

What are the benefits of staying in the UK - and what are the risks of independence?



The facts you need



Need a postal vote form? See back page.

INTRODUCTION

The decision we take in the referendum will be irreversible. There will be no going back. That is why we have to be 100% sure of the facts before we vote.

We love our country and want the best for our future. Scotland can have the best of both worlds: more decisions taken here in Scotland, backed up by the strength, stability and security of the United Kingdom.

But we know that with so much information coming out every day, it can be difficult to get the facts you need to make the most important decision in our history.

This document sets out the facts on the big issues. All the information in this document comes from impartial experts, economists and employers. We even quote the SNP themselves - so you can get all the facts you need.

There is a strong emotional argument for remaining part of the UK family, but the cold-hard facts are so overwhelmingly against breaking-away from Britain that we think they speak for themselves.



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THE UK POUND

The strength, security and stability of the Pound

The Pound is one of the most trusted and secure currencies in the world. Leaving the UK means losing the UK Pound.

- If we leave the UK, Scotland, and the rest of the UK become separate countries. Sharing the UK Pound would need agreement with people in the rest of the UK to set up a Eurozone-style currency union.
- All the parties in the rest of the UK have said no to Alex Salmond's Eurozone style

currency union. The Governor of the Bank of England has said sharing the UK Pound without sharing a tax system, as the SNP suggest, won't work.

- The SNP have refused to set out a plan B for what will replace the UK Pound.
- That means a separate Scotland would use the Euro or would have to set up an unproven separate currency.

In the SNP's own words

"The SNP Government has no currency plan for an independent Scotland."

Jim Sillars, former SNP Deputy Leader

The expert view

"Without a plan B on the currency issue the Scottish people are being duped about the potential massive costs and disruption to the Scottish economy."

Ronnie MacDonald, Professor of Economics, Glasgow University

What currency we use is about much more than the coins in your pocket

When the Royal Bank of Scotland was about to collapse, being part of one of the biggest economies in the world mattered. The bail out by taxpayers across the UK was more than twice the size of what the whole Scottish economy generates in a year.

**£152
Billion**

Scottish Economy

**£320
Billion**

RBS support from UK taxpayers

COST OF LIVING

What would leaving the UK cost you?

Things are already too expensive. Breaking up the UK would mean higher prices and more costs for families.

Interest rates are lower as part of the UK

Impartial experts at the National Institute for Economic and Social Research estimate that independence would put up interest rates by as much as 1-2%. What would a 1% rise mean for your finances?



Average mortgage up by around £1,300 a year.



Average household credit card, catalogue and store card bills up by around £120 a year.

Being part of the UK keeps shop prices lower

Common sense tells you that it costs more to transport a tin of beans to Inverness or Stornoway than it does to Birmingham or Manchester. However everyone in the UK pays the same prices in big supermarkets.

Here is what the Chief Executives of the big supermarkets say about what breaking up the UK will mean for the cost of your shopping:

“The price customers pay for a pint of milk or loaf of bread is the same regardless of where they live in the UK. However the cost of doing business in different parts of the country does vary.”

Andy Clarke, Chief Executive of Asda

“Once Scotland is a separate country, we and other retailers will take a view of what the cost structure is ... If you were to strike that today, there’s no doubt Scotland is a more costly country in which to run a grocery retail business.”

Justin King, Chief Executive of Sainsbury’s

COST OF INDEPENDENCE

YOUR FAMILY SHOPPING BILL

18 - SEPT - 2014 22:00

Random basket of shopping Tesco UK: £26.62

Identical basket of shopping Tesco Ireland: £30.75

Extra cost: 16% higher

NON REFUNDABLE

You don’t need to look far to see how much more expensive things could be. Tesco sells identical goods at different prices in the UK and Ireland.

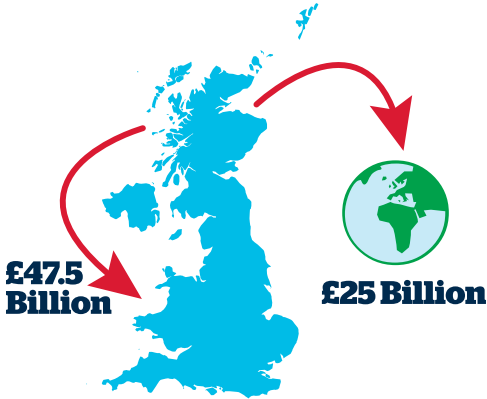
JOBS AND ECONOMY

A stronger economy and more Scottish jobs

The things we are really good at in Scotland are better protected by being backed-up by UK investment. That means more jobs and more opportunities for future generations.

