



GfK NOP Social Research

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## Public opinion research around the 2007 Scottish Parliament and local elections

A report for:

The  
Electoral  
Commission

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Technical Details</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction and context of the research</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Survey Findings</b> .....	<b>11</b>
4.1	Voting behaviour on 3 <sup>rd</sup> May.....	11
4.1.1	<b>Turnout in the 2007 Scottish elections</b> .....	<b>11</b>
4.1.2	<b>Whether Registered to Vote</b> .....	<b>12</b>
4.1.3	<b>Voting</b> .....	<b>13</b>
4.1.4	<b>Frequency of voting at Elections</b> .....	<b>14</b>
4.2	Satisfaction and Knowledge of Systems and Methods .....	17
4.2.1	<b>Satisfaction with the system of registering to vote</b> .....	<b>17</b>
4.2.2	<b>Knowledge of how to register to vote</b> .....	<b>19</b>
4.2.3	<b>Knowledge of how to vote in an election</b> .....	<b>23</b>
4.2.4	<b>How to find out</b> .....	<b>27</b>
4.2.5	<b>Satisfaction with the process of voting at elections</b> .....	<b>29</b>
4.3	Attitudes to Voting Methods .....	32
4.3.1	<b>How prepared were people to use different voting methods at future elections?</b> .....	<b>32</b>
4.3.2	<b>Important considerations when voting</b> .....	<b>36</b>
4.4	Attitudes to and knowledge of fraud .....	38
4.4.1	<b>Extent to which different types of fraud were a problem</b> .....	<b>38</b>
4.4.2	<b>Extent to which fraud was considered a problem in the elections on May 3rd</b> .....	<b>40</b>

4.4.3	<b>Stories in the media affect perceptions of electoral fraud .....</b>	<b>42</b>
4.4.4	<b>Would the need to sign before being given a ballot paper have an impact upon privacy or electoral fraud? .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.5	Comparing perceptions and attitudes towards voting at a polling station and postal voting .....	45
4.5.1	<b>Analysis of Attitudes towards voting in Person and by post .....</b>	<b>49</b>
4.5.2	<b>Overall satisfaction with voting methods .....</b>	<b>51</b>
4.6	Information and publicity prior to the election.....	53
4.6.1	<b>Awareness of information about the election for the Scottish Parliament.....</b>	<b>53</b>
4.6.2	<b>Awareness of information about the local elections from the council.....</b>	<b>55</b>
4.6.3	<b>Getting information about the elections during the campaign .....</b>	<b>57</b>
4.7	Voters' experience of voting at the polling station .....	59
4.7.1	<b>Assessment of the information provided at polling stations .....</b>	<b>59</b>
4.7.2	<b>How easy was it to fill in the different ballot papers? .....</b>	<b>59</b>
4.7.3	<b>Reasons for finding ballot papers difficult.....</b>	<b>60</b>
4.7.4	<b>Further analysis of the difficulties with ballot papers in Scotland</b>	<b>61</b>
4.7.5	<b>The requirement not to fold ballot papers.....</b>	<b>66</b>
4.7.6	<b>Reasons for dissatisfaction with voting in Scotland.....</b>	<b>67</b>
5	<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>68</b>
Appendix 1:	<b>Profile of respondents.....</b>	<b>71</b>
Appendix 2:	<b>Survey questionnaire .....</b>	<b>72</b>



## 1 Executive Summary

The third election to the Scottish Parliament was held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007. The Electoral Commission has a statutory duty to report on the conduct of the elections. The Commission has also been asked by the Scottish Executive to report on the local government elections in Scotland, which took place simultaneously with those to the Scottish Parliament. This report contributes to that by detailing the findings of survey research conducted in the immediate aftermath of the election.

The research involved a telephone survey of a representative sample of 1,004 adults across Scotland. The survey explored various aspects of respondents' experiences of the election campaign, and their attitudes to the process of voting. The main findings of the research were:

### **The experience of the voting process in Scotland**

- Voting at a polling station remained the most popular method of voting in Scotland, while the take up and use of postal voting remained lower than in both Wales and England
- Across all levels of election older voters were consistently more likely than younger voters to say that they always vote
- A majority (63%) of people in Scotland were satisfied with the actual process of voting at elections, however this was notably lower than the levels of satisfaction in both Wales and England where three quarters of people were satisfied

### **Perceptions of electoral fraud**

- Three in ten people said that the most important consideration for them when voting was that their vote was safe from fraud or abuse
- People in Scotland were far more likely to feel that voting in person at a polling station, rather than voting by post, was good at providing privacy and being safe from fraud or abuse



- Concerns about electoral fraud in the UK were significantly lower in Scotland than in both England and Wales, however Scottish people were far more likely than their Welsh and English counterparts to feel that electoral fraud was a problem in the May elections (30% compared with 12% and 23% respectively)
- Of the people who thought that electoral fraud was a problem, two in five said that media stories had given them this impression
- More than two thirds (68%) thought that having to sign for a ballot paper would make no difference to *the privacy of their vote*, while a third (35%) of people in Scotland felt that this change would lead to a decrease in *electoral fraud*

#### **Views on the usability of ballot papers**

- The majority of people in Scotland did not think the changes to the different ballot papers were confusing or misleading
- Four in five (82%) voters found the Scottish Parliament ballot paper easy to fill in, and a similar proportion (83%) said that the local election ballot paper was easy to fill in
- However, when asked how easy or difficult voters found using two different voting systems (AMS in the Scottish Parliamentary election and STV in the local elections) the proportion who found it easy was notably lower (77%)
- Two thirds (67%) of those who voted at a polling station were happy not to fold their ballot paper, although 16% were not happy with this new requirement



## 2 Technical Details

GfK NOP Social Research carried out a quota telephone survey of 1,004 Scottish residents aged 18+ between 4 and 16 May 2007 on behalf of the Electoral Commission. The questionnaire, 15 minutes in length (a copy can be found in the appendix), explored attitudes, experiences and knowledge of different methods and systems of voting immediately following the Scottish Parliamentary and local elections held on 3 May 2007. Quotas were initially set on age bands, gender and working status. Halfway through the fieldwork period it became apparent that quotas were also necessary for those who had and those who had not voted in the elections.

