

Your Vote Matters

Public Attitudes Survey Results 2026

Widening Demographic Participation in Scottish Democracy



Survey conducted	April 2026
Respondents	118 adults in Scotland
Geography	Predominantly Central Scotland
Organisation	Your Vote Matters (non-profit, non-political)
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Your Vote Matters is a non-profit, non-political organisation whose sole aim is to widen demographic participation. This report presents findings from our 2026 public attitudes survey, capturing views on voting intention, political trust, and key policy issues affecting people in Scotland.

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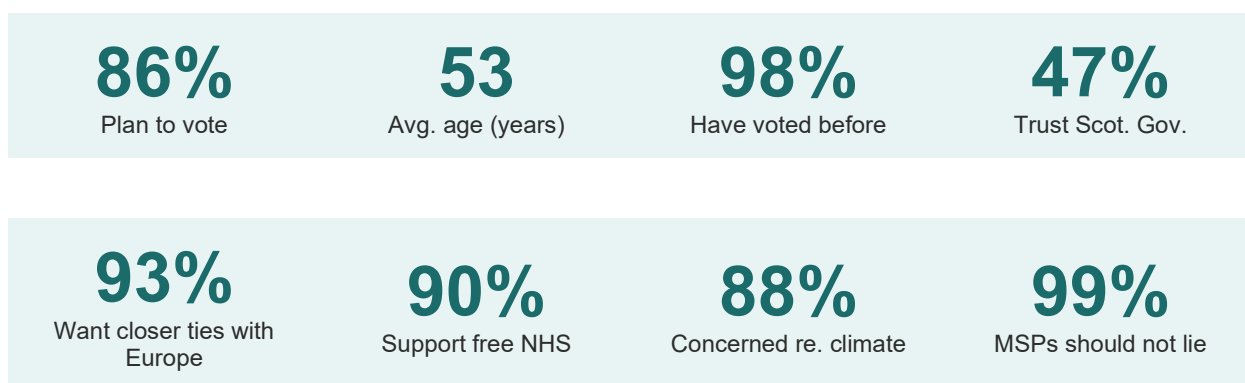
Executive Summary

This report presents findings from a survey of 118 adults conducted predominantly in Central Scotland. The survey explored voting intentions for the upcoming elections, demographic information, and attitudes towards a range of policy issues. Key findings are summarised below.

The survey was distributed to hundreds of voting-age adults across Scotland, spanning a wide range of ages and locations. The respondent demographic profile reflects current patterns of engagement and highlights where further work is needed to reach a broader cross-section of the voting-age population.

The survey was shared widely across Scotland; the respondent profile reflects current engagement and where outreach is still needed.

Key Findings at a Glance



Despite high voting intention (86%), nearly 1 in 8 respondents (13%) either do not plan to vote or are unsure. Applied to Scotland's population of ~5.5 million, this represents approximately 800,000 people — more than the combined populations of Iceland, Barbados, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Cayman Islands ^{1,2,3}.

About Your Vote Matters



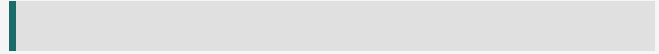
Your Vote Matters is a Scottish based non-profit, non-political organisation run by concerned citizens working to widen participation in Scottish democracy.

In a public attitudes survey of 118 adults (predominantly in Central Scotland), voting intentions were explored for the upcoming elections and the reasons behind them. This report summarises the findings.

Voting Intention

An overwhelming majority of respondents — **86%** — said they are planning to vote in the upcoming elections.



Only 4% said they were not planning to vote, while almost 10% were unsure. This is an encouraging finding, but those who are undecided or disengaged still represent a significant share of the electorate.

Yes, planning to vote		86% (102)
Unsure		9% (11)
Not planning to vote		4% (5)

Why does this matter? UK elections are frequently decided by small margins. According to the electoral reform society, as of March 2026, there is only a 15-point gap between the party in 1st place and the party in 5th place in Scottish polling — meaning even small shifts in turnout could dramatically alter electoral outcomes¹.

Previous Voting Experience

An overwhelming 98% of respondents reported having voted in a previous election, demonstrating that our sample represents an engaged and politically active population.

