



The Scottish  
Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Public Services and Government

Testing the Young Voter  
Registration Form for the  
2014 Referendum on  
Scottish Independence



social  
research

**TESTING THE YOUNG VOTER REGISTRATION  
FORM FOR THE 2014 REFERENDUM ON SCOTTISH  
INDEPENDENCE**

**Vanessa Chan, Lorraine Murray, Kate Sewel and Steven Treanor**

**Ipsos MORI Scotland**

Scottish Government Social Research  
2013

This report is available on the Scottish Government Social Research website ([www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch)) only.

**The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.**

© Crown copyright 2013

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Table of Contents**

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2	INTRODUCTION	3
	Background	3
	Aims and objectives	4
3	METHODOLOGY	5
	Sample profile and recruitment	5
	Fieldwork	6
	The Young Voter Registration Form and other research materials	7
4	FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	8
	Main findings	8
	Changes made between version 1 and version 2	8
	Errors made when completing the YVF	9
	Other issues with the YVF	10
	Findings in relation to the annual canvass form	12
	Conclusions	13
	APPENDIX A: RESEARCH MATERIALS	14

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 A draft Young Voter Registration Form (YVF) was developed by the Scottish Government. The YVF will be used to register young people to allow them to vote in the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. This document provides the findings from Ipsos MORI's testing of the YVF.
- 1.2 The ultimate aim of the study was to test whether the purpose of the YVF was easily understood and that the YVF was correctly completed by households who have 15 year olds who will be 16 by the date of the referendum.

### **Methodology**

- 1.3 The testing method was qualitative in nature. It was conducted through a series of 40 one-to-one cognitive interviews which involved: participants completing the YVF and a generic annual canvass form; researchers observing how participants completed the forms; an in-depth interview with participants.
- 1.4 To ensure that the testing explored the experiences of a range of people in different circumstances, and thereby identify a range of potential problems with the YVF, interviews were carried out with participants from a mix of different types of households, levels of qualifications and working status.
- 1.5 In addition, the study included groups who are likely to experience problems with filling out forms because of language issues or low literacy.
- 1.6 To begin with, the draft version of the YVF designed by the Scottish Government (version 1) was tested in 23 interviews. In light of the findings which emerged in these interviews, the YVF was slightly amended. The amended version of the YVF (version 2) was tested in the remaining 17 interviews.

### **Main findings**

- 1.7 The findings from the testing show that the YVF works well. The instructions provided at the front of the YVF were felt to be "clear" and "easy to understand" and, from reading these, participants were generally able to understand the purpose of the form.
- 1.8 Those who had 15 year olds in their household experienced little difficulty in working out whether their child would be 16 by the referendum date. Those who had eligible 15 year olds were generally positive about the layout of the YVF and found it easy to complete.
- 1.9 In general, participants completed the YVF correctly or correctly left it blank. The few errors that did emerge could be dealt with by Electoral Registration Officers without the need to re-contact households for clarification.
- 1.10 Above all, nobody failed to include an eligible 15 year old on the YVF.

## **Changes made between version 1 and version 2**

- 1.11 There was a view among participants that there was too much text in the instructions on the front page and some participants did not understand the word „eligible“. In version 2, the instructions were amended accordingly. The remaining changes made were in relation to the layout of the YVF in order to overcome errors which emerged in testing version 1.
- 1.12 The fairly minor amendments that were made to create version 2 appeared to work well among participants.

## **Errors made when completing the YVF**

- 1.13 While in most cases participants filled out the YVF correctly or correctly left it blank, a small number of errors did emerge during the testing: one participant in his twenties included himself on both forms; one participant included a 15 year old on the YVF and the annual canvass form; one participant included a 16 year old on the YVF instead of the annual canvass form; one participant included a 16 year old on the YVF and the annual canvass form; two participants from households containing ineligible children signed blank YVFs.

## **Other issues with the YVF**

- 1.14 There was some uncertainty around whether participants themselves, or their eligible 15 year olds, should complete and sign the YVF. Anyone in the household, including the young person themselves, could complete and sign the YVF. Even in the interviews where there was uncertainty, the YVFs were nonetheless completed, so we recommend keeping the YVF as it stands.

## **Conclusions**

- 1.15 The testing found that the YVF worked well from the outset:
- participants understood what the YVF was for
  - those with eligible 15 year olds were able to complete the YVF accurately and with ease
  - those in ineligible households correctly left the YVF blank
  - the amendments that were made to the YVF during the testing appeared to work well.
- 1.16 We recommend keeping version 2 of the YVF largely as it stands. The only amendment we recommend is changing the word „mailshot“, used on the back page to explain how the electoral register may be used by certain organisations, to „information“.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A draft Young Voter Registration Form (YVF) was developed by the Scottish Government. The YVF will be used to register young people to allow them to vote in the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence. This document provides the findings from Ipsos MORI's testing of the YVF.