The resultant data is weighted to the profile of Scottish residents by age, gender, working status and turnout at the elections on 3 May.

Coincident post-election surveys were conducted in England and Wales and, where appropriate, this report compares the findings from the Scottish survey with these.



### 3 Introduction and context of the research

Elections took place simultaneously on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 for the Scottish Parliament and for all of Scotland's 32 local councils. They were held on the same day as elections to the National Assembly for Wales and local elections in most of England.

A number of important innovations were implemented in the elections in Scotland. First, the local elections were held for the first time using the single transferable vote (STV). Apart from its use in electing university MPs up to and including 1945, this was the first time this system had been used in any public election in Great Britain since the 1920s, when it was used to elect the separate local education authorities that existed in Scotland at that time. In short, voters were being asked to use a system that few, if any, would have ever used before in a public election. Moreover, STV is more demanding of voters than are the other electoral systems currently in use in Scotland; instead of marking their ballot paper with an 'X', voters are invited to place candidates in rank order, 1,2,3 etc.

Second, although the electoral system being used to elect the Scottish Parliament, the Additional Member System (AMS), was the same as that used in the first two such elections in 1999 and 2003, a new ballot paper was introduced for the 2007 election.

Under AMS voters have two votes; one to elect a constituency Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), the other to determine the election of members from regional party lists. In the first two Scottish Parliament elections these two votes were cast on two different ballot papers. However, following a recommendation from the Arbuthnott Commission (Arbuthnott, 2006), the UK government decided to introduce a single ballot paper on which both votes were to be cast. The parties standing in a voter's region were listed on the left hand side of this ballot paper, and voters were invited to mark an 'X' against one of these. The individual candidates standing in a voter's constituency were placed on the right hand side, and voters were again invited to place a mark against one of these. Both lists were arranged in alphabetical order, though it was possible for parties to register more than one official name, and most notably the Scottish National Party stood under the label, 'Alex Salmond for First Minister', thereby claimed a higher placing on the left hand side of the ballot paper than 'Scottish National Party' would have done.

Third, although holding local elections on the same day as the parliamentary election was not in itself an innovation – the same had also happened in 1999 and 2003 – the fact that this practice was maintained even though voters were now expected to vote in a different manner



in the local elections from how they voted in the parliamentary election can be regarded as a further innovation. Although local elections had previously been held under single member plurality rather than AMS, both those electoral systems require voters to vote by placing an 'X'. This time, in contrast, voters were being asked to vote by using 'X's on one ballot paper and 1,2,3 on another. Although voters in Northern Ireland were required to do the same on the occasion of the coincident UK general and local elections there in 2001 and 2005, it was widely argued beforehand that the use of two very different ways of voting in Scotland on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007 would be a potential source of confusion and misunderstanding.

Fourth, both sets of elections were counted using electronic counting. This was arguably the biggest and most demanding use of electronic counting yet to have been undertaken in the UK; hitherto its biggest used had been in the 2000 and 2004 London mayoral and assembly elections (including the coincident European election in 2004). The impact on the voting process was that voters were asked not to fold their ballot papers before placing them in the ballot box.

None of these innovations were introduced in Wales or England. Wales, for example, retained the use of two separate ballot papers to elect the National Assembly (again under AMS). Voters in England continued to use 'X' voting in their local elections, while electronic counting only took place in a handful of local authorities as part of experimental pilots. So, if any or all of these innovations affected voters' evaluations of the electoral system in Scotland, then we might expect to find that those evaluations are different in Scotland from those in England or Wales.

However, apart from the innovations that took place in Scotland but not (for the most part) in England or Wales, one change to the process of voting was introduced in both England and Wales but not in Scotland. Following concerns expressed about the security of postal voting in the wake of some well publicised incidents of fraud in Birmingham, the UK government introduced legislation, the Electoral Administration Act 2006, that, inter alia, changed the postal voting procedure. The Electoral Administration Act does not, however, apply to Scottish local government elections which are a devolved matter, but the provisions of that Act are effectively replicated for these elections by the Local Electoral Administration and Registration Services (Scotland) Act 2006. Those applying for a postal vote are now to be required to provide their local electoral registration officer with their signature and date of birth. Then on submitting a postal vote a voter would again have to provide a signature and date of birth, which could then be compared with those provided with the original application as a means of verifying the voter's identity. While this new procedure was adopted for the



2007 local elections in England and the National Assembly election in Wales, the relevant regulations were not introduced in Scotland on the grounds that it would be a mistake to make this change at the made time as the other innovations already described. (At the same time, however, the former requirement that voters should have their signature to a postal vote witnessed was also dispensed with.) This is yet a further reason why attitudes to the electoral process in Scotland in May 2007 might have been different to those in England and Wales.

In fact there would be good reason anyway to compare attitudes towards postal voting in Scotland with those in England and Wales. Since the law was changed in 2000 to allow any voter to vote by post should they so wish, the take up of postal voting in Scotland has been lower than in England and Wales. At the time of the 2005 UK general election, for example, just 8% of the electorate in Scotland were issued with a postal vote compared with nearly 13% in both England and Wales (Rallings and Thrasher, 2005). There are two main possible explanations for this difference. One is that local authorities in Scotland are less effective in promoting postal voting amongst their populations. The other is that voters in Scotland are less keen on postal voting. This second possibility can be examined by comparing attitudes in Scotland with those in England and Wales.