Scottish jobs depend on UK customers. Why put up a barrier?

Scotland sells twice as much to the rest of the UK as we do to the rest of the world. Scottish exports to the rest of the UK totalled £47.5 billion. £11.7 billion of all Scottish exports were destined for the EU. £13.4 billion to the rest of the world



Managing the UK's money

Our reputation for being prudent with money is one reason why almost 200,000 workers are employed by the financial services industry in Scotland. These good jobs are at risk if we leave the UK.

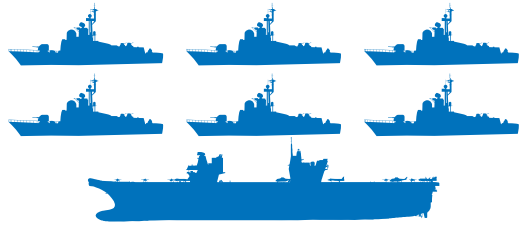
If we leave the UK, nine out of ten of our banks and pension companies' customers would be in a foreign country. Some of the biggest employers in Scotland, like Standard Life in Edinburgh or Alliance Trust in Dundee, have started making preparations to set up new companies in England if we vote for independence.

Save our shipyards

Around 12,000 people across Scotland are employed in the defence industry, especially in high-quality engineering jobs.

About 2,000 jobs depend on shipbuilding on the Clyde and 2,000 jobs at Rosyth on the Forth. The only customer for these shipyards is the Royal Navy who have never built a warship in a foreign country.

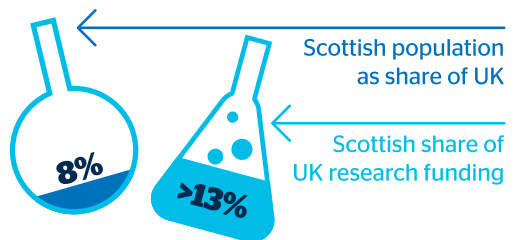
Clyde shipyards have built 6 Royal Navy frigates since 2004. The largest ship in the Royal Navy's history will launch this summer at Rosyth.



Made in Scotland

Investing in Scottish universities

We have more top universities than far bigger countries like France. This is backed-up by the investment into things like science and medical research by the whole of the UK. With around 8% of the population we get over 13% of all UK research funding. This means that our Scottish ideas and inventions can continue to change the world.



PROTECTING SCHOOLS & HOSPITALS

The back-up of the UK means higher spending on schools and hospitals

As part of the UK we have far higher public spending than the rest of the UK. Experts agree that going it alone would put our schools and hospitals at risk.

- Scotland receives over £1,200 a year more per head of population in public spending than in other parts of the UK. This money pays for our schools, NHS hospitals and policies like free personal care for the elderly.
- Impartial research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies said that leaving the UK would mean huge cuts to vital public services, tax rises or a combination of the two.
- It pays to be part of something bigger. When Scottish banks, like RBS, collapsed in 2008, the entire UK signed the cheque that kept banks running and money in our cash machines. Smaller countries like Ireland and Iceland could not do this - and we saw what happened there.



Schools and hospitals are better protected within the UK



Having our own Parliament as part of the UK means we are better protected from economic shocks.

Just this year we saw a collapse in the money coming from the North Sea. Had we been independent, this would have seen £4.4 billion taken from our budget. That is equivalent to what we spend on schools in Scotland. As part of the bigger UK, spending on our NHS and our schools is protected from this risk.

Public spending per head is higher in Scotland than the UK as a whole.

PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

Your UK pension and benefits guaranteed by over 60 million people

- Today our benefits and pensions are guaranteed by being part of a system backed by one of the biggest economies in the world.
- The UK welfare system is based on need not nationality. It means that right across the UK, irrespective of where you live, everybody gets access to the same level of support.
- If we leave the UK we leave behind the UK pensions and benefits system. With less than 2 years before we would become a separate country, there is no plan for how pensions and benefits would be paid.
- Even the SNP Government's own expert group say there is a "serious risk" of disruption to benefit payments to people who rely on them.

