

Official Statistics in Development

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2023: Attitudes to government, the economy, and the health service

July 2024

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Executive Summary

- In 2023, a condensed version of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) Core Module was run to explore potential impacts of a change in methodology from face-to-face to a push-to-web survey.
- Overall, the mode change was not found to significantly have impacted the comparability of the 2023 findings with the long-running SSAS timeseries. For a full exploration of this mode change, please see the accompanying SSAS 2023 technical report.
- The 2023 SSAS ran from the 13th September to the 31st October 2023 and had a sample size of 1,574 people aged over 16 in Scotland.

Attitudes to government and the Scottish Parliament

- In 2023, 47% of people trusted the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests. This has decreased from 61% in 2019 and is now at its lowest level since the survey began.
- 21% of people said they trusted the UK Government to work in Scotland's best long-term interests. This has increased from 15% in 2019 but has consistently remained lower than trust in the Scottish Government.
- Just over a third of people (35%) thought that the Scottish Government was good at listening to people's views before taking decisions. This is a decrease from 51% in 2019.
- 12% of people thought that the UK Government was good at listening to people's views before taking decisions, which has decreased from 15% in 2019 and has consistently remained lower than the Scottish Government figure.
- The percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed has decreased from 56% in 2019 to 45% in 2023.
- 46% of people thought that the UK Government has the most influence over the way Scotland is run, compared to 43% who thought Scottish Government has the most influence. 61% of people thought Scottish Government ought to have the most influence over the way Scotland is run.

Priorities, standard of living, and the health service

- When asked to choose what the Scottish Government's highest priority should be from a list of options, by far the most popular answer was to 'improve the economy'. This has increased from 23% in 2019 to 42% in 2023.
- The majority of people (83%) thought the general standard of living had fallen over the previous year, which is an increase from 2019 when half of people (50%) thought the standard of living had fallen.

- 23% of people said they were satisfied with the way in which the NHS runs, compared to 52% who were dissatisfied. The NHS satisfaction level has fallen from 64% in 2019, and 2023 is the first year since 2005 where more people were dissatisfied than satisfied with the way the NHS runs.
- 69% of people thought the standard of the health service had fallen over the previous 12 months, which is an increase from 45% of people in 2019.

Tax, spending, and redistribution

- Almost half (47%) of respondents thought the government should increase taxes and spend more on health, education, and social benefits. This has decreased from 55% of people in 2019.
- Half of people (50%) agreed that Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off, while just under a quarter (23%) disagreed.

1. Introduction

The Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSAS) has been conducted annually (with the exception of 2008, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2020) by the independent research organisation ScotCen since the advent of devolution in 1999, gathering nationally representative data on the social and political views of the Scottish public. In 2023, SSAS was run as a push-to-web survey for the first time in its history, having been a face-to-face survey between 1999 and 2019, and run once as a push-to-telephone survey in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictionsⁱ. Detailed analysis of this change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web is available in an accompanying technical report.

SSAS has a modular structure, with a 'Core Module' which has been consistently commissioned by the Scottish Government since 2004ⁱⁱ, and modules on different topics being commissioned by a number of funders each year. The Core Module typically consists of thirty questions on attitudes toward government and public services. Due to the experimental nature of the 2023 survey – with the piloting of a new online mode of data collection – only a limited version of the Core Module was run. These questions covered attitudes to:

- government,
- the standard of living,
- the health service,
- and tax, spending, and redistribution.

These Core Module questions produce valuable data and were, in general, part of the longer timeseries (starting in 1999) and were therefore used to investigate comparability with previous years of SSAS as part of the review of the impact of the mode change from face-to-face to push-to-web.

Mode change and comparability

For this experimental SSAS, we tested the impact of the mode change on the achieved sample, the distribution of responses to attitudinal questions, and the suitability of question design. Overall, we found that the push-to-web mode was robust and provided similar weighted demographic data to the face-to-face SSAS. On the basis of this, the SSAS 2023 technical report, published alongside this findings report, concludes that most of the 2023 Core Module findings can be compared with the SSAS timeseries. Therefore, timeseries comparison is included for the majority of the 2023 data in this report. However, we are highlighting the mode change in all timeseries comparison charts through shading to acknowledge the uncertainties surrounding comparability. It is important to note that while we were able to test for the impact of the mode change on the sample, distribution of responses, and question design, we were not able to account for the impact of the absence of an interviewer and any other elements which may have impacted the survey comparability.

Two Core Module questions had to be significantly adapted to feature in the online survey which meant that these questions are not comparable with the timeseries – this is flagged in the report.

It should also be noted that while we found that SSAS 2023 provided a largely similar sample to previous years, there was a marked drop in the proportion of people who identified as having a long-term health condition. If a push-to-web SSAS Core Module is run again, this will need to be addressed to ensure SSAS is representative of the Scottish population. The findings of this experimental SSAS Core Module should therefore be considered as a contribution to the growing evidence-base surrounding mode effects. The mode change and the future of the SSAS Core Module will be further explored through an upcoming review, as detailed below.

Fieldwork and analysis

Fieldwork was carried out from the 12th September 2023 to the 31st October 2023. A stratified, random probability sample of Scottish private households was drawn from the Postcode Address File to produce a representative sample. Letters were then sent to the selected addresses inviting up to two adults aged 16 and over to take part online. Three subsequent reminder letters were sent to each address that had not yet completed the survey. SSAS 2023 achieved a sample size of 1,574 completed surveys from an issued sample of 7,749 addresses representing an overall response rate of 15.1%. The last two times SSAS was fielded using face-to-face interviewing in 2019 and 2017, the sample sizes were 1,022 and 1,234 respectively, and the response rates were 41% and 50% respectively.

All percentages cited in this report are based on the weighted data and are rounded to the nearest whole number. A percentage may be quoted in the text for a single category that aggregates two or more of the percentages shown in a table. The percentage for the single category may, because of rounding, differ by one percentage point from the sum of the percentages in the table. Differences shown in this publication are calculated using unrounded figures and may differ from the rounded figures shown in the text.

Where differences between subgroups are described in the text of the report, these differences were determined to be statistically significant using chi-squared tests (with the Holm–Bonferroni method used to correct for false positives).

Not all subgroup analysis is presented in detail in this report. A full list of statistically significant associations is provided in annex C, and the associated tables are available alongside the report.

An Official Statistics in Development Publication for Scotland

These statistics are official statistics in development. Official statistics in development may be new or existing statistics, and will be tested with users, in line with the standards of trustworthiness, quality, and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

A review of the Core Module of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey will be carried out by the Scottish Government in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics to ensure the data meets the needs of users. This will involve engagement with users on the experimental mode change from face-to-face to push-to-web as well as the questionnaire content. More information on how users can be involved in the review will be published on the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey page on the Scottish Government website.

Scottish Government statistics are regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

More information about Scottish Government statistics is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

ⁱ The change in methodology in 2021 impacted the nature of the sample and responses received, meaning that the telephone survey findings were not comparable with previous SSAS data.

ⁱⁱ With the exception of 2008, 2012, 2014, 2018, and 2020.

2. Context

The SSAS 2023 fieldwork period was 12th September 2023 to the 31st September 2023. This section provides relevant context for this period of time for the public attitudes presented in this SSAS report.

Economic context

The cost of living has risen across the world as well as in the UK since 2022. In this period, food and energy prices in particular rose markedly, partly in response to the conflict in Ukraine, and global recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic put further pressure on prices.ⁱⁱⁱ Inflation was at its highest in October 2022, when the Consumer Prices Index was at 11.1%.^{iv} By the time of the fieldwork period for SSAS 2023, inflation had fallen and was continuing to fall during the fieldwork. CPI was at 6.7% in the 12 months to September 2023, falling to 3.9% in the 12 months to November 2023.^v

In 2023, Scotland's economy was estimated to have grown by 0.1%. This indicated a plateauing after initial recovery growth of 5.9% in 2022 and 9.2% in 2021, the immediate years following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic where the Scottish GDP fell by 12%.^{vi} Pre-pandemic, the Scottish economy had an estimated growth of 0.6% in 2019, relative to a growth rate of 0.4% in 2018.^{vii}

Since 2010, Scotland's employment rate had typically been increasing over time before falling in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but had returned to pre-pandemic rates during early 2022. Considering the period in which the fieldwork for the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey took place, Scotland's employment rate was estimated at 73.6% in September to November 2023, down from 75.6% in same period in 2022. Scotland's unemployment rate was estimated at 4.5% in September to November 2023 compared to 3.4% in same period in 2022.^{viii} Despite this, labour market conditions have generally been resilient in the face of subdued GDP growth and inflationary pressures, and has been characterised by low unemployment, strong demand for labour with elevated vacancy rates, and some companies reporting staffing shortages.^{ix}

The National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland

The NHS in Scotland has experienced extreme pressures from dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising demand, operational challenges, and increasing costs have added to the financial pressures. The NHS has struggled to meet the growing demand for health services and Audit Scotland found this pressure was creating operational challenges throughout the whole system, having a direct impact on patients.^x

These issues are reflected in decreased patient satisfaction with the NHS. The proportion of people responding positively when asked to rate the overall care provided by their GP practice has declined from 79% in 2019/20 to 69% in 2023/24.

While the 2023/24 figure is a slight increase from 67% in 2021/22, this is still 10 percentage points lower than the pre-COVID-19 level.^{xi}

The pressure on the NHS has also meant a challenging landscape in which to meet waiting time targets.

In Scotland, 95% of patients should be seen at a new outpatient appointment within 12 weeks of referral. Treatment Time Guarantee (TTG) states that following the decision to treat, all eligible patients should wait no longer than 12 weeks for treatment as an inpatient or day case.

At the end of September 2023, there were around 535,000 ongoing waits for a new outpatient appointment. Of those waiting for a new outpatient appointment, 58% waited over twelve weeks. At the end of September 2023, there were around 153,000 ongoing waits for an inpatient or day case appointment. Of those waiting for an inpatient or day case appointment, 67% were waiting over 12 weeks, with a median wait of 163 days.^{xii}

In July 2022, the Scottish Government [announced new targets](#) to eradicate long waiting times in the NHS, including eradicating waits over two years in most specialities by the end of August and September 2022 for new outpatient and inpatient or day cases respectively. By the end of September 2023, there were over 1,000 waits lasting over two years for a new outpatient appointment and almost 7,000 ongoing waits lasting over two years for an inpatient or day case appointment.^{xiii}

ⁱⁱⁱ ONS (2024) [Cost of Living latest insights](#). [Accessed: 22nd May 2024]

^{iv} ONS (2024) [Cost of Living latest insights](#). [Accessed: 22nd May 2024]

^v ONS (2023) [Consumer Price Inflation, UK: November 2023](#).

^{vi} Scottish Government (2024) [GDP Quarterly National Accounts: 2023 Quarter 4](#).

^{vii} [Scottish Government Quarterly GDP Statistics](#).

^{viii} ONS (2024) [Labour Force Survey, seasonally adjusted](#) NB: LFS data from July to September 2022 onward has been reweighted, causing a step change discontinuity. Therefore, data for July to September 2022 onwards cannot be directly compared with data prior to July to September 2022.

^{ix} Scottish Government (2024) [Scottish Economic Bulletin](#).

^x Audit Scotland (2024) [The NHS in Scotland 2023](#).

^{xi} Scottish Government (2024) [Health and Care Experience Survey 2023/24](#).

^{xii} PHS (2024) [Stage of treatment waiting times open data](#).

^{xiii} Ibid

3. Attitudes towards government

This chapter presents Scottish attitudes towards government and addresses the following questions:

- What level of trust do people have in the Scottish Government and UK Government on acting in Scotland’s best interests;
- Whether people feel that the Scottish Government and UK Government listen to people’s views before taking decisions;
- Whether people think that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more or less say in how Scotland is governed;
- Whether people feel that the Scottish Government, UK Government, Scottish local councils, or the European Union have the most influence over how Scotland is run, and which they think ought to have the most influence.

Trust in government

Respondents were asked to what extent they trust the Scottish and UK Governments to act in Scotland’s best interest “just about always”, “most of the time”, “only some of the time” or “almost never”.

Table 1 - How much do you trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests/ the UK Government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?