It will by now be apparent that the 2007 parliamentary and local elections in Scotland took place at a time of considerable change and innovation in the electoral process. But apart from the changes actually implemented in those elections, both the UK government and the Electoral Commission have expressed an interest in further changes. Indeed the primary legislation to implement one of these innovations is already on the statute book. For amongst its other provisions the Electoral Administration Act 2006 are the foundations for the introduction of a new procedure for voting at a polling station. Currently in Great Britain a voter does not have to prove his or her identity when claiming a vote at a polling station; they simply have to assert that they are a person whose name and address appears on the electoral roll. Under the new provisions voters will be required to sign their name both when they register to vote and when they collect their ballot paper, thereby providing a means of checking their identity. It is of course important that voters should find the new procedure acceptable.

Meanwhile there continues to be interest in the potential for using new electronic methods of voting. These range from voting using an electronic voting machine at a polling station to the use of internet, SMS texting or the telephone to cast a vote remotely. Such innovations also open up the prospect (as does voting by post) of enabling voters to vote over an extended



period prior to polling day rather than on just polling day itself. How far these possible innovations will either be widely used (if introduced on a voluntary basis) or prove publicly acceptable is, however, far from clear.

Indeed even innovations that have been in place for some time and which are designed to make it easier for citizens to claim and exercise their right to vote may be plagued by relatively low levels of public awareness. For example, since 2001 voters have been able to register to vote at any time of the year on the basis of their current address rather than only being able to claim the franchise on the basis of where they lived on 10 October last. This means, for example, that those who have recently moved home can register to vote at their new address almost straight away rather than waiting for up to 16 months before they could do so. Moreover, further changes made to the regulations for the 2007 elections meant that voters could register to vote as late as eleven working days before polling day. But we cannot assume voters are aware of these changes.

Voters' evaluations of any particular election or electoral procedure will not of course simply depend on the legislative framework. It will also depend on how effectively and efficiently that framework is thought to have been implemented. The administration of the 2007 Scottish elections has proved to be the subject of some controversy and has attracted considerable media publicity. Three features of the elections in particular have been the subject of some criticism:

1. Delays in the sending out of postal votes. The last date by which a voter could request a postal vote was in fact moved at this election from six working days before polling day to eleven days, a move designed to make it easier for returning officers to cope with the administrative burden of sending out and receiving postal votes. However, delays in the printing and distribution of ballot papers meant that some local authorities in Scotland were unable to send postal ballot papers out on time, and in some cases only doing so a week or so before polling day. Clearly such delays could be the source of voter dissatisfaction.
2. Delays in electronic counting. It had been anticipated that the electronic count of the parliamentary ballot would be completed by around breakfast time on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May. In practice it was not completed until that evening. A number of counts had to be suspended in the early hours because of technical difficulties. Although these delays did not inconvenience voters directly, frustration at not knowing the result is also a potential source of voter dissatisfaction.



3. Large number of rejected ballots. As many as 4.1% of votes cast in the constituency part of the parliamentary ballot paper were declared invalid, as were 2.9% of those on the regional ballot paper (Secretary of State for Scotland, 2007). This is well above the figure of 0.8% (on both ballots) at the last Scottish parliament election in 2003. Meanwhile it is estimated that just under 2% of the votes cast in the local government election were declared invalid (Electoral Reform Society, 2007), well above the norm in 'X' voting elections in Britain, though on a par with the incidence of invalid votes at recent local elections in Northern Ireland (where STV is also used). Although the incidence of invalid votes in the parliamentary election was less than that experienced in the London Assembly elections of 2000 and 2004 (also conducted under AMS using a single ballot paper), it attracted far more widespread media comment and controversy. This experience obviously raises questions about how difficult voters found the task of completing the ballot papers used at this election and whether this might have affected their level of dissatisfaction with the voting process.

It should, however, be borne in mind that the adverse media publicity that attended these three controversies may itself have affected voters' perceptions of how well the elections in Scotland were administered. Thus, for example, while voters themselves may not have been directly inconvenienced by delays in the electronic count, the media publicity that this engendered may well have helped persuade people that the election was not conducted efficiently. People's reactions to the 2007 elections will thus not necessarily be a direct reflection of people's experience of the electoral process; they may also have been shaped by their indirect experience via the media.

The issues outlined in this section informed the construction of the survey questionnaire and also inform the following analysis.



## 4 Survey Findings

### 4.1 Voting behaviour on 3<sup>rd</sup> May

#### 4.1.1 Turnout in the 2007 Scottish elections

As has been mentioned earlier in this report quotas were set according to whether respondents voted in the May 3<sup>rd</sup> elections or not. In total, 60% of the sample claimed to have voted in at least one of the elections which took place in Scotland that day. This and the pattern of turnout by gender and age is very similar to 2003 as Table 1 shows.

The unweighted findings suggest that younger voters were no more likely to turnout in the 2007 elections, but a higher number of older voters were interviewed this year.

**Table 1: Turnout in the 2007 Scottish elections, proportion who voted**

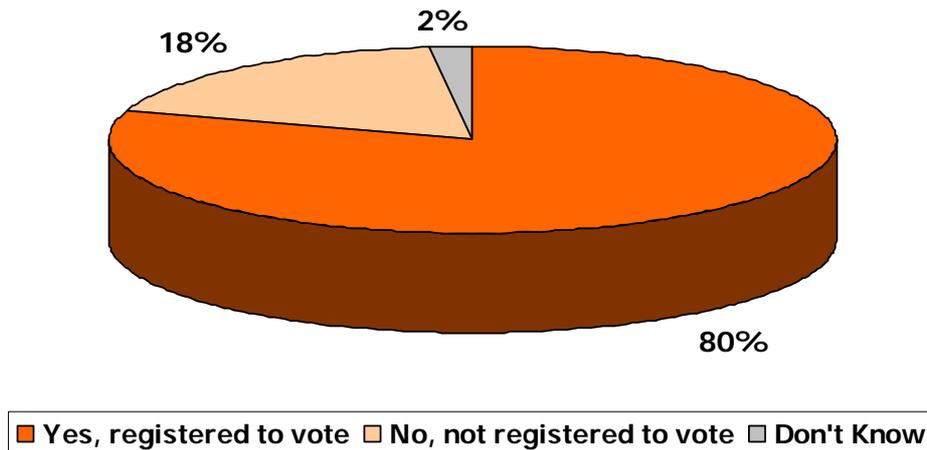
	Total		Male		Female		18-34		35-54		55+	
	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007	2003	2007
Unweighted base	1,100	1,004	547	457	553	547	380	272	486	385	334	341
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
% Voted	57	60	57	60	57	60	41	41	54	58	71	75