Read below what the Finance Minister John Swinney wrote for the SNP Cabinet:

John Swinney writes that the costs of pensions in Scotland will rise: **"spending on state pensions and public sector pensions is also driven by demographics, and is set to rise"** so he has set up a working group to **"consider the affordability of state pensions."**

John Swinney admits that relying on oil taxes to fund schools, hospitals and pensions is risky: **"There is a high degree of uncertainty around future North Sea revenues reflecting considerable volatility in production and oil prices."**

Just as oil runs out the number of Scottish pensioners will rocket



Sources: Office for National Statistics & Office for Budget Responsibility


THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

More powers and the back-up of the bigger UK

Scotland can have the Best of Both Worlds.

- Scotland has had a devolved parliament for 15 years. The mixture of distinctive Scottish decision making alongside the strength of being part of one of the biggest economies in the world has been good for us.
- More powers are already guaranteed for the Scottish Parliament, with new powers to raise taxes and borrow already transferred to Holyrood.
- All the main political parties in both the UK and the Scottish Parliament support bringing more decision-making to Scotland.

Size of economy

WORLDS RICHEST COUNTRIES	GDP (MILLIONS of \$)
1. USA	16,244,575
2. China	8,221,015
3. Japan	5,960,269
4. Germany	3,429,519
5. France	2,613,665
6. United Kingdom	2,476,665
	
43. Finland	247,646
44. Pakistan	225,558
45. Independent Scotland	216,000

DEVOLUTION TODAY

Today we already have full powers in the Scottish Parliament on:

- The NHS
- Schools
- Universities and Colleges
- Local Transport
- Police and Justice
- The Environment
- Economic Development

DEVOLUTION FROM 2016

Plans have been put in place which guarantee more powers for the Scottish Parliament including:

- More tax-raising powers.
- From 2016 there will be a Scottish rate of income tax.
- Powers to borrow money.

THE NEXT STAGE OF DEVOLUTION

All three parties are putting forward their own proposals, but these include things like:

- More power to raise taxes without undermining the ability to transfer money to Scotland in times of need.
- Bringing the delivery of benefits to local areas including things like Housing Benefit.

Devolution means we keep the best of both worlds

And we have the strength, security and stability that comes from being part of the bigger UK.

We get higher public spending than the UK average worth £1,200 per person, per year.

But we don't risk the budget for the NHS or our childrens' schools on volatile oil prices.

In a crisis we stand together, like when the Royal Bank of Scotland was bailed out by taxpayers across the UK.

Our benefits and pensions are safer with 30 million UK income taxpayers paying into the kitty instead of just 2.7 million here in Scotland.

What do you think?

Do you agree that Scotland's best future remains as part of the United Kingdom? Or do you want to find out more before you make the biggest decision in Scotland's history?

Please tear off this page, fold it over to stick it down and pop it in the post - you do not even need a stamp.

1. Which best describes your view on independence?

- I strongly believe Scotland should remain part of the United Kingdom
- I'm not sure but I lean towards staying in the United Kingdom
- I am undecided
- I'm not sure but I lean towards independence
- I strongly believe Scotland should be independent from the rest of the UK

2. What issue will most affect the way you vote in the referendum?

3. Which party did you vote for at the last election for the...

UK Parliament

- SNP
- Labour
- Conservative
- Lib Dem
- Didn't Vote
- Other

Scottish Parliament

- SNP
- Labour
- Conservative
- Lib Dem
- Didn't Vote
- Other

4. Your details

Forename: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please tick here if you would like a postal ballot form.

The information you supply us will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Information may be stored on a database and used by the Better Together Campaign and the members of our coalition (the Scottish Labour Party, Scottish Conservative Party and Scottish Liberal Democrats) to keep you informed of campaign news and the ways in which you can get involved in the campaign. By providing your data to us, you are consenting to Better Together, and the members of our coalition, making contact with you in the future with regards to the campaign and referendum by telephone, text or other means, even though you may be registered with Telephone Preference Service. If you don't want to be added to our database tick this box:



Your Decision

**More powers
guaranteed for
Scotland AND the
back up of the UK**

OR

**A messy divorce
with more costs,
bigger cuts and
fewer jobs.**

We want *the* BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Business Reply Plus
Licence Number
RTAU-ZCRB-TELS



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