuse people.
- Occasionally, respondents suggested that a second question would increase the number of spoiled ballot papers due to the added complexity of the voting procedure.

- 6.15 A strong theme within respondents' comments against a second question was that the vote for independence should be resolved first, and then, depending on the outcome of that vote, further devolution could be considered at a later date. Respondents suggested this could be done in three ways: (i) through the normal negotiation arrangements already in place between the Scottish and UK governments; (ii) through a second referendum; or (iii) through the route of a general election in which individual party manifestos would identify their respective positions in relation to further devolution.
- 6.16 Another common argument against a second question was that a formal **vote** on devo max was entirely unnecessary. Respondents who made this point argued that the Scottish Government already has the right, and a mandate from the Scottish people, to negotiate for additional powers, and indeed had already successfully begun to do so in the Scotland Act 2012. These respondents believed that further powers would continue to be transferred to Scotland on an ongoing basis, making a referendum vote on devo max unnecessary.
- 6.17 Unlike those who were in favour of a second question because they saw devo max and independence on a continuum (see paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 above), some of those who were opposed to a second question saw devo max and independence as fundamentally different. These respondents argued that independence is a constitutional matter, and it was right and proper for only the people of Scotland to vote on this. In contrast, they saw devo max as a matter which affected everyone in the UK. Therefore, it was not appropriate for the people of Scotland alone to make a decision on what further powers they wished to be devolved from the UK Government.
- 6.18 Three other points were occasionally made among respondents who did not want a second question:
- Some were concerned that the inclusion of a second question could have a significant adverse impact on the response to the independence question — in particular, they believed it would “split the yes vote”. In general, these respondents thought that if there was only one question, for or against

independence, people would be more willing to vote for independence because of a strong dissatisfaction with the status quo. However, if a second question were introduced, many might be tempted to “sit on the fence” and vote for the “middle” or “compromise” option.

- Respondents who were not in favour of independence suggested that the introduction of a possible vote on devo max was a ploy by the SNP to allow them to “save face” in the event that independence is not supported.
- In contrast, SNP supporters urged the SNP leadership to hold fast to their party’s commitments and ideals, and not to dilute their push for independence.

## Comments on voting systems and the ordering of the questions

- 6.19 Respondents who were in favour of a second question made a wide range of comments about voting systems. Furthermore they often set out two or more possible alternatives. Respondents generally saw value in using a simple majority system or some form of preferential voting system, depending on the order of the questions and whether they were asked as a single question with three options, or two separate questions.
- 6.20 In general, people who advocated the inclusion of a second question argued that the first question — that is, the question on independence — should take precedence over the devo max question. In other words, a simple majority vote for independence should result in Scotland becoming independent, irrespective of whether a greater proportion of people voted for devo max. It was rare for these respondents to suggest that a larger vote for devo max should take precedence over a majority vote for independence.
- 6.21 Respondents made suggestions about how the two questions should be ordered on the ballot paper.<sup>16</sup> The most common are described below.
- **A gateway question with the independence question first.** In this case, a vote in favour of independence would also be counted as a vote for devo max if independence did not achieve a simple majority. For example:

Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country?  
[Yes / No]  
If no, would you support devo max? [Yes / No]
  - **Two separate questions, both of which should be answered by all voters.** In some cases respondents suggested that the questions should appear on two separate ballot papers, and that the ballot paper with the devo max question on it should only be counted if the vote for independence did not achieve a simple majority. For example:

Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country?  
[Yes / No]

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<sup>16</sup> Such suggestions were made both by those who wanted a second question, and those who did not. Comments from the latter group often took the form of: “I would prefer only one question. However, if there is a second question, it should be like this....”

If the result of the first question is No to independence, would you support devo max? [Yes / No]

- **A single question with three options.** Respondents who made this suggestion generally thought that the options should be ranked in order of preference. It was less common for respondents to suggest that only one of the three options should be ticked. For example:

Status Quo	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devo Max	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independence	<input type="checkbox"/>

- **A gateway question as proposed in the consultation document.**

For example:

Do you agree that the Scottish Parliament should have greater powers? [Yes / No]

If yes, tick one of the following:

Scotland should become an independent country	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scotland should have full control of all of its finances	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Comments on the meaning of devo max

- 6.22 A recurring theme in the responses to this question (both among those who were in favour of a second question and those who were not) was that respondents were often not sure what devo max meant. It was common for people to qualify their agreement to a second question by saying, "... but it needs to be defined", while some of those who were opposed to the inclusion of a second question made the point that the electorate could not be expected to vote on something that was so ill-defined.
- 6.23 Other respondents often used the term "full fiscal autonomy" to refer to devo max. This term clearly included full control over taxation and spending. A few respondents also suggested that a second question should focus on "home rule" — occasionally clarifying that this did not include responsibility for defence, foreign affairs, monetary policy and the currency. Still other respondents spoke about the creation of a "federal United Kingdom".

## Balance of opinion on the proposed referendum question

- 6.24 As mentioned above in paragraph 6.5, 21,281 respondents made a comment specifically about the issue of including a second question in the referendum. An analysis of these comments indicated that 32% were broadly in favour of including a second question and 62% were not; the remaining respondents expressed mixed or unclear views. Annex 3 provides details of how responses were classified in relation to the extent of their agreement or disagreement.
- 6.25 Among individual respondents, the proportion agreeing and disagreeing with the inclusion of a second question followed a similar pattern to the proportion overall. (See Table A3.3 in Annex 3.)

6.26 Other points to note are:

- Among those who were in favour of including a second question in the referendum, it was not usual for respondents to qualify their agreement — that is, they were happy for a second question to be included so long as certain conditions were met (e.g. “as long as the question is clear”; “as long as there’s a binding agreement by Westminster to deliver it”; “as long as each question is considered separately”). Overall, 7% of those who had a view on this issue expressed qualified agreement.
- Among those who were **not** in favour of a second question, a greater proportion expressed definite disagreement with the idea. Overall, just 3% said that their preference was not to have a second question, but they would be willing to do so **only** if certain conditions were met (e.g. “only if it can be shown that there is sufficient demand for it”; “only if someone is willing to define devo max and campaign for it”).
- The Scottish Labour and Lanarkshire campaigns both included a statement which opposed the inclusion of a second question in the referendum. The SNP standard campaign response did not include a comment on this issue.
- Organisational / group respondents were more likely than other types of respondents to have mixed or unclear views on this issue.

## **7 THE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT OF THE REFERENDUM**

- 7.1 Section 2 of the ‘Your Scotland, Your Referendum’ consultation document contained a discussion about the mechanics of the referendum. The following topics (among others) were covered:
- The operational management of the referendum
  - The responsibility for regulation and oversight of the referendum
  - The conduct of the poll and the count
  - Suggestions for improving voter turnout
  - Eligibility to vote (including a proposed extension of the franchise to voters aged 16 and 17).
- 7.2 The last two points will be covered in Chapters 8 and 9 in relation to the analysis of respondents’ comments on Questions 6 and 7 respectively. This current chapter covers the first three points, and provides a qualitative analysis of comments in relation to Questions 4 and 5. (Note that no detailed quantitative analysis was undertaken in relation to these questions.) Given the focus of these two questions, a summary is also provided at the end of this chapter of comments made by the seven electoral organisations who took part in the consultation.