#### 4.1.2 Whether Registered to Vote

Those who did not vote were asked if they were registered to vote. Most (80%) were registered and only 18% were not registered. In all, 8% of the total sample said that they were not registered to vote.

**Chart 1: Were you registered to vote or not?**



Base: All respondents who did not vote at the elections on May 3rd (405)

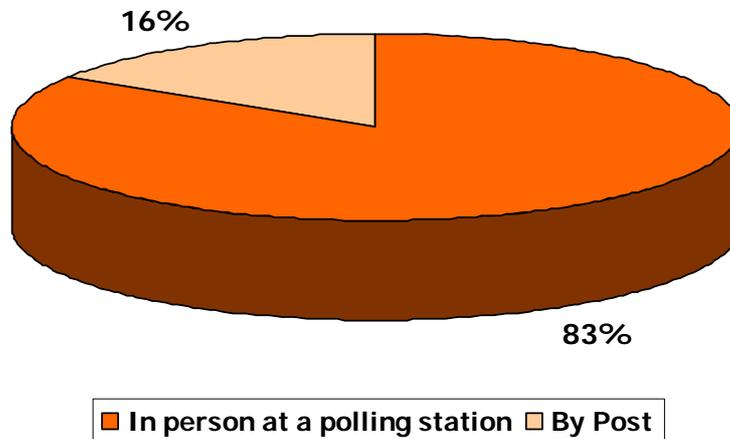
As we would expect from previous research, age appears to be the key factor here as 30% of 18 - 34 year olds were not registered compared with 11% of those aged 35 - 54 and just five per cent of those aged 55 or over.

### 4.1.3 Voting

All respondents who claimed to have voted were asked which method of voting they had used. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority (83%) voted in person at a polling station. Sixteen per cent said that they had voted by post and less than one per cent did so by proxy. Out of the total sample, this means that 45% of people voted in person and that 9% voted by post.

The proportion of people who said they voted by post on May 3<sup>rd</sup> is lower than in both England (23%) and Wales (19%), which is consistent with the lower level of take up in Scotland since 2000.

**Chart 2: At the Scottish Parliament and local election did you vote at a polling station or by post?**



Base: All respondents who voted at the elections on May 3rd (599)

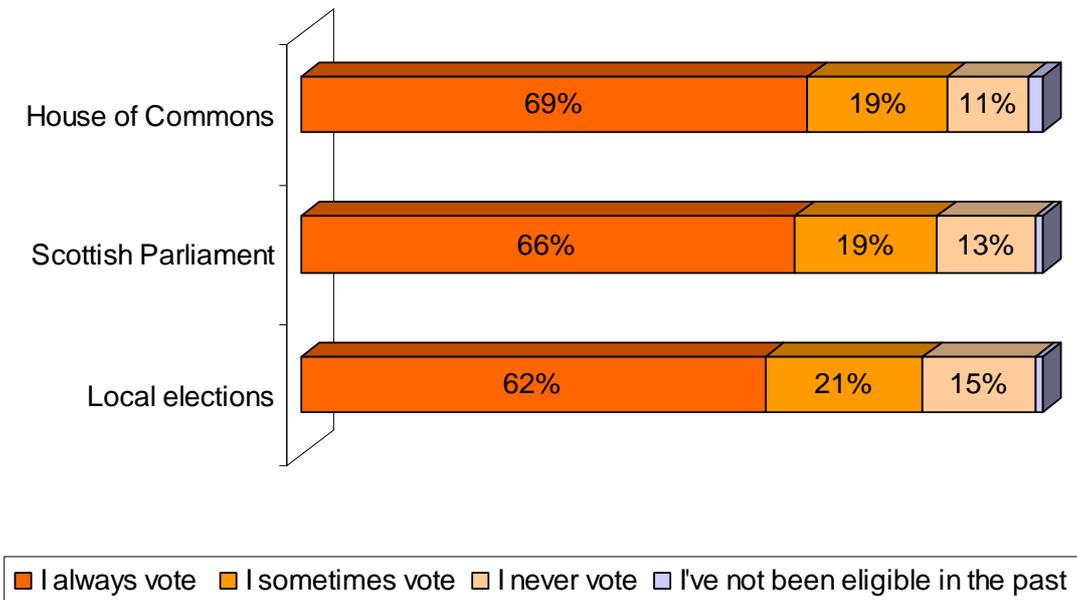
Older voters (those aged 55+) were most likely to have opted for the postal voting method (19% compared with 11% of those voters aged 35 – 54).

#### 4.1.4 Frequency of voting at Elections

Three questions were asked about frequency of voting, one on General Elections, another on the elections for the Scottish Parliament and the third on local council elections.

Sixty nine per cent of all respondents except those who were not registered to vote said they always vote in elections to the House of Commons, 66% said they always vote at Scottish Parliamentary elections and 62% said they always vote in local elections.

**Chart 3: Which of these best describes how often you vote in General Elections / Scottish Parliamentary Elections / Local Elections?**



Base: All respondents except those not registered to vote (935)

Across all three questions, there was a very clear correlation between age and likelihood to vote in elections. Table 2 shows the sharp age gradient in relation to this question. In each of the three different types of elections older voters were consistently more likely than younger voters to say that they always vote.

