



More in
Common

Public opinion in Scotland in 2025

**More in Common research for
the SNP Party Conference**

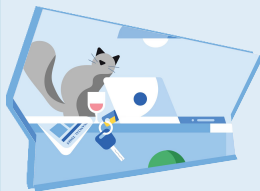
Progressive Activists



Incrementalist Left



Established Liberals



Sceptical Scrollers



Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

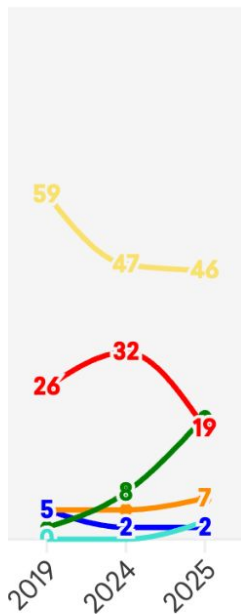
...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

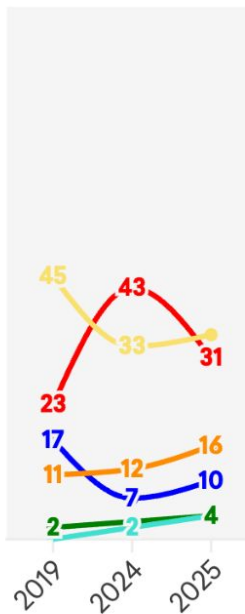
... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

Voting patterns of the seven segments

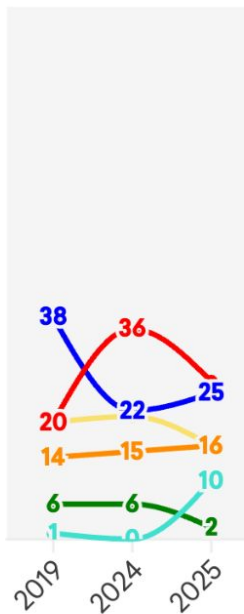
Progressive Activists



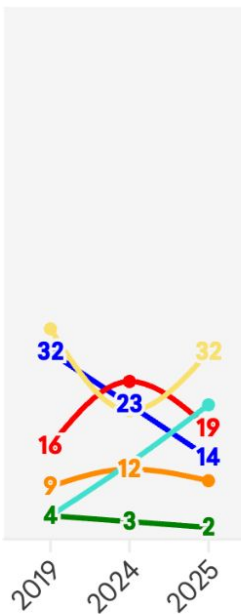
Incrementalist Left



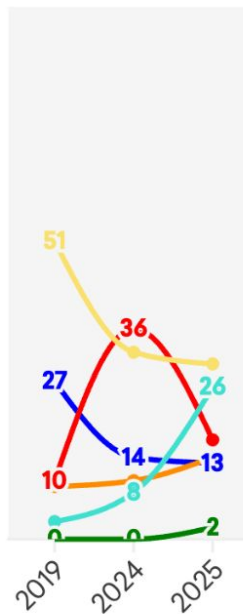
Established Liberals



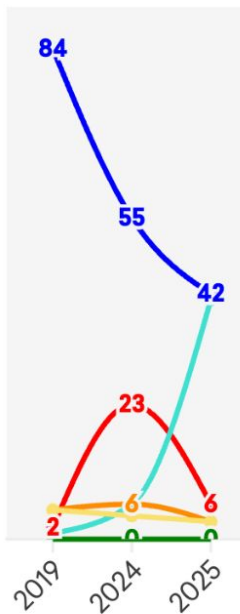
Sceptical Scrollers



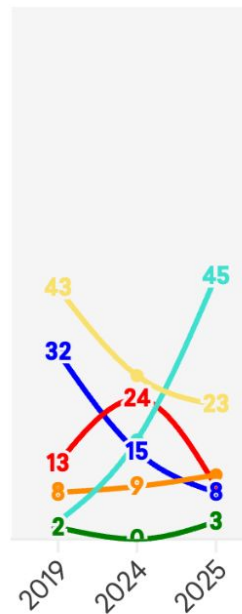
Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



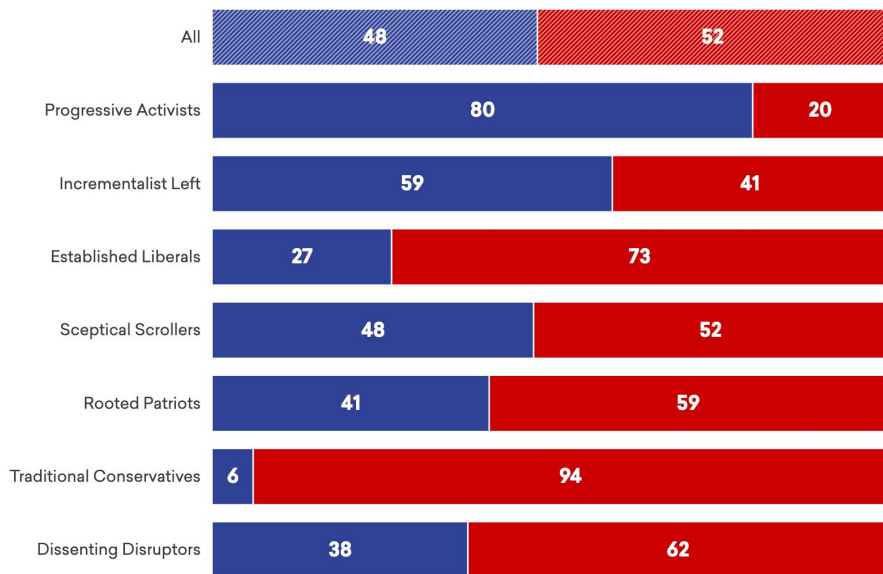
● Conservative ● Labour ● Liberal Democrat ● Green ● Reform UK / Brexit Party ● SNP

Attitudes to independence by segment

An independence referendum today would be extremely close

If the independence referendum was held today, how would you vote?

● FOR Scottish independence ● I would not vote ● Don't know
● AGAINST Scottish independence










Independence is favoured by the more progressive segments. Of those who would vote in a second independence referendum, four fifths of Progressive Activists and three fifths of the Incrementalist Left would opt for independence.

Our more conservative segments lean more towards remaining in the UK, but not overwhelmingly so. Rooted Patriots are split 59:41 in favour of remaining in the UK.