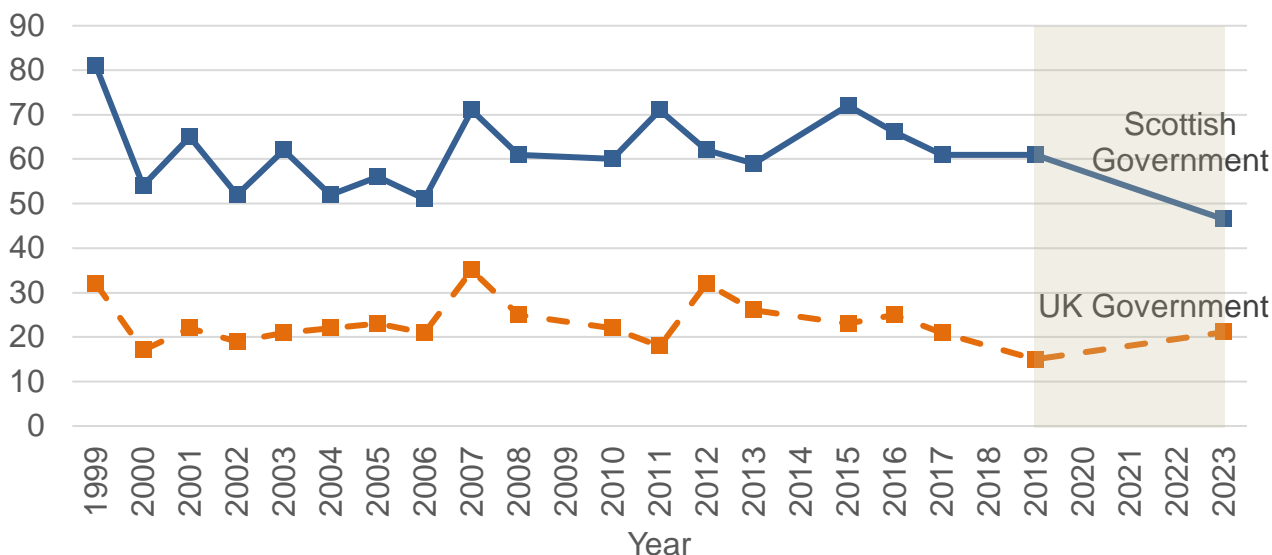
	Scottish Government (%)	UK Government (%)
Just about always	11	4
Most of the time	36	17
Only some of the time	33	32
Almost never	19	45
Don't know/not answered	2	2
Just about always/most of the time	47	21
Only some of the time/almost never	52	77
Unweighted base	1574	1574

Just under half of people (47%) said they trusted the Scottish Government to work in Scotland’s best interests “just about always” or “most of the time”, compared with 21% who said they trusted the UK Government to do so.

These questions have been asked in every SSAS since it began in 1999.

Figure 1 – Time series of trust in government figures which shows a decrease in trust in SG in 2023, and a consistently higher level of trust in SG compared to UKG in every year

Percentage of people who said they trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests/ the UK Government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage who said they trust the Scottish Government “just about always” or “most of the time” fell from 61% in 2019 to 47% in 2023. It is now at its lowest level since the survey began and is the first year in which it dropped below 50%. It has declined steadily since 2015 (when it was 72%).

The equivalent figure for trust in the UK Government increased from 15% in 2019 to 21% in 2023.

The percentage who said they trust the Scottish Government “just about always” or “most of the time” has been greater in every year than the percentage who say the same of the UK Government.

Subgroup analysis

In 2023, younger people were more likely to trust the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s best interest than older people (70% of people aged 16 to 24 compared with 38% of those aged 65 and over).^{xiv}

Those on the left of the left-right political scale^{xv} (53% of those on the left compared with 25% of those on the right), those in favour of Scottish Independence (69% of people in favour of Independence compared with 27% of those against) and supporters of the SNP were more likely to trust the Scottish Government.

Those on the right of the left-right scale (60% of those on the right compared with 15% of those on the left), those opposed to Scottish Independence (36% of people who oppose Independence compared with 6% of those in favour) and supporters of the Conservatives were more likely to trust the UK Government.^{xvi}

Figure 2 - Trust in Scottish Government was higher among supporters of Scottish Independence

Trust in Scottish Government (percentage who trust/don't trust) among those who support or oppose Scottish independence, 2023

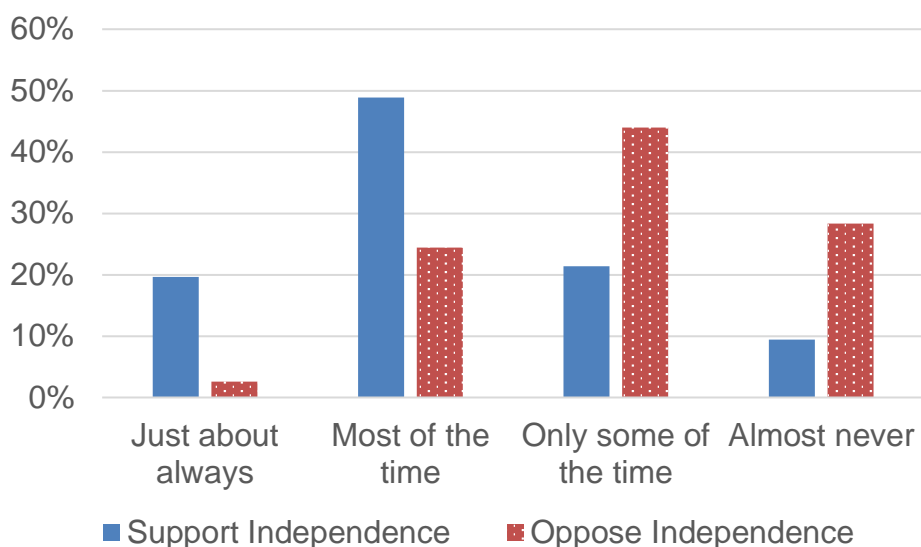
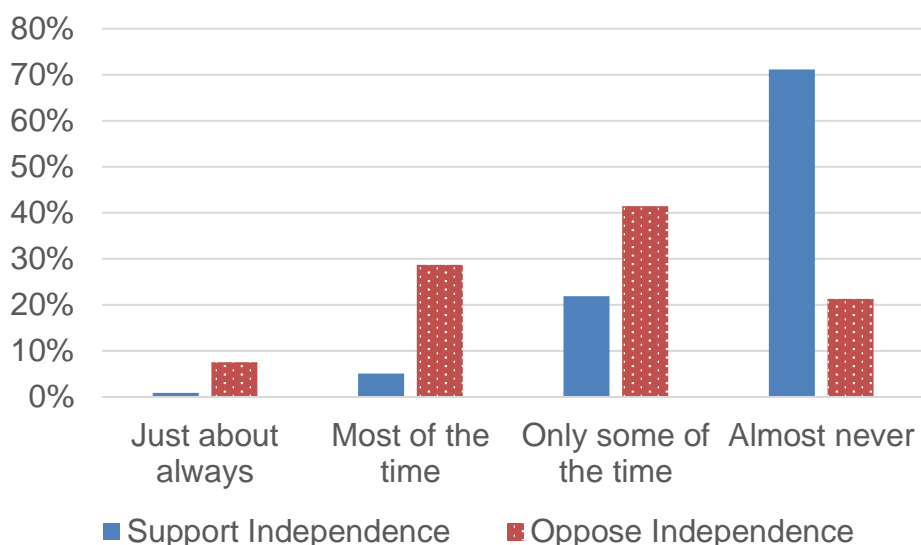


Figure 3 - Trust in UK Government was lower among supporters of Independence

Trust in UK Government (percentage who trust/don't trust) among those who support or oppose Scottish independence, 2023



How good is government at listening before taking decisions?

Respondents were asked how good they thought the Scottish and UK Governments were at listening to people’s views before taking decisions, choosing between the options “very good”, “quite good”, “not very good” or “not at all good”.

Table 2 - How good would you say the UK Government/Scottish Government is at listening to people’s views before taking decisions?

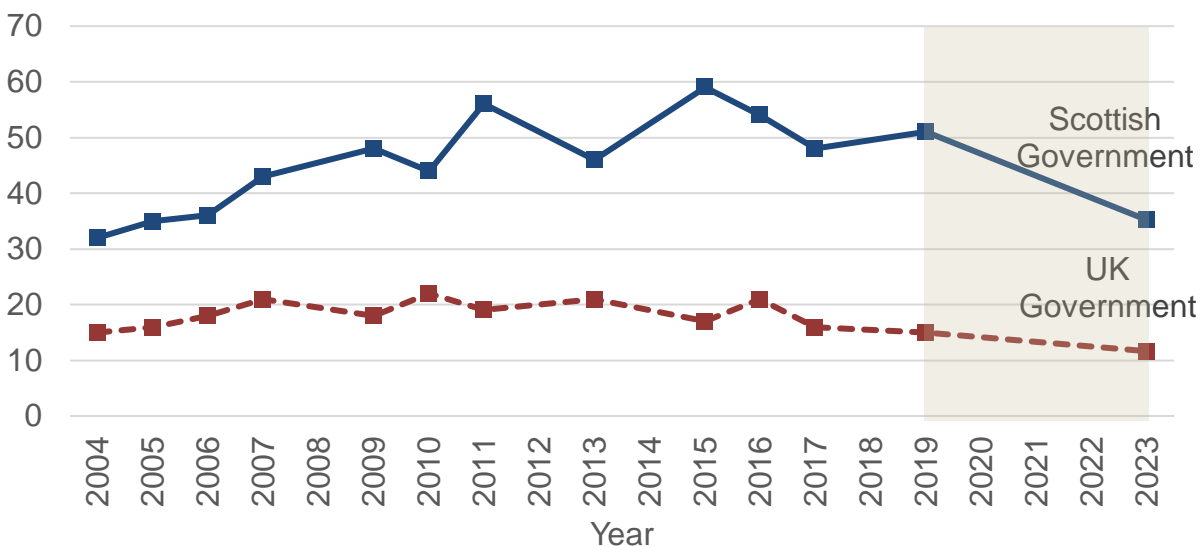
	Scottish Government (%)	UK Government (%)
Very good	4	1
Quite good	31	11
Not very good	40	46
Not at all good	22	40
Don't know/not answered	3	2
Very/quite good	35	12
Not very/not at all good	62	86
Unweighted base	1574	1574

Just over a third (35%) of people thought that the Scottish Government was “very good” or “quite good” at listening to people’s views before taking decisions, compared with 12% for the UK Government.

These questions have been asked since 2004.

Figure 4 – Fewer people thought Scottish Government and UK Government good at listening

Percentage of people who said the Scottish Government/UK Government is very or quite good at listening to people’s views before it takes decisions, 2004 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023



The percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Government were “very good” or “quite good” at listening to people’s views before taking decisions fell from 51% in 2019 to 35% in 2023. It has declined from its peak in 2015 (59%).

The equivalent figure for people who thought the UK Government were “very good” or “quite good” at listening to people’s views before taking decisions fell from 15% in 2019 to 12% in 2023.

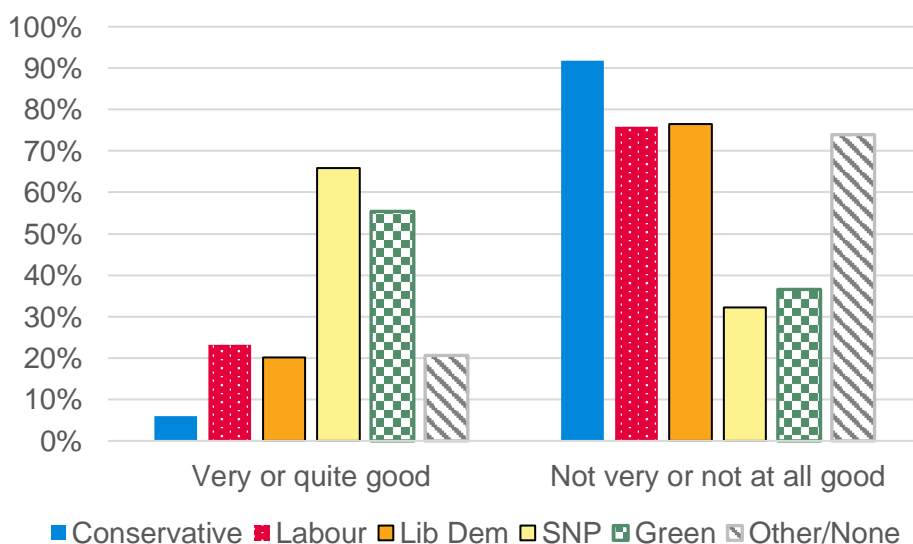
Subgroup analysis

Supporters of the SNP (66%) and Scottish Greens (55%) were more likely to think that the Scottish Government is very or quite good at listening to people’s views than supporters of the Conservatives (6%) or Labour (23%).^{xvii}

People with a physical or mental health condition or illness were more likely to say very or quite good (42% compared with 33% of those without a physical or mental health condition), and less likely to say very or quite bad (55% compared with 64% of those without a physical or mental health condition), than those without.