**Table 2: Which of these best describes how often you vote in General Elections / Scottish Parliamentary Elections / Local Elections?**

Base: All except those not registered to vote	General Elections			Scottish Parliamentary Elections			Local Elections		
	18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
Unweighted base	226	367	337	226	367	337	226	367	337
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I always vote	48	67	83	48	64	81	41	59	79
I sometimes vote	27	20	12	26	20	12	29	23	14
I never vote	18	12	4	21	16	6	25	18	7
I've not been eligible before	7	-	1	5	-	-	5	*	-
Don't know	*	-	1	1	-	-	*	-	-

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a finding of less than 0.5% but more than 0.



A comparison with the Welsh data is interesting as the data indicate that although Welsh<sup>1</sup> voters are as likely as Scottish voters to say they always vote in elections to the House of Commons (67% in Wales, 69% in Scotland) they are significantly less likely to say the same about elections to the National Assembly for Wales as Table 3 shows.

**Table 3: Which of these best describes how often you vote in General Elections / Elections to devolved bodies / Local Elections?**

Base: All except those not registered to vote	Scotland			Wales		
	General Election	Scottish Parliamentary elections	Local elections	General Election	NAW elections	Local elections
Unweighted base	935	935	935	943	943	943
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I always vote	69	66	62	67	50	49
I sometimes vote	19	19	21	23	25	29
I never vote	11	13	15	8	20	20
I've not been eligible before	2	1	1	2	3	1
Don't know	*	*	*	*	1	*

<sup>1</sup> GfK NOP also conducted post-election polls in Wales and England following the elections on 3<sup>rd</sup> May. All three polls used the same telephone methodology and were conducted over the same fieldwork period.

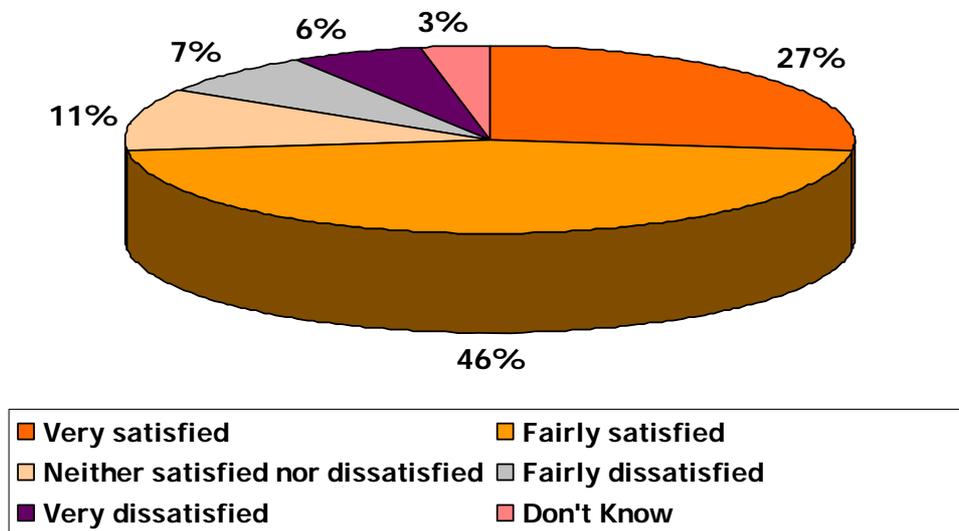


## 4.2 Satisfaction and Knowledge of Systems and Methods

### 4.2.1 Satisfaction with the system of registering to vote

Three quarters of respondents (73%) were satisfied with the system of registering to vote, in fact more than a quarter (27%) were *very* satisfied. Thirteen per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with the system, while the remaining 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied). It is interesting to note that satisfaction with the system of registering to vote was significantly lower than in both England and Wales where 79% expressed satisfaction with the system, although it is unclear why this is the case.

**Chart 4: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the system of registering to vote?**



Base: All respondents except those not registered to vote (935)

As Table 5 shows, although older voters (those aged 55 or more) were most likely to be very satisfied (31% compared with 21% of 18 – 34 year olds) they were also more likely to be dissatisfied overall (18% compared with 12% of 35 – 54 year olds and 6% of 18 – 34 year olds). In addition, satisfaction was greater amongst people who voted in the recent elections (82% compared with 62% of non-voters).

**Table 4: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the system of registering to vote?**

Base: All	Age				Voted in elections	
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
Unweighted base	1,004	226	367	337	599	335
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	27	21	28	31	34	17
Fairly satisfied	46	49	45	45	47	44
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11	20	12	4	5	20
Fairly dissatisfied	7	4	7	9	6	9
Very dissatisfied	6	2	6	9	6	5
Don't know	3	3	2	2	1	4
<b>All satisfied</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>All dissatisfied</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>

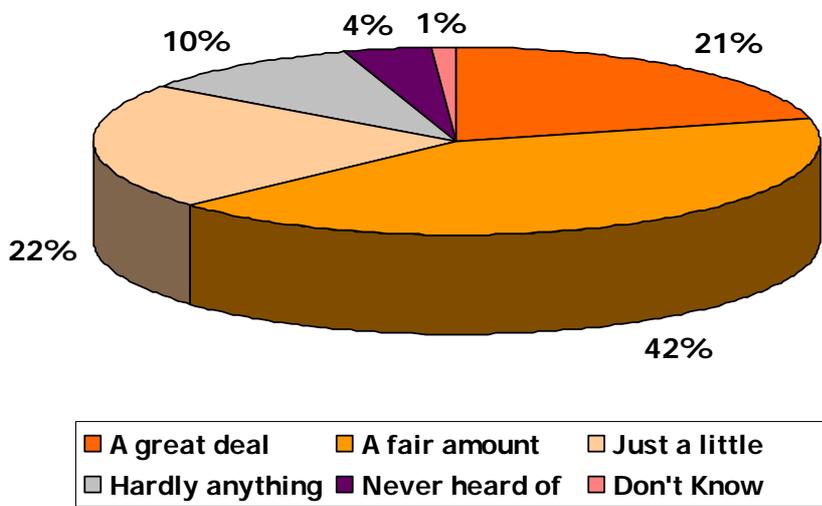


### 4.2.2 Knowledge of how to register to vote

Overall, people felt that they know a reasonable amount about how they can register to vote.

