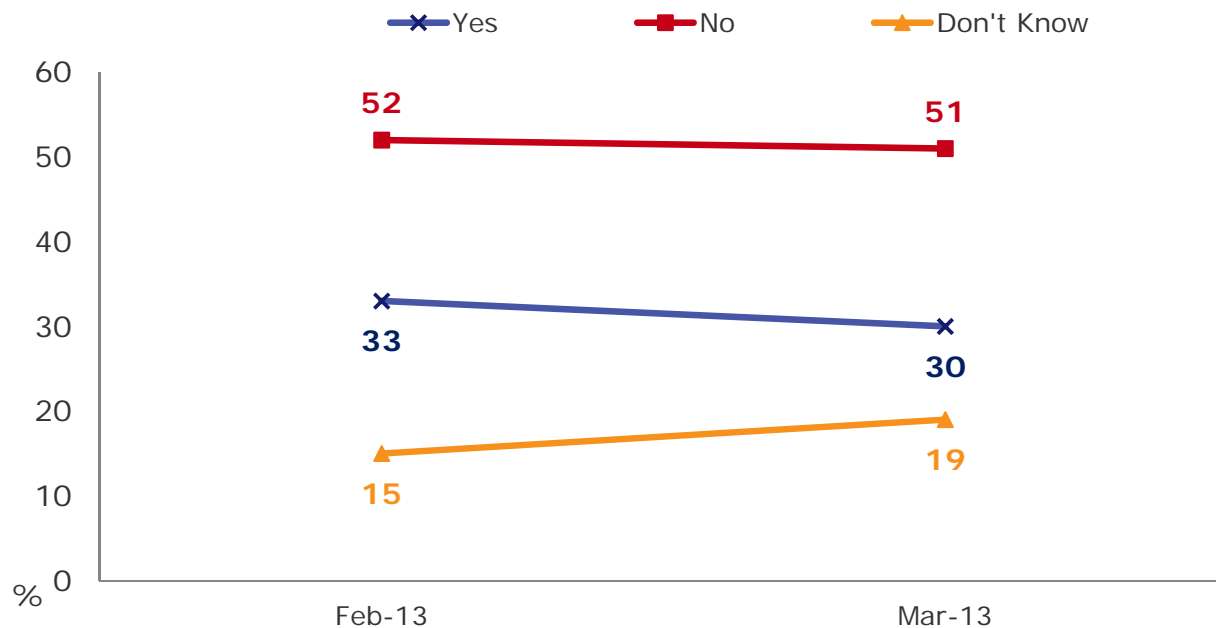


# Referendum on Scottish independence

Press release - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2013

Q1

There will be a referendum on Scottish independence in the autumn of 2014. If the referendum were to be held tomorrow, how would you vote in response to the question, 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'



## Findings

The question wording may have been agreed and the date of the referendum announced, but there would appear to have been few other developments on the referendum in recent months, at least as far as public voting intentions are concerned. Just over half the electorate remain opposed to independence, with around one third in favour – resulting in a healthy lead of around 20% for the Better Together movement. However a similar percentage were undecided in this latest poll – slightly up from February.

The switch to the referendum question wording in our poll in February may have broken the absolute continuity of our trend data back to 2007, as shown overleaf. Yet the respective levels of support and gap between these have remained broadly consistent for the last 6 months. If this might suggest that the electorate is already settled in its views on the matter of Scottish independence, this



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# Referendum on Scottish independence