Traditional Conservatives and Established Liberals, our most affluent segments, are by far the most likely to oppose Scottish independence.

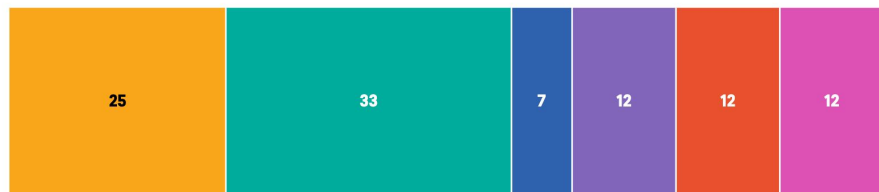
The politics of the Seven Segments in Scotland

	Progressive Activists	The SNP's recent base: strong supporters of independence and increasingly attracted to the Greens.
	Incrementalist Left	These voters supported Labour in the 2024 election but, disappointed with the party's performance so far, they are now shifting their support to the SNP or Liberal Democrats.
	Established Liberals	Centre-right voters who oppose independence and voted Labour in 2024, mostly to remove the Conservatives, but they are increasingly attracted to the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives.
	Sceptical Scrollers	Over half of this extremely low-turnout group did not vote in 2024, with the SNP leading among those who did. Reform is however making solid inroads with these voters.
	Rooted Patriots	This socially conservative group often votes against the incumbent Westminster government, which meant they voted SNP in 2019, Labour in 2024, and are now increasingly likely to vote Reform.
	Traditional Conservatives	These extremely unionist voters have traditionally been the Conservative Party's base, but that support is collapsing as they are now just as likely to vote Reform as they are to vote Conservative.
	Dissenting Disruptors	Traditional SNP voters or non-voters - this group are now more likely than any other segment to say they would vote Reform.

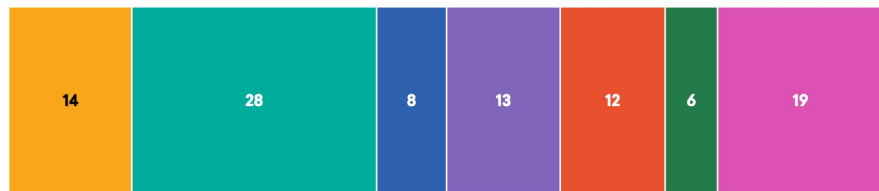
The SNP's Holyrood voter base

More than half of the SNP's voter base are Progressive Activists and Incrementalist Left

Intending to vote SNP in 2026



Scottish public



● Progressive Activists ● Incrementalist Left ● Established Liberals
● Sceptical Scrollers ● Rooted Patriots ● Traditional Conservatives
● Dissenting Disruptors

By virtue of its position as a pro-independence party, the SNP is in a unique electoral position.

On the one hand, it is less vulnerable to the rise of Reform than Labour or other unionist parties, and in fact can benefit from the fragmentation of the unionist vote.

On the other hand, this means that the SNP's support base is a broad coalition of pro-independence voters. There will be challenges and opportunities for the party carrying this broad support base into the 2026 elections.

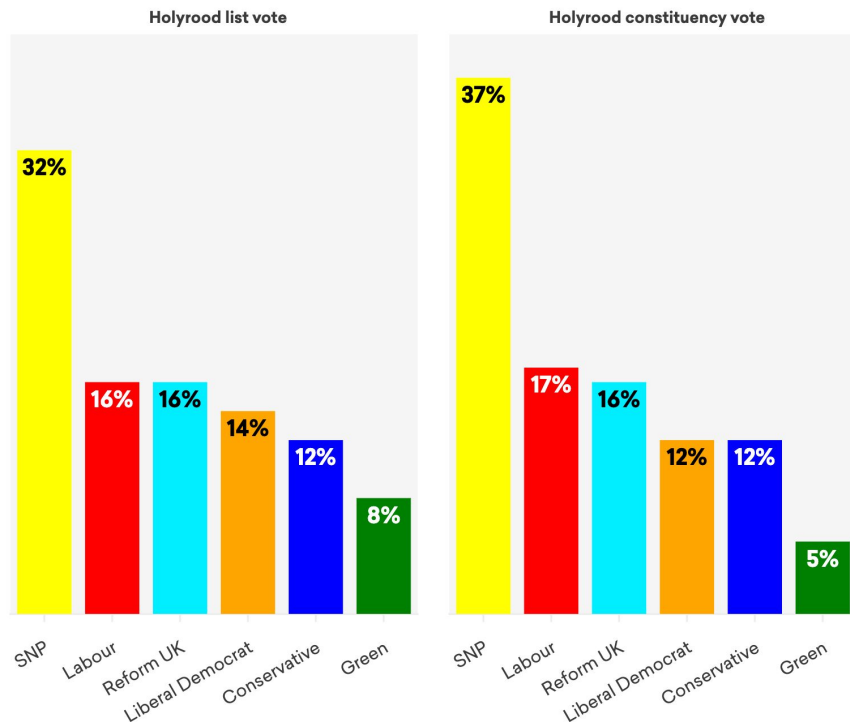


Electoral politics

Where does the SNP stand ahead of the Holyrood elections?

Headline Voting Intention - Holyrood

Fieldwork: 21st August - 1st September 2025



Since last year's General Election, Labour's support has more than halved in Scotland while the SNP has marginally improved its standing.

While not seeing as significant a rise as in England, Reform has emerged as the potential 2nd-place party after the SNP in Scotland, suppressing the Conservatives' vote share as well as eating into Labour's.