A fifth (21%) felt that they know a great deal, the proportion who felt that they know a fair amount doubles to 42%, while 22% felt that they know just a little. In comparison 10% felt that they know hardly anything about how they can register to vote and four per cent felt that they know nothing about this.

**Chart 5: How much do you feel you know about how you can register to vote?**



Base : All Respondents (1004)



Whilst there was no gender difference on this question there were some notable differences as older people, people in higher social classes and voters were more likely to feel they know a great deal.

Three in ten (30%) people aged 55+ said they know a great deal, this fell considerably amongst 35 – 54 year olds and 18 – 34 year olds (to 16% and 14% respectively). Over a quarter (27%) of people in social class AB felt that they know a great deal, this is significantly higher than the 20% of people in social class C1 and 16% of people in social class C2 who said the same. A quarter (25%) of people who voted in the recent elections felt that they know a great deal about how to register, while just 15% of those who did not vote said the same thing.

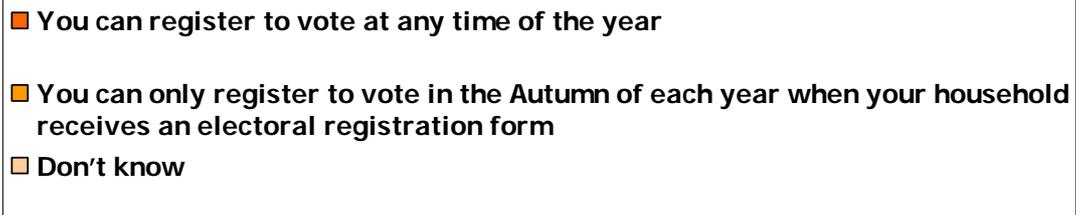
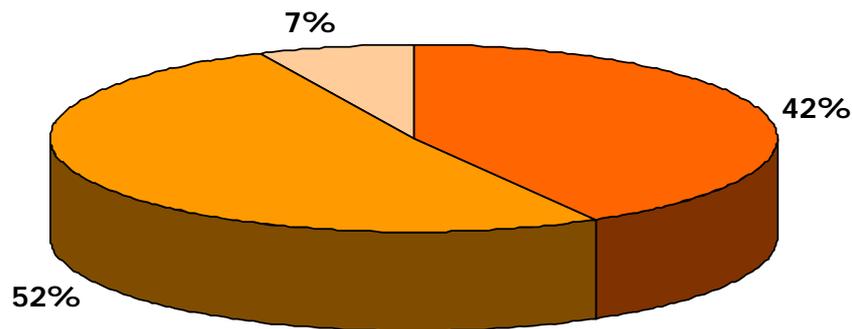
**Table 5: How much do you feel you know about how you can register to vote?**

	Base: All									
	Total	Age			Social class				Voted in elections	
		18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Yes	No
	1,004	272	385	341	214	312	214	264	599	404
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	21	14	16	30	27	20	16	21	25	15
A fair amount	42	37	47	41	45	41	40	42	46	37
Just a little	22	30	21	16	15	23	30	20	18	26
Hardly anything	10	15	8	8	9	10	7	11	7	13
Nothing	4	5	6	2	2	5	7	4	2	8
Don't know	1	-	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1



As well as asking people about their perceived knowledge of registering to vote the survey also asked respondents to say which of two statements was true. The data indicates that there is still widespread ignorance of rolling registration as 52% felt that they 'can only register to vote in the autumn of each year when (their) household receives an electoral registration form'. Two in five (42%) felt the statement about rolling registration ('you can register to vote at any time of the year') was correct. Just 7% admitted that they did not know which of the statements was correct.

**Chart 6: Which statement do you think is true?**



Base : All Respondents (1004)

It is worth noting that people aged 55 and above – one of the groups who were more likely to say they know a great deal about how to register – were no more likely to pick the correct option than their younger counterparts. However, those in a higher social class and those who voted in the recent elections were more likely to choose the correct statement.

Half of people in social class AB or C1 opted for the rolling registration statement (51% and 47% respectively), while 37% of people in social class C2 and 32% of people in social class DE said the same. Forty five per cent of people who voted in the recent elections said that the statement about registering to vote at any time of the year is correct, while 37% of non-voters chose the same option.

**Table 6: Which statement do you think is true?**

Base: All	Social class					Voted in elections	
	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE	Yes	No
	1,004	214	312	214	264	599	404
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
You can register to vote at any time of the year	42	51	47	37	32	45	37
You can only register to vote in the autumn of each year when your household receives an electoral registration form	52	42	47	57	59	47	57
Don't know	7	7	6	6	8	8	6



### 4.2.3 Knowledge of how to vote in an election

The research clearly indicates that people felt more confident that they know how to vote in person in comparison with voting by post.

The majority of people felt either very (48%) or fairly (35%) sure that they would know what to do if they wanted to vote *in person* at an election. Just 15% felt unsure about this (9% not very sure and 6% not at all sure). In comparison, only half (52%) of people felt sure about what to do if they wanted to vote *by post*. Table 8 shows the differences in relation to both methods of voting.

**Table 7: If you wanted to vote in person / by post at an election, how sure are you that you would know what to do?**

Base: All	Total	
	In person	By post
Unweighted base	1,004	1,004
	%	%
Very sure	48	26
Fairly sure	35	25
Not very sure	9	22
Not at all sure	6	23
Don't know	1	4
<b>All sure</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>All unsure</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>45</b>



Men, older people, middle class people and those who voted in the May elections reported the greatest levels of confidence in relation to voting in person.