Figure 5 - Supporters of SNP and Greens were more likely to think Scottish Government good at listening

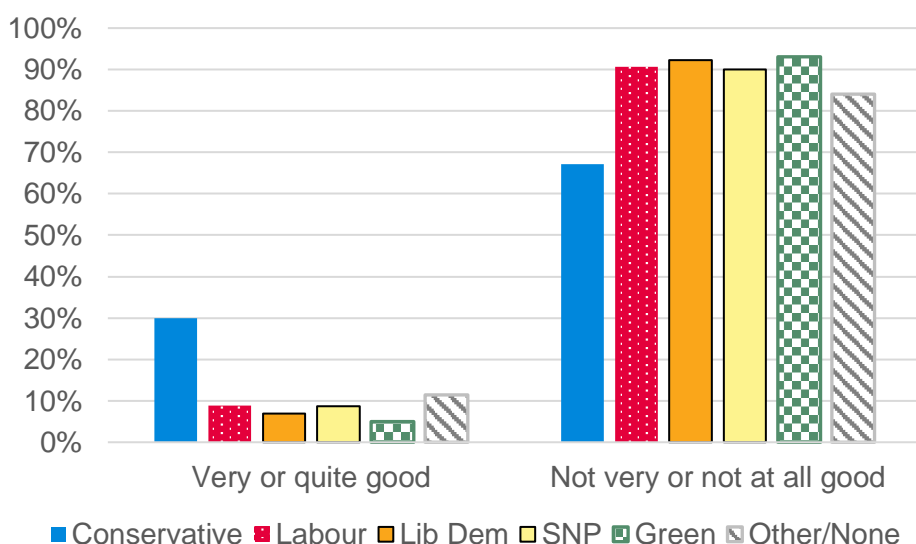
Percentage of people who thought the Scottish Government are very or quite good, or not very or not at all good, at listening to people's views before it takes decisions by political party affiliation, 2023



Supporters of the Conservatives were more likely to think that the UK Government is very or quite good at listening to people’s views – 30%, compared with 9% for both the SNP and Labour, 7% for the Liberal Democrats, and 5% for the Scottish Greens.

Figure 6 - Supporters of all parties were more likely to think UK Government not good at listening

Percentage of people who thought the UK Government are very or quite good, or not very or not at all good, at listening to people's views before it takes decisions by political party affiliation, 2023



Whether the Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people more or less of a say in how Scotland is governed

Respondents were asked whether they think the Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people “more say”, “less say”, or “makes no difference” in how Scotland is governed.

Table 3 - Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people more or less say in how Scotland is governed?

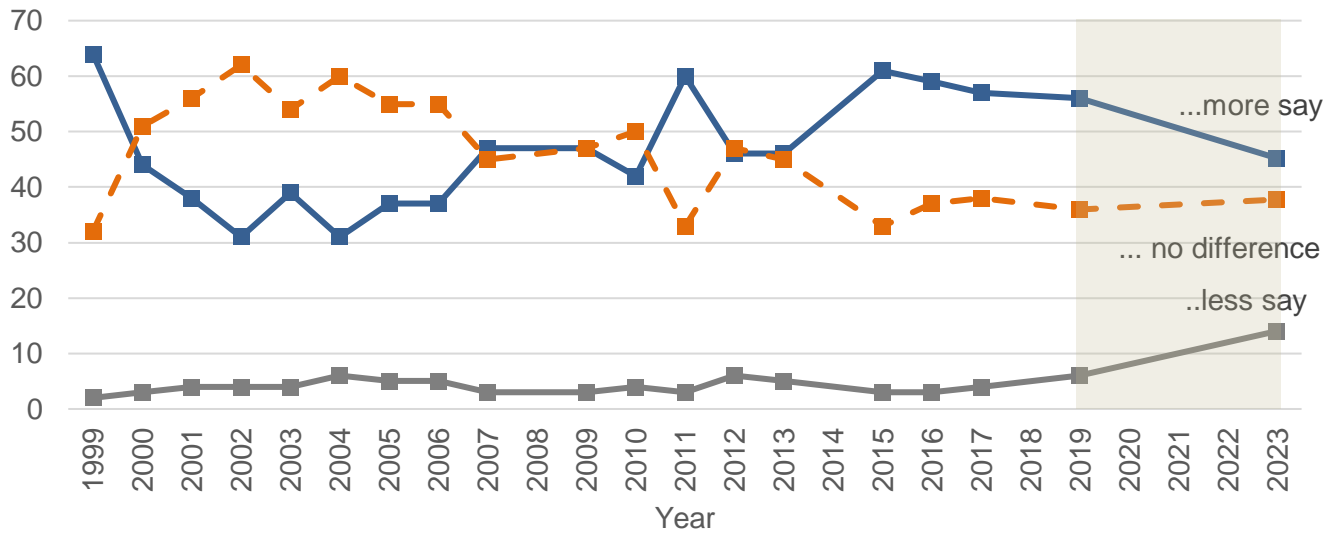
	(%)
More say in how Scotland is governed	45
Less say in how Scotland is governed	14
No difference	38
Don't know/not answered	3
<hr/>	
Unweighted base	1574

Just under half of people (45%) thought that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say, 14% thought it gives ordinary people less say, and 38% thought it makes no difference.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 7 - Fewer people say the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed

Percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say, or less say, or makes no difference in how Scotland is governed, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say has fallen from 56% in 2019 to 45% in 2023. This figure has varied since the survey began, but has seen a consistent decline since 2015 (when it was 61%).

The percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people less say increased from 6% in 2019 to 14% in 2023, its highest value since the survey began.

Subgroup analysis

Those with higher level of education were more likely to think that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed (58% for those with degree qualifications or equivalent, compared with 41% of those with no qualifications).^{xviii}

Those on the left were more likely to say that the Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say (50% compared to 24% of those on the right), as were those on the libertarian side of the libertarian-authoritarian scale^{xix} (79% compared with 25% of those on the authoritarian side).

Who has/ought to have most influence over how Scotland is run?

Respondents were asked who they thought has the most influence over how Scotland is run, and who they thought ought to have the most influence.

Table 4 - Which of the following do you think has/ought to have the most influence over the way Scotland is run?

	Has most influence (%)	Ought to have most influence (%)
Scottish Government	43	61
UK Government at Westminster	46	18
Local Councils	7	17
European Union	1	1
Don't know/not answered	3	3
Unweighted base	1574	1574

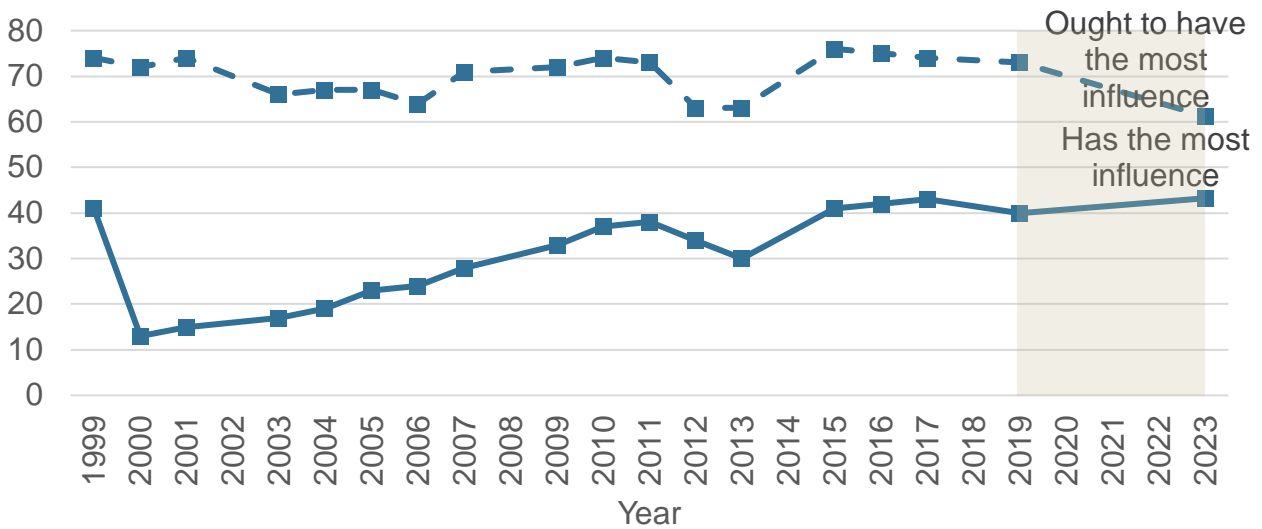
Just under half (46%) of people thought that the UK Government has the most influence, and fewer than one in five (18%) thought that the UK Government should have the most influence. 43% of people thought that the Scottish Government has the most influence over how Scotland is run, with 61% thinking that the Scottish Government should have the most influence.

The percentage of people who thought that local councils or the European Union have the most influence were small (7% and 1% respectively). 17% of people thought that local councils should have the most influence, and 1% thought that the European Union should have the most influence.

These questions have been asked since 1999.

Figure 8 - People say the Scottish Government should have more influence over how Scotland is run

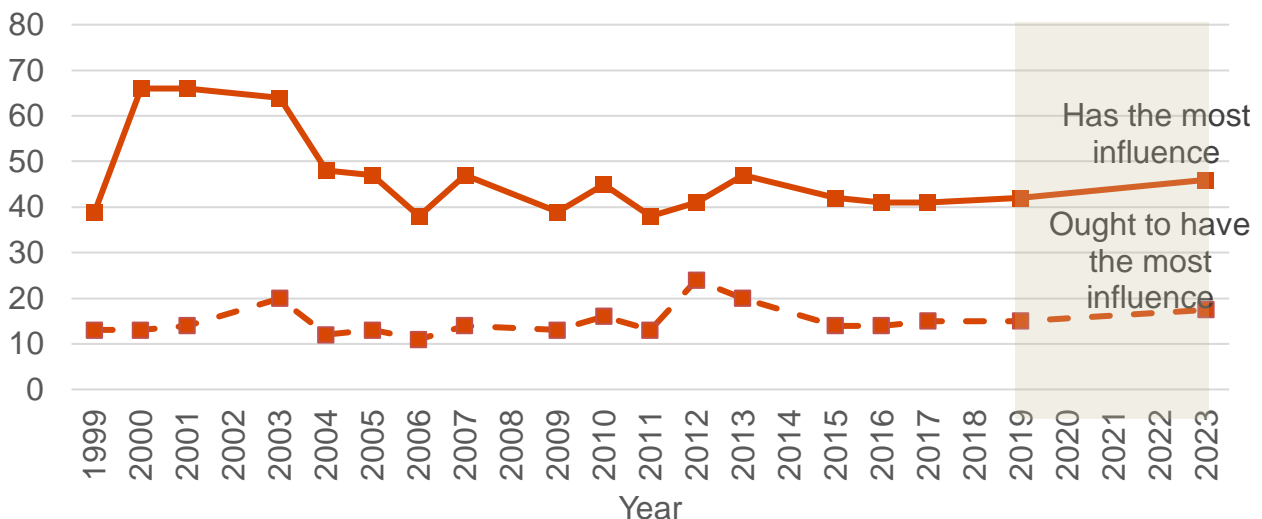
Percentage of people who thought that the Scottish Government has the most influence, or ought to have the most influence, over how Scotland is run, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



In every year since the survey began, more people have thought the Scottish Government ought to have the most influence over how Scotland is run than thought they do have the most influence. In 2023, this gap was 18 percentage points. The opposite is true for the UK Government, where people are more likely to think the UK does have the most influence, than ought to have the most influence (with a 28 percentage point gap in 2023).

Figure 9 - People say the UK Government should have less influence over how Scotland is run

Percentage of people who thought that the UK Government at Westminster has the most influence, or ought to have the most influence, over how Scotland is run, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage who think the Scottish Government does have the most influence has increased steadily over time.