### Background

- 2.2 In May 2011, the Scottish National Party was elected to form the Scottish Government with a manifesto commitment to hold a referendum on independence during the current parliamentary session at Holyrood (2011-2016). The Scottish Government's consultation, *Your Scotland, Your Referendum*<sup>1</sup>, which was published in January 2012, proposed that the franchise for the referendum should be extended to cover 16 and 17 year olds.
- 2.3 Following negotiations, on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012, the UK Prime Minister and the Scottish First Minister signed the Edinburgh Agreement<sup>2</sup> which outlines the broad terms under which the referendum may take place – including extending the voting franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. The specific terms of the referendum will be subject to vote by the Scottish Parliament.
- 2.4 The existing electoral registration system only allows for those aged under 18 to be registered if they will become 18 during the twelve months beginning on the 1<sup>st</sup> December after their registration. As part of the arrangements for ensuring that all eligible young people (at least 16 at time of the referendum) are able to register to vote in time for the referendum, a „Young Voter Registration Form“ will be distributed to households as part of the next canvass (due Winter 2013 - Spring 2014).
- 2.5 The Scottish Government has developed a draft YVF, with reference to the principles of the Electoral Commission's "Making Your Mark"<sup>3</sup> guidance and it was designed to be similar in format to the regular annual canvass forms.
- 2.6 The YVF is intended to collect the details of 15 year olds who will be 16 by the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the date of the referendum. The registration of 16 and 17 year olds will be covered by the regular annual canvass forms sent out by the Electoral Registration Officers.
- 2.7 Ipsos MORI was commissioned by the Scottish Government to test the draft YVF with members of the public to assess whether it is user-friendly and that the appropriate information is collected.
- 2.8 The final version of the YVF is a schedule to the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill, which was introduced to Parliament on the 11<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0038/00386122.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404789.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/150358/Making-Your-Mark-Design-Guidance-For-Electoral-Administrators.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/150358/Making-Your-Mark-Design-Guidance-For-Electoral-Administrators.pdf)

March 2013 and, if supported by Parliament, is due to be passed in summer 2013. Under the Bill, Electoral Registration Officers will be required to use the YVF, alongside annual canvass forms, for the registration of eligible 15 year olds.

### **Aims and objectives**

- 2.9 The ultimate aim of the study was to test whether the purpose of the YVF was easily understood and whether the form was completed accurately, i.e.:
- everyone who should be included was included
  - those who should not be included, were not included
  - that the Young Voter Form worked properly in conjunction with the annual canvass form.
- 2.10 The research was designed to establish whether:
- people understand what the YVF was for
  - people know who should, and should not, be included on the YVF
  - the correct information about individuals was provided
  - the YVF was easy to complete
  - any improvements could be made to the form to ensure that the above criteria are met.
- 2.11 The research specifically included groups who were more likely to encounter difficulties, such as those who have lower levels of literacy or whose first language is not English.
- 2.12 The clarity of instructions for how completed YVFs should be returned to Electoral Registration Officers, the usability of annual canvass forms and attitudes to extending the voting franchise to 16 and 17 year olds were outwith the scope of this study.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The testing of the YVF was conducted through a series of one-to-one cognitive interviews which involved:
- giving participants an envelope containing an annual canvass form placed over the YVF and asking them to complete these as they would if they had received them in the post
  - researchers observing how participants completed the YVFs
  - an in-depth interview with participants to establish whether YVFs were completed accurately, the reasons behind any errors made and views on the usability of the YVF.
- 3.2 The testing method was qualitative in nature: it was primarily concerned with uncovering the range of potential problems experienced when participants completed the YVFs and why these problems arose. It was not designed to measure the likely prevalence of errors among the wider population and was therefore not a quantitative exercise.

#### Sample profile and recruitment

- 3.3 To ensure that the testing explored the experiences of a range of people in different circumstances, and thereby identify a range of potential problems with the YVF, interviews were carried out with the main householder in households containing:
- 15 year olds who will be 16 by the date of the referendum – referred to as „eligible households“ (householders should fill in the YVF)
  - 15 year olds who will not be 16 by the date of the referendum, 13-14 year olds or 16-17 year olds – referred to as „almost eligible households“ (householders should not fill out the YVF but may have made errors because of their child’s age being close to the eligible age)
  - 0-12 year olds or no children – referred to as „ineligible households“ (householders should not fill out the YVF).
- 3.4 In addition, the testing targeted groups who are likely to experience problems with filling out forms because of language issues or low literacy.
- 3.5 Forty interviews were conducted in total. Table 2.1 shows the breakdown of interviews by household type.

**Table 2.1: Sample profile**

	Main sample	English as a 2 <sup>nd</sup> language	Low literacy	Total
Eligible households	12	1	1	14
Almost eligible households	10	1	0	11
Ineligible households	10	2	3	15
Total	32	4	4	40

- 3.6 The testing included both men (12) and women (28) with different levels of qualifications (at least 12 participants had less than Higher qualifications) and working status.
- 3.7 To recruit participants in eligible and almost eligible households, the research team applied for, and were granted access, to the Scottish Household Survey (SHS) re-contact database. These participants were telephoned by Ipsos MORI and invited to take part in the testing.
- 3.8 Recruitment of participants from ineligible households was conducted on-street by experienced Ipsos MORI recruiters using a recruitment questionnaire developed by the research team.
- 3.9 Participants who used English as a second language were recruited through community organisations and snowballing<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.10 The research team had originally intended to recruit participants with low literacy through adult literacy groups. However, low literacy participants were identified in the course of undertaking interviews among eligible and ineligible households so it was not necessary to use alternative recruitment methods.

