

Consultation on a draft Referendum Bill

Easy Read Summary



What is this consultation about?

This paper sets out the Scottish Government's suggestions for new laws about a second Scottish independence referendum.

The Scottish Government wants to get people's views on this now. This will mean the law will be ready if the Scottish Government decides that another independence referendum is the best way to protect Scotland's interests after the EU referendum.

It would then be up to the Scottish Parliament to look at the new law and decide whether a new referendum should be held.

This consultation asks for people's views on how the referendum would be run.

This is just a summary. The full consultation can be available online here:
<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/8279/0>

The suggestions are based on the same law that was used for the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, which worked very well. The Scottish Government wants to make a few small changes and we would like to ask you questions about these.

The Scottish Government will publish the answers it gets, unless people say that they do not want their answers to be made public. Your answers will be used to help make the new law.

How would the referendum be run?

The referendum would be run by the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, which is an independent organisation that isn't part of the Scottish Government.

The poll and count would be handled like an election. Counting officers and a Chief Counting Officer would be responsible for this.

The referendum campaign would be watched over by the Electoral Commission. After the referendum they would make a report to the Scottish Parliament.

Everyone who lives in Scotland would be able to vote in the referendum. This would include 16 and 17 year olds and EU citizens. Decisions on Scotland's future should be made by the people who live and work here, including everyone who has chosen to make Scotland their home.

Question 1: What are your views on these suggestions for how the referendum should be run?

Changes to the referendum rules

The Scottish Government suggests making some changes to how absent voting is done. This would be to make the referendum the same as other Scottish elections, where every postal vote is checked

The Scottish Government also suggests a change to the rules for polling and polling staff. They suggest that none who has been involved in campaigning can become polling or count staff.

Question 2: What are your views on these suggested changes to the referendum rules?

Changes to rules on campaigning

Trying to get people to vote yes or no is called campaigning. There are rules to make sure that campaigning is done fairly and properly.

These rules would be mostly the same as used in 2014 for the last independence referendum but the Scottish Government suggests some changes. Anyone who will be in charge of spending money on campaigning for an organisation must register first with the Electoral Commission.

Any person or organisation wanting to spend £10,000 on campaigning for a yes or no vote would need to register with the Electoral Commission. The rules set out different spending limits.

No public money would be given to anyone wanting to campaign.

Question 3: What are your views on these suggested changes to the rules about campaign spending?

Question 4: What are your views on the suggested changes to rules on campaign spending?

Question 5: What are your views on the suggested changes to rules about campaign expenses?

How to give your answers?

You can fill the form in online at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk>.

You can email your answers to referendumbillconsultation@gov.scot

You can post your answers in writing to:

Referendum Consultation

Elections Team

Area 2 West

St Andrews House

Regent Road

Edinburgh EH1 3DG

The deadline for giving your views is **11th January 2017**.



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