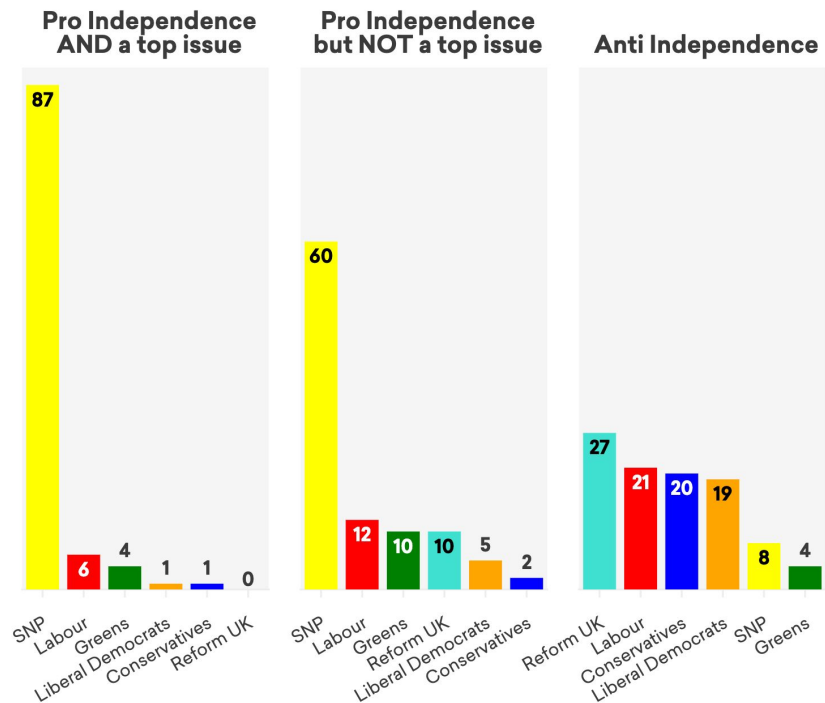
Despite losing 11 points in the constituency vote, this result would put the SNP just shy of a majority in Holyrood, mostly due to fragmentation in the other parties.

Holyrood voting intention by independence views

Headline Voting Intention - Holyrood Constituency vote



Fieldwork: 21st August - 1st September 2025

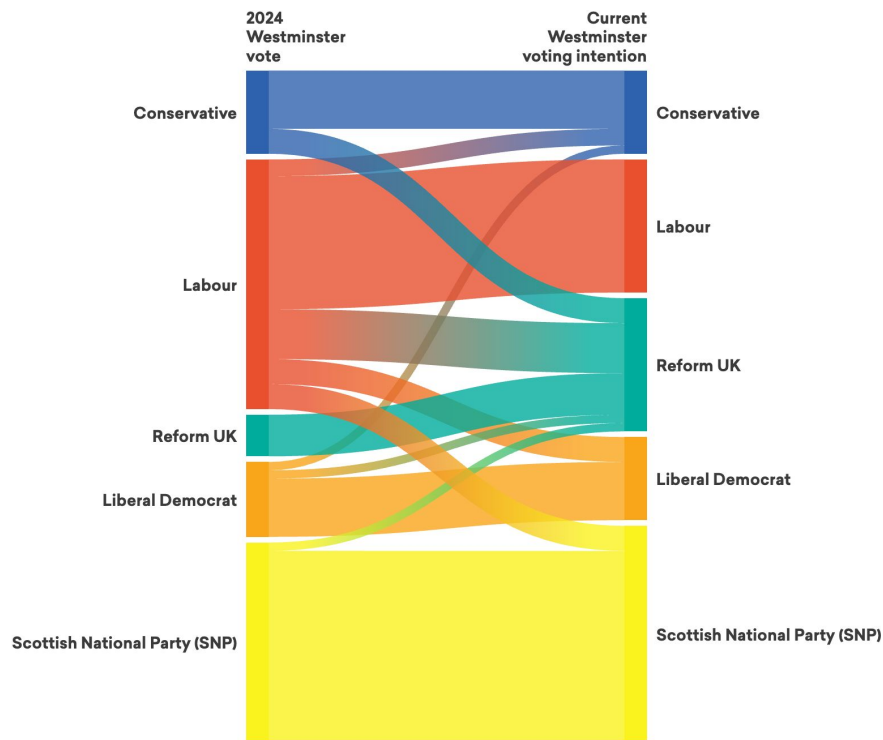


While the SNP is leagues ahead among voters who favour independence, the **anti-independence voter bloc is split between four parties.**

When independence is on the agenda, it puts a ceiling on how many votes Reform, Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats can win.

Labour's success in 2024 relied on appealing on both sides of the independence debate, as voters prioritised penalising the incumbent SNP. If Reform hopes to capitalise on Scottish voters' dissatisfaction, it will need to do the same.

The rise of Reform



Any threat that Reform might pose to the SNP in Scotland will likely stem from its ability to pick up voters from other parties to form its base, rather than taking support away from the SNP itself.

Most of the voters gained by Reform in Scotland since last year's General Election cast their ballot for Labour or the Conservatives.

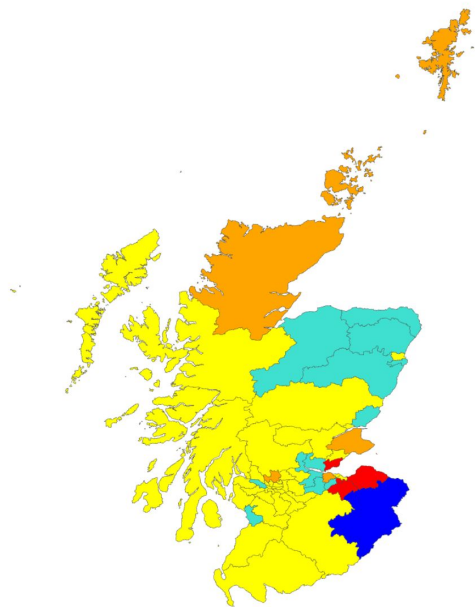
Reform is managing to win over some voters who have voted SNP historically - even if not in recent years. **20% of current Reform voters voted for the SNP in 2019, and 45% say they have voted SNP at some point in the past.**

A threat from Reform in Westminster?

Labour's gains in Scotland could be reversed

More in Common's September MRP (UK Parliament Constituencies)

Winner: ● Liberal Democrat ● Scottish National Party (SNP) ● Reform UK ● Labour ● Conservative



More in Common's September MRP suggests that Reform UK could break through north of the border for the first time.

In an election held today, the SNP would win 34 seats, Reform UK would win 13, and Labour would hold on to just 4 seats in Scotland.