### Fieldwork

- 3.11 Interviewing was carried out in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, West Lothian and Fife by members of the Ipsos MORI research team. Interviews lasted on average 25 minutes each and participants were given £25 to thank them for their time.
- 3.12 Fieldwork took place between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2013. Fieldwork started in advance of obtaining access to the SHS re-contact database because of the timescales available for the study. This meant that most of the interviews with participants in ineligible households, those who use English as a second language and those with low literacy were conducted towards the start of the fieldwork period, while interviews with eligible and almost eligible householders took place towards the end.

---

<sup>4</sup> This is a method which is commonly used in social research to recruit hard to reach participants. Hard to reach participants, who were recruited through other methods, were asked whether they knew of other people who also fitted the research criteria that might be interested in taking part in the research.

## **The Young Voter Registration Form and other research materials**

- 3.13 To begin with, the draft version of the YVF designed by the Scottish Government (version 1) was tested in 23 interviews. In light of the findings which emerged in these interviews, the YVF was slightly amended (see section 4.10). The amended version of the YVF (version 2) was tested in the remaining 17 interviews.
- 3.14 In agreement with the Scottish Government, a dummy date for the referendum was used on the YVF as the actual date had not been announced by the start of the fieldwork period. The dummy date was 30<sup>th</sup> January 2014 to provide a similar timeframe (and therefore age for eligibility) from the canvass to the date of the referendum as will be used in the actual canvass.
- 3.15 While the precise date of the referendum had not been set by the start of fieldwork, it had been announced that the referendum would take place in autumn 2014 and announcement of the precise date was made during the fieldwork period. However, the discrepancy between the dummy date on the YVF and these announcements was rarely brought up by participants in the testing. In cases where it was, it did not appear to have an impact on the testing.
- 3.16 Other fieldwork materials developed included a generic annual canvass form and a discussion guide. To ensure that the testing replicated real life experiences of completing canvass forms as much as possible, the design of the generic annual canvass form was largely based on the existing form used by the Lothian Valuation Joint Board, which is designed in line with Electoral Commission guidelines.
- 3.17 Copies of all research materials are provided in Appendix A.

## 4 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 As the changes made between version 1 and version 2 of the YVF were relatively minor, the findings presented in this chapter relate to both versions of the form unless otherwise stated. A discussion of the changes and an assessment of these changes has been included in section 4.10 - 4.15.

### Main findings

- 4.2 The findings from the testing show that the YVF works well.
- 4.3 Throughout the testing, the annual canvass form was placed on top of the YVF and the two forms were then folded into an envelope and given to participants to complete. Participants tended to fill out the annual canvass form immediately without checking the back page of instructions or the YVF. Despite this, no one failed to notice the YVF.
- 4.4 The instructions provided at the front of the YVF were felt to be “clear” and “easy to understand” and, from reading these, participants were generally able to understand the purpose of the form. In many cases, participants were able to quickly establish whether the YVF was relevant to them simply from the instruction placed in a shaded box towards the middle of the page.
- 4.5 Those who had 15 year olds experienced little difficulty in working out whether their child would be 16 by the dummy referendum date (and should therefore be included on the YVF).
- 4.6 Participants from eligible households were generally positive about the layout of the YVF and found it easy to complete. These findings may in part be attributed to the similarities between the YVF and the annual canvass form and the fact that most were familiar with the latter from past canvasses.
- 4.7 Participants did not have any concerns with providing information about young people. Some went on to say that they felt reassured by the information provided on the back page on how Electoral Registration Officers will be using young people’s details.
- 4.8 In general, participants completed the YVF correctly or correctly left it blank. The few errors that did emerge (for example including a 16 year old on the YVF) could be dealt with by Electoral Registration Officers.
- 4.9 Above all, nobody failed to include an eligible 15 year old on the YVF<sup>5</sup>.

### Changes made between version 1 and version 2

- 4.10 The changes made to create version 2 of the YVF were based on the findings which emerged while testing version 1.

---

<sup>5</sup> This was established in the interviews by asking participants about their household composition and, where applicable, the ages of all children in the household.

- 4.11 There was a view among participants that there was too much text in the instructions on the front page and too many repetitions of „15 year olds“, „16“ and „30th January 2014“. This deterred one participant from reading the instructions altogether and resulted in an error (see section 4.16). Some participants, those with English as a second language and with low literacy in particular, did not understand the word „eligible“. In version 2, the instructions were amended so that there was less text and the word „eligible“ was avoided.
- 4.12 The instruction to turn overleaf for more information was not always noticed and this was highlighted in bold in version 2.
- 4.13 The name and nationality of the young person was sometimes entered in the heading box, rather than the row below. This was resolved in version 2 by re-aligning the heading text so that there was no space to do this.
- 4.14 There was not enough space for entering an email address so the box for this was extended in version 2.
- 4.15 These fairly minor amendments that were made to create version 2 appeared to work well among participants.