Subgroup analysis

Older people were more likely to think that the Scottish Government has the most influence (55% for those aged 65 and over compared with 34% for those aged 16 to 24), and they were also more likely to think the UK Government at Westminster should have the most influence (22% for those aged 65 and over compared with 10% for those aged 16 to 24).^{xx}

Figure 10 - Younger people were more likely to think that the UK Government has the most influence

Percentage of people who thought the Scottish Government, or the UK Government, had the most influence over how Scotland is run by age, 2023

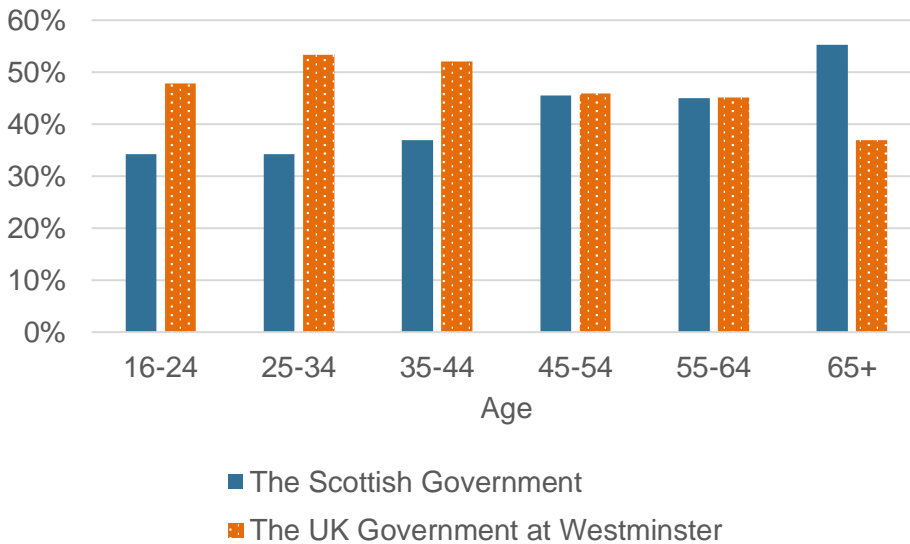
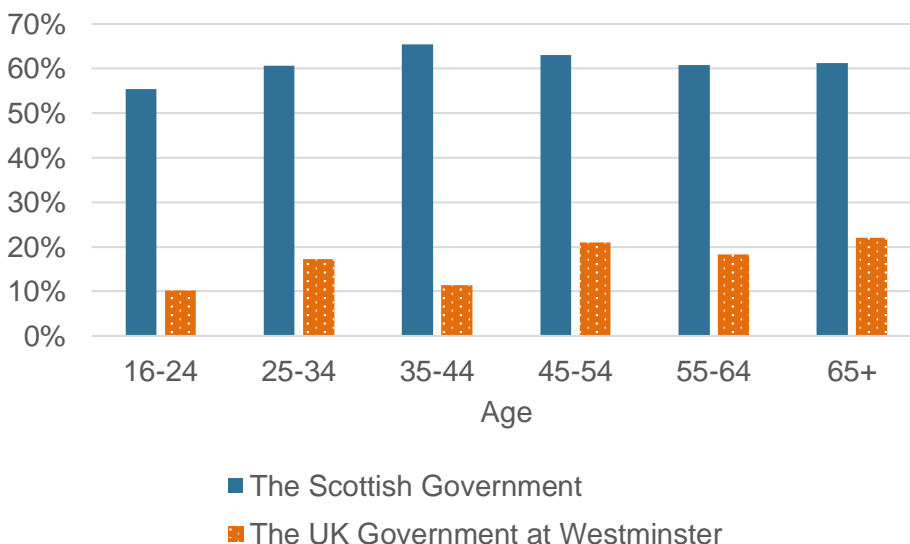


Figure 11 - Older people were more likely to think that the UK Government should have the most influence

Percentage of people who thought the Scottish Government, or the UK Government, ought to have the most influence over how Scotland is run by age



Supporters of Scottish Independence were less likely (29% compared with 58% of people who oppose Independence) to think that the Scottish Government had the most influence, and were more likely to think (62% to 32% people who oppose Independence) that the UK Government at Westminster does instead.

Supporters of Scottish Independence (77% compared with 47% people who oppose Independence), and those on the left of the left-right scale (68% compared with 35% of those to the right), were more likely to think that the Scottish Government should have the most influence.

^{xiv} See Annex B – Tables B.1 & B.2 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xv} See Annex A for definition.

^{xvi} The question on whether respondents support or oppose Scottish Independence does not form part of the SSAS Core Module and was not funded by the Scottish Government.

^{xvii} See Annex B – Tables B.3 and B.4 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xviii} See Annex B – Table B.5 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xix} See Annex A for definition.

^{xx} See Annex B – Tables B.6 and B.7 for full subgroup analysis.

4. Views on government priorities, the health service, and the general standard of living

This chapter presents the findings from the following questions:

- Which do you think should be [the Scottish Government's] highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?
- How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the National Health Service runs nowadays?
- Thinking back over the last twelve months, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen? And what do you think this has mainly been the result of?
- Thinking back over the last 12 months, would you say that since then the general standard of living in Scotland has increased or fallen? And what do you think this has mainly been the result of?

Priorities for the Scottish Government

Respondents were asked to pick from a list of eight options what they thought Scottish Government's highest priority should be:

- Improve the economy
- cut crime
- improve people's health
- improve standards of education
- improve housing
- reduce environmental problems
- or reduce inequality.

Table 5 - Which do you think should be Scottish Government's highest priority, that is, the most important thing it should try and do?

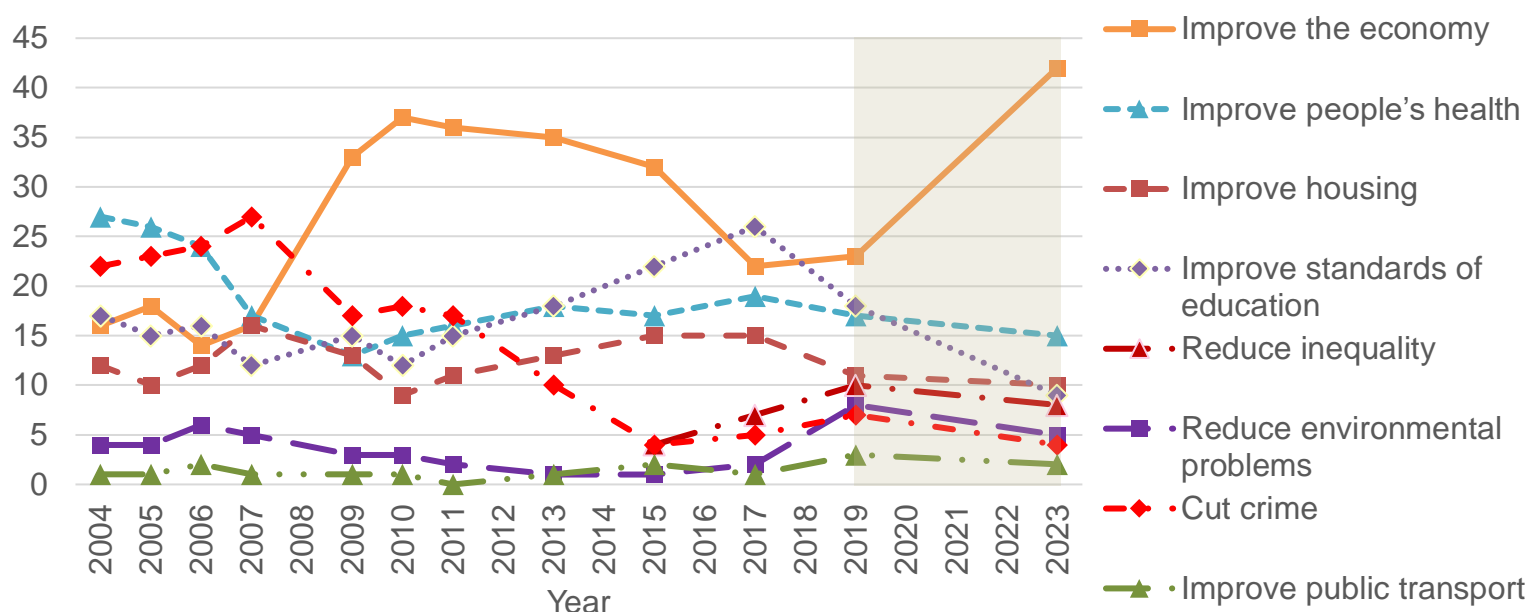
	(%)
Improve the economy	42
Improve people's health	15
Improve housing	10
Improve standards of education	9
Reduce inequality	8
Reduce environmental problems	5
Cut crime	4
Improve public transport	2
Unweighted base	1574

Over four in ten (42%) thought that improving the economy should be Scottish Government's highest priority, by far the most frequently chosen option. The next most frequent was "improve people's health" at 15%, followed by "improve housing" at 10%.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 12 - Economy should be the top priority for Scottish Government

Percentage of people who said this should be Scottish Government's highest priority, 2004 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage of people picking "improve the economy" increased from 23% in 2019 to 42% in 2023. It has been the most frequently picked priority since 2009, with the exception of 2017 where "improve standards of education" was more frequently picked. "Improve standards of education" had been increasing in popularity from 2010 until 2017, where it had steadily risen from 12% to 26%, and then fell to 18% in 2019. In 2023 this reached an all-time low at 9%.

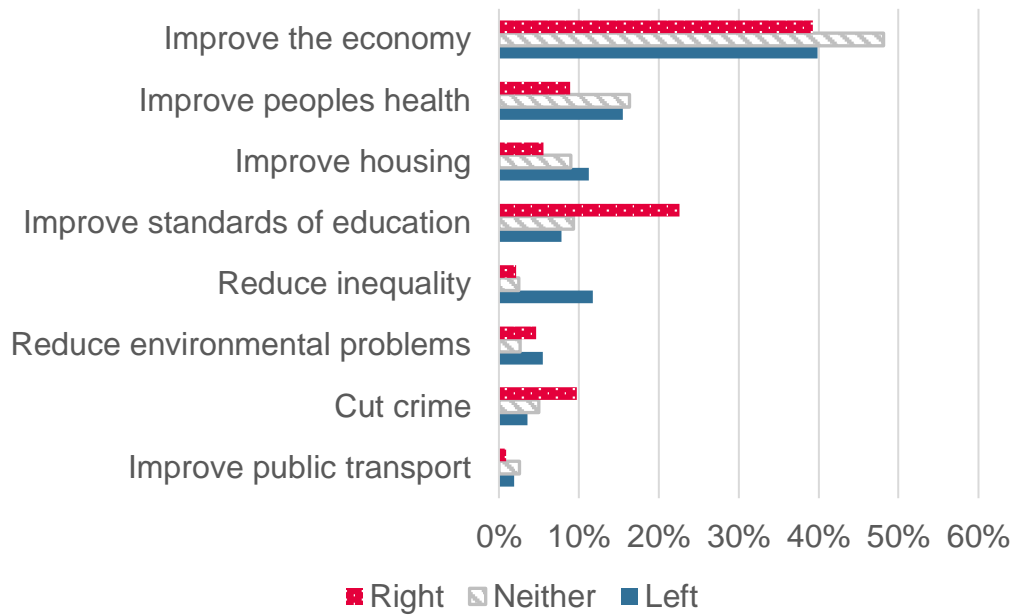
Subgroup analysis

Those living in urban areas (according to the [Urban Rural Classification 2020](#)) were more likely to think that housing should be the Scottish Government's top priority (12% compared with 4% for those in rural areas).^{xxi}

Those on the left of the left-right scale were more likely to think reducing inequality was a top priority (12% compared with 2% for those on the right). They were also more likely to think health a top priority (15% compared with 9% for those on the right), and less likely to consider education a top priority (8% compared with 23% for those on the right).

Figure 13 – Left were more concerned with reducing inequality while right were more concerned with improving standards of education

Percentage of people who thought this should be the Scottish Government's highest priority by position on the left-right scale, 2023



Satisfaction with the National Health Service

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the way in which the National Health Service is run nowadays – “very satisfied”, “quite satisfied”, “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”, “quite dissatisfied”, or “very dissatisfied”.

Table 6 - How satisfied or dissatisfied would you say you are with the way in which the National Health Service runs nowadays?