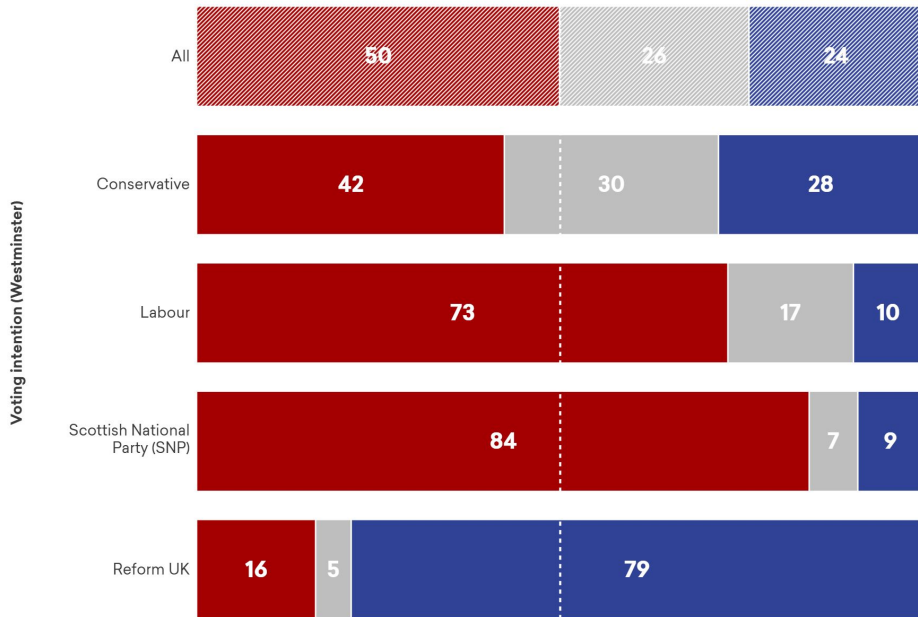
Given how fragmented the electoral map is in Scotland, many of these races would be extremely close. In our MRP projection, there are five seats in Scotland where three parties come within three percentage points of each other.

Is Reform too “English” to do well in Scotland?

Half of Scots think that Reform is mainly a party for England

Which of the following is closest to your view?

● Reform UK are mainly a party for England ● Don't know ● Reform UK are a party for all of Britain



A perception of Reform as too English-centric is still a key reason why it is taking few voters away from the SNP.

Additionally, a sense that Reform doesn't care about Scotland is a key reason not to vote for it, selected by nearly a third of SNP voters (31 per cent).

"[Does Nigel Farage care about Scotland?] No. I think he has a vision for Great Britain." Stephen, Reform voter, Dundee

"Reform is like a breath of fresh air. I'm not saying everything they are saying is good - I don't like Nigel Farage. But at the same time, he seems to see the truth about what is actually going on in the country. People in Scotland will not vote Tory - goodness me, the thought of it! I just think we need to give someone else a chance." Kay, Reform voter, Dundee

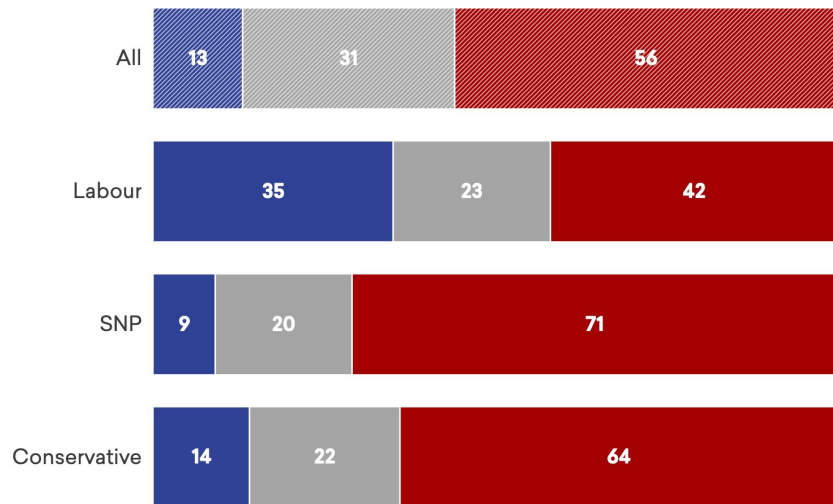
Labour's short honeymoon in Westminster

Just 13 per cent of Scots think that Labour has been good for the people in Scotland

Have the new Labour government in Westminster been...

- Good for the people of Scotland
- Don't know
- Bad for the people of Scotland

2024 Westminster vote



As support for Labour has declined in Scotland since the election, so has the public's confidence in its ability to govern.

Around one in ten (13 per cent) think that the new Labour Government in Westminster has been good for the people of Scotland.

Even among those who cast their ballot for Labour last year, only a third (35 per cent) now say that the party has been good for Scotland.

"I'm kind of old enough to know - I've voted for a few other parties - but looking back to Labour, I've just noticed so clearly how much he will say anything to get out of a position or put himself in a new position, and backtrack. And it's pretty worrying." - Colin, voted Labour in 2024, Dundee

Labour's short honeymoon in Westminster

In a word or two, how would you describe the Labour Government in Westminster?



For many Scottish voters, Labour's first year in government has convinced them that it is no different from the previous Conservative Government: 74 per cent of Scots (including 53 per cent of those who voted Labour in 2024) say this new government represents "more of the same".

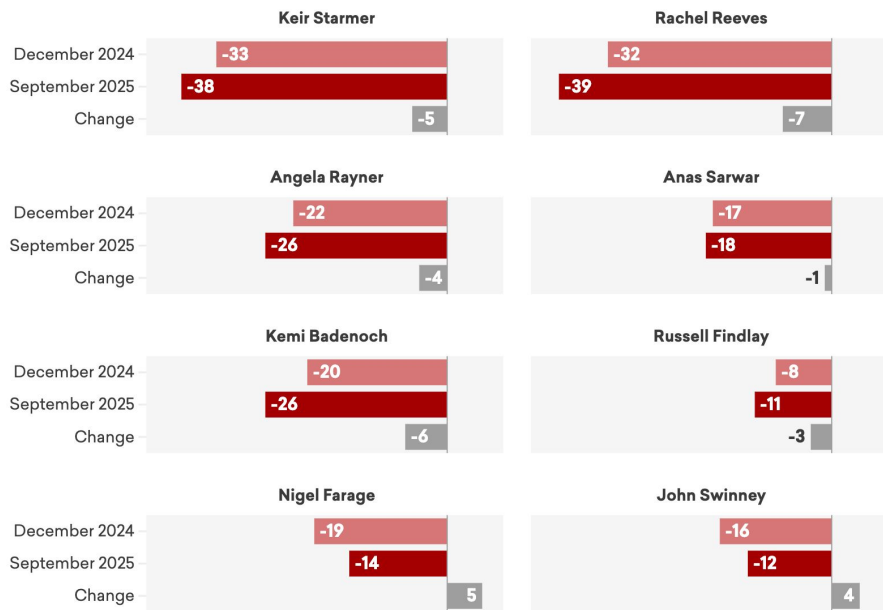
"I think they've got off that terrible start. Everything they promised, they've never followed through. They said they wouldn't put our taxes up, they've done that. They said we would keep the economy stable. That's not happened. And it's the same as what it was during COVID. The cost hasn't went down. They said they were going to cut waiting times to the NHS. They've actually just got bigger and bigger."