#### **Errors made when completing the YVF**

- 4.16 While in most cases participants filled out the YVF correctly or correctly left it blank, a small number of errors did emerge during the testing. We have noted the version of the form given to participants in the discussion below but this should not be taken to imply that the error would have been avoided if they were given the other version unless stated.
- One participant in his twenties included himself on both the YVF and the annual canvass form (version 1 of YVF) – this participant had very limited reading skills which meant that he did not read any of the instructions provided on either form and went on to make other errors. It is not clear whether any amendments to the YVF could have helped him.
  - One participant included a 15 year on both the YVF and the annual canvass form (version 1 of YVF) – this participant added her eligible 15 year old daughter to the annual canvass form immediately after reading the start of the instructions on the YVF. She then went back to reading the rest of the instructions on the YVF and added her daughter to that form too.
  - One participant included a 16 year old on the YVF instead of the annual canvass form (version 1 of YVF) – this participant was put off from reading the instructions properly because of the amount of text and by the number of times the words „15 year olds“, „16“ and „30th January 2014“ were repeated. Instead, she simply focused on the instruction „...who will be 16 by 30th January 2014“ and went on to add her 16 year old son to the YVF only. This participant completed version 1 of the YVF and it may be that the amendments made to version 2 would have helped her.

- one participant included a 16 year old on the YVF and the annual canvass form (version 2 of YVF) – As in the case above, this participant mainly focused on the instruction „...who will be 16 by the 30th January 2014“ and decided to include her daughter, who had just turned 16, on the YVF “just in case”. She commented that she was being “overly cautious” and felt that officials could easily work out that her daughter had been added to both forms.
- two participants signed (and planned to return) blank YVFs (versions 1 and 2 of YVF) – a couple of participants from households containing ineligible children correctly left Part 1 of the YVF blank, failed to notice the instruction that if no one is entered no action is required and went on to sign Part 2 of the YVF “just in case”.

4.17 In addition to these errors, block letters were not always used when completing the YVF. The testing suggests that whether people use block letters depends on whether they notice this instruction on the annual canvass form: all participants completed the annual canvass form first and sometimes missed the instruction on using block capitals. Then, because of the similarity between the two forms, completed the YVF in the same way.

4.18 Importantly, in most cases these errors could have been addressed by Electoral Registration Officers without the need to re-contact households for clarification. Moreover, none of the errors would have resulted in eligible young people not being registered to vote.

### **Other issues with the YVF**

4.19 Beyond the main findings and errors discussed above, a number of further issues emerged in the testing.

### ***Uncertainty as to who should complete the YVF***

4.20 Once participants had established whether the YVF was relevant to their household, there was some uncertainty around whether participants themselves, or the eligible 15 year olds, should complete and sign the YVF.

4.21 Some had inferred that they themselves should complete the YVF on the basis that the YVF was addressed to them – i.e. „To the occupier“ – and from the instruction „Please enter **their** details in Part 1...“ (our emphasis). Others simply assumed that it should be the householder. Others said that they would have given the YVF to their eligible 15 year old to complete (one participant thought this might be part of an attempt by government to engage young people in the democratic process).

4.22 As with current practice for regular annual canvass forms, anyone in the household, including the young person themselves, could complete and sign the YVF. Even in the interviews where there was uncertainty, the YVFs were nonetheless completed, so we recommend keeping the YVF as it stands. Adding guidance to the effect that the YVF could be completed by anyone in

the household might add further confusion or risk people assuming that the YVF should be completed even if there are no eligible 15 year olds.

### ***Prioritising the instruction that households with no eligible 15 year olds do not need to return the YVF***

- 4.23 Some participants from ineligible households suggested moving the instruction „If there are no 15 year olds living at this address who will be 16 by 30 January 2014, you do not need to complete or return this form“ to the top of the front page of the YVF.
- 4.24 Although this change will mean that this instruction will become obvious slightly quicker for the majority who will not be required to complete the YVF, the purpose of the YVF may become less immediately obvious for those who are required to complete it. The Electoral Commission recommends phrasing instructions in terms of what people should do, rather than what not to do<sup>6</sup>. On balance, therefore, we recommend keeping the instruction for householders with eligible 15 year olds at the top to ensure that the YVF works well for those who are required to fill it in.

### ***Including date of birth to help with working out eligibility***

- 4.25 The back page of the YVF gives the last day on which young people could have been born in order to be eligible. A couple of participants suggested that this could be included on the front page of the YVF for additional clarity.
- 4.26 Given that none of the participants had any difficulty in working out eligibility from the dummy referendum date, and given the preference for less text (see section 4.11), we do not recommend adding this to the front page.

### ***The title of the YVF***

- 4.27 A few participants felt that the title of the YVF – Young Voter Registration form for the Referendum on Scottish Independence – contained several long words and that it did not provide enough explanation as to who should be entered on the YVF. Still, we recommend keeping the title as it is for a variety of reasons: the existing title did not appear to impede understanding of the purpose of the form; alternatives such as „Registration form for 15 year olds“ may increase the risk of households including 15 year olds who will not be 16 by the referendum date; and it is not feasible for the title to convey all the relevant information.