**Question 4: What are your views on the proposal to give the Electoral Management Board and its Convener responsibility for the operational management of the referendum?**

**Question 5: What are your views on the proposed division of roles between the Electoral Management Board and the Electoral Commission?**

### **The Scottish Government’s proposals**

- 7.3 The consultation document set out the Scottish Government’s proposal that the Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB) and its Convener should have the responsibility for the operational management of the referendum. This proposal is consistent with arrangements currently in place for the management of local elections in Scotland.
- 7.4 The Scottish Government also proposed that the Electoral Commission should have the role of overseeing and monitoring the referendum and the role of regulating campaign expenditure. This proposal is consistent with current arrangements (set out in Scottish legislation) which give the Electoral Commission a role in supervising Scottish local government elections. For the referendum, the Electoral Commission would be responsible to, and report to the Scottish Parliament.

## Comments on the roles of the EMB and the Electoral Commission

- 7.5 Compared to the number of responses to other questions in the consultation, the numbers of responses to these two questions were among the lowest. Out of the 26,219 total respondents, 18,840 made a comment at Question 4 and 18,481 made a comment at Question 5.
- 7.6 The SNP campaign did not address either of these questions. Both the Scottish Labour and Lanarkshire campaigns agreed with the Scottish Government's proposal that the Electoral Commission should supervise / regulate the referendum. The Lanarkshire campaign also agreed that the arrangements now in place for the management of elections in Scotland should be used in the referendum.
- 7.7 Comments from individuals (not campaign responses) were often unclear or inconsistent, and these inconsistencies appeared to be based on misunderstandings of the proposals set out in the consultation document.
- 7.8 Respondents also often said that they did not have enough information to be able to comment.<sup>17</sup> Others stated that they were either not interested, or had no view on the issues addressed by Questions 4 and 5. Among those who made a comment in relation to these questions at all, a quarter made comments on both questions such as: "Unsure", "Don't know", "No opinion", "Don't mind", "Don't care", "Not interested", "Somebody has to do it" or "Doesn't matter". In considering Question 5 alone, nearly 2 out of every 5 respondents made these types of comments.
- 7.9 However, in considering respondents' other comments on these questions, it was clear that what was **most** important to them was that the management of the referendum should be — and should be seen to be — fair, independent, impartial, transparent, open to scrutiny, and not subject to political interference, regardless of who organised it. People often made this point and nothing else, and it was not unusual for respondents to say they did not care who organised the referendum, as long as it is fair / impartial / not subject to political interference / etc.
- 7.10 However, among those who expressed a view, more than half agreed at Question 4 with the Scottish Government's proposal to give the EMB responsibility for the operational management of the referendum. In addition, nearly two-thirds either stated specifically at Question 5 that they were content with the proposed division of roles between the EMB and the Electoral Commission, or they made a more general statement expressing support for the idea of having two different bodies take responsibility for the roles of operational management and oversight. This group also includes individuals who said they agreed with the Electoral Commission having a regulatory, supervisory, monitoring or overseeing role, but who made no further comment on the proposed division of roles.

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<sup>17</sup> This may suggest that people attempted to answer the consultation questions without having read the consultation document itself.

7.11 It was more common for people to agree in response to Questions 4 and 5 than to disagree. However, one group of respondents wanted the Electoral Commission to have **full** responsibility for the referendum — because of their experience and perceived impartiality. At the same time, there was also a contrasting view that there should be **no** involvement from the Electoral Commission. Those who expressed this view tended to have the opinion that the Electoral Commission could be subject to political interference from the UK Government.

7.12 Other less common themes in the responses to Questions 4 and 5 were that:

- The usual practices in relation to the management of elections should apply for the referendum.<sup>18</sup>
- The management and / or oversight of the referendum should be carried out by an external body. Those mentioned most often were the United Nations or some European body.
- Having two separate bodies in the management and oversight of the referendum would be too complicated or bureaucratic.
- An effort should be made to minimise the costs involved in running the referendum.
- Whichever bodies were responsible, they should be answerable to the Scottish Parliament. It was much less common for respondents to say the bodies should be answerable to the UK Parliament.
- The Scottish Government should seek consensus with the UK Government regarding the management and oversight of the referendum.

## Comments from electoral organisations

7.13 Seven electoral organisations took part in the consultation, including the Electoral Commission and the Electoral Management Board for Scotland. In general, these respondents were content for the EMB to undertake the operational management, administration and co-ordination of the referendum, and for the Electoral Commission to provide oversight. It was felt that this division of roles would avoid a conflict of interest which could arise if only one organisation was responsible for both administration and oversight. Only one organisation was **not** in favour of a role for the Electoral Commission in overseeing the referendum, and this was due to a lack of confidence in the organisation.

7.14 Some of the main points raised by the electoral organisations are as follows:

- It was pointed out that some of the proposals set out in the consultation document did not appear to be reflected in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill, particularly in relation to the Convener of the EMB acting in the role of the Chief Counting Officer (CCO).

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<sup>18</sup> It was generally not possible to ascertain whether respondents were referring to the usual practices for elections in Scotland, in the UK, for local government or for parliamentary elections.

- In general, respondents were content with the Convener of the EMB taking on the role of CCO although one respondent suggested the Chair of the Electoral Commission should have this role.
- It was felt that the Scottish Parliament should have the remit of appointing the CCO and not Scottish Ministers as stated in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill.
- Respondents often referred to the UK Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act, 2000 (PPERA). This Act provides a generic set of rules for conducting referendums, thus limiting the ability of governments to make rules that would favour their desired outcome. It was strongly argued that the Scottish referendum should be conducted according to this framework, or that the referendum should be administered to standards at least as rigorous as those set out in this legislation.
- Respondents felt it was important that the lessons learned in the 2011 UK Alternative Vote Referendum and the 2011 Welsh referendum — specifically in relation to the role of the CCO — should be taken into account in the Scottish referendum.
- Respondents made the point that sufficient resources would need to be provided to the bodies responsible for operational management and oversight of the referendum to enable them to fulfil their duties.
- Finally, it was suggested that the proposed relationships between the EMB, Electoral Commission and Scottish Parliament should be set out in legislation.

## 8 SATURDAY VOTING

- 8.1 This chapter presents an analysis of respondents' comments in relation to Question 6 in the consultation document. Question 6 asked for views on whether the referendum could be held on a Saturday as a way of increasing voter turnout. It also asked respondents to consider other suggestions as to how voting could be made easier — for example, by using alternatives to traditional polling stations (such as shops, libraries), or through the use of mobile polling stations.

**Question 6: What are your views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday or on other ways which would make voting easier?**

- 8.2 A total of 20,227 respondents made a comment at Question 6.<sup>19</sup> Of these, 18,994 respondents made a comment specifically about the proposal to hold the referendum on a Saturday.<sup>20</sup> An analysis of these comments indicated that 46% broadly agreed with holding the referendum on a Saturday and 32% did not; the remaining respondents had mixed or unclear views. The balance of opinion on holding the referendum on a Saturday is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

### Comments on the issue of Saturday voting

- 8.3 Comments in relation to Question 6 generally focussed on whether voter turnout would be higher if the vote were to be held on a Saturday. Those who broadly supported the idea of a Saturday vote frequently said that they would be in favour of the idea if it increased voter turnout.
- 8.4 Respondents who supported holding the referendum on a Saturday often suggested that many people would find it easier to get to a polling station on a Saturday, most obviously because fewer people would be working.
- 8.5 Respondents who supported a Saturday ballot sometimes also saw advantages beyond the potential to increase voter turnout. In particular, respondents (including those with school age children) were keen to avoid schools being closed to be used as polling stations; and a few respondents who identified themselves as employers reported that their business or workplace can be disrupted if staff have to take leave to cover childcare because their children are not in school.