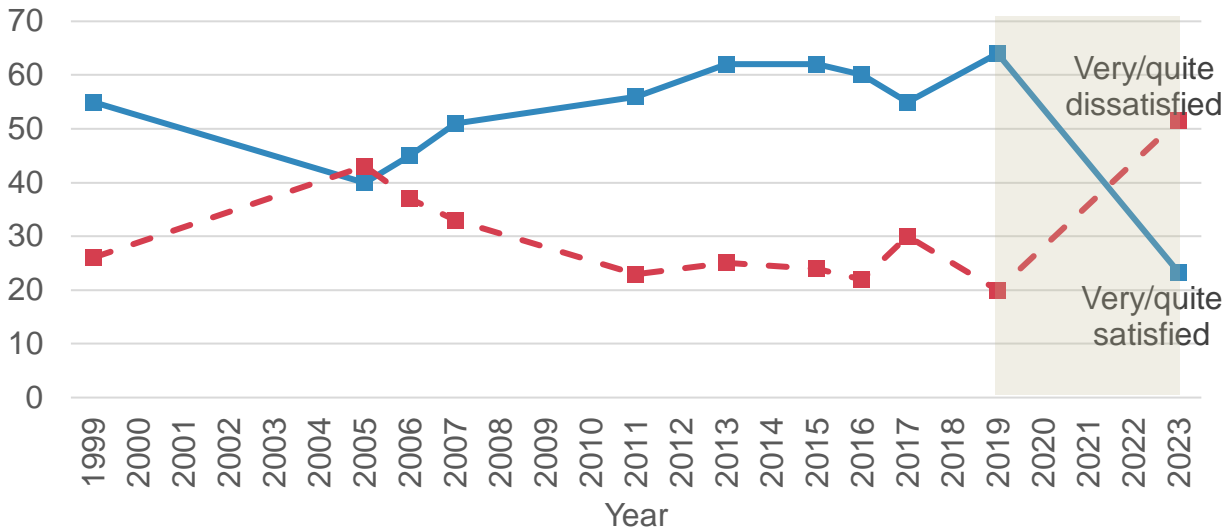
	(%)
Very satisfied	2
Quite satisfied	21
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	25
Quite dissatisfied	35
Very dissatisfied	16
Very/quite satisfied	23
Quite/very dissatisfied	52
Unweighted base	1574

Just over two in ten (23%) of people said they were very or quite satisfied with the way in which the NHS runs, compared with 52% who said they were very or quite dissatisfied.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 14 – Satisfaction with the NHS fell

Percentage of people who were satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which the National Health Service runs, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage of people who were very or quite satisfied with the way in which the NHS runs fell from 64% in 2019 to 23% in 2023, with a corresponding increase in those who were very or quite dissatisfied.

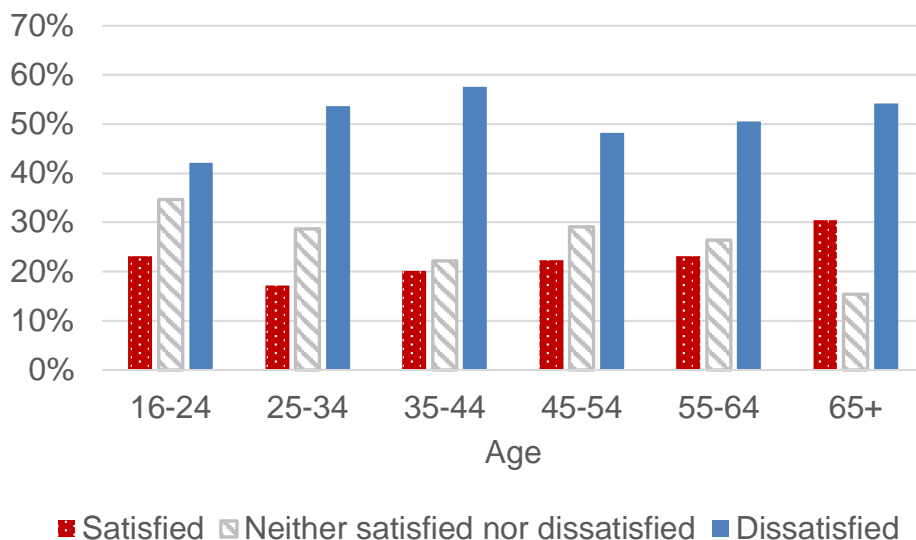
This is the first year since 2005 where more people were dissatisfied than satisfied with the way the NHS runs. This represents the lowest level for satisfaction and highest level for dissatisfaction since the timeseries began in 1999.

Subgroup analysis

Older people were more likely to be very or quite dissatisfied with the way the NHS is run (54% for those aged 65 and over, compared with 42% for those aged 16 to 24) and were more polarised (i.e. less likely to have no opinion).^{xxii}

Figure 15 – Older people were more likely to be satisfied with the way the NHS is run

Percentage of people who were satisfied, dissatisfied or neither with the way the NHS is run by age, 2023



Supporters of Scottish Independence were less likely to be very or quite dissatisfied, than those opposed (46% compared with 57%) and more likely to have no opinion.

Standard of the health service

Respondents were asked whether they thought the standard of the health service in Scotland had changed over the previous year – “increased a lot”, “increased a little”, “stayed the same”, “fallen a little” or “fallen a lot”.

Table 7 - Thinking back over the last twelve months, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?

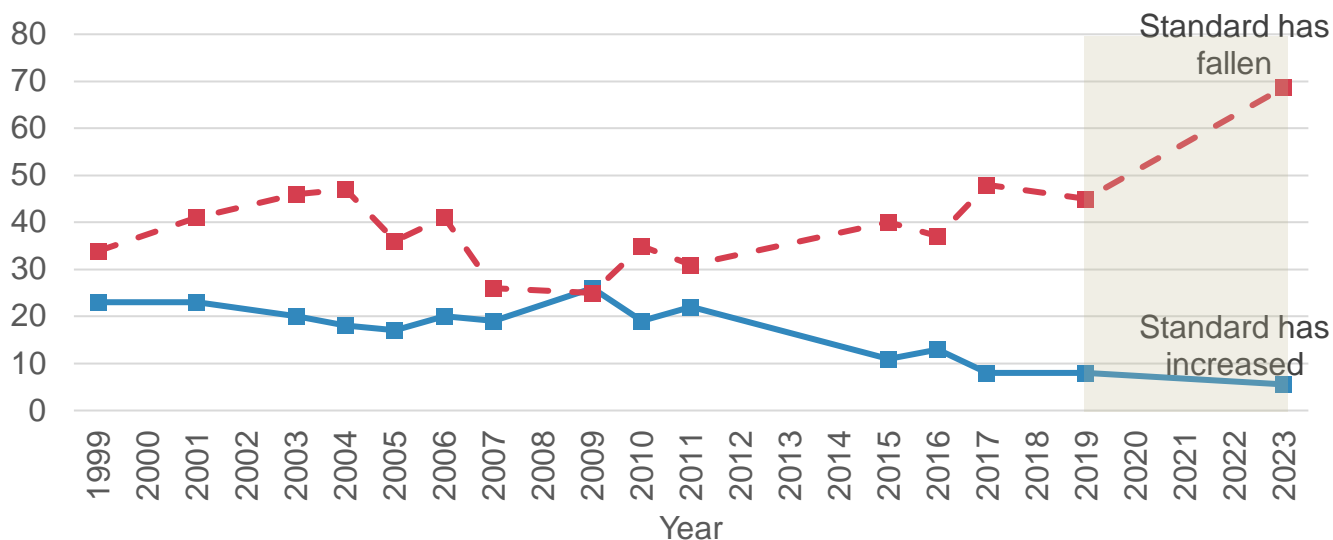
	(%)
Increased a lot	0
Increased a little	5
Stayed the same	25
Fallen a little	40
Fallen a lot	29
Increased a little/a lot	6
Fallen a little/a lot	69
Unweighted base	1574

More than two thirds (69%) of people thought that the standard of the health service in Scotland had fallen either a little or a lot. One in four (25%) thought that standards had remained the same, and 6% thought that standards had increased.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 16 – Perceived standard of the health service fell

Percentage of people who thought the standard of the health service in Scotland had increased or fallen since previous year, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage who thought the standard of the health service had increased fell slightly from 8% in 2019 to 6% in 2023. This figure has declined from 26% in 2009.

The percentage who thought the standard of the health service had fallen increased from 45% in 2019 to 69% in 2023. This is the highest value since the survey began in 1999, and has increased from 25% in 2009.

Respondents were also asked to say whether they thought the change was a result of Scottish Government policies, UK Government policies, for some other reason, or both Westminster and Scottish Government equally. In previous years, this question was asked face-to-face by an interviewer and the “both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” option was not given to respondents – it was only recorded if the respondent suggested it spontaneously.

As the ‘spontaneous response’ aspect of this question could not be reproduced online, the 2023 push-to-web survey asked the question in two different ways. Half of respondents were provided with the “both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” response option alongside the other responses (question option A). For the other half of respondents, the “both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” response option was hidden unless they skipped the question (question option B). Question option B more closely resembles the way this question was asked by an interviewer in the face-to-face survey.^{xxiii}

Of the 69% of people who thought that the standard of the health service had fallen, for those who were presented with and answered question option A, “Both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” was the most frequently chosen response for four in ten people (42%). Of those who answered question option B,

almost half (47%) said the fall in standards was mainly the result of UK government policies; a third (32%) said mainly the result of Scottish Government policies instead.

Table 8 - Of those who thought the standard of the health service had fallen, what do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	Question option A ("Both" option shown) %	Question option B ("Both" option hidden) %
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government's policies	19	32
Mainly the result of the UK Government's policies at Westminster	30	47
For some other reason	7	19
Both Westminster and Scottish Government equally	42	0
Unweighted base	544	533

The change in the way this question was asked in the push-to-web survey means that the 2023 data is not comparable with the long-running SSAS timeseries. For more information on the mode change and discussion of the comparability with the timeseries, please see the SSAS 2023 technical report.

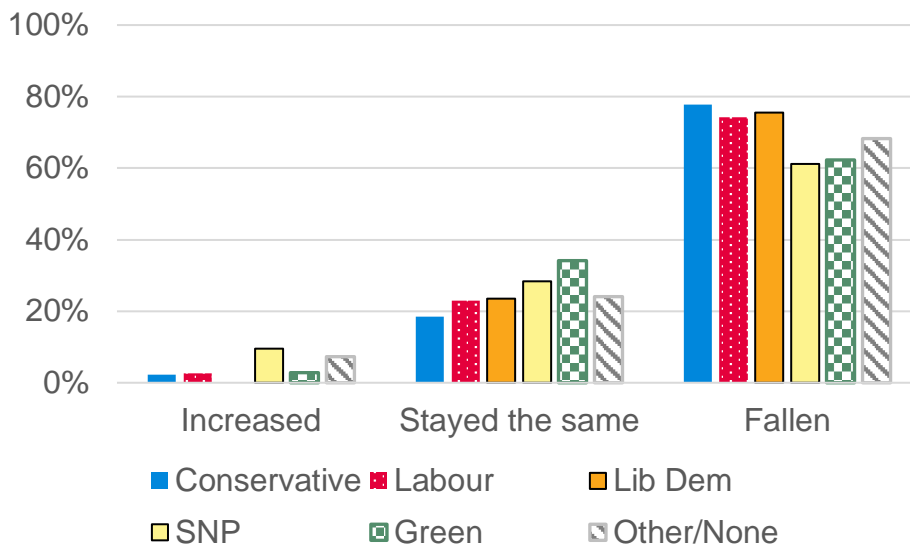
Subgroup analysis

Those with lower household income were more likely to think that the standard of the NHS had increased over the previous year, and less likely to think that it hadn't changed, than those with higher incomes.^{xxiv}

Supporters of the SNP and the Scottish Greens were less likely to think that the standard of the health service had fallen, and more likely to think that it had stayed the same, than supporters of other parties.

Figure 17 – Supporters of SNP and Greens were less likely to think the standard of health service fell

Percentage of people who thought the standard of the health service had increased or fallen in the previous year by political party affiliation, 2023



Standard of living

Respondents were asked whether they thought the general standard of living in Scotland had changed over the previous year – “increased a lot”, “increased a little”, “stayed the same”, “fallen a little” or “fallen a lot”.

Table 9 - Thinking back over the last twelve months, would you say that since then the general standard of living in Scotland has increased or fallen?