### ***The term ‘mailshot’***

- 4.28 Although the information provided on the back page of the YVF was generally felt to be clear, the word „mailshot“, used on the back page to explain how the electoral register may be used by certain organisations, was not always understood by participants. We recommend changing this to „information“.

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/150358/Making-Your-Mark-Design-Guidance-For-Electoral-Administrators.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/150358/Making-Your-Mark-Design-Guidance-For-Electoral-Administrators.pdf)

### ***Whether views on lowering the voting age affected completion***

- 4.29 While views on extending the voting franchise were outwith the scope of the study, the testing found no evidence to suggest that objections to lowering the voting age resulted in eligible 15 year olds not being registered. That said, this finding is based on a very small number of participants who had such objections and also had an eligible 15 year old in their household.

### **Findings in relation to the annual canvass form**

- 4.30 While the testing primarily focused on the YVF, there were some findings which emerged in relation to the annual canvass form.
- 4.31 In the main, participants were familiar with the annual canvass form and were aware that it should be used to register adult householders aged 18 years and older. In all but one case (see section 4.16), 16 year olds were also correctly entered on the annual canvass form: some were aware of the fact that 16 year olds can be registered; some simply thought that the voting age was 16 (this may have resulted from media coverage on extending the vote to 16 and 17 years olds for the referendum); and others were prompted by the column in the table in Part 1 that states „16/17 YEAR OLDS ONLY“. In a couple of cases, participants only became aware that they had to register their 16 year old on the annual canvass form from reading the instructions provided on the front page of the YVF.
- 4.32 There were a small number of cases where participants missed out eligible adult household members aged 18 years or older. In one case, this seemed to be a result of the testing context as the participant was quite focused on the fact that she had been recruited because of her child's age. In another interview, with a participant who used English as a second language, the participant was more familiar with individual voter registration forms used in her country of birth.
- 4.33 Other errors made included failing to use block letters, and entering dates of birth of all household members, despite the fact that this is only required for those aged 16 and 17.

## Conclusions

4.34 The testing found that the YVF worked well from the outset:

- participants understood what the YVF was for
- those with eligible 15 year olds were able to complete the YVF accurately and with ease
- those in ineligible households correctly left the YVF blank
- the amendments that were made to the YVF during the testing appeared to work well.

4.35 Nobody failed to register an eligible 15 year old. In all but one case where errors were made, participants provided enough information to enable Electoral Registration Officers to deal with the errors without needing to re-contact the households.

4.36 As a result of these findings, we recommend keeping version 2 of the YVF largely as it stands. The only amendment we recommend is changing the word „mailshot“ to „information“.

## **APPENDIX A: RESEARCH MATERIALS**

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Introduction and background

Introduce self, Ipsos MORI.

Thank participants for agreeing to be interviewed; mention should take a maximum of 30 minutes.

Research commissioned by the Scottish Government which involves talking to members of the public to see whether people understand and can easily complete voter registration forms.

Mention anonymity of respondents and MRS (Market Research Society) code of conduct. This is not a test – we are only interested in whether they find the form easy to understand and complete.

Ask permission to record.

### Exercise: Completing the registration forms

We would like you to complete the forms in this envelope as if you had received them through your door today. Please complete the forms as you would if I was not here. Although I'm not interested in your personal information, it will make it a more realistic test of the forms if you treat it as „real“. Just work at your own pace. I will be looking to see how you get on. But, don't worry, this is not a test of you, it's a test of the forms! One thing that is helpful for me to understand how you are getting on is for you to „think aloud“ and say what you are thinking about as you complete the forms.

1.1 [INTERVIEWER: note any important comments made in think aloud, expressions, hesitations or body language.]

1.2

1.3 IF PARTICIPANT QUERIES THE DATE OF THE REFERENDUM EXPLAIN:

We are just using this date for the purposes of testing. The actual date for the referendum has not been set yet. IF NECESSARY: But you are right, it is likely that the referendum will take place in autumn 2014.

### Interview

#### 1 Overall intelligibility

##### How did you find that?

- Was it easy or difficult?
- Anything that was unclear or tricky about it?

##### What did you have in mind when you were completing the forms?

##### What were your first impressions of the forms?

- Anything off-putting about either of them?
- Anything you particularly liked about either of them?

#### 2 Accuracy – household members entitled to vote

##### How did you decide who to include?

##### How confident are you that you have completed the forms correctly?

##### Who do you think should be included on this (main) form and who should be included on this (young voters) form?

YOUNG VOTERS FORM:

[FOR PEOPLE WHO DID NOT INCLUDE ANYONE ON YVF:]

##### Why did you not include anyone on this form?

[FOR EACH PERSON INCLUDED ON YVF FORM:]

**Why did you include this person on this form?**

[ALL:]

**Did you consider including anyone else on either form?**

- Why did you decide not to include them?

**Is there anyone else who stays here sometimes but you didn't put on the forms?**

- Why did you not include this person on any of these forms?

**Are there any children in your household?**

- How old are they? [ASK FOR DATES OF BIRTH IF ELIGIBLE/CLOSE TO BEING ELIGIBLE]

[CHECK: ANYONE DUPLICATED?:]

**Why did you decide to include this person on both forms?**

[CHECK: ANYONE INCLUDED ON THE WRONG FORM?:]

**Why did you decide to include this person on this form but not this one?**

**We're particularly interested in the young voter registration form so for the rest of the interview I am mainly going to ask you about that one.**

### 3 Understanding – Main page (front page)

**Did you read the instructions fully, scan them, or did you skip them?**

- [IF READ:] Was it helpful/confusing?
- Why did you scan/skip that part?