<sup>19</sup> This number includes respondents who made comments about other ways of making voting easier without specific reference to Saturday voting and vice versa. It also includes respondents who made comments at Question 6 that did not relate **either** to the issue of Saturday voting **or** other ways of making voting easier.

<sup>20</sup> No attempt was made to quantify respondents' comments about other ways of making voting easier.

- 8.6 However, those who were opposed to Saturday voting suggested that voter turnout might actually be **lower** on a Saturday. Three main reasons were given for this:
- For many people, and particularly those with children, Saturday can be the busiest day of the week and some people may struggle to find time to cast their vote. It was also suggested that clashes with key sporting events, and football matches in particular, could prevent some people from going to the polls.
  - Some people may have religious beliefs that would prevent them from voting on a Saturday. Respondents also pointed out that there could be implications for the first day of the count falling on a Sunday, or of the count having to be delayed until Monday.
  - Continuity is important. Respondents argued that Scotland has always voted on a Thursday and people would be more likely to remember to vote, and indeed feel comfortable voting, if the tradition of Thursday voting was maintained.
- 8.7 In relation to the latter point, respondents also gave another reason for preferring the referendum vote on a Thursday, rather than a Saturday. It was suggested that a vote of such importance would not be the right time to “try something new”, not only because of the possible impact on turnout but also because procedures for a Saturday vote would be untested. Any problems that resulted from the introduction of new practice could call the legitimacy of the vote into question. Respondents who held this view were not necessarily opposed in principle to voting on a Saturday, but simply felt that it would be more appropriate to “pilot” Saturday voting at a local council election or a Scottish Parliamentary election rather than introducing it for the first time for the referendum vote.
- 8.8 Other respondents were opposed to a change in existing arrangements for Thursday voting. Among this group were those who believed the change to a Saturday was only being suggested because the current administration anticipates the pro-independence vote would be greater if the referendum was held on a Saturday (although it was not clear why those making this comment felt this would be the case).
- 8.9 However, other respondents presented more pragmatic arguments against a change to a Saturday vote. The point was made that the costs of holding the referendum on a Saturday might be higher, principally because of increased staffing and venue hire costs. The impact on costs of staffing a Sunday count was also raised.

### **Having a vote over two days**

- 8.10 Another frequently made comment was that voting should extend over more than one day. Those respondents who made this comment generally suggested either a Friday and a Saturday, or a Saturday and a Sunday. Two other less commonly expressed — and opposing — views were that:

- Whichever day of the week the referendum is held, school or public holidays should be avoided.
- The referendum date should be declared a public holiday (thus helping ensure more people are not at work and have the opportunity to vote).

## **Comments about other ways of increasing voter turnout**

- 8.11 In their responses to Question 8, around one in ten respondents made a more general comment in support of any / all efforts to maximise turnout and make it as easy as possible for people to vote.
- 8.12 However, respondents' views were mixed in relation to the specific suggestions set out in the consultation document for making voting easier — including the idea of locating polling stations in a range of non-traditional venues. As with a possible change to Saturday voting, there were those who felt that tried and tested practice should be retained, not least because the electorate has long-established and clear expectations about where they go to cast their vote. There were also concerns that allowing people to vote in locations such as supermarkets might in some way trivialise what is a very important event and that the security of the polling stations (and of ballot boxes in particular) might be harder to ensure in non-traditional venues. Similarly, respondents suggested that the potential for fraudulent voting might increase if there were too many polling stations.
- 8.13 In contrast, other respondents felt that any changes that might make voting easier or more appealing would be worthy of careful consideration. Some of the suggestions made by respondents included longer voting hours and allowing people to vote through the internet or by text. It was felt that these latter approaches would be particularly appealing to younger people and might boost turnout among this group.
- 8.14 Other respondents suggested that promoting postal voting might also help boost the turnout, although there were concerns that the postal voting system, in particular, could be open to fraud. Respondents tended to feel that procedures either needed to be reviewed and tightened, or there should be no postal voting allowed for the referendum.
- 8.15 Finally on the subject of turnout, there were a few respondents who felt that the easiest and most effective way of ensuring a high turnout for the referendum (and all other elections) would simply be to make voting compulsory.

## **Balance of opinion on holding the referendum on a Saturday**

- 8.16 As noted at paragraph 8.2 above, 18,994 respondents made a comment about holding the referendum on a Saturday. Of these, 46% broadly agreed with the idea of a Saturday vote, and 32% disagreed; the remainder expressed unclear or mixed views. Annex 3 provides details of how responses were classified in relation to the extent of their agreement or disagreement.

8.17 The proportions of individual and organisational / group respondents who agreed and disagreed with the idea of Saturday voting was broadly similar to the proportions overall. (See Table A3.4 in Annex 3.)

8.18 Other points to note are that:

- The Lanarkshire campaign expressed opposition to Saturday voting and advocated the vote on a Thursday. Neither the SNP nor the Scottish Labour campaigns included a statement about Saturday voting. Only nine respondents amended a standard SNP or Scottish Labour campaign response to give their views on this issue.
- Around a quarter of both individual and organisational respondents (22% and 24% respectively) expressed mixed or unclear views on the subject of Saturday voting.
- In addition, a relatively high proportion of individual and organisational respondents (13% and 17% respectively) expressed conditional or qualified agreement with the proposal. As discussed above, these respondents often suggested that the referendum could be held on a Saturday if there was evidence to suggest that voter turnout would increase as a result, while others suggested that Saturday could be an option, but as part of a two-day voting period.

## **9 EXTENDING THE FRANCHISE TO INCLUDE 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS**

- 9.1 This chapter presents an analysis of respondents' comments about extending the franchise for the referendum to include 16 and 17 year olds. The consultation document proposed that eligibility to vote in the referendum would follow the precedent of the 1997 referendum on the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and be based on that for the Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government elections. This franchise closely reflects residency in Scotland.
- 9.2 The only change from the 1997 referendum franchise proposed in the consultation document was to reduce the voting age to 16.

**Question 7: What are your views on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register?**

- 9.3 A total of 25,019 respondents made a comment at Question 7.<sup>21</sup> Of these, 24,777 respondents made a comment specifically about the franchise being extended to 16 and 17 year olds. An analysis of these comments indicated that 56% broadly agreed with the proposal to extend the franchise to this group and 41% did not; the remaining respondents expressed mixed or unclear views. The balance of opinion on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

### **Comments on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years**

- 9.4 Those who favoured extending the franchise frequently pointed out that if 16 and 17 year olds are able, for example, to get married and join the army, they should also be allowed to vote at elections. The other reason repeatedly given for supporting the extension of the franchise was that it is younger people who will live with the outcome of the referendum vote and they should be entitled to have their say on what a future Scotland will look like. Less commonly, respondents suggested that:
  - As potential tax payers, 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote according to the basic principle of 'no taxation without representation'.
  - Allowing young people aged 16 and 17 to vote in the referendum might promote their engagement with the political process more widely; this could help tackle some long standing issues around low turnout amongst younger people at elections.

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<sup>21</sup> This number includes respondents who made comments about topics or issues other than the issue of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds.