Karen, nurse, Larkhall



(Un)popular leaders

John Swinney and Nigel Farage are the only major political figures whose favourability has improved in Scotland this year



Most politicians' favourability ratings have declined since the beginning of the year - with Westminster politicians seeing the largest drops.

Nigel Farage and John Swinney stand out as the only two major politicians whose approval has risen over this time frame.

In focus groups, voters talk about Swinney as an improvement over Humza Yousaf; SNP voters like his approach to independence, but some see his communication as uninspiring.

"He [Swinney] is a very nice man but he's useless." Tom, Reform voter, Dundee

"I don't know whether Swinney is the right person to take independence forwards. Because of his charisma. You need someone more passionate." Ewan, SNP voter, Dundee

The double incumbency effect

In a word or two, how would you describe the SNP Government in Holyrood?



After 18 years in power in Scotland, the SNP is now facing fatigue from voters; Labour, after little over a year, is facing the same.

In focus groups, Scottish voters now talk in the same way as English voters about their disillusionment with the political mainstream: a sense that they have been let down by both parties, and that it might be worth “rolling the dice” on Reform UK.

“The SNP has had 18 years. I started voting SNP in 1972. (...) And I've voted them for 40 odd years, 50 years and I've just got sick fed up them. For example, the NHS has just went down the toilet.”

Tom, Reform voter, Dundee

“The SNP has always got an excuse that the dog ate my homework. Always blame Westminster if all else fails. And in Westminster, the Labour government blame it on the previous government. (...) Nobody ever takes no accountability.”

James, Reform voter, Dundee

How voters talk about the SNP's legacy

*"Scotland turned into such a really angry and horrible place [during Covid] and it was just because people were scared. It was just a fear thing. I didn't know what was going on. **So I think (Nicola Sturgeon) brought stability by turning up and standing there and on her podium and calming us down.**"*

Kay, SNP voter, Dundee

*"**One good thing the SNP did do was obviously bring in free school meals** for the P1s to 5s, but then what about the P6 and 7s that was meant to be carried on and then it was like, oh we're not getting the money from Westminster so we can't do it."*

Kay, Reform voter, Dundee

*"I mean they've done a lot of good things. Let's face it. **I mean the free bus passes, free prescriptions and things like they've brought in a lot of good things.**"*

Sylvia, SNP voter, Dundee

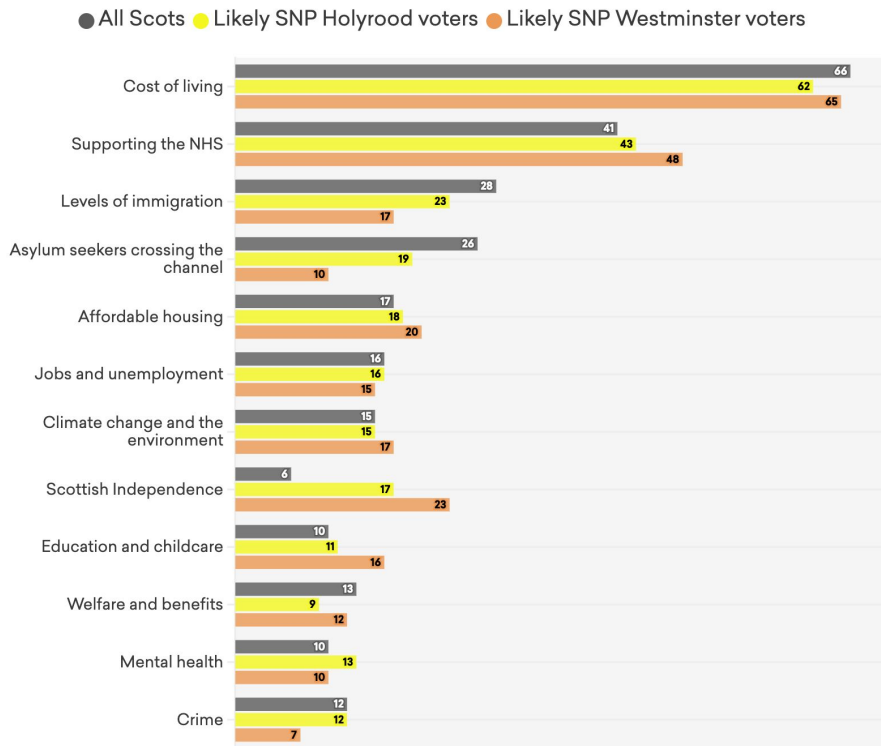
"Nothing much changed in Dundee for decades. Until probably more recently, the last 15 years. You know, investment and stuff, and the SNP took credit for that."

Colin, Reform voter, Dundee



Big issues

SNP voters' top issues



Aside from independence, SNP voters are more likely to see the NHS, affordable housing and education as top issues for the country.

They are less likely to see immigration or small boats as big issues.