**Did you feel it was clear what you were being asked to do?**

**IF READ: How did you feel about completing the form after reading it?**

[IF NOT READ, ASK TO READ NOW]

[ALL:] **Is there anything that's a bit confusing?**

**Do you feel everyone would understand these instructions? What sort of people would have difficulties?**

- What aspects of the form would people have difficulty understanding?

**What words or phrases, if any, are difficult to understand?**

**What do you think is meant by 'eligible 15 year olds'?**

**Did you notice the instruction about registering people who are 15 at the moment but will be 16 by the referendum on 30 January 2014?**

- Was it helpful/confusing?
- How could it be made clearer?

**Did you notice the instruction about not completing the form if there are no 15 year olds living at this address?**

- Was it helpful/confusing?
- How could it be made clearer?

**Did you notice the instruction about not registering people using this form if they are already 16 or older?**

- Was it helpful/confusing?
- How could it be made clearer?

**Would you have liked more guidance?**

- What information would you add?

### 4 Understanding – 'About this form' page (back page)

**Did you read the instructions fully, scan it, or did you skip any of it?**

- [IF READ:] Was it helpful/confusing?
- Why did you scan/skip that part?

[IF NOT READ, ASK TO READ NOW]

[ALL:] **Is there anything that's a bit confusing?**

**Do you feel everyone would understand these instructions? What sort of people would have difficulties?**

- What aspects of the form would people have difficulty understanding?

**What words or phrases, if any, are difficult to understand?**

**Would you have liked more guidance?**

### 5 Other aspects of the form

**Was it clear how you should write in the boxes?** [CHECK IF THEY HAVE COMPLETED THE FORM USING BLOCK LETTERS]

**What do you think of the layout of the page**

- Is there too much/too little information?
- Would you change anything?

**How did you find the length of the form?**

[INTERVIEWER TO POINT TO EACH BOX (NATIONALITY, DATE OF BIRTH, POSTAL VOTE) IN TURN:] **Was it clear what you were supposed to include in each of these boxes?**

- What was unclear?

[FOR NATIONALITY:] **Why did you complete it this way?**

- Did you consider a different answer or leaving it blank?

[FOR POSTAL VOTE:] **Why did you tick/not tick this box?**

**What did you think of the bottom section?**

- [IF DID NOT COMPLETE:] Why did you not sign the form?

### 6 Closing questions

**Was there anything on the form you weren't particularly happy about being asked?**

**Did you have any concerns when you were answering?**

**Are there any questions that you did not answer honestly?**

**What would you do if you were having difficulty with the form or needed more information?**

**THANK AND CLOSE – Thank you for helping out with this important exercise. The findings will help the Scottish Government make improvements to the form if necessary before it is sent to everyone in Scotland later this year.**

# VERSION 1 OF THE YVF

## Young Voter Registration form for the Referendum on Scottish Independence

INFORMATION ON HOW TO RETURN FORM

To the occupier

The voting age for the referendum on Scottish independence is 16. British citizens, European Union citizens and qualifying Commonwealth citizens are entitled to vote (see over the page for more details).

If there are any young people living at this address who are 15 at the moment, but will be 16 by the referendum on 30 January 2014, they should be registered using this form to make sure they can vote in the referendum.

If there are eligible 15 year olds living at this address, please make sure their details are entered in Part 1 below, then sign Part 2 and return the form. This is required by law.

If there are no 15 year olds living at this address, you do not need to complete or return this form.

People who are already 16 or older should not be registered using this form – their details should instead be entered on the annual canvass form (enclosed in the same envelope as this form). This will register them to vote in the referendum.

### Part 1 15 year olds living at this address who will be 16 by 30 January 2014

Please enter the names of 15 year olds living here who will be 16 by 30 January 2014 and are entitled to register to vote in the referendum, and whose names are not already printed below. Please cross out any names printed below that should not be on this form.

Please write in BLOCK LETTERS.			Date of birth	Postal vote		
Surname	First name and middle initials	Nationality	Day/Month/Year			Tick here if the person wants a postal vote application

### Part 2 Please sign here before returning this form

It is an offence to give false information on this form.

I declare that, as far as I know, the details on this form are accurate and complete.

Signature  Date

Print name

Daytime phone number  E-mail address

*You do not need to provide your phone number or email address, but it could prove helpful if we need to contact you. It will not be used or supplied for other purposes.*

## About this form

To vote in the referendum on Scottish independence, each person needs to be registered. People who are already 16 or older should be registered using the annual canvass form (which also registers them to vote in other elections once they turn 18). This form collects the information we need to register young people who are 15 at the moment, but will be 16 by the referendum on 30 January 2014. If you do not respond to this form, they may not be able to vote in the referendum.

This form will only register these young people to vote in the independence referendum: it will not register them to vote in any other election or referendum. To vote in most elections and referendums voters need to be 18.