- 9.5 Respondents who supported the extension of the franchise for the referendum frequently suggested that the franchise should be extended for **all** elections. At the same time, there were also some who felt the franchise for the referendum should **only** be extended if it were to be done for all elections.
- 9.6 The timing of any extension of the franchise was also raised — those raising this issue included both those who supported making a change for the referendum and those who did not. Respondents who supported the change sometimes suggested that the extension of the franchise is long overdue and that the current age limit is inappropriate in 21<sup>st</sup> century Scotland. Some respondents favoured the extension of the franchise in principle, but did not believe that the referendum was the right time at which to make such a change. The most frequently given reasons for this latter point were that:
- Introducing the change for the referendum (either in isolation or as the first occasion on which the franchise is extended) could undermine the credibility of the result, particularly if the vote is a close one.
  - The franchise used for the referendum must be the same as that used for the election at which the current administration was given the mandate to call the referendum.
  - This is a major constitutional change, with some respondents suggesting that either it would require a referendum vote in its own right or that it should only be introduced after an election at which the change was a manifesto commitment for the party voted into office.
  - The change must apply to all elections across the whole of the UK and not just to Scotland.
  - Given both the time constraints and certain powers being reserved to the UK Parliament, it may not be possible to ensure that all 16 and 17 year olds are registered to vote by 2014.<sup>22</sup> If that were to be the case, it would not be fair or democratic to include only some 16 and 17 year olds.
- 9.7 Some respondents objected to 16 and 17 year olds being given the vote under any circumstances. This group included those who suggested that the proposed change was politically motivated — with the current administration believing that 16 and 17 year olds will be more likely to vote for independence than the electorate overall. However, other reasons given by this group for opposing the change related more to their views about 16 and 17 year olds specifically:
- It was felt that 16 and 17 year olds are simply not mature enough and have insufficient life experience to make such an important decision. This

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<sup>22</sup> As explained within the consultation document, the franchise for elections is reserved to the UK Parliament. The electoral register is established and maintained under UK legislation. The system currently allows 16 and 17 year olds to apply to be on the register if they will become 18 during the twelve months beginning on 1 December after their application. The draft Bill therefore provides that those 16 and 17 year olds who are eligible to be registered under the existing UK legislation will be able to vote in the referendum.

position was often associated with concerns that young people in this age group would be too easily influenced by their peers, parents or teachers.

- It was also argued that society does not consider 16 and 17 year olds responsible enough to buy alcohol, and the Scottish Government has recently decided they should not be able to buy cigarettes. Given these restrictions, these respondents sometimes questioned why society would consider them mature enough to vote. A few respondents also suggested that, far from citing being able to get married or join the army as a reason for allowing 16 and 17 year olds the vote, the more appropriate policy response would be to increase the minimum age for such important life decisions to 18 years.

### The views of youth organisations

- 9.8 The consultation received responses from 11 organisations or groups which are either run by, or work with, young people. Ten of these respondents were in favour of allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote in the referendum and one group reported that its membership had mixed views.
- 9.9 The reasons given for supporting the change were broadly in line with those given by other respondents and included:
- Society needs to engage young people in relation to policy issues which affect them and one of the best ways of doing this would be to allow them to have their say. Including young people in the franchise now and at future elections would send a message that the government and decision-makers take the views of young people seriously.
  - In Scotland, adult rights and duties are acquired at 16 including: to work, sign contracts, pay tax; 16 year olds can leave school, earn a wage, marry without parental consent, drive a car and serve in the armed forces.
- 9.10 Other points raised by respondents included:
- Lowering the voting age to 16 is the stated party policy of three of the five parties represented within the Scottish parliament (SNP, Scottish Liberal Democrats and Scottish Greens).
  - There are many examples of other regions, including the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey, and a range of European countries in which the voting age has been lowered to 16 years. Respondents also cited recent elections for NHS Boards in Scotland which included a vote for 16 and 17 year olds on a pilot basis.
  - **All** those who would be 16 or older on the day of the referendum should be allowed to register to vote. The Scottish and UK Governments should work together to grant all 16 and 17 year olds the right to vote in the referendum and at all subsequent votes.

## **Balance of opinion on extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds**

- 9.11 As noted at paragraph 9.3 above, 24,777 respondents made a comment about extending the franchise to include 16 and 17 year olds. Of these, 56% agreed with extending the franchise, and 41% disagreed. Only 2% of respondents expressed mixed or unclear views on this issue, and those who agreed and disagreed generally expressed definite agreement or disagreement. Annex 3 provides details of how responses were classified in relation to the extent of their agreement or disagreement.
- 9.12 The proportion of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the proposal to extend the franchise varied considerably between different types of respondents (see Table A3.5 in Annex 3). Among individual respondents, opinion was relatively balanced with 48% of individuals supporting the change and 50% advocating that the current age limits should be retained. However, among organisation / group respondents, 60% were in favour of the proposed change and only 32% were not.
- 9.13 Other points to note are that:
- Overall, around 3% of respondents expressed conditional agreement with the idea of extending the franchise. In general, these were often people who were in favour of extending the franchise as long as the extension applied to all elections and not just to the referendum.
  - The SNP campaign made a statement expressing definite agreement with extending voter eligibility to include 16 and 17 year olds and non-standard campaign responses were also very heavily weighted in favour of the proposal to extend the franchise to this group. The Scottish Labour campaign did not provide any comment on this issue. Responses from the Lanarkshire campaign were classified as agreeing conditionally, as this campaign expressed support for the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds if the law is changed for all elections.

## **10 SPENDING LIMITS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN**

- 10.1 Section 3 of ‘Your Scotland, Your Referendum’ set out the Scottish Government’s proposals in relation to campaign rules – that is, the rules that are intended to ensure that the referendum campaigns are run in a fair and transparent manner. This section of the consultation document addressed:
- The need for campaign rules
  - Which individuals or groups should be able to participate in the referendum campaign
  - The issue of public funding and proposed spending limits for participants
  - Referendum expenses, donations and returns to the Electoral Commission.
- 10.2 The penultimate question in the consultation document, Question 8, sought respondents’ views on the proposed spending limits.

**Question 8: What are your views on the proposed spending limits?**

### **The Scottish Government’s proposals**

- 10.3 The Scottish Government’s proposals seek to ensure that the referendum campaign is run in a fair and transparent manner. The proposed rules are based on UK legislation, although the spending limits have been tailored to the specific context of the referendum.
- 10.4 The consultation document proposed that the Electoral Commission would have responsibility for policing the rules and would report to the Scottish Parliament.

### **Comments on the spending limits**

- 10.5 The number of responses at Question 8 was among the lowest in the consultation, with 18,217 respondents making a comment. Only one of the campaigns made a comment in relation to this question: the Lanarkshire campaign affirmed that limits should be applied and that the proposals contained in the consultation document seemed reasonable.
- 10.6 Among those who submitted a response at this question, around 6,300 either stated they were unable to make further comment (often because they felt they had insufficient understanding of the specific proposals), or they made a comment which did not relate to campaign spending.<sup>23</sup>
- 10.7 Around 12,000 respondents expressed a view on the specific issue of campaign spending. Of these:

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<sup>23</sup> These responses tended to refer to public spending more generally.

- Around three in five respondents made a comment **either** in support of the proposed spending limits as set out in the consultation document, **or** in support of the general principle of having spending limits. However, it was not always possible to distinguish between this ‘in principle’ agreement that limits should be in place and support for the specific proposals.<sup>24</sup>
- Around one in five respondents made a statement which suggested that they **disagreed** with the proposals regarding spending limits. However, again, it was not always possible to ascertain whether these individuals disagreed with the principle of spending being limited, or with the specific proposals.

