

MAKE SCOTLAND MATTER



Why Independence?

The primary aim of the SNP is to take Scotland forward to Independence.

Independence means the Scottish Parliament having full control over Scottish affairs, and the right to decide when to share power with others. Independence would give us the same rights and the same responsibilities as other nations. And it would bring greater independence for individuals, families and communities, within a society built on common interests.

We want Scotland to have what every other country takes for granted - the freedom to decide what kind of society we want to live in, and how we want to interact with the world around us. In other words, normality.

As individuals we accept our own independence as normal. We wouldn't put up with someone else making decisions for us about how to earn and spend our money, how to take responsibility for our lives or how to interact with others. Why should we put up with anything less for our country?

Most of us also want our communities to have more independence. We want to have a greater say in deciding how our public services should be funded and delivered, we want to participate in decisions which affect the environment we live in and we want to contribute more to the communities we live in. That too is normal - but it won't happen unless we start by taking control of our country and taking decisions for ourselves.

Devolution is not enough

The SNP campaigned for the Scottish Parliament because we believed it was a move in the right direction for our country. But devolution is not the same as Independence - and it is not nearly enough to make a real difference to Scotland.

Although the Scottish Parliament has brought a new level of democracy to our country its powers are strictly limited and therefore there is a limit to what it can achieve. With devolution Westminster keeps control of crucial areas like the economy (including our oil), taxation, benefits, pensions, immigration and asylum, broadcasting, defence and international affairs. It also retains the right to legislate in all areas - devolved as well as reserved - and can over-ride the will of the Scottish Parliament without consent.

Furthermore, the Scottish Executive's frequent use of Sewel motions has undermined the Scottish Parliament's ability to scrutinise legislation in a number of important areas, for example gambling, civil partnerships and nuclear waste.

All of this means that Scotland can still be shoe-horned into a political agenda designed to fit the south east of England, or bolted on to UK policy as an afterthought.

The Scottish Parliament has passed some important legislation, including bills on free personal care for the elderly, land reform, homelessness and proportional representation for local government elections. However on key issues such as

economic growth or pensions it remains powerless and on matters as basic as whether or not to send Scottish troops to war it has no voice.

The Scottish Parliament is also the most financially powerless Parliament on earth. Even Scotland's Councils have far greater tax varying powers than Scotland's national Parliament.

We already have our Parliament – now we need to complete its powers.

Scotland can flourish with Independence

Independence is not only normal; it is also desirable. Small independent nations like Norway, Denmark and Finland are much more successful than Scotland in terms of both economic prosperity and living standards. Independence gives those nations the powers to shape their country for the better. Scotland could have this too.

Scotland is a wealthy country, with our natural resources like oil and renewable energy potential, to the education and skills of our workforce, and our globally recognised brand, identity and reputation for quality and integrity.

Scotland's problem is not a lack of resources, but lack of control of these resources and the ability to use our wealth for the benefit of all Scotland.

With Independence, Scotland can pursue successful economic policies like those of Sweden and Ireland, to give our economy a competitive edge, the opportunity to grow and to generate wealth to invest in our public services and give Scotland's pensioners a decent standard of living.

Why our economy needs Independence

Our economy is underperforming under devolution, because the Scottish Parliament lacks the powers we need to escape Scotland's cycle of low economic growth and population decline.

Independence will give the Scottish Parliament the powers to harness our economic potential and transform Scotland into a high growth economy and a prosperous society.

With Independence, our Parliament will have at its disposal the powers to make Scotland a more competitive place to do business, such as the power to cut business taxes. As part of a wider economic strategy, such measures will also generate an increase in overall business tax revenue, which will in turn produce more wealth to invest in greater economic growth and the public services we value in Scotland.

Why Scotland's pensioners need Independence

With Independence, Scotland can provide all pensioners with a decent amount to live on. Independence will give Scotland the powers over pensions that currently reside at Westminster. With Independence, the Scottish Parliament will have the power to introduce a Citizen's Pension – a non-means tested state pension payable to all pensioners, as of right.

The SNP is committed to introducing a universal Citizen's Pension of at least £110 a week for single pensioners and £168 for couples, which will rise in line with earnings to maintain the value of the pension over time.

With Independence, and the power to introduce a Citizen's Pension, we can tackle pensioner poverty, end the discrimination against women in the state pension system and ensure that no pensioner in Scotland is treated like a second class citizen.

Why Scotland needs a voice in the world

Without Independence, Scotland can only look on while other nations gather to discuss and tackle global issues such as world poverty, third world debt, international security and climate change.

Without Independence, Scotland has no role in shaping the decisions of the European Union - decisions that directly affect us. To become part of the decision-making process, Scotland needs to become a Member State. To become a Member State, Scotland has to become independent.

With Independence, Scotland will have a voice on the international stage; a voice we can use to promote peace and reconciliation, and fairness.

With Independence, Scotland will have a role in international decision-making; shaping the decisions that affect us, and the wider world.

With Independence, Scotland will be able to play a part in tackling global problems like poverty and climate change.

How will Scotland get Independence?

Scotland will only gain Independence when the people of Scotland vote for it in a democratic referendum. An SNP Government in the Scottish Parliament will hold a referendum on Independence. If a majority of those who vote in the referendum vote for Independence, representatives of the Scottish Government will then begin negotiations with Westminster to agree an Independence settlement. While negotiations are under way, a written constitution for an independent Scotland will be drafted, which will guarantee rights for Scotland's citizens and set out how Scotland will be governed.