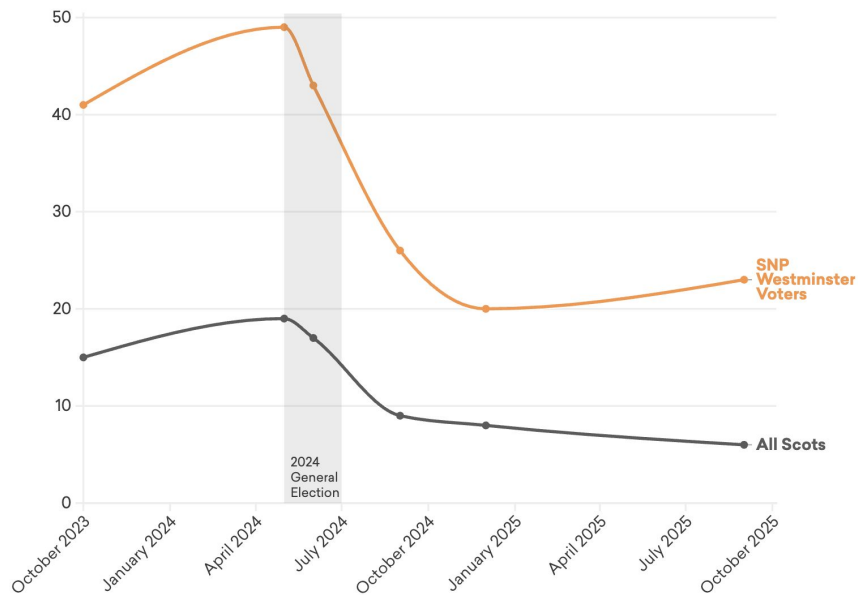
“Independence is always up there for the SNP. That's what they lead with. And then I think the last time I read something, the next one down was the NHS and that's the two most important things for me.”

Emma, SNP voter, Dundee

The salience of Scottish independence has fallen

The salience of Scottish Independence has fallen significantly since the 2024 General Election

Proportion listing "Scottish Independence" among their top three issues facing the country



The salience of independence in Scotland has fallen significantly in recent years - particularly as the salience of the cost of living, public services and immigration has risen.

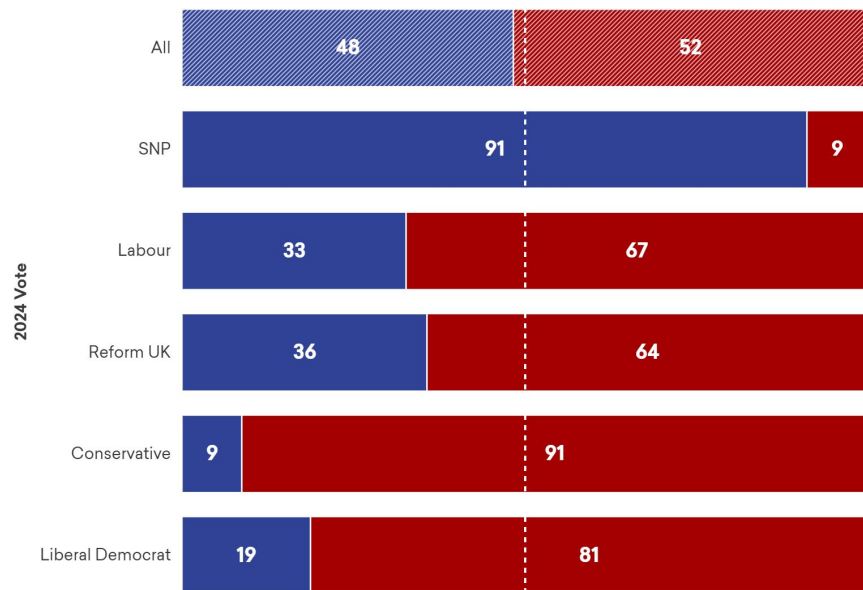
Now, fewer than a quarter of SNP voters say that independence is in the top three issues facing the country. This is not to say that independence does not matter for SNP voters, but that having immediate answers for public services and other challenges will be essential for winning over voters for whom independence is not the top priority at the current time.

An independence referendum

Scottish Independence voting intention

And if the independence referendum was held today, how would you vote?

● FOR Scottish independence ● AGAINST Scottish independence



An independence referendum in Scotland held today would have a very close result.

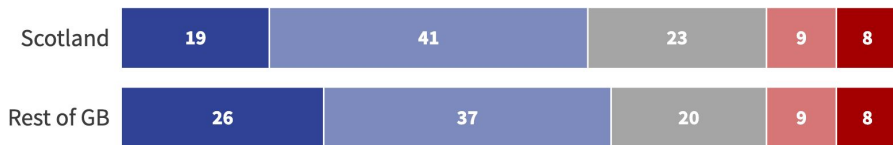
Despite John Swinney's announcement on Saturday that he would push for a second referendum if the SNP wins a majority in Holyrood, the possible outcome of any such referendum remains unclear.

Climate and energy

Scots are as concerned about climate change as other Britons

How worried are you about climate change?

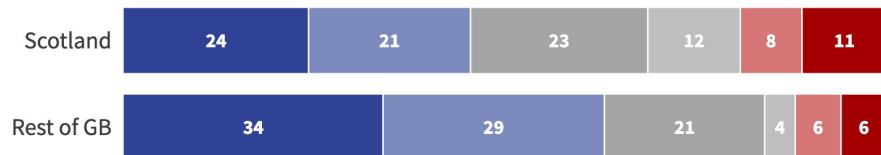
Very worried Somewhat worried Neither worried nor unworried Somewhat unworried Very unworried



Scots are less supportive of net zero than other Britons

In general, do you support or oppose the government's target to reach net zero by 2050?

Strongly support Slightly support Neither support nor oppose Don't know Slightly oppose Strongly oppose



Across the UK, we have begun to see a decoupling of climate concern with support for net zero. This gap appears to be wider in Scotland.

Three in five Scots are worried about climate change - roughly the same proportion as in England and Wales. Yet support for the UK government's net zero target is significantly lower.