While 88% of men felt sure about what to do the proportion of women who said the same was markedly lower at 80%. Nine in ten (91%) people aged 55+ felt sure about what to do, this fell to 83% of people aged 35 – 54 and 78% of 18 – 34 year olds.

**Table 8: If you wanted to vote in person, how sure are you that you would know what to do? (by gender and age)**

Base: All respondents	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+
	1,004	457	547	272	385	341
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very sure	48	51	46	37	45	61
Fairly sure	35	37	34	41	38	29
Not very sure	9	7	11	12	10	6
Not sure at all	6	5	7	8	7	3
<b>All Sure</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>All not sure</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>

Ninety per cent of people in social class AB felt sure that they would know what to do if they wanted to vote in person, this was significantly higher than amongst people in social class C2 (82%) and DE (80%). The difference between people who voted in the recent elections and those who did not was particularly marked (91% compared with 75%).

**Table 9: If you wanted to vote in person, how sure are you that you would know what to do? (by social class and whether voted)**

		Social Class				Voted in elections	
		AB	C1	C2	DE	Yes	No
	1,004	214	312	214	264	542	461
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very sure	48	63	45	41	48	60	35
Fairly sure	35	27	40	41	32	32	40
Not very sure	9	7	8	12	10	5	14
Not sure at all	6	3	8	5	8	2	11
<b>All Sure</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>All not sure</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>24</b>

Similar trends were evident in relation to confidence about knowing what to do if people want to vote by post, although there was no gender gap on reported knowledge of how to vote by post.

Three in five (60%) people aged over 55 felt sure that they would know what to do, confidence was lower amongst both 35 – 54 year olds and 18 – 34 year olds (45% and 48% respectively). Fifty eight per cent of people in social class AB felt sure that they know what to do in this regard, this fell to 49% of people in social class C1 and 48% of people in social class C2. As with voting in person the gulf between voters and non-voters was significant, with 58% of people who voted in the May elections saying they were sure they would know what to do compared with 45% of those who did not vote.

**Table 10: If you wanted to vote by post, how sure are you that you would know what to do? (by age, social class and whether voted)**

	Age			Social Class				Voted in elections		
	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE	Yes	No	
	1,004	272	385	341	214	312	214	264	542	461
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very sure	26	21	21	37	31	24	23	28	33	18
Fairly sure	25	27	24	24	28	24	25	25	24	26
Not very sure	22	27	22	16	23	19	23	22	17	27
Not sure at all	23	22	29	18	16	30	23	20	21	25
<b>All Sure</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>All not sure</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>52</b>



#### 4.2.4 How to find out

Respondents were asked how they would find out about where to vote and how to go about voting, both in person and by post, if they wanted to.

A number of different options were mentioned but the most common was contacting the local council or registration officer (34% cited this in relation to voting in person and 24% mentioned this in relation to postal voting). In both cases contacting the council was mentioned less frequently than in England and Wales. Two in five people in England (42%) and Wales (38%) said they would contact their council to find out about voting in person, while one in three people in England (32%) and Wales (30%) would contact the council to find out about voting by post.

One in five (20%) said they would use a website to find out how to vote in person – this includes using the Council website, [votescotland.co.uk](http://votescotland.co.uk) and other sites – the proportion who said they would use a website to find out about postal voting is considerably lower (10%). The next highest proportion said that they would wait for a form to come through the door (mentioned by 15% in relation to voting in person and 9% in relation to voting by post).

The proportion of people who said they do not know how they would find out about postal voting (38%) is far higher than the proportion who said the same about voting in person (10%). This supports the earlier finding about people feeling less sure that they would know what to do if they wanted to vote by post.

Table 12 shows all responses mentioned by at least 5% of the sample in relation to finding out about voting in person.



**Table 11: Comparison of how people would find out about either where to vote and how to do it or applying to vote by post**

Base: All	Total	
	In person	By post
Unweighted base	1,004	1,004
	%	%
Contact my local council / registration officer	34	24
Wait for a form / leaflet to come through the door	15	9
Internet / websites	11	6
Information from television / radio / newspapers	8	1
Ask friends / family / colleagues	7	2
Get a form from / go to the library	7	3
Send / post the card back	6	5
Go to Council website	6	3
Go to / collect a form from my local Council / registration officer	6	5

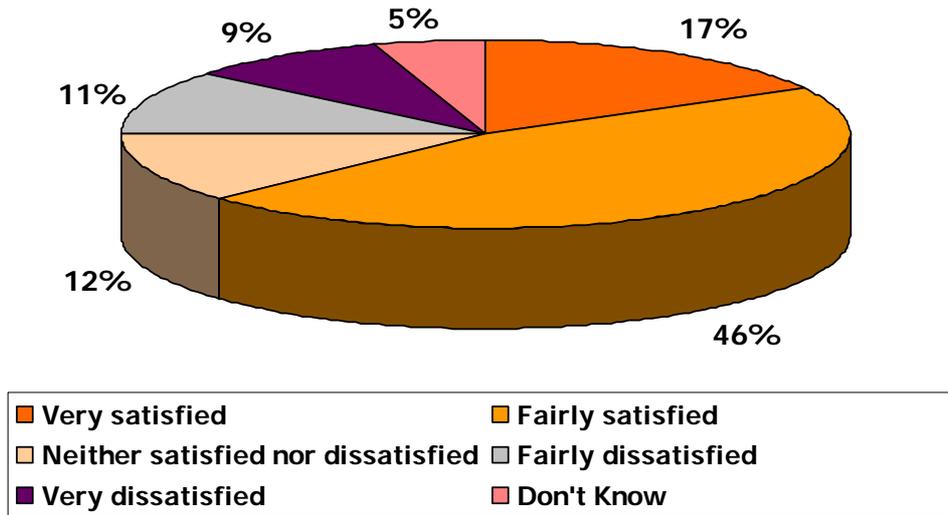
Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger people were most likely to use online options to find out about voting in person (33% compared with 20% of 35 – 54 year olds and 7% of those aged 55 or more).



