

INDEPENDENCE CORE BRIEFING

More and more people are waking to the opportunity of a lifetime to build a more prosperous and fairer country.

Scotland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world – richer, per head, than Japan, France and the UK.

- Seven out of the ten wealthiest countries in the developed world have populations similar to, or smaller than, Scotland. That's according to OECD figures – the group of rich developed nations. Scotland would be 14th on the list, with the UK at 18th.
- We have a £13 billion food and drink industry; international exports from manufacturing alone of £15 billion. We have more top universities than any other country; and we are world-leaders in industries of the future like creative industries, life sciences and renewables. We have a quarter of Europe's offshore wind potential and 60% of the EU's oil reserves.
- We've generated more tax, per head, than the UK for every one of the last 33 years.
- Over the past five years our public finances have been healthier than the UK's by £8.3 billion – that's nearly £1,600 per person.
- Spending on social protection benefits, including pensions, is more affordable in Scotland because they take up a smaller proportion of our total tax receipts.
- We don't need oil to be successful (the UK Government itself says we raise roughly the same taxes per head as the UK even without it) but there is as much oil by value to be extracted from the North Sea as has been taken out already, so we will benefit from this huge bonus of many billions of pounds for decades to come.

Experts agree we are one of the richest countries in the world. That means we can choose independence with confidence

- The Financial Times says, per head, Scotland is richer than the rest of the UK and in the top 20 countries globally.
- The head of the Institute for Fiscal Studies says: "The statement that 'this is a rich and successful economy' is one I would entirely agree with."
- The economic ratings agency Standard and Poor's says: "Even excluding North Sea output Scotland would qualify for our highest economic assessment." The ratings agency Moody's says: "all possible outcomes point to Scotland being among the wealthiest sovereigns in the world."
- Even David Cameron says: "Supporters of independence will always be able to cite examples of small, independent and thriving economies across Europe. It would be wrong to suggest that Scotland could not be another such successful, independent country."
- So everyone agrees Scotland is currently one of the wealthiest countries in the world. The issue is why at present so many people don't feel the benefit of that great wealth. The referendum is about how we can create more jobs and build a fairer society for the future.

But under Westminster for too many of us it doesn't feel that way - and that is why a Yes is so important. With a Yes vote, we can take control and make sure our wealth delivers more opportunities for everyone.

- No-one is suggesting the Westminster government is deliberately damaging the Scottish economy but with only 9% of Westminster MPs from Scotland, we will never be any UK Government's priority.
- The evidence shows with Westminster in control economic policy has favoured London and the South-East of England. One study says 8 out of 10 new jobs in the UK are now being created in London. Every year nearly 40,000 young people leave Scotland – so we need the job-creating powers to provide more and better jobs here in Scotland.
- Those on low pay will lose out because Westminster has decided the minimum wage shouldn't rise in line with inflation.
- It will be harder for people from ordinary backgrounds to get on because the gap between rich and poor is getting wider.
- In Scotland the wealthiest 10% of households own 900 times the wealth of the least wealthy 10%.

The people of Scotland are the best people to take decisions about our country's future – no-one else will do a better job.

Independence is not a magic wand. It is the greatest opportunity we will ever have to use Scotland's wealth and extraordinary resources to build a more prosperous country with more job opportunities.

- With independence we have the opportunity to build a more secure economy because for the first time ever we will have the job-creating powers and an economic policy that will put Scotland first.
- If we match the performance of other similar sized independent countries on productivity, population growth and employment we will generate £5 billion extra tax revenues within 15 years. That's £1,000 per person better off.
- With control of the tax system we have the opportunity to create more and better jobs for people by giving incentives to firms to set up and expand here.
- We can help people climb the career ladder in Scotland by cutting business taxes which will help attract and retain company HQs – which means the opportunity of more well-paid, high-level jobs.
- We will have the opportunity to reindustrialise Scotland by putting in place an industrial strategy to reverse the decline in well-paid manufacturing jobs.
- We'll have the opportunity to build a more secure future for our children by investing some of our vast oil wealth in a fund for future generations.
- For the first time ever we will have the opportunity of around 90 overseas offices dedicated to boosting Scottish exports - a 50 % increase in exports will mean an extra 100,000 jobs.

We're better off with Scotland's future in Scotland's hands.

- With control of Scotland's budget we have the opportunity to make big savings. We won't be spending £600 million on Westminster priorities: which include Trident and the House of Lords.
- Instead we can use that money to help young families by expanding free childcare, making it easier for parents to go out to work.
- And with independence, the extra taxes generated from getting more people into work will stay in Scotland. That means we can re-invest that money – helping to pay for a further, staged increase in free childcare for all one-to five year olds.
- We have the opportunity to use some of the savings to give people more financial security by cost of living increases in tax allowances and tax credits.
- With control of employment policy we can help the low-paid by passing a law that says the minimum wage must always rise at least in line with the cost of living

We'll always get the governments we vote for. So we have the opportunity to protect our public services, like the NHS, from Westminster/Tory cuts and privatisation.

- The Conservatives are privatising the NHS in England. Under the Westminster system, cuts to spending in England automatically trigger cuts in Scotland. So if private money replaces public funding in England, our budget will also be slashed no matter what we want or need.
- The Tories are already promising cuts of £25 billion after the next Westminster election. On top of that we know MPs from all the Westminster parties want to cut spending in Scotland further because they think we get too much money now. And all the Westminster parties are signed up for a new generation of nuclear weapons which will cost £4 billion a year within 10 years.
- With independence we will have control of both our tax system and the budget for public services, so we can protect the NHS and other vital public services from Westminster privatisation. The decision will be one for us to take.
- Unison's Scottish Secretary, Mike Kirby, said on 1st August 2013 that:
"David Cameron and George Osborne might not run NHS Scotland, but that doesn't mean that they aren't attacking it...Devolution means they can't run down and privatise our NHS directly, as they are doing in England. But what they can do is starve it of resources - they are cutting back on the money provided to the Scottish government and this puts the health budget under pressure" ([Unison Scotland press release, 14th August 2013](#)).