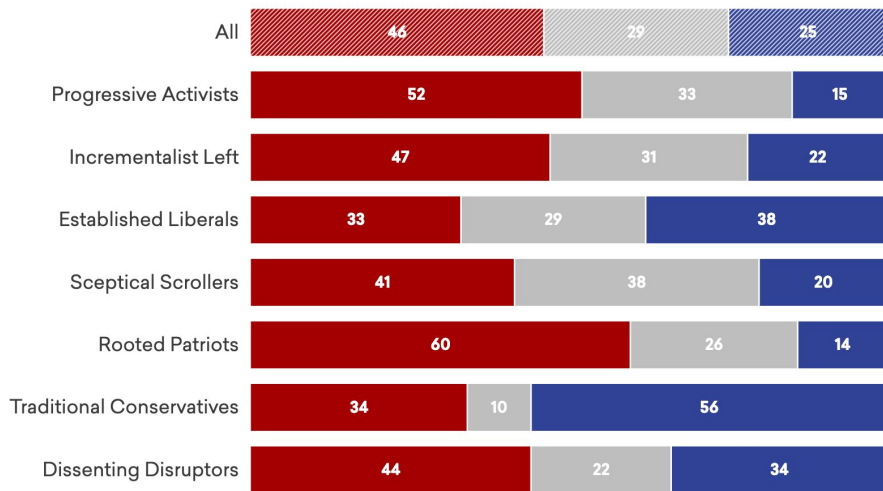
I know we are going to net zero. I'm in Peterhead and it's going to affect us severely.. We're all getting plied with net zero this and net zero that and I do understand we need to change but it [the pylons] are going to affect a lot of people and I think they have to really think about how they are going to go around this.
Donna, Aberdeenshire

The fairness test

Almost half of Scots think Scotland is getting an unfair deal on net zero

Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

- Scotland is getting an unfair deal from the energy transition to net zero
- Don't know
- Scotland is being treated the same as the rest of the UK in the energy transition to net zero



Central to this erosion of support for net zero targets is a perception that Scotland is getting an unfair deal.

This concern is particularly important to the SNP's voter base: 73 per cent of those who intend to vote SNP in the next general election believe that the transition is unfair to Scotland.

Energy fairness (and perhaps emphasising the Scottish government's 2045 target) could be crucial in avoiding an erosion of support for climate action.

"All the energy from the pylons that's coming from out west is getting fed to the North of England. All of it. We get nothing from this."

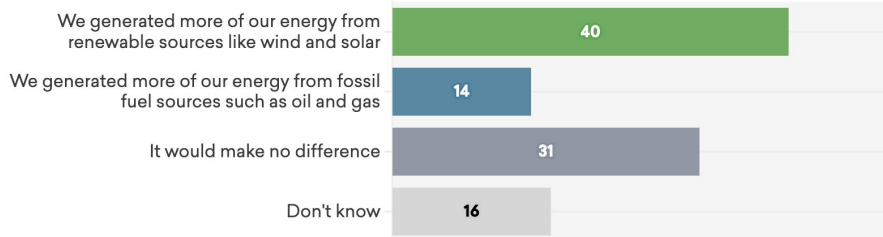
Dave, Aberdeenshire

The cost test

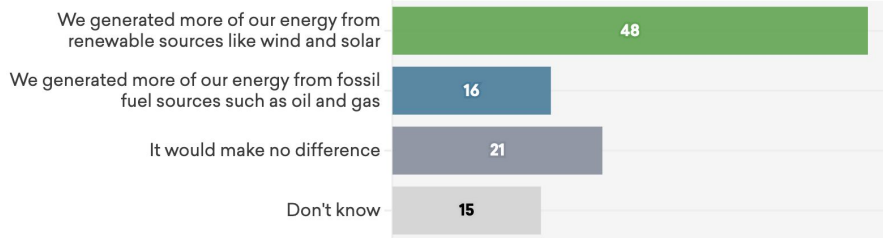
In Scotland and the rest of Britain, people are more likely to think their bills will be lower if we had more renewables

Do you think your energy bills would be lower if...

Scotland



Rest of GB



Winning the debate on the energy transition will require evidence that renewables can actually reduce energy bills.

Scots are slightly more sceptical than English and Welsh people about the potential of renewables to reduce energy bills. Scots are 9 points more likely to say that transitioning to renewables would 'make no difference' to the cost of electricity - yet few believe that generating more energy from fossil fuels would make bills cheaper.

"I can say wind farms, yeah, that's fantastic renewable source. But again for me here, what impact does it make to me in my bills it isn't, we're still paying through the roof."

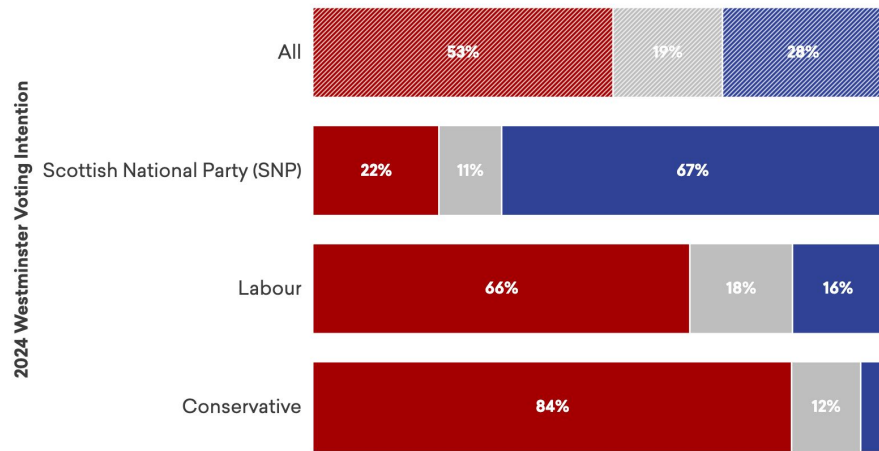
Zahi, Project Manager, Glasgow

The independence test

Most Scots think independence would be impossible without North Sea oil

Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

- Scottish independence would be unaffordable without oil and gas from the North Sea
- Don't know
- Scottish independence could still be affordable without oil and gas from the North Sea



In Scotland, the debate around the energy transition is tied to the debate around independence.

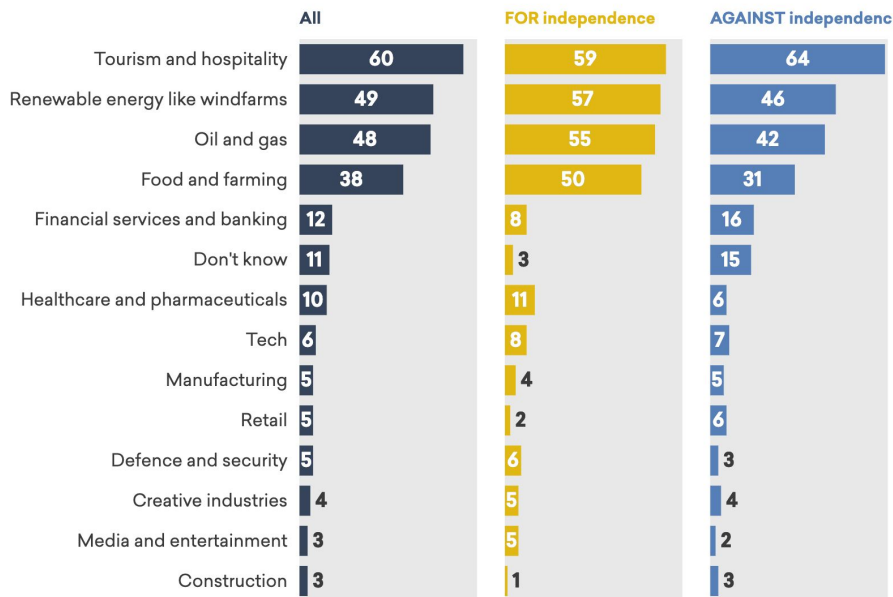
Beyond the SNP's base, most Scots believe that independence would be unaffordable without North Sea oil.