Yes, voted before		98% (116)
No, never voted		2% (2)

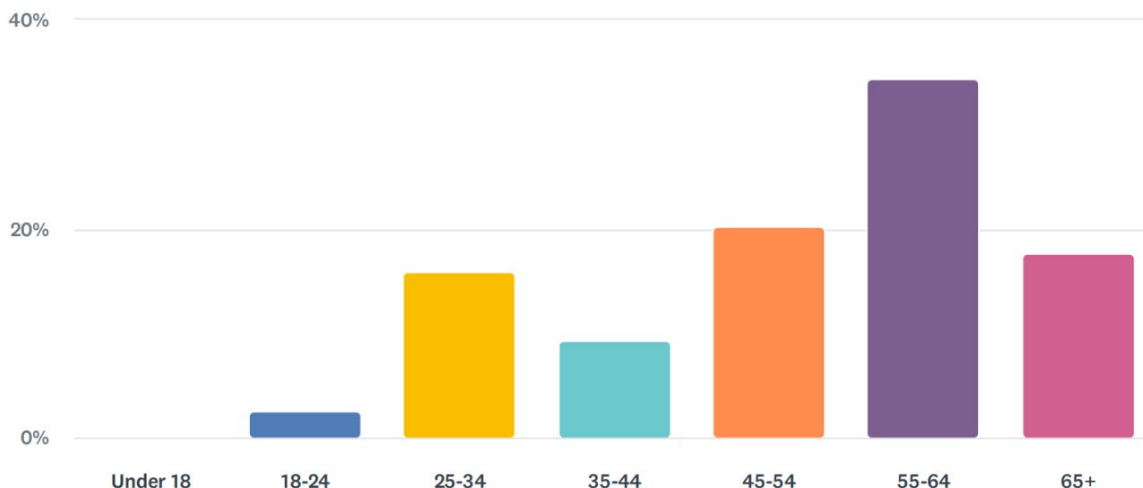
Respondent Demographics

The survey captured responses from 118 adults across Scotland. The demographic profile of respondents is summarised below.

Age Demographics

Based on the data collected, the estimated average age of respondents was **53 years old**. The largest single group was the 55–64 bracket, followed closely by the 25–34 and 45–54 groups.

Respondent Age Demographic



18–24	<div style="width: 3%;"></div>	3% (3)
25–34	<div style="width: 16%;"></div>	16% (19)
35–44	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>	9% (11)
45–54	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	20% (24)
55–64	<div style="width: 34%;"></div>	34% (40)
65+	<div style="width: 18%;"></div>	18% (21)

Context: Respondents skewed older than Scotland’s population overall, reflecting well-established patterns of electoral participation. In Scottish elections, those aged 45+ typically make up the majority of votes cast. The survey therefore offers a strong snapshot of Scotland’s active electorate—those most likely to shape the result on polling day.

Note on methodology: Average age was estimated by assigning midpoint values to each age bracket (e.g. 18–24 = 21; 25–34 = 29.5; 65+ = 75). This gives an estimated mean age of 53 years, which closely aligns with the median age of likely voters in Scotland.

A YouGov poll provides a useful age profile.

Recent polling from [YouGov](#) and other trackers suggests that age continues to be the primary predictor of how a person will vote in the upcoming 2026 Holyrood election.