### Who can register to vote in the referendum?

**Age:** To vote in the referendum, voters must be 16 or older on 30 January 2014. This means that a person will be able to vote if their date of birth is 30 January 1998 or earlier.

**Residence:** People normally register at the address where they reside. You should include people who are temporarily away (for example, on holiday, at boarding school or in hospital). If in doubt, please get in touch with your Electoral Registration Officer using the contact details below.

**Nationality:** People are entitled to register to vote in the referendum if they are:

- A British citizen
- A citizen of another EU country
- A qualifying Commonwealth citizen. This means a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to enter or remain in the UK, or who does not require such leave.

### Details of people at this address

For each 15 year old being registered, you need to include:

- Their surname, first name and any middle initials.
- Their nationality. This will usually be shown on the person's passport.
- Their date of birth, in the format DD/MM/YYYY, so that we can confirm they will be 16 by the referendum. For example, 5 December 1997 should be entered as 05/12/1997.
- Whether the person wants a postal vote application form.

### What happens to the information I provide on this form?

The details of the people registered on this form will be placed on a "Register of Young Voters", which will be used only for the referendum. Electoral Registration Officers and their staff will be the only people who are legally entitled to see the Register of Young Voters.

Some organisations will need the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in the referendum, including those who are on the Register of Young Voters. These include people who administer the referendum (such as the staff at polling stations) and the official campaign groups, who may send a mailshot to everyone registered to vote. These organisations will be given a list of the names and addresses (but not the dates of birth) of everyone registered to vote in the referendum. They will not be told how old anyone on the list is, and it will be against the law for them to share or publish the list.

### How to get in touch with us if you need assistance or more information

The Electoral Registration Officer

Address

Town, Postcode

Telephone: 0123 456789

Website: [www.abcdefg.uk](http://www.abcdefg.uk)

# VERSION 2 OF THE YVF

## Young Voter Registration form for the Referendum on Scottish Independence

To the occupier

The voting age for the referendum on Scottish independence is 16. British citizens, European Union citizens and qualifying Commonwealth citizens are entitled to vote.

If there are 15 year olds living at this address who will be 16 by 30 January 2014, they should be registered using this form to make sure they can vote in the referendum. Please enter their details in Part 1 below, sign Part 2 and return the form. This is required by law. **Please see over the page for more details.**

If there are no 15 year olds living at this address who will be 16 by 30 January 2014, you do not need to complete or return this form.

People who are already 16 or older should not be registered using this form – their details should instead be entered on the annual canvass form (enclosed in the same envelope as this form).

### Part 1 15 year olds living at this address who will be 16 by 30 January 2014

Please enter the names of 15 year olds living here who will be 16 by 30 January 2014 and are entitled to vote in the referendum, and whose names are not already printed below. Please cross out any names printed below that should not be on this form.

Please write in BLOCK LETTERS.			Date of birth			Postal vote
Surname	First name and middle initials	Nationality	DD	MM	YY	Tick here if the person wants a postal vote application

### Part 2 Please sign here before returning this form

It is an offence to give false information on this form.

I declare that, as far as I know, the details on this form are accurate and complete.

Signature  Date

Print name

Daytime phone number

E-mail address

*You do not need to provide your phone number or email address, but it could prove helpful if we need to contact you. It will not be used or supplied for other purposes.*

## About this form

To vote in the referendum on Scottish independence, each person needs to be registered. People who are already 16 or older should be registered using the annual canvass form (which also registers them to vote in other elections once they turn 18). This form collects the information we need to register young people who are 15 at the moment, but will be 16 by the referendum on 30 January 2014. If you do not respond to this form, they may not be able to vote in the referendum.

This form will only register these young people to vote in the independence referendum: it will not register them to vote in any other election or referendum. To vote in most elections and referendums voters need to be 18.

### Who can register to vote in the referendum?

**Age:** To vote in the referendum, voters must be 16 or older on 30 January 2014. This means that a person will be able to vote if their date of birth is 30 January 1998 or earlier.

**Residence:** People normally register at the address where they reside. You should include people who are temporarily away (for example, on holiday, at boarding school or in hospital). If in doubt, please get in touch with your Electoral Registration Officer using the contact details below.

**Nationality:** People are entitled to register to vote in the referendum if they are:

- A British citizen
- A citizen of another EU country
- A qualifying Commonwealth citizen. This means a Commonwealth citizen who has leave to enter or remain in the UK, or who does not require such leave.

### Details of people at this address

For each 15 year old being registered, you need to include:

- Their surname, first name and any middle initials.
- Their nationality. This will usually be shown on the person's passport.
- Their date of birth, in the format DD/MM/YY, so that we can confirm they will be 16 by the referendum. For example, 5 December 1997 should be entered as 05/12/97.
- Whether the person wants a postal vote application form.

### What happens to the information I provide on this form?

The details of the people registered on this form will be placed on a "Register of Young Voters", which will be used only for the referendum. Electoral Registration Officers and their staff will be the only people who are legally entitled to see the Register of Young Voters.