- 10.8 As noted, comments made at Question 8 frequently focused on the basic principles which should underpin the spending arrangements, rather than on the specific proposals set out within the consultation document. It was suggested that spend should be “equitable”, and that there must be high levels of transparency and accountability. Related to this latter point, there was a feeling that clear processes must be in place throughout the referendum campaign. A few respondents suggested that any ‘rule breaking’ on spend must be addressed as it happens, rather than as part of a retrospective review of whether the participants had kept spend within the prescribed limits.
- 10.9 Respondents who offered such comments generally wanted clear spending limits in place. However, a contrasting view – expressed less often – was that those campaigning should be able to spend whatever they had available and whatever they considered necessary to make their case to the Scottish electorate.
- 10.10 Other issues raised by respondents who recorded their broad disagreement or who disagreed with specific aspects of the proposals included:

- The overall spend suggested is too high, should be kept as low as possible, or is a waste of public money.
- The overall spend is too low or should not be restricted when such an important decision is being made.
- Although raised less frequently, that allowing each party represented at the Scottish Parliament to spend up to £250,000 would advantage the anti-independence campaign because there are more pro-union than pro-independence parties. Those who raised this issue generally suggested that overall equality of spend between the two campaign positions must be ensured.

- 10.11 Other issues raised by respondents were that:

- In accord with the proposals in the consultation document, respondents felt there should be no grants of public money to those who wish to campaign.

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<sup>24</sup> A typical example would be “Yes, there should be spending limits”.

- The current administration is already using, and will continue to use, Scottish Government resources (particularly in the form of Scottish Government staff) to promote their case. The respondents who made this comment questioned the appropriateness of this.
- The proposed limits would only apply to the regulated period leading up to the referendum. Respondents raising this issue sometimes went on to suggest that the regulating and monitoring of spend must start straightaway.
- Consideration should be given to whether donations from outwith Scotland should be permitted. Those who raised this issue generally felt they should not.

10.12 Finally, a recurring theme was that, irrespective of the imposition of spending limits, a fair campaign will not be achieved unless measures are taken to ensure that media coverage is even and balanced. Respondents' concerns tended to focus on the broadcast media more generally and the BBC in particular and usually suggested that these organisations demonstrate a pro-Unionist bias.

## **11 DRAFT REFERENDUM BILL AND OTHER COMMENTS**

11.1 The consultation document included a draft of the Referendum (Scotland) Bill, which incorporated many of the proposals set out in earlier sections of the document. The final question in the consultation document asked for comments about the draft Bill.

**Question 9: Do you have any other comments about the proposals in the draft Referendum (Scotland) Bill?**

11.2 Question 9 had the lowest number of responses of all the questions in the consultation document. Altogether, 10,731 respondents (out of the total 26,219) left this question blank. In addition, more than 7,000 replied with responses such as “No”, “No comment”, “No views”, “None”, and so on. It was also common for respondents to simply say, “Fine”, or “Looks ok”.

11.3 Very few of the comments at Question 9 specifically addressed the draft Bill. Altogether, just over 50 people made a substantive comment on the draft. These included suggested changes to particular sections of the Bill.

11.4 In addition, while not directly related to the draft Bill, a small number of respondents suggested that Scotland should have a written constitution, and that this constitution should form the basis for the independence vote.

11.5 Respondents often used the space provided by this question to give their views (or to ask a series of questions) on a wide range of other subjects not related directly to the questions in the consultation document, including:

- The need for further information about the implications of independence (and / or devo max) — in particular, in relation to immigration, border control, pensions, defence, the currency, and so on
- The Queen as head of state
- An independent Scotland’s membership of the European Union
- The cost of the referendum (in general, those who made a comment described it as “a waste of money”)
- Concerns about biased reporting in the media, and by the BBC in particular
- Scottish Government policies on various issues (ranging from windfarms, to air rifles and handguns, to same-sex marriage)
- Views about and voting intentions in relation to independence.

11.6 In addition, respondents often also used this space to:

- Make a comment about which Parliament (the Scottish or UK Parliament) should have responsibility for making decisions about the referendum
- Reiterate or summarise their earlier comments
- Address issues which were raised in the consultation document, but which were not the subject of a particular question.

- 11.7 In relation to this latter point, two recurring themes raised by respondents at Question 9 related to the general issue of voter eligibility (beyond the specific issue of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds) and the approval thresholds for the referendum (i.e. whether the result of the referendum should be decided on the basis of a simple majority). These two issues were not only raised at Question 9, but were occasionally raised in respondents' comments at other questions too.
- 11.8 As neither of these issues were the subject of a specific question in the consultation document, any comments made on these issues were likely to have been raised only by those respondents for whom they were particularly important. It has previously been noted in this report, that the findings of a consultation cannot be considered to be representative of the views of the general population. However, this point must be stressed again in relation to these two issues.

## **Comments on voter eligibility and the issue of a simple majority**

### **Voter eligibility**

- 11.9 As noted in Chapter 9, the consultation document proposed that eligibility to vote in the referendum would follow the precedent of the 1997 referendum and be based on the franchise for the Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government elections.
- 11.10 Although the consultation document contained no specific question on eligibility to vote beyond the inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds, a number of respondents did comment on the broader issue. Overall, around 1,700 respondents made a comment about eligibility to vote at some point within their response.
- 11.11 Just under half of these comments were broadly in favour of the franchise as proposed. Some respondents suggested that voter eligibility should be defined "as for other elections", although they did not always identify whether they were referring specifically to the franchise for the Scottish Parliament or that for UK Government elections. Other respondents stated that only people resident in Scotland at the time of the referendum should be allowed to vote. Reasons given for supporting the franchise as proposed tended to focus both on issues relating to fairness (residents will be the ones most affected by the result of the vote) and on issues relating to practical considerations (the current electoral register is the only reliable record of voters that could be in place by 2014).
- 11.12 Those who did not agree with basing the franchise on that for the Scottish Parliament elections mostly expressed the view that non-resident Scots should be allowed to take part in the referendum. For some respondents this included Scots living anywhere in the world, although others restricted the extension of the franchise to those living in other parts of the UK. Respondents who defined what they meant by 'Scots' generally referred to those born in Scotland, although an alternative definition offered was "those who would be entitled to a Scottish passport". A subset of respondents

suggested that the wider “Scottish diaspora” should be entitled to vote. In supporting their argument, respondents sometimes noted that they, or members of their family, had left Scotland to study or find work, but still saw Scotland as their home and hoped to return one day.

- 11.13 Other respondents wished to see restrictions placed on the residents of Scotland who would be entitled to vote. Most frequently, respondents suggested that non-British citizens resident in Scotland should be excluded from the vote. Another suggestion was that people should have been resident in Scotland for a certain qualifying period before they become entitled to vote in the referendum.
- 11.14 Finally, there was a group of respondents who suggested that the whole population of the UK should be entitled to vote on this issue, as any future dissolution of the Union would affect not only those living in Scotland, but everyone in the UK.