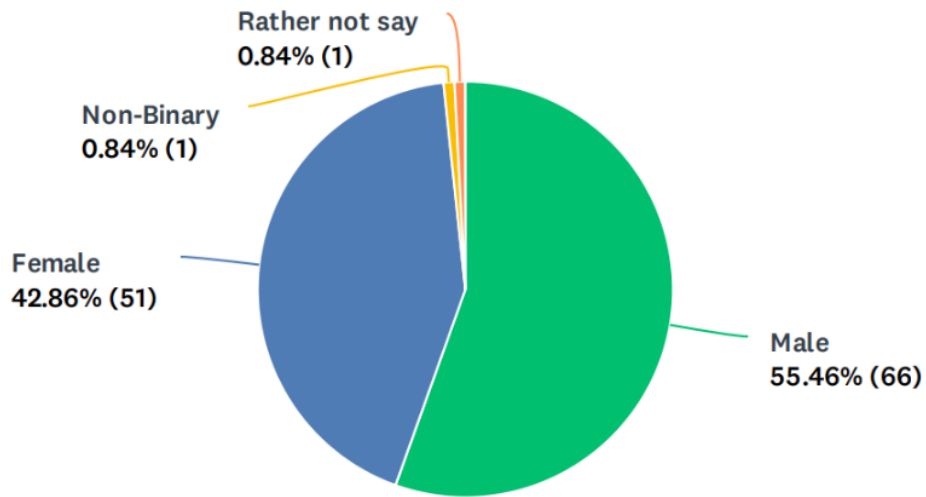
The YouGov poll results

Age Group	Voter Sentiment Highlights
16-19	Often the "most interested" in politics, but registration remains a challenge.
20-30	High support for the SNP and Greens; primarily driven by sociocultural values.
30-59	Sometimes report the <i>lowest</i> level of interest in local elections compared to other groups.
60+	Most consistent voters with the highest level of political awareness regarding local representatives.

Gender Demographics

Of the 118 respondents, 55% identified as male and 43% as female, with the remaining 2% selecting 'non-binary/other' or 'prefer not to say'.

Respondent Gender Demographic

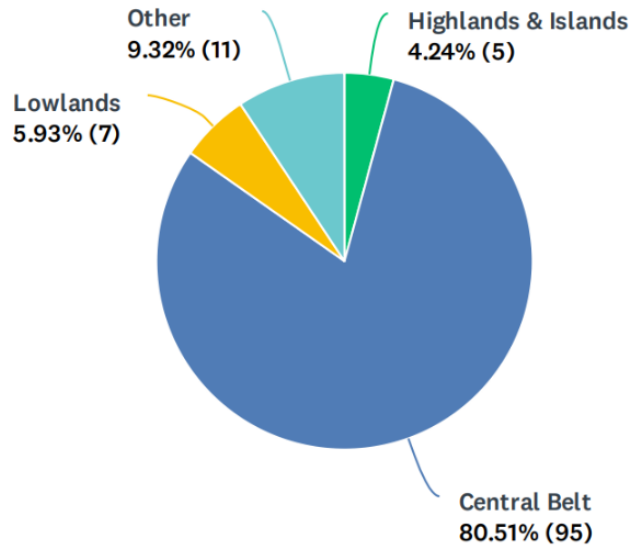


Male	<div style="width: 55%;"></div>	55% (65)
Female	<div style="width: 43%;"></div>	43% (51)
Non-binary / Other	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1% (1)
Prefer not to say	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1% (1)

Location Demographics

The vast majority of respondents (80%) were based in Central Scotland, consistent with the survey's geographical focus.

Respondent Location Demographic

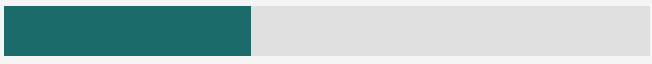

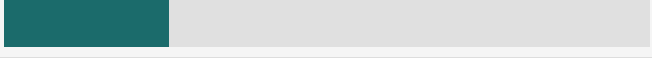
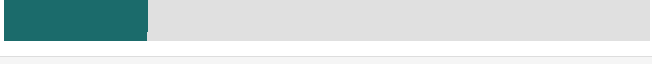
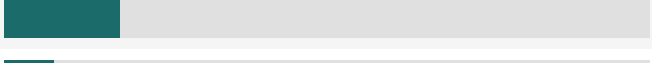
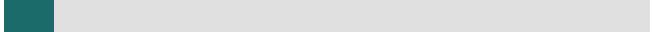


Central Scotland	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	80% (94)
South Scotland	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>	9% (11)
North Scotland	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>	6% (7)
West Scotland	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>	4% (5)
Not stated	<div style="width: 1%;"></div>	1% (1)

Sources of Political Information

Respondents were asked which sources had most influenced their views about politics and voting recently. They could select more than one option.