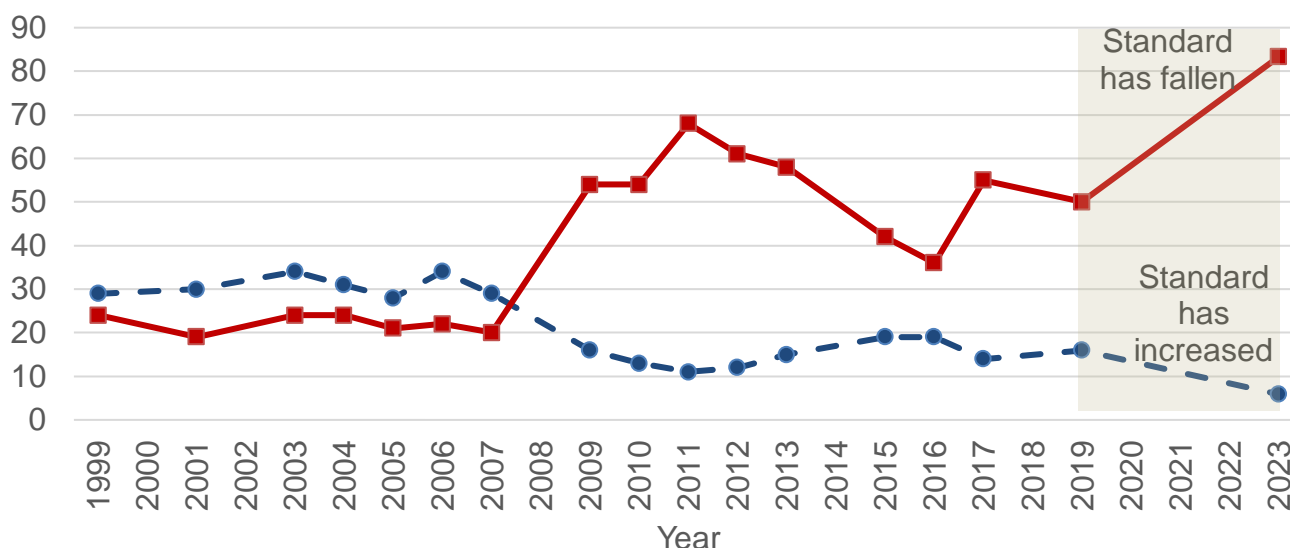
	(%)
Increased a lot	4
Increased a little	2
Stayed the same	10
Fallen a little	41
Fallen a lot	42
Don't know/not answered	1
Increased a little/a lot	6
Fallen a little/a lot	83
Unweighted base	1574

More than eight in ten people (83%) thought that the general standard of living had fallen a little or a lot over the previous year. Fewer than one in ten (6%) thought the standard of living had increased a little or a lot, and 10% thought it had stayed the same.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 18 – Fall in perceived standard of living

Percentage of people who thought the general standard of living in Scotland had increased or fallen since previous year, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage of people who said that the general standard of living had increased over the previous year fell from 16% in 2019 to 6% in 2023. The percentage who thought the standard of living had fallen, increased from 50% in 2019 to 83% in 2023.

In every year since 2007, more people have said that the standard of living has fallen than have said the opposite.

As with the question on standard of the health service, respondents were asked to say whether any change in the standard of living was mainly the result of Scottish Government policies, UK Government policies, some other reason, or both Westminster and Scottish Government equally. Again, due to the change from a face-to-face to an online survey, half of the respondents were presented one version of the question where “both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” was offered alongside the other responses (option A), and the other half of respondents were only shown the “both Westminster and Scottish Government” equally answer option if they tried to skip the question (option B). Option B is most closely aligned with the way this question answer functioned in the face-to-face survey, where interviewers would not present “both Westminster and Scottish Government equally” as an option and would only record this if the respondent offered this spontaneously themselves.^{xxv}

Here, of the 83% of people who thought that the standard of living had fallen, for those who were presented with and answered question option A, UK Government policies was the most frequently chosen response for four in ten people (38%) and almost two in ten (17%) said Scottish Government policies. Of those who answered question option B, more than half (55%) said the fall in standards was mainly the result of UK government policies; just over a quarter (27%) said mainly the result of Scottish Government policies instead.

Table 10 - Of those who thought the standard of living had fallen, what do you think this has been mainly the result of?

	Question option A ("Both" option shown) %	Question option B ("Both" option hidden) %
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government's policies	17	27
Mainly the result of the UK Government's policies	38	55
For some other reason	8	17
Both Westminster and Scottish Government equally	36	1
Unweighted base	673	662

The change in the way this question was asked in the push-to-web survey means that the 2023 data is not comparable with the long-running SSAS timeseries. For more information on the mode change and discussion of the comparability with the timeseries, please see the SSAS 2023 technical report.

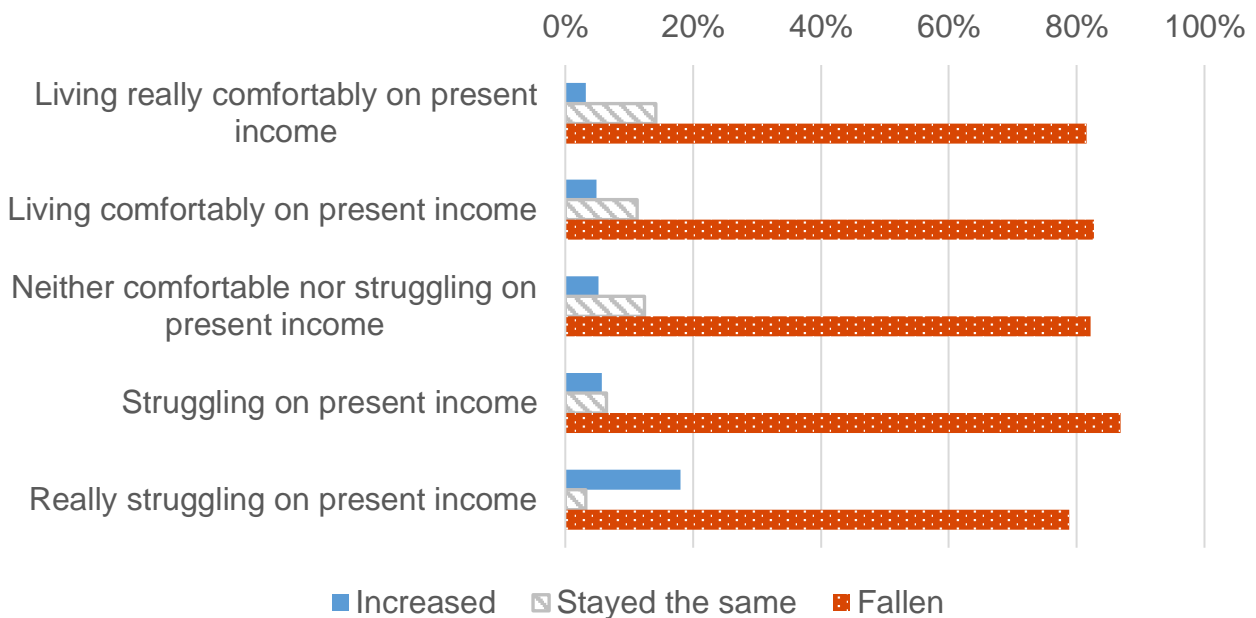
Subgroup analysis

In terms of self-rated hardship, people who identified themselves as “really struggling on present income” were more likely to think the standard of living had increased or stayed the same, and less likely to think that it had fallen, compared with groups who were more comfortable.^{xxvi}

Those on the left of the left-right political scale were more likely to think that the standard of living had fallen, than those on the right.

Figure 19 – Those more comfortable on their income were less likely to think the standard of living fell

Percentage of people who thought the general standard of living had increased or fallen in the previous year by self-rated hardship, 2023



^{xxi} See Annex B – Table B.8 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xxii} See Annex B – Table B.9 for subgroup analysis.

^{xxiii} For more information on how the inclusion of this question in the online survey was explored and detailed discussion of the impact of the mode change from a face-to-face survey to push-to-web, please see the SSAS 2023 technical report.

^{xxiv} See Annex B – Table B.10 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xxv} For more information on how this was explored and detailed discussion of the impact of the mode change from a face-to-face survey to push-to-web, please see the SSAS 2023 technical report.

^{xxvi} See Annex B – Table B.11 for full sub-group analysis.

5. Tax, spending and redistribution

This chapter presents views on tax, spending and redistribution of income.

Taxes and spending

Respondents were presented with three options and asked to pick which one they thought government should choose – whether to “reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits”, “keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level” or “increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits”.

Table 11- Suppose the government had to choose between the three options on this card. Which do you think it should choose?

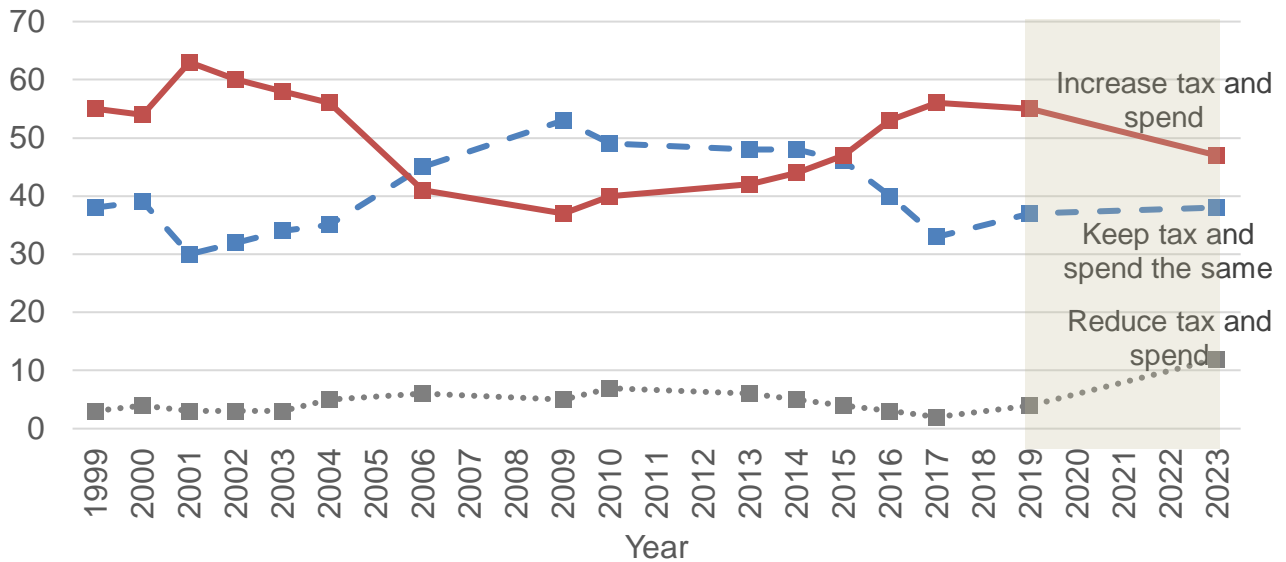
	(%)
Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	12
Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level	38
Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	47
None of these	1
Unweighted base	1574

Just under half (47%) of people thought government should increase taxes and spending; under four in ten (38%) thought government should keep taxes and spending the same, and 12% thought government should reduce taxes and spending.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 20 – Around a half of people support increased tax and spending

Percentage of people who thought the government should increase, reduce or keep the same tax and spending on health, education and social benefits, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



The percentage who thought government should increase tax and spending decreased from 55% in 2019 to 47% in 2023. The percentage who thought government should keep them the same increased slightly from 37% in 2019 to 38% in 2023, and the percentage who thought government should reduce tax and spending increased from 4% in 2019 to 12% in 2023.

Although the percentage who say government should reduce tax and spending is generally low, its value of 12% in 2023 is the highest since the survey began.

Between 2006 and 2014, more people said government should keep tax and spend the same than said they should be increased. Outwith these years, more people said to increase tax and spend than to keep them the same.