### **Simple majority**

- 11.15 The consultation document states that the referendum will not be subject to any minimum turnout requirements or approval threshold where approval is required by a minimum percentage of registered voters. This is the same basis as for the 1997 Scottish devolution referendum.
- 11.16 Although no specific question was asked, around 1,500 respondents made a comment on this issue at some point in their response. Overall, around two-thirds of those who commented agreed with the use of a simple majority to decide the outcome of the referendum. Those who explained their support for the use of the simple majority often cited the precedent of the 1997 referendum, as well as examples of other referendums held elsewhere internationally. Other respondents suggested that the use of a simple majority would be the only fair and democratic approach.
- 11.17 A range of different suggestions were put forward by those who took an alternative view. These included: setting a higher than 50% threshold for the ‘yes’ vote (for example suggesting that 60% — or some other figure — of those who vote must be in favour of independence for the vote to be carried); setting a minimum turnout figure (for example suggesting that 60% — or some other figure — of all registered voters would have to participate for the vote to be valid); or suggesting some combination of increased majority and minimum turnout. Respondents who were in favour of such thresholds often referred to the enormity — and perceived irreversibility — of the referendum decision. These respondents expressed concern that the simple majority approach could result in major constitutional change being enacted based on the views of a minority of the Scottish electorate.

## **Comments on the consultation document and consultation process**

- 11.18 Finally, this last section provides a brief summary of comments received on the consultation document itself and the consultation process. Again, these comments were made by a relatively small number of respondents overall.
- 11.19 Some respondents welcomed the consultation and the opportunity to comment. There were positive comments about the consultation document, which was described as easy to understand, thorough, and comprehensive. Respondents also commented that it was easy to participate and to submit their comments. Some specifically mentioned that this was the first time they had ever responded to a government consultation and they had found the process worthwhile.
- 11.20 Those who made critical comments tended to focus on the perceived “one-sided” or “biased” nature of the consultation, for example in relation to the lack of balance in the document about the consequences of a ‘No’ vote. (The consequences of a ‘Yes’ vote were covered in detail.) There were also comments about the lack of detail on what independence would entail. In relation to the consultation process, there was a perception that it was not easy for people to participate if they did not have internet access; and that links to further information occasionally did not work. A few respondents were concerned about the possibility that multiple and anonymous responses could skew the outcome of the consultation; others were wary of how the responses would be analysed and presented.

## **ANNEX 1: CAMPAIGN TEXTS**

### **Scottish Labour campaign**

The referendum on Scotland's constitutional future is hugely important, and I want to have my say on how the referendum is run. I want it to be legal, fair, and decisive.

#### **Legal**

I do not want the referendum to be subject to legal challenge or dragged through the courts. Clarity on which parliament has the legal responsibility to call the referendum must be sorted out.

#### **Fair**

I want the referendum to be supervised by the Electoral Commission, and I am opposed to any attempt to water down their role. They must have the legal power to rule on the wording of the question.

#### **Decisive**

There should only be one question in order to give a definitive answer on whether or not Scotland remains part of the UK. I do not support attempts to muddy the water with further questions on other matters. I want the referendum sooner rather than later and do not see the need to wait almost three years.

Please take my views into account.

### **SNP campaign**

I believe the Scottish Parliament rather than the UK Government should decide the arrangements for the referendum.

I support the suggested wording of the question: 'Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country'. This is clear and fair.

I agree that the referendum should be held in autumn 2014.

I believe 16 and 17 year old young people should be able to vote, given they can marry, pay taxes and join the army. The referendum is about their future too.

## **Lanarkshire campaign**

### **Question 1**

This is a very important question which I believe should be addressed by the Electoral Commission.

### **Question 2**

The question should be put to the people of Scotland as soon as possible. The delay is causing uncertainty and wasting civil service time and resources preparing for something the people of Scotland may or may not vote for. This all adds to expense for the taxpayer.

### **Question 3**

There should be one question on the referendum ballot paper and the outcome decided on a simple majority basis.

### **Question 4**

The arrangements now in place for the management of elections in Scotland are satisfactory and should be used in the referendum.

### **Question 5**

The arrangements now in place for the management of elections in Scotland are satisfactory and should be used in the referendum. The Electoral Commission should regulate the Referendum.

### **Question 6**

There are strong traditional and religious arguments against holding the referendum on a Saturday. I believe that it should be held on a Thursday.

### **Question 7**

If the law is changed for all elections I have no objections to 16 & 17 year olds having the right to vote. Registration procedures will require to be considered very carefully especially issues in relation to child protection and the need to publish electoral registers.

### **Question 8**

I agree there should be a limit and believe the proposals are reasonable.

### **Question 9**

No.

## **ANNEX 2: LIST OF ORGANISATIONAL / GROUP RESPONDENTS**

- 55 North Network Ltd
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
- Aberdeen Central Constituency Branch of the Scottish National Party
- Aberdeen City Centre Association
- Aberdeen University Fourth Year Law Students
- Academy of Government, University of Edinburgh
- ACCOUNTABILITY SCOTLAND
- ADS Scotland
- African and Caribbean Network Ltd
- Aitchtech
- Anderson Construction
- Andersons Northern Ltd
- Angus Conservative and Unionist Association
- Ardgay & District Community Council
- Asgard
- Ashdown Associates
- ASLEF
- Association of British Insurers
- Association of Electoral Administrators
- Auchmuty and Dovecot Tenants and Residents Association
- Banffshire Business
- BEMIS
- Black Triangle Anti-Defamation Campaign in Defence of Disability Rights
- British Armed Forces Federation
- British Monarchist Society
- British Trout Association Ltd
- Business for Scotland
- CBI Scotland
- The Central Scotland News Agency Ltd.
- Children 1st
- Children in Scotland
- The Church of Scotland
- Clovenfords Magazine
- Communist Party of Scotland
- Connecticut Chapter, Clan MacQuarrie Society
- Constitutional Reform Working Group, RSE Young Academy of Scotland
- Coul House Hotel
- The Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) Scotland
- Crawford Architectural Design Services Ltd
- CWU Dundee Clerical Branch
- CWU Edinburgh, Dundee and Borders Branch
- CWU Glasgow Amal
- CWU Scotland No. 5 Branch
- CWU Scotland Regional Committee
- CWU Scottish Regional Political Forum
- The de Borda Institute
- Democratic Left Scotland
- Devoplus
- Dumfries and Galloway Constituency Labour Party
- Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale Constituency Labour Party
- Dundee Youth Council
- Edinburgh Books
- EIS
- Ekklesia
- Electoral Commission
- The Electoral Management Board for Scotland (EMB)
- Electoral Reform Society Scotland
- Employment Enterprise
- Ernest Stephens & Son (+Mrs Stephens)
- Everyday Mindfulness Scotland
- Evolution Design Limited
- FIFE FABRICATIONS LIMITED
- Finite State Systems Ltd
- Forum of Private Business
- Free Scotland Party
- Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
- Glasgow North Liberal Democrat Local Party
- Grampian & Shetland Branch of the CWU
- The Hamilton Toy Collection
- Heriot Watt University Student Union
- Hg Planning
- Hulse Organisation Limited
- IAN-IT
- ImaginEars Animation Studio
- Indian Workers Association, Glasgow
- Industrial New Media Limited
- Infinity Oils
- Isle of Arran SNP
- JDC Consulting