Respondent Sources of Information Demographic

Newspapers and websites (e.g. BBC, Guardian, Telegraph)		42% (49)
TV or radio		33% (39)
Friends, colleagues and family		29% (34)
Social media (e.g. TikTok, Facebook, Instagram)		25% (30)
All of the above		21% (25)
None of the above		11% (13)

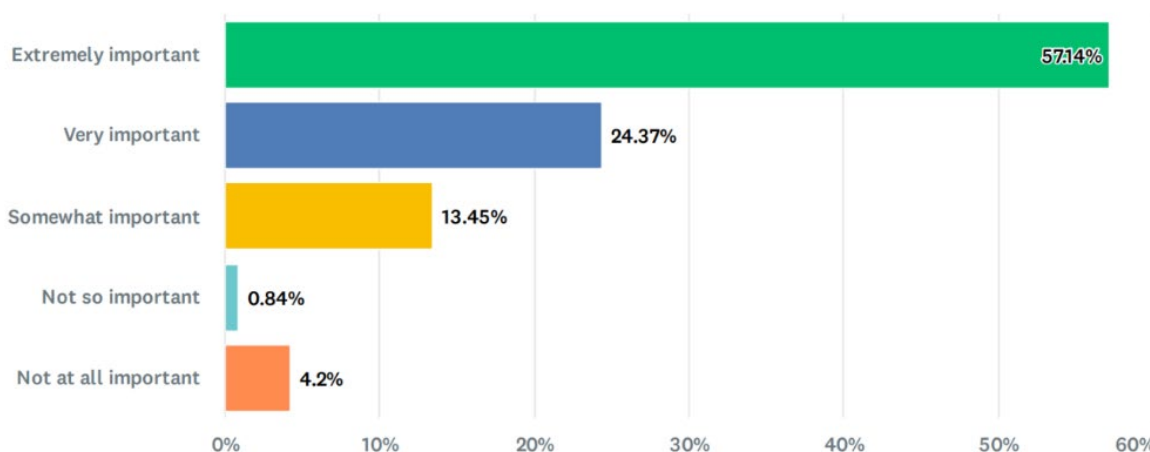
Traditional news media remains dominant: newspapers and websites (42%) and TV/radio (33%) are the most commonly cited sources, followed by personal networks (29%) and social media (25%). Notably, 11% said none of these sources influenced their views, suggesting a group of voters who may be harder to reach through conventional channels.

Policy Attitudes

The survey included a range of policy and values questions to understand what matters most to voters in Scotland. The following sections summarise the key findings.

Voice & Trust in Government

81% of respondents said it was very or fairly important that their voice is heard in Scottish elections. However, trust in the Scottish Government tells a more complex story.



Survey Respondents trust in the Scottish Government

The simplified findings are as follows:

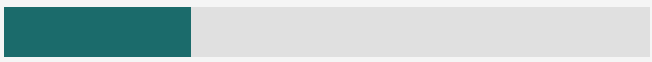

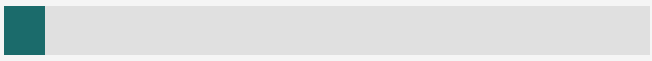

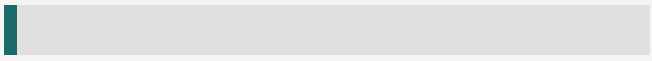

Trust a great deal / tend to trust		36% (41)
Neither trust nor distrust		17% (19)
Tend not to trust / do not trust at all		47% (54)

Nearly half of respondents (47%) expressed distrust in the Scottish Government, compared to only 36% who expressed trust. This gap between civic engagement and institutional trust is a significant finding for organisations working to encourage voter participation.

Views on the impacts of Immigration

Respondents were asked what impact they think people coming to live and work in Scotland has had on Scotland.

Survey Respondents views on people coming to live and work in Scotland.

Very positive		32% (37)
Somewhat positive		44% (51)
Neutral		10% (11)
Somewhat negative		8% (9)
Very negative		5% (6)
Not sure		1% (1)

The majority view immigration positively: 76% of respondents said immigration has had a somewhat or very positive impact on Scotland, compared to only 13% who expressed a negative view.