The challenge for the SNP is demonstrating that wind and other renewables could be stable and affordable enough to replace oil and gas in an independent Scotland.

The independence test

Scots believe that the Scottish economy relies on renewables

If Scotland were to become independent, which industries would the Scottish economy most rely on?



Asked what the Scottish economy would most rely on post-independence, Scots are as likely to say that renewable energy will be important as they are to cite oil and gas.

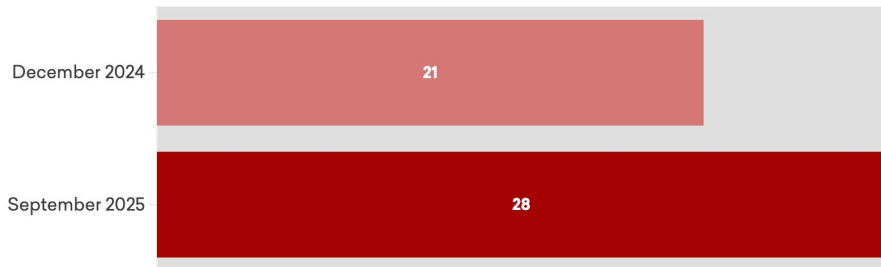
Regardless of Scots' views on net zero, the Reform UK-style approach of scrapping all renewable energy is unlikely to be popular with Scots on either side of the independence argument.

Migration

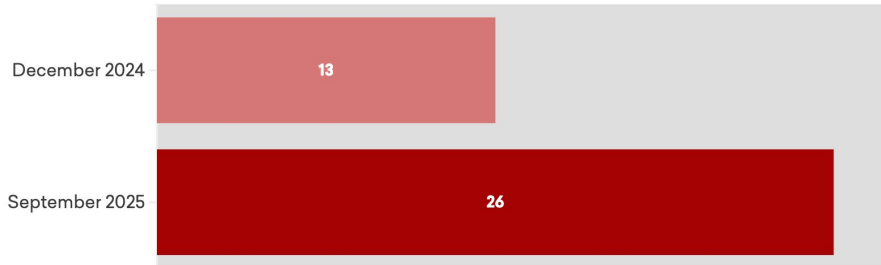
The salience of migration has risen in Scotland

(Proportion selecting "asylum seekers crossing the channel in small boats" as one of the top three issues facing the country)

Levels of immigration



Asylum seekers crossing the channel



There may be some truth in Humza Yousaf's assertion last month that English debates and attitudes toward migration had made their way north of the border.

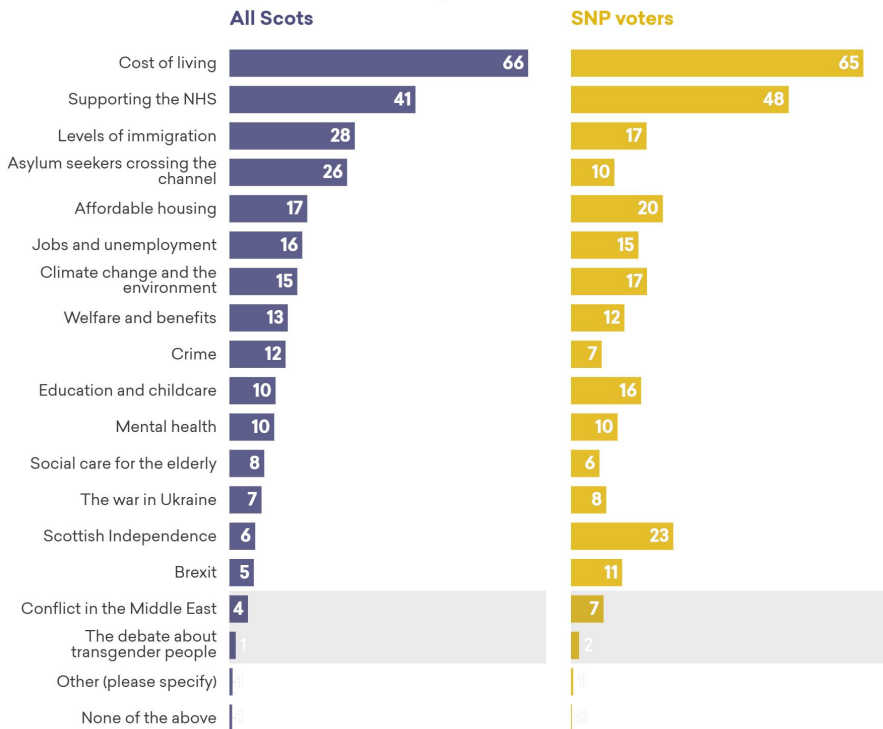
Scots are in line with the rest of the public in their belief that net migration is too high (64 per cent hold this view), although immigration and asylum are less salient issues in Scotland than in Britain.

Yet notably, the salience of migration has risen significantly this year: **the proportion of Scots selecting "asylum seekers crossing the channel" as a top issue facing the country has doubled since December 2024.**

Other issues

Gaza and gender identity are not salient issues in Scotland

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Please select up to three



Taking vocal stances on issues like Gaza and gender identity are likely to be popular among the SNP's base of Progressive Activists. However, they could risk alienating the party's broad coalition which includes socially conservative segments.

"They've done their gender reform bill, I don't know how much they spent on it. The Palestine, Humza Yousaf going on about Palestine more than any other country where everyone in our country is struggling."

Stephen, Reform voter, Dundee