Subgroup analysis

Older people (60% of those aged 65 and over compared with 42% of those aged 16 to 24) were more likely to think that taxes and spending should be increased, as were disabled people (57% compared with 44% people who were not disabled), those on the left (55% to 26% of those on the right) and supporters of Scottish Independence (54% to 41% of those who oppose Scottish Independence).^{xxvii}

Figure 21 – Older people were more likely to support increased tax and spending

Percentage of people who thought that taxes and spending should be increased, kept the same or reduced, by age, 2023

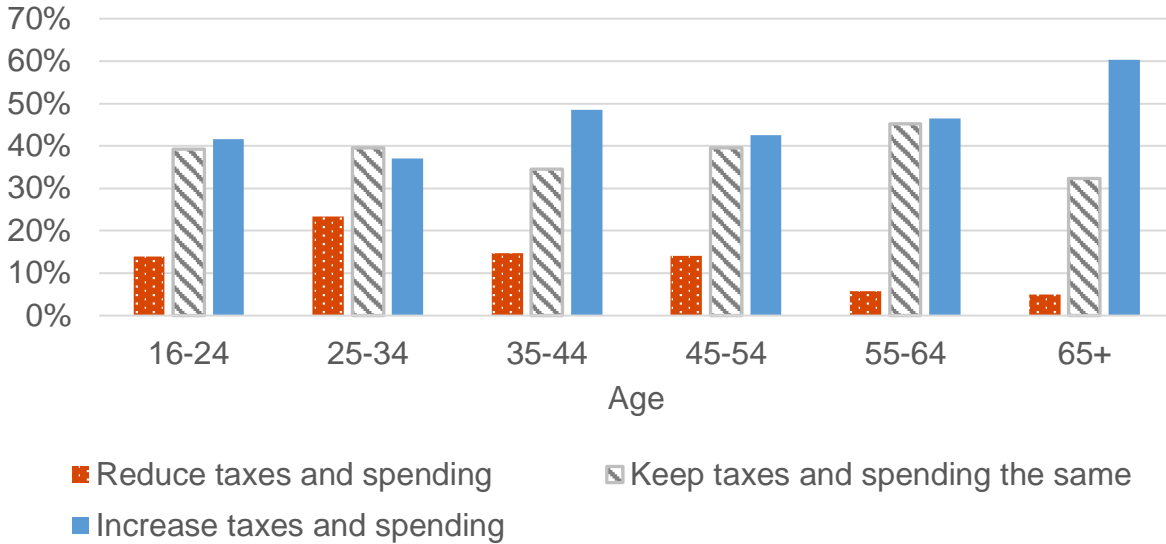
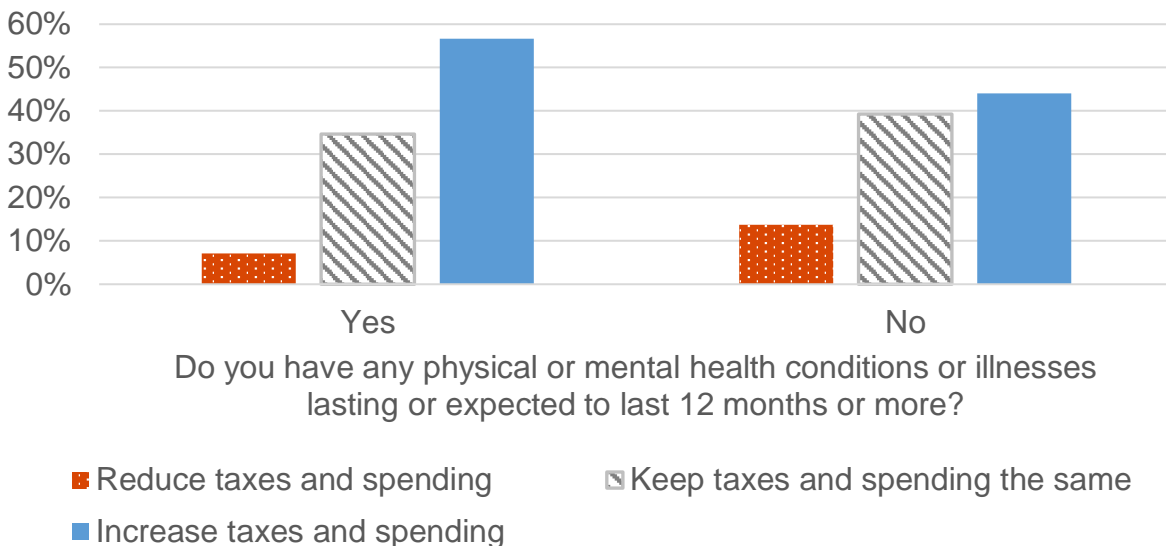


Figure 22 – Disabled people were more likely to support increased tax and spending

Percentage of people who thought that taxes and spending should be increased, kept the same or reduced, by disability, 2023



Redistribution of income

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with the statement “Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off”.

Table 11 - Whether agree or disagree with the statement ‘Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off

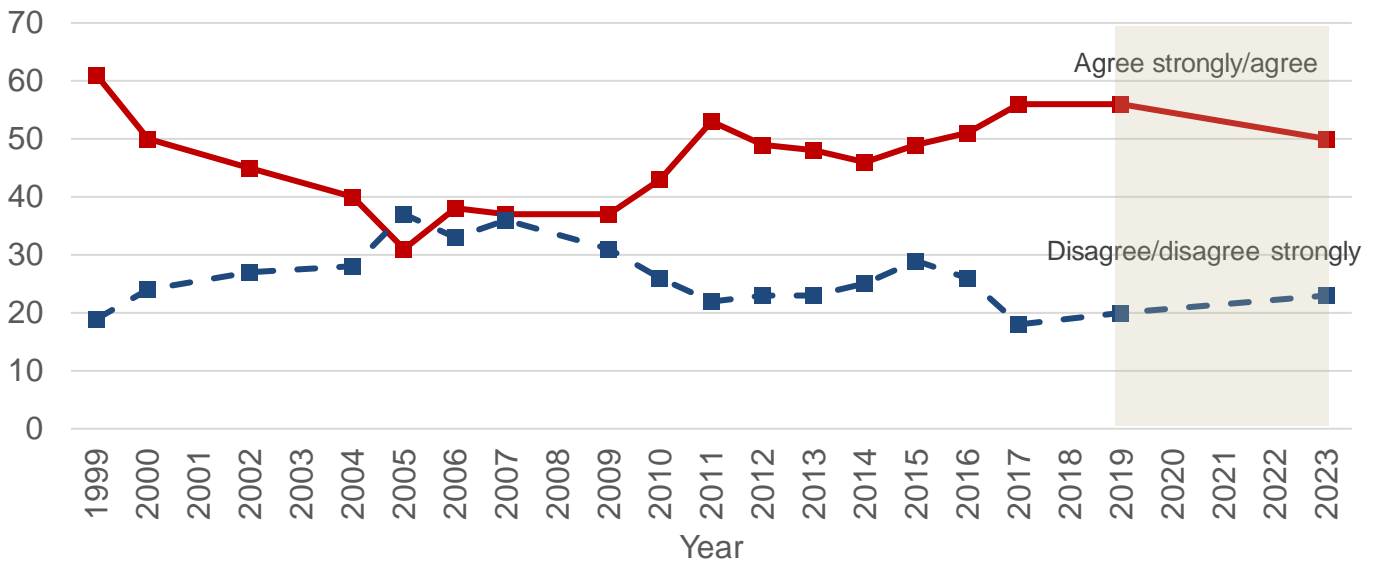
	(%)
Agree strongly	20
Agree	30
Neither agree nor disagree	25
Disagree	15
Disagree strongly	8
Agree strongly/agree	50
Disagree/disagree strongly	23
Unweighted base	1574

Half of people (50%) agreed that Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off; just under a quarter (23%) disagreed and just over a quarter (27%) either didn’t agree or disagree, or didn’t know or answer.

This question has been asked since 1999.

Figure 23 – More agree with redistribution of income than disagree

Percentage of people who agree or disagree with the statement ‘Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well-off’, 1999 to 2023. N.B. Shading indicates a change in methodology from face-to-face to push-to-web between 2019 and 2023.



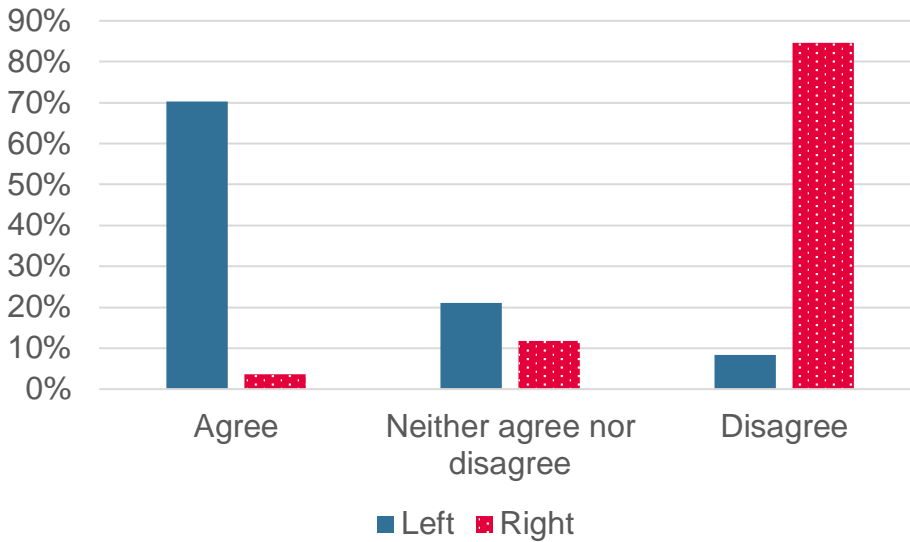
In every year since 2005, there has been more support for redistribution than there has been opposition.

Subgroup analysis

Those on the left (of the Left-Right Scale)^{xxvii} were more likely to support redistribution of income than those on the right (70% compared with 4%).

Figure 24 – Those on the left more likely to agree with redistribution of income; those on the right more likely to disagree

Percentage of people who agreed or disagreed with redistribution of income from the better-off to the less well-off, by position on the left-right scale, 2023



^{xxvii} See Annex B – Table B.12 for full subgroup analysis.

^{xxviii} See Annex A for definition.

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Annex A – Left-Right and Liberal-Authoritarian Scales

Since 1999, the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey has included two attitude scales which aim to measure where respondents stand on certain underlying value dimensions – left–right and libertarian–authoritarian.

A useful way of summarising the information from a number of questions of this sort is to construct an additive index. This approach rests on the assumption that there is an underlying – ‘latent’ – attitudinal dimension which characterises the answers to all the questions within each scale. If so, scores on the index are likely to be a more reliable indication of the underlying attitude than the answers to any one individual question.

Both scales consist of a number of statements to which the respondent is invited to “agree strongly”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” or “disagree strongly”. The items are outlined below.

Left-right scale

- Government should redistribute income from the better off to those who are less well off;
- Big business benefits owners at the expense of workers;
- Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth;
- There is one law for the rich and one for the poor;
- Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance.

Libertarian–authoritarian scale

- Young people today don’t have enough respect for traditional British values;
- People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences;
- For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence;
- Schools should teach children to obey authority;
- The law should always be obeyed, even if a particular law is wrong;
- Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral standards.

The indices for the scales are formed by scoring the left-most and most libertarian as 1 and, the right-most, most authoritarian as 5. The “neither agree nor disagree” option is scored as 3. The scores to all the questions in each scale are added and then divided by the number of items in the scale, giving indices ranging from 1 (left-most, most libertarian) to 5 (right-most, most authoritarian). The scores on the indices have been placed on the dataset.

Annex B – Subgroup tables

This annex presents the subgroup analysis referenced in this report. The full statistical tables for the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2023 are published alongside this report on the Scottish Government website.

Table B.1: ‘How much do you trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland’s best interest?’ subgroup analysis

		Just about always	Most of the time	Only some of the time	Almost never	Just about always/Most of the time	Only some of the time/almost never	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Age	16-24	14%	55%	23%	5%	70%	28%	102
Age	25-34	11%	43%	22%	22%	54%	44%	242
Age	35-44	9%	38%	31%	20%	47%	51%	260
Age	45-54	10%	31%	39%	17%	41%	56%	249
Age	55-64	9%	31%	36%	23%	40%	59%	310
Age	65+	11%	27%	41%	21%	38%	62%	408
Left-right scale	Left	12%	41%	29%	18%	53%	47%	960
Left-right scale	Neither	6%	32%	41%	18%	38%	59%	442
Left-right scale	Right	12%	13%	41%	34%	25%	75%	137

Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	20%	49%	21%	9%	69%	31%	755
Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Union	3%	24%	44%	28%	27%	72%	778
Party political identification	Conservative	3%	15%	45%	37%	18%	82%	196
Party political identification	Labour	3%	31%	43%	23%	34%	66%	359
Party political identification	Lib Dem	6%	30%	45%	18%	36%	63%	90
Party political identification	SNP	25%	50%	19%	6%	75%	25%	489
Party political identification	Green	11%	66%	21%	3%	76%	24%	98
Party political identification	Other/None	5%	28%	34%	29%	34%	63%	292

Table B.2: ‘How much do you trust the UK Government to work in Scotland’s best long-term interest?’