Scotland's Relationship with Europe

Respondents were asked the extent to which they think Scotland should strengthen its relationship with Europe.

Survey Respondents views on closer ties with Europe.

Strongly strengthen		76% (87)
Somewhat strengthen		15% (17)
No change		7% (8)
Somewhat reduce		1% (1)
Strongly reduce		2% (2)

There is strong consensus around Europe: 93% of respondents think Scotland should strengthen its relationship with Europe, with 76% choosing 'strongly strengthen'. This is one of the clearest areas of agreement across the survey.

NHS Healthcare

Respondents were asked how strongly they support or oppose NHS healthcare remaining free at the point of use for everyone.

Survey Respondents attitudes towards free Healthcare delivered through the NHS.



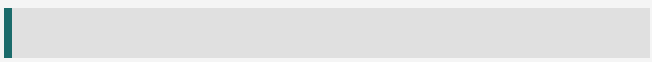

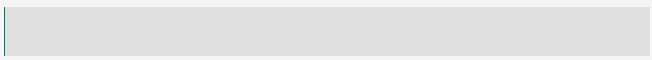
Strongly support		79% (91)
Support		11% (13)
Neither support nor oppose		3% (4)
Oppose		4% (5)
Strongly oppose		1% (1)
Not sure / no opinion		1% (1)

Support for a free NHS is near-universal: 90% of respondents either support or strongly support NHS healthcare remaining free at the point of use.

Climate Change

Respondents were asked how concerned they are, if at all, about climate change.

Survey Respondents level of concern regarding climate change.

Very concerned		52% (60)
Fairly concerned		36% (41)
Not very concerned		4% (5)
Not at all concerned		7% (8)
No opinion		1% (1)

Climate concern is high: 88% of respondents described themselves as very or fairly concerned about climate change, with 52% saying they are very concerned.

Energy and Fuel Prices

Respondents were asked how much current energy and fuel prices are affecting their household finances.

Respondents level of concern for energy and fuel prices affecting household finances.

A great deal		23% (26)
A fair amount		45% (52)
A little		29% (33)
Not at all		1% (1)
Not sure / N/A		3% (3)

Energy costs are a widespread concern: 67% of respondents say current energy and fuel prices are affecting their household finances a great deal or a fair amount. Only 1% say they are not affected at all.

Employment Opportunities

Respondents were asked whether they think there are enough rewarding jobs and opportunities available in their area.

Respondents' views on there being enough rewarding jobs and opportunities

Yes, definitely		5% (6)
Yes, somewhat		27% (31)
No, somewhat not		41% (47)
No, definitely not		16% (18)
Unsure		11% (13)

Concern about employment is significant: 57% of respondents said there are not enough rewarding jobs and opportunities in their area, with only 32% expressing a positive view. This may reflect wider concerns about regional inequality and economic opportunity in Scotland.

Artificial Intelligence and Jobs

Respondents were asked what impact they think artificial intelligence is having on jobs.

Respondents views on effects of AI on jobs

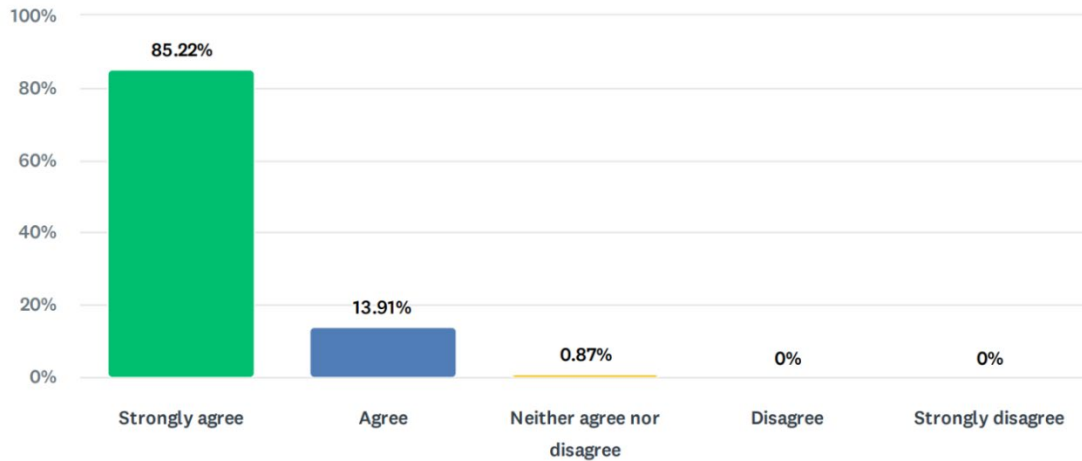
Very positive		3% (4)
Somewhat positive		32% (37)
Neutral		12% (14)
Somewhat negative		30% (35)
Very negative		8% (9)
Don't know		14% (16)