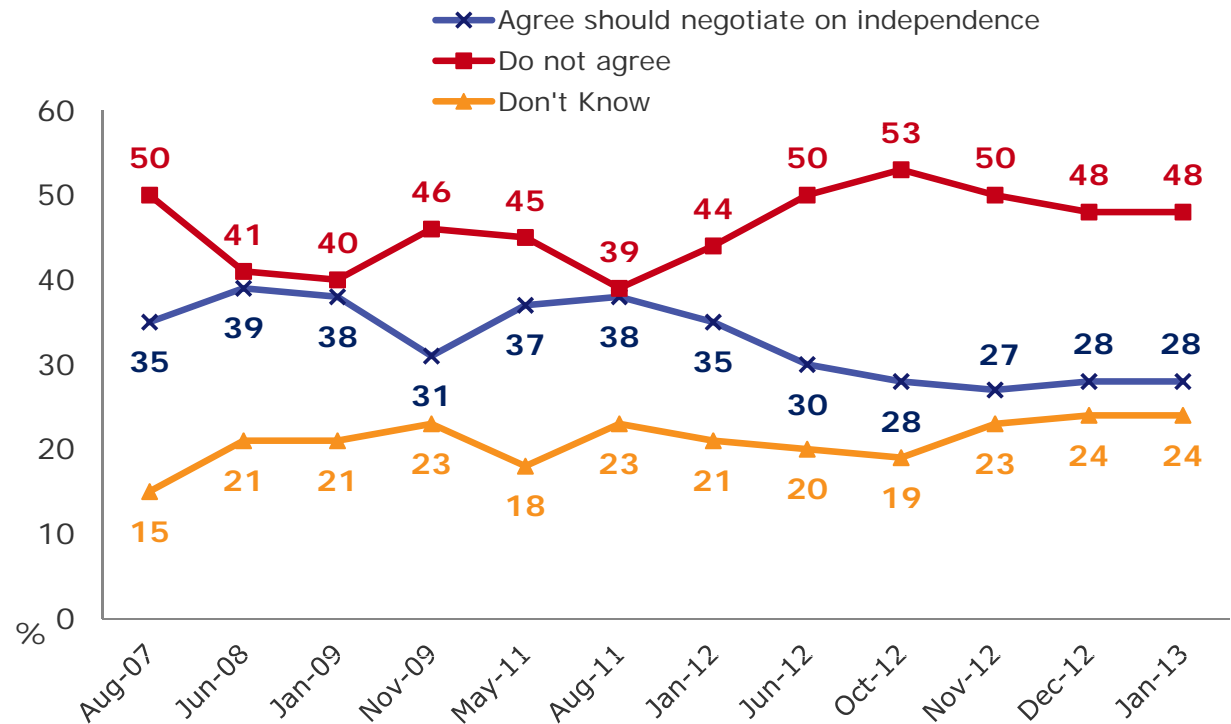
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would be a premature assumption. It is certainly the case that the 'No' vote holds a commanding lead. However, with almost 18 months to go until the referendum is held, it is still very early days and neither camp has really started to develop its case to any extent. There may have been some initial skirmishing around issues such as EU membership, currency and effect on the military and employment, designed to keep the 'Yes' campaign on the back foot, but not to any significant extent.

With the potential for voter fatigue a real concern, we are unlikely to see much concerted activity getting underway until the autumn at the earliest, and hence little cause for significant movement in patterns of support over the next few months. However any reading of this as the settled will of the Scottish people would be misplaced. The contest for hearts and minds on Scottish independence has not even begun.

## HISTORIC POLLING

The SNP are outlining their plans for a possible referendum on Scottish independence in the future. If such a referendum were to be held tomorrow, how would you vote?



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# Referendum on Scottish independence

## Background

In August 2007, the SNP published a white paper on Scotland's future, containing the bill which would authorise a referendum on Scottish independence and setting out a proposed ballot paper.

Using our omnibus, Scottish Opinion Survey, TNS BMRB conducted a poll at that time to establish how the Scottish electorate would respond to the two options specified if such a referendum were to be held at that time. This poll was then repeated periodically over the next 2 years to monitor any changes in public opinion.

Some 4 years on, the temperature was raised considerably by the success of the SNP in winning an outright majority in the Scottish Parliament election in May 2011 and declaring that a referendum will be held during the course of this Parliament.

Against this background, TNS BMRB restarted its series of independence polls, using the same question as before to maintain trend data.

Since then, in 2012, we have seen the launch of both the pro-independence campaign and the 'Better together' campaign promoting the status quo and, in October, the Edinburgh Agreement signed between the Westminster and Scottish Governments formalising the date, single question format of the referendum and the extension of the franchise to all aged 16+ on this occasion. The actual question wording for the ballot was agreed in January 2013 and, most recently, the date set as 18<sup>th</sup> September 2014.

We adopted the referendum question wording for our polling from February 2103.

## Method

A sample of 1002 adults aged 16+ was interviewed face-to-face in-home in 59 constituencies across Scotland over the period 20<sup>th</sup> March – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2013.

While polling was previously restricted to 18+, we have included those aged 16 and 17 in recent polls to reflect agreement on their eligibility to vote in the referendum.

To ensure the sample was representative of the adult population of Scotland, it was weighted to match population profile estimates in the analysis.

Data tabulations have been supplied separately.

Respondents were asked:

**There will be a referendum on Scottish independence in the autumn of 2014. If the referendum were to be held tomorrow, how would you vote in response to the question, 'Should Scotland be an independent country?'**

Yes

No

(Don't know)



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