Some organisations will need the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in the referendum, including those who are on the Register of Young Voters. These include people who administer the referendum (such as the staff at polling stations) and the official campaign groups, who may send a mailshot to everyone registered to vote. These organisations will be given a list of the names and addresses (but not the dates of birth) of everyone registered to vote in the referendum. They will not be told how old anyone on the list is, and it will be against the law for them to share or publish the list.

### How to get in touch with us if you need assistance or more information

The Electoral Registration Officer

Address

Town, Postcode

Telephone: 0123 456789

Website: [www.abcdefg.uk](http://www.abcdefg.uk)

# GENERIC ANNUAL CANVASS FORM

## Electoral Registration Office

To the Householder  
Or the Present Occupier

### Annual Canvass of Electors 2013

- To vote in elections you need to register every year.
- This information is **required by law**.
- You should return the information **as soon as possible**.
- Information to help you complete this form is included over the page.



PART 1 – DETAILS OF PEOPLE TO BE REGISTERED AT THIS ADDRESS		NATIONALITY	16/17 YEAR OLDS ONLY			POSTAL VOTE	THE EDITED REGISTER
Please write clearly using BLOCK LETTERS in BLACK INK. Please enter the names of people eligible to vote. <b>Remember to enter your own name if you are resident and eligible.</b>		The nationality <b>MUST</b> be entered for any name added in the boxes below against the appropriate name	Please enter the <b>date of birth</b> in the boxes below against the appropriate name			If the person would like a <b>postal vote application form</b> please enter a tick (✓) in the boxes below against the appropriate name	If the person wishes to <b>opt-out of the Edited Register</b> please enter a tick (✓) in the boxes below against the appropriate name
SURNAME	FIRST FORENAME in full, initials or other forenames		Day/Month/Year				

**PART 2 – THIS PART SHOULD ONLY BE COMPLETED IF THERE ARE NO ELECTORS (INCLUDING YOURSELF) TO BE REGISTERED**

Property empty  Registered elsewhere, eg holiday/second home  Not British, Irish, Commonwealth or European Union Citizen  Business premises

**PART 3 - PLEASE SIGN BELOW. Please do not detach this declaration from the rest of the form.**

**IT IS AN OFFENCE TO GIVE FALSE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM.**

I declare, that as far as I know, the details on this form are true and accurate.

Signature.....Date.....

Daytime Phone No.....E-mail Address.....

(You do not need to provide your telephone number or e-mail address but it could prove helpful if we need to contact you. It will not be used or supplied for other purposes).

# ABOUT THIS FORM

To vote in elections and referendums you need to be on the Electoral Register. This form collects the information we need to publish a revised Register, which we do every year. If you do not respond to this form you, and the rest of the residents in your household, may not appear on the revised Register and you might lose your right to vote. Registering for other services or paying Council Tax does not register you to vote.

You are required by law to give the information asked for in this form.

## Who Can Register to Vote?

### Age

You must be 18 or older to vote. You can register to vote when you are 16.

### Residence

People can register only for the address where they are resident. You should include:-

- People who are temporarily away - e.g. away working, on holiday, in hospital or students.
- Any other residents, lodgers or guests (but not short stay visitors) at your address.

### Nationality

People who are entitled to register to vote:-

- British citizens
- Citizens of the Irish Republic
- Citizens of other European Union countries

EU citizens will be registered as local government electors only (except citizens of Cyprus, Malta or the Irish Republic, who can vote in all elections).

- Qualifying Commonwealth citizens. This means Commonwealth citizens who:-
  - have leave to enter or remain in the UK; or
  - do not require such leave.

## What are the 'Full' and 'Edited' Registers?

**The Full Register** lists the name and address of everyone who is registered to vote. The Electoral Registration Officer holds a copy. Anyone can look at it, but it is a criminal offence to supply or use copies for purposes other than those set down in law. More information is available at [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk). The main use of the Full Register is to show who can vote in elections and referendums. Credit reference agencies can use it, but only to check your name and address if you are applying for credit and for other purposes specified in law. It can also be used for law enforcement.

**The Edited Register** is available for general sale and can be used for any purpose. The Edited Register can be bought by any person, company or organisation and can be used for commercial activities such as marketing. If you do not want your details to appear on the Edited Register, please tick the 'Edited Register' box. You must also ask each person named on the form if they want their details to appear on the Edited Register.

## PART 1 - Details of People to be Registered at this Address

- Name: Surname, first name and middle initials.
- Nationality: This will be as shown on the person's passport.
- Please remember to provide the details of any 16 and 17 year olds in the property. Make sure you include their date of birth so that they can vote as soon as they are 18.

## PART 2 - If No-one is to be Registered at this Address

Only complete this part if no-one in your household (including yourself) is eligible to be registered.

## PART 3 - Signing and Returning the Form

Please sign to confirm all the details are correct before returning the form. It is an offence to provide false information.

If there is anything you don't understand about the form, or if you would like more information or assistance, you should contact:

The Electoral Registration Officer

Address

Town, Postcode

Telephone: 0123 456789

Website: [www.abcdefg.uk](http://www.abcdefg.uk)

**Social Research series**

**ISSN 2045-6964**

**ISBN 978-1-78256-561-1**

**web only publication**

**[www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch)**

APS Group Scotland  
DPPAS14242 (05/13)