#### 4.2.5 Satisfaction with the process of voting at elections

Three in five (63%) people in Scotland were satisfied with the actual process of voting at elections (17% very and 46% fairly satisfied). However, one in five (20%) expressed dissatisfaction with the process.

**Chart 7: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the actual process of voting at elections?**



Base : All Respondents (1004)

Although a clear majority of people in Scotland were satisfied with this process it is important to note that satisfaction was significantly lower in Scotland than in both Wales and England (63% compared with 75% and 74% respectively). This may be a sign that the various problems that occurred in the conduct of the elections in Scotland have had an adverse impact on people's satisfaction with the electoral process.

**Table 12: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the actual process of voting at elections?**

Base: All	Scotland	Wales	England
Unweighted base:	1,004	1,000	1,000
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	17	25	26
Fairly satisfied	46	50	48
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12	15	13
Fairly dissatisfied	11	4	5
Very dissatisfied	9	3	4
Don't know	5	3	4
<b>All satisfied</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>All dissatisfied</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>

Seven in ten (72%) of those who voted in the May 3<sup>rd</sup> elections expressed satisfaction, compared with only just over half (53%) of who did not vote. But even so, as Table 13 shows, this still means the level of satisfaction amongst those who voted in the elections in Scotland was lower than that amongst those who did so in Wales or England. The data suggests that satisfaction with voting in Scotland may well have been affected by the problems that were experienced on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.



**Table 13: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the actual process of voting at elections? (by actual voters)**

Base: All who voted	Scotland	Wales	England
Unweighted base:	599	541	601
	%	%	%
Very satisfied	22	37	38
Fairly satisfied	50	51	52
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5	6	4
Fairly dissatisfied	11	3	3
Very dissatisfied	11	2	2
Don't know	2	1	1
<b>All satisfied</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>All dissatisfied</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### 4.3 Attitudes to Voting Methods

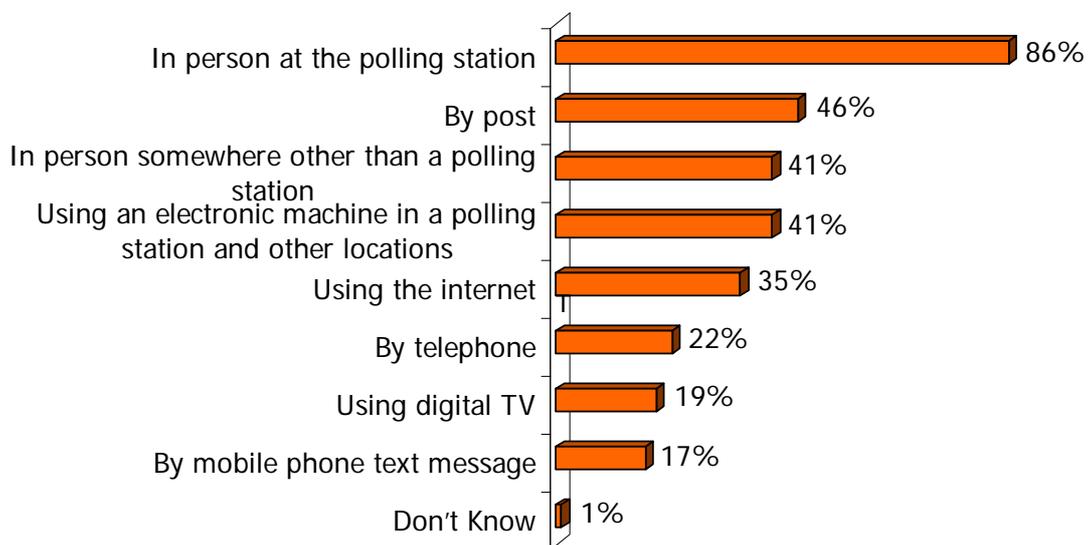
#### 4.3.1 How prepared were people to use different voting methods at future elections?

All respondents were read a list of different methods of voting and asked which of them they would be prepared to use in future elections if they had a choice.

As the chart below indicates the most popular choice, one that 86% were prepared to use, is the traditional method of voting at a polling station. Two in five were prepared to vote by post (46%), similar proportions were prepared to vote somewhere other than a polling station or to use an electronic machine or in person somewhere other than a polling station (both 41%). A third (35%) were prepared to vote using the internet, 22% by telephone, 19% using digital TV and 17% by mobile phone text message.

Clearly, there was a relative reluctance to use newer methods of voting. It should of course be acknowledged that this may be because they have not had the chance to use these methods rather than reflecting determined resistance to their use.

**Chart 8: If you had a choice, which of these methods would you be prepared to use to vote at future elections?**



Base: All Respondents (1004)



The data suggests that men and younger people were most open to new alternatives to the current methods of voting. Men were more likely than women to consider using an electronic machine (47% compared with 37%), voting in person somewhere other than a polling station (45% compared with 37%), using the internet (41% compared with 30%) and using digital TV (23% compared with 15%)

Younger people were more willing than those aged 55 or more to use every new option, though even amongst this group voting in person is still the most popular option by far. The most notable differences were in relation to new technology: 53% were willing to use the internet (compared with 17% of people aged 55+ and 37% 35 – 54 year olds), 25% were willing to use digital TV (compared with 11% of those aged 55+) and 29% were willing to use text messaging (this fell to 7% of people aged 55+ and 16% of people aged 35 – 54).

**Table 14: If you had a choice, which of these methods would you be prepared to use to vote at future elections?**