Views on AI are divided: 36% of respondents view AI's impact on jobs positively, while 38% view it negatively. 14% are unsure, suggesting this remains an emerging concern for many voters. This is the most evenly split issue in the survey.



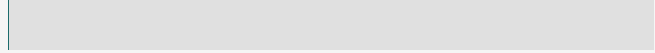
Political Accountability

Respondents were asked whether it should be illegal for elected members of the Scottish Parliament to knowingly lie in their official role.

Respondents views on legally enforceable requirement for Scottish MPs to tell the truth



The summarised results are as follows:

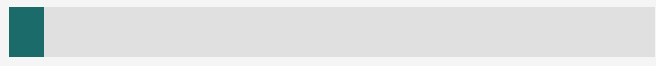

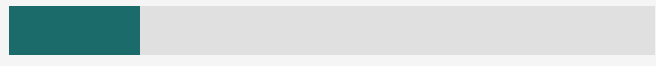

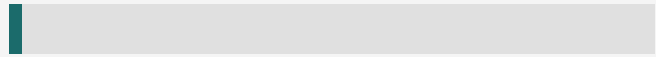
Strongly agree (it should be illegal)		85% (98)
Agree		14% (16)
Neither agree nor disagree		1% (1)

There is near-universal agreement on political honesty: 99% of respondents agree it should be illegal for MSPs to knowingly lie in their official role. This is the strongest consensus of any issue in the survey.

Fair Chance to Get On in Life

Respondents were asked how strongly they agree or disagree that most people in Scotland have a fair chance to get on in life.

Respondents views on having a fair chance to get on in life

Strongly agree		9% (10)
Agree		38% (44)
Neither agree nor disagree		23% (27)
Disagree		24% (28)
Strongly disagree		5% (6)

Views on fairness are mixed: 47% of respondents agree that most people in Scotland have a fair chance to get on in life, while 30% disagree. 23% are neutral. This suggests that while optimism is the plurality view, a substantial minority feel Scotland's society is not fair for everyone.

What Can You Do?

You can use your right to vote!

Here are some practical steps you can take:

- Register to vote at gov.uk or mygov.scot if you are not already registered.
- Check your polling station and the date of the upcoming election in your area.
- Encourage friends, family and colleagues to vote — particularly those in younger age groups.
- If you are undecided on who to vote for, consider using an online voting advice tool to explore which party's policies align best with your values.

Remember: even small changes in voter turnout can dramatically change electoral outcomes. In current Scottish polling, there is only a 15-point gap between the party in 1st place and the party in 5th place. Your vote genuinely matters.

A Note on Transparency

Your Vote Matters is committed to transparency. We believe it is important to recognise the limitations of this survey.

This survey captured only a small slice of the voting-age population (118 adults, predominantly in Central Scotland). It is also possible that individuals who do not plan to vote are less likely to participate in voting-related surveys. As a result, our findings may overstate voting intention in the broader population.

Despite this, we believe the results provide a useful and honest picture of current voters and their likely rationale for using — or not using — their right to vote.

Appendices

Methodology

The survey was conducted online using a structured questionnaire with 118 adults in Scotland, predominantly in the Central Scotland area.

Age demographics: To determine an average age, open-ended age ranges (e.g. '65+') were capped at appropriate upper limits. Midpoints were calculated for each bracket (e.g. 35–44 = 39.5). This methodology gives an estimated average age of 53 years.

References

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