		Just about always	Most of the time	Only some of the time	Almost never	Just about always/Most of the time	Only some of the time/almost never	Unweighted bases
Left-right scale	Left	2%	13%	28%	57%	15%	85%	960
Left-right scale	Neither	3%	21%	43%	30%	25%	73%	442
Left-right scale	Right	24%	37%	26%	14%	60%	40%	137
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	1%	5%	22%	71%	6%	93%	755
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Union	8%	29%	41%	21%	36%	63%	778
Party political identification	Conservative	14%	54%	22%	9%	68%	32%	196
Party political identification	Labour	5%	21%	43%	31%	26%	74%	359
Party political identification	Lib Dem	5%	16%	45%	32%	21%	78%	90
Party political identification	SNP	1%	4%	22%	73%	5%	95%	489

Party political identification	Green	1%	3%	25%	71%	4%	96%	98
Party political identification	Other/None	3%	16%	37%	40%	19%	77%	292

Table B.3: ‘In general how good would you say the Scottish Government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?’ subgroup analysis

		... very good,	quite good,	not very good	or, not at all good?	very/quite good	not very good/not at all good	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Party political identification	Conservative	*	6%	43%	49%	6%	92%	196
Party political identification	Labour	2%	21%	50%	26%	23%	76%	359
Party political identification	Lib Dem		20%	53%	23%	20%	76%	90
Party political identification	SNP	9%	57%	28%	4%	66%	32%	489
Party political identification	Green	4%	52%	34%	2%	55%	37%	98
Party political identification	Other/None	2%	19%	42%	32%	21%	74%	292

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?	Yes	4%	37%	33%	21%	42%	55%	477
Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?	No	4%	30%	43%	22%	33%	64%	1079

Table B.4: ‘And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?’ subgroup analysis

		... very good,	quite good,	not very good	or, not at all good?	very/quite good	not very good/not at all good	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Party political identification	Conservative		30%	49%	18%	30%	67%	196
Party political identification	Labour	1%	8%	54%	37%	9%	91%	359
Party political identification	Lib Dem		7%	61%	31%	7%	92%	90
Party political identification	SNP	1%	8%	36%	54%	9%	90%	489
Party political identification	Green		5%	32%	61%	5%	93%	98
Party political identification	Other/None	1%	11%	51%	33%	11%	84%	292

Table B.5: ‘Do you think the Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people...’ subgroup analysis

		... more say in how Scotland is governed	less say	or, is it making no difference?	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Highest educational qualification attained (Scotland)	Degree or equivalent, and above	58%	11%	29%	697
Highest educational qualification attained (Scotland)	Other Higher Education, including Diplomas in Higher Education, HNC and HND	38%	19%	42%	292
Highest educational qualification attained (Scotland)	Higher grade or advanced higher, International Baccalaureate, A-level, or SVQ level 3 or equivalent	40%	12%	42%	214
Highest educational qualification attained (Scotland)	Qualification below Scottish Higher or Advanced Higher, such as GNVQ/GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate, SVQ Level 1 or 2	38%	15%	43%	218

Highest educational qualification attained (Scotland)	No qualifications	41%	16%	41%	112
Libertarian-authoritarian scale	Libertarian	79%	4%	14%	390
Libertarian-authoritarian scale	Neither	43%	15%	40%	648
Libertarian-authoritarian scale	Authoritarian	25%	20%	52%	505

Table B.6: ‘Which of the following do you think has most influence over the way Scotland is run?’ subgroup analysis

		... the Scottish Government	the UK Government at Westminster	local councils in Scotland	or, the European Union?	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Age	16-24	34%	48%	9%	0%	102
Age	25-34	34%	53%	9%	1%	242
Age	35-44	37%	52%	7%	1%	260
Age	45-54	45%	46%	5%	0%	249
Age	55-64	45%	45%	6%	1%	310
Age	65+	55%	37%	7%	0%	408
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	29%	62%	6%	0%	755
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Union	58%	32%	8%	1%	778

Table B.7 ‘And which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?’ subgroup analysis

		... the Scottish Government	the UK Government at Westminster	local councils in Scotland	or, the European Union?	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Age	16-24	55%	10%	25%	2%	102
Age	25-34	61%	17%	17%	2%	242
Age	35-44	65%	11%	18%	4%	260
Age	45-54	63%	21%	13%	0%	249
Age	55-64	61%	18%	19%	0%	310
Age	65+	61%	22%	15%		408
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	77%	7%	12%	2%	755
Support/oppose Scottish Independence	Union	47%	29%	22%	1%	778

Table B.8: ‘Here is a list of things the Scottish Government could try and achieve. Which do you think should be its highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?’ subgroup analysis

		Improve standards of education	Improve housing	Improve the economy	Improve people’s health	Cut crime	Reduce environmental problems	Improve public transport	Reduce inequality	Other	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Urban or Rural	Rural	8%	4%	42%	14%	6%	8%	2%	10%	2%	365
Urban or Rural	Urban	10%	12%	42%	16%	4%	4%	2%	8%	2%	1209
Left-right scale	Left	8%	11%	40%	15%	4%	6%	2%	12%	2%	960
Left-right scale	Neither	9%	9%	48%	16%	5%	3%	3%	2%	2%	442
Left-right scale	Right	23%	6%	39%	9%	10%	5%	1%	2%	1%	137

Table B.9: ‘How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the National Health Service runs nowadays?’ subgroup analysis

		Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Age	16-24	2%	21%	35%	30%	12%	102
Age	25-34	2%	15%	29%	42%	12%	242
Age	35-44	2%	18%	22%	37%	20%	260
Age	45-54	1%	21%	29%	35%	14%	249
Age	55-64	1%	22%	26%	30%	21%	310
Age	65+	4%	26%	15%	37%	17%	408
Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	3%	23%	28%	34%	12%	755
Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Union	2%	20%	21%	36%	21%	778

Table B.10: ‘Thinking back over the last twelve months, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?’ subgroup analysis

		Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Fallen a little	Fallen a lot	Increased	Stayed the same	Fallen	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Monthly Household income	Less than £1,411	1%	11%	20%	37%	31%	12%	20%	68%	224
Monthly Household income	£1,411 - £2,560		3%	20%	42%	33%	3%	20%	75%	316
Monthly Household income	£2,561 - £4,350	1%	3%	29%	39%	28%	4%	29%	67%	388
Monthly Household income	£4,351 or more		3%	27%	48%	22%	3%	27%	70%	366
Party political identification	Conservative		2%	18%	37%	41%	2%	18%	78%	196
Party political identification	Labour	0%	2%	23%	42%	32%	3%	23%	74%	359
Party political identification	Lib Dem			24%	43%	32%	0%	24%	75%	90

Party political identification	SNP	0%	9%	28%	41%	20%	9%	28%	61%	489
Party political identification	Green		3%	34%	50%	12%	3%	34%	62%	98
Party political identification	Other/None	1%	6%	24%	33%	35%	7%	24%	68%	292

Table B.11: ‘Thinking back over the last 12 months, would you say that since then the general standard of living in Scotland has increased or fallen?’ subgroup analysis

		Increased a lot	Increased a little	Stayed the same	Fallen a little	Fallen a lot	Increased	Stayed the same	Fallen	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Self-rated hardship	Living really comfortably on present income	3%	1%	14%	38%	43%	3%	14%	82%	85
Self-rated hardship	Living comfortably on present income	2%	3%	11%	51%	32%	5%	11%	83%	509

Self-rated hardship	Neither comfortable nor struggling on present income	4%	1%	12%	43%	39%	5%	12%	82%	546
Self-rated hardship	Struggling on present income	4%	2%	6%	29%	57%	6%	6%	87%	299
Self-rated hardship	Really struggling on present income	15%	3%	3%	13%	65%	18%	3%	79%	97
Left-right scale	Left	5%	2%	6%	38%	48%	6%	6%	87%	960
Left-right scale	Neither	3%	2%	15%	46%	33%	5%	15%	79%	442
Left-right scale	Right	1%	3%	25%	41%	30%	4%	25%	71%	137

Table B.12: Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose?

		Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits	Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now	Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	None	Don't know	Prefer not to answer	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Age	16-24	14%	39%	42%	0%	5%	0%	102
Age	25-34	23%	40%	37%	0%	0%	0%	242
Age	35-44	15%	34%	49%	1%	2%	0%	260
Age	45-54	14%	40%	43%	1%	3%	0%	249
Age	55-64	6%	45%	46%	1%	1%	0%	310
Age	65+	5%	32%	60%	1%	1%	0%	408
Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?	Yes	7%	35%	57%	1%	1%	0%	477

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?	No	14%	39%	44%	1%	2%	0%	1079
Left-right scale	left	10%	33%	55%	1%	1%	0%	960
Left-right scale	neither	13%	47%	37%	0%	2%	0%	442
Left-right scale	right	27%	44%	26%	2%	0%	0%	137
Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Independence	11%	33%	54%	0%	1%	0%	755
Support/Oppose Scottish Independence	Union	13%	43%	41%	1%	1%	0%	778

Table B.13: Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off

		Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know	Prefer not to answer	<i>Unweighted bases</i>
Left-right scale	left	31%	39%	21%	8%	1%	0%	0%	960
Left-right scale	neither	2%	18%	40%	26%	14%	0%	0%	442
Left-right scale	right	0%	4%	12%	36%	49%	0%	0%	137

Annex C: Full list of significant associations for subgroup analysis

This annex provides a list of which questions saw a statistically significant association with which subgroup variables, including those not referenced in the report. The full statistical tables for the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2023 are published alongside this report on the Scottish Government website

Question wording	Question code	Is there a significant association with:							
		Age	Gender	Disability	Household income	Highest qualification attained	SIMD	Urban or rural	Self-rated hardship
Thinking back over the last twelve months, that is since {month of interview } 2022, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?	SNHSIE12				Yes				
Thinking back over the last 12 months, that is since {month of interview} 2022, would you say that since then the general standard of living in Scotland has increased or fallen?	SLivIE12					Yes	Yes		Yes
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the National Health Service runs nowadays?	NHSSat	Yes							
Here is a list of things the Scottish Government could try and achieve. Which do you think should be its highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?	ExecDo23		Yes			Yes		Yes	
In general how good would you say the Scottish Government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?	ExecList		Yes	Yes					
And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?	UKList								
How much do you trust the UK Government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?	UKIntNat								
How much do you trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests?	NatInNat	Yes				Yes			
Which of the following do you think has most influence over the way Scotland is run?	DoesInfl	Yes							
And which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?	OughtInfl	Yes				Yes			
Think Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people...[more say in how Scotland is governed/less say/or, is it making no difference?]	SayInGv3DV					Yes			
Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose? Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits/Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now/Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	TaxSpend	Yes		Yes					
Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off - agree or disagree?	Redistrib						Yes		Yes

Question wording	Question code	Is there a significant association with:					
		Left-right scale	Libertarian-authoritarian scale	Party political identification	Constitutional preference	Relationship to EU	Interest in politics
Thinking back over the last twelve months, that is since {month of interview } 2022, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen?	SNHSIE12			Yes	Yes		
Thinking back over the last 12 months, that is since {month of interview} 2022, would you say that since then the general standard of living in Scotland has increased or fallen?	SLivIE12	Yes					Yes
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the National Health Service runs nowadays?	NHSSat				Yes		Yes
Here is a list of things the Scottish Government could try and achieve. Which do you think should be its highest priority, that is the most important thing it should try and do?	ExecDo23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
In general how good would you say the Scottish Government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?	ExecList	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?	UKList	Yes		Yes	Yes		
How much do you trust the UK Government to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?	UKIntNat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
How much do you trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests?	NatInNat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Which of the following do you think has most influence over the way Scotland is run?	DoesInfl	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
And which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?	OughtInfl	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Think Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people...[more say in how Scotland is governed/less say/or, is it making no difference?]	SayInGv3DV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Suppose the government had to choose between the following three options. Which do you think it should choose? Reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits/Keep taxes and spending on these services at the same level as now/Increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits	TaxSpend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Government should redistribute income from the better-off to those who are less well off - agree or disagree?	Redistrib	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



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