- JGC Engineering & Technical Services Ltd
- Josh Cold Store Pvt. Ltd
- Law Society of Scotland
- Legal and Debt Solutions Limited
- Legal Knowledge Scotland
- Lindon Technical Services
- The London Scottish Conservative Club
- Loy Surveys Ltd
- Macbar Civil Engineering Ltd
- Mistletoe Ltd
- Morton Research Labs
- Munro Sawmills Ltd
- National Liberal Party
- National Museums Scotland
- New EU Support Service CIC
- New Prosperity
- No Campaign Limited
- Number One Ladies Bookgroup of Strathearn
- NUS Scotland
- Old Ravenshaw Farm
- One Dynamic Nation
- Phoenix Hotel Brand Ltd
- Public and Commercial Services Union
- Queen's Federation of Student Nationalists
- Red Paper Collective
- Reform Scotland
- Renfrewshire Youth Voice
- Residents Against Turbines Scotland
- RJS Consulting Services Ltd
- The Royal Society of Edinburgh
- The Rural Development Company Ltd.
- Ruthless Research
- Saltire Scotland
- The Salvation Army
- SBPA
- The Scotch Whisky Association
- Scottish Assessors' Association Electoral Registration Committee
- Scottish Chambers of Commerce
- Scottish Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship"
- Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party
- The Scottish Council for Development and Industry
- Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
- Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- Scottish Council on Deafness
- Scottish Democratic Alliance
- Scottish Democratic Alliance – Caithness & Sutherland Branch
- Scottish Engineering
- Scottish Federation of University Women – Glasgow Association
- Scottish Federation of University Women – Inverclyde Association
- Scottish Federation of University Women – Dundee Association
- Scottish Financial Enterprise
- The Scottish Human Rights Commission
- Scottish Independence Convention
- Scottish Liberal Democrats
- Scottish Monetary Reform.org.uk
- Scottish National Party
- Scottish Republican Socialist Movement
- Scottish Socialist Party
- Scottish Trades Union Congress
- Scottish Women's Convention
- Scottish Youth Parliament
- Simon Bell Driving School
- Simple HR Ltd
- Society and College of Radiographers
- Solidarity: Scotland's Socialist Movement
- South Londonderry Ulster-Scots Association
- Swan Electronics
- Think Different Events Ltd.
- The Thistle Foundation
- UCATT
- Ujazz Records Limited
- Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW)
- UNISON Scotland
- Unite Scotland
- Universities Scotland
- University and College Union Scotland
- Unlock Democracy
- Veracity UK Ltd
- VETCEL LIMITED
- The Weir Group PLC
- West Lothian Council
- Whisky Kiss
- WSD Scotland Ltd
- Young Scots for Independence (YSI)
- YouthLink Scotland

## **ANNEX 3: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS AND TABLES**

This Annex provides information about the quantitative coding frameworks for Questions (or parts of Questions) 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7. In particular, this section includes details of how respondents' comments were classified in relation to agreement or disagreement with the following issues:

- The proposed referendum question (Question 1)
- The proposed timetable (Question 2)
- The issue of whether a second question should be included in the referendum (Question 3)
- The issue of Saturday voting (Question 6)
- Whether the franchise should be extended to include 16 and 17 year olds (Question 7).

As has previously been stated in Chapter 3, the consultation document did not ask respondents to specifically say whether they agreed or disagreed with these proposals. Rather respondents were asked open-ended questions: 'What are your views about X?'.

Therefore, the comments that have been received did not always lend themselves to categorisation on the basis of agreement or disagreement. In some cases respondents explicitly stated their agreement / disagreement; in other cases, their agreement / disagreement had to be inferred. However, in still other cases it was not possible to determine whether they agreed or disagreed at all.

A coding framework was developed for each of the questions to reflect the comments submitted to each.

## **Question 1: What are your views on the referendum question?**

Six quantitative categories were used:

- **Definite agreement:** Respondent made a comment which clearly indicates that they are satisfied with the proposed referendum question. For example:
  - “The referendum question is clear and concise.”
- **Inferred or conditional agreement:** Respondent made a comment which can be inferred as agreeing with the proposed referendum question. This category includes comments in which the respondent made a positive comment, but also suggested an amendment (usually minor) to the question. For example:
  - “The question is good, but would prefer to change ‘country’ to ‘nation’”.
- **Mixed or unclear views:** Respondent made a comment about the question, but it could not be classified as agreement or disagreement. In many cases, this is because they made both positive and negative comments about the question without making their own views clear.
  - For example:
    - “The referendum question and ballot paper are clear and appropriate, but the question is leading.”
- **Other comment:** Respondent made a comment which was not about the proposed referendum question. (For the purposes of quantitative analysis, if the respondent made a comment about the ballot paper, but no comment about the question, the comment was categorised as ‘other comment’.)
- **No answer:** Respondent did not answer the question.
  - Question left blank.
- **Disagreement:** Respondent made a comment which either indicates clear disagreement, or for which disagreement with the proposed referendum question is implied. For example:
  - “The question is biased in favour of a yes response. Change it to ‘Should Scotland be independent?’”

**A3.1: Respondents' views on the proposed referendum question (Question 1)**

	Individuals		Organisations / groups		Non-standard campaigns		Standard campaigns		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Definite agreement with proposed question	10,147	58%	40	38%	689	83%	3,300	83%	14,176	63%
Inferred or conditional agreement	332	2%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	334	1%
Disagreement with proposed question	6,236	36%	40	38%	22	3%	0	0%	6,298	28%
Mixed or unclear views	818	5%	23	22%	124	15%	700	18%	1,665	7%
<b>Total comments on proposed referendum question</b>	<b>17,533</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22,473</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other comments (not about the proposed question)	3,020		34		6		0		3,060	
<b>All comments at Question 1 (comments on proposed referendum question + other comments)</b>	<b>20,553</b>		<b>139</b>		<b>841</b>		<b>4,000</b>		<b>25,533</b>	
No answer / question left blank	645		25		16		0		686	
<b>Base</b>	<b>21,198</b>		<b>164</b>		<b>857</b>		<b>4,000</b>		<b>26,219</b>	

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Question 2: What are your views on the proposed timetable?

Seven quantitative categories were used:

- **Definite agreement:** Respondent said they agreed, or were happy with the proposed timetable. For example:
  - “I think Autumn 2014 is just right.”
- **Inferred or conditional agreement:** Respondent made a positive comment which implied agreement with the timetable, or the respondent agreed with the timetable, but put conditions on that agreement. For example:
  - “Probably OK if everything can be done properly by then.”
- **Definite disagreement:** Respondent specifically stated that they did not agree with the timetable as set out in the consultation document – or that they would prefer an earlier (or later) timetable. For example:
  - “Have it earlier – 2013 at the latest.”
- **Inferred or conditional disagreement:** Respondent stated that their preference would be to have an earlier (or later) timetable, but they would be willing to agree to the timetable set out in the consultation document in certain circumstances or for certain reasons. For example:
  - “I would prefer earlier, but it would be acceptable if the Electoral Commission thought so.”

**Table A3.2: Respondents' views on the proposed timetable (Question 2)**

	Individuals			Organisations / groups			Non-standard campaigns			Standard campaigns			Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Definite agreement with the proposed timetable	10,057	53%	63	51%	674	81%	3,300	83%	14,094	59%				
Inferred or conditional agreement	604	3%	2	2%	5	1%	0	0%	611	3%				
Definite disagreement with the proposed timetable	6,615	35%	42	34%	136	16%	700	18%	7,493	31%				
Inferred or conditional disagreement	1,219	6%	7	6%	6	1%	0	0%	1,232	5%				
Mixed or unclear views	451	2%	10	8%	6	1%	0	0%	467	2%				
<b>Total comments on the proposed timetable</b>	<b>18,946</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>23,897</b>	<b>100%</b>				
Other comments (not about the proposed timetable)	1,353	9	4	4	0	0	1,366	1,366						
<b>All comments at Question 2 (comments on proposed timetable + other comments)</b>	<b>20,299</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>25,263</b>	<b>25,263</b>								
No answer / question left blank	899	31	26	0	956	956								
<b>Base</b>	<b>21,198</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>26,219</b>								

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

### **Question 3: What are your views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum?**

Seven quantitative categories were used:

- **Definite agreement:** Respondent expressed clear agreement with the idea of having a second question in the referendum. For example:
  - “I would welcome a second question because...”
- **Inferred or conditional agreement:** Respondent agreed that a second question should (or could) be included if certain conditions were met. For example:
  - “Happy if that’s what people want / ... if that’s what the Scottish Government thinks.”
- **Definite disagreement:** Respondent clearly disagreed with the idea of having a second question. For example:
  - “A second question muddies the issue.”
- **Prefers not:** Respondent stated that they would prefer **not** to have a second question, but would be willing to do so in certain circumstances or for particular reasons. This category also included people who said that a second question should **only** be used in certain circumstances, or should **not** be used **unless** certain conditions were met. For example:
  - “A second question should only be included if this consultation shows there is a demand for it. I would prefer one question.”
- **Mixed or unclear views:** Respondent presented arguments for and against the idea of having a second question without making his / her own views clear. This category also includes: (i) comments that expressed a (weak) willingness to have a second question, but at the same time expressed concerns or presented arguments against it; and (ii) those where the respondent said they were ambivalent, undecided or unsure about the issue. For example:
  - “Not sure. It depends on what the second question is!”
- **Other comment:** Respondent made a comment which was not about the issue of a second question. (For the purposes of quantitative analysis, if the respondent made a comment about the potential voting system, but no comment about whether they preferred one question or two in the referendum, the comment was categorised as ‘other comment’.)
- **No answer:** Respondent did not answer the question.
  - Question left blank.

**Table A3.3: Respondents' views on the inclusion of a second question in the referendum (Question 3)**

	Individuals		Organisations / groups		Non-standard campaigns		Standard campaigns		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Definite agreement with the inclusion of a second question	5,222	26%	34	27%	56	24%	0	0%	5,312	25%
Inferred or conditional agreement	1,552	8%	7	6%	10	4%	0	0%	1,569	7%
Definite disagreement	11,591	57%	66	53%	163	70%	700	100%	12,520	59%
Prefers not	719	4%	6	5%	0	0%	0	0%	725	3%
Mixed / unclear views	1,138	6%	12	10%	5	2%	0	0%	1,155	5%
<b>Total comments on the issue of a second question</b>	<b>20,222</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21,281</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other comments (not on the issue of a second question)	413	16	2	2	0	0	431	431	431	431
<b>All comments at Question 3 (comments on the issue of a second question + other comments)</b>	<b>20,635</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>21,712</b>	<b>21,712</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>26,219</b>
No answer / question left blank	563	23	621	3,300	3,300	4,507	4,507	4,507	4,507	4,507
<b>Base</b>	<b>21,198</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>4,507</b>	<b>26,219</b>	<b>26,219</b>

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## **Question 6: What are your views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday?**

Seven quantitative categories were used:

- **Definite agreement:** Respondent made a comment which indicates that they would be in favour of holding the referendum on a Saturday. For example:
  - “Great idea! Why hasn’t it always been on a Saturday!”
- **Inferred or conditional agreement:** Respondent made a positive comment which implied agreement with the idea of holding the referendum on a Saturday, or the respondent agreed but put conditions on that agreement, or the respondent agreed but also made further suggestions. For example:
  - “Certainly worth considering, but why not Saturday and Sunday?”
- **Definite disagreement:** Respondent specifically stated that they did not agree with the idea of holding the referendum on a Saturday. For example:
  - “It’s always been a Thursday. It shouldn’t be changed now.”
- **Mixed or unclear views:** Respondent made a comment about Saturday voting, but their views were not clear. In some cases, this is because they gave arguments both for and against Saturday voting without making their own views clear. For example:
  - “Tricky one – has both its pros and cons.”
- **Other comment:** Respondent made a comment which was not about the issue of Saturday voting. (For the purposes of quantitative analysis, if the respondent made a comment about other ways of increasing voter turnout, but no comment about Saturday voting, the comment was categorised as ‘other comment’.)
- **No answer:** Respondent did not answer the question.
- Question left blank.

**Table A3.4: Respondents' views on the idea that the referendum could be held on a Saturday (Question 6)**

	Individuals		Organisations / groups		Non-standard campaigns		Standard campaigns		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Definite agreement	6,314	34%	27	23%	3	33%	0	0%	6,344	33%
Inferred or conditional agreement	2,387	13%	20	17%	3	33%	0	0%	2,410	13%
Definite disagreement	4,940	26%	26	23%	2	22%	85	100%	5,053	27%
Inferred or conditional disagreement	925	5%	14	12%	0	0%	0	0%	939	5%
Mixed or unclear views	4,219	22%	28	24%	1	11%	0	0%	4,248	22%
<b>Total comments on Saturday voting</b>	<b>18,785</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18,994</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other comments (not on Saturday voting)	1,221	11	1	1	0	0%	0	0%	1,233	1
<b>All comments at Question 6 (comments on Saturday voting + other comments)</b>	<b>20,006</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>20,227</b>					
No answer / question left blank	1,192	38	847	847	3,915	5,992				
<b>Base</b>	<b>21,198</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>26,219</b>					

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.  
<sup>6</sup>Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## **Question 7: What are your views on extending the franchise to those aged 16 and 17 years who are eligible to be registered on the electoral register?**

Seven quantitative categories were used:

- **Definite agreement:** Respondent was clearly in favour of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. For example:
  - “Why not – it’s their future.”
- **Inferred or conditional agreement:** Respondent expressed agreement with the proposal to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, but put conditions on that agreement. For example:
  - “Seems like a good idea, so long as the schools explain the importance of voting.”
- **Definite disagreement:** Respondent was clearly not in favour of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. For example:
  - “Terrible idea. They’re just children.”
- **Inferred or conditional disagreement:** Respondent’s comments can be inferred as disagreeing with the proposal to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds, or they disagreed unless specific conditions were met. For example:
  - “Do they have enough life experience to be able to vote?”
- **Mixed or unclear views:** Respondent made a comment about extending the vote to 16 and 17 year olds, but their views were not clear. In some cases, this is because they gave arguments both for and against the proposal without making their own views clear. For example:
  - “My daughter would love to vote, but some of her friends are very immature.”
- **Other comment:** Respondent made a comment which was not about the subject of extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds.
- **No answer:** Respondent did not answer the question. Question left blank.

**Table A3.5: Respondents' views on extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds (Question 7)**

	Individuals		Organisations / groups		Non-standard campaigns		Standard campaigns		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Definite agreement with extending the franchise	9,226	45%	62	48%	607	90%	3,300	97%	13,195	53%
Inferred or conditional agreement	712	3%	15	12%	6	1%	85	3%	818	3%
Definite disagreement with extending the franchise	9,917	48%	39	30%	54	8%	0	0%	10,010	40%
Inferred or conditional disagreement	352	2%	3	2%	0	0%	0	0%	355	1%
Mixed or unclear views	385	2%	10	8%	4	1%	0	0%	399	2%
<b>Total comments on extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds</b>	<b>20,592</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,385</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>24,777</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other comments (not about extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds)	235	3	4	0					242	
<b>All comments at Question 7 (comments on extending the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds + other comments)</b>	<b>20,827</b>		<b>132</b>		<b>675</b>		<b>3,385</b>		<b>25,019</b>	
No answer / question left blank	371	32	182	615	4,000	1,200				
<b>Base</b>	<b>21,198</b>		<b>164</b>		<b>857</b>		<b>4,000</b>		<b>26,219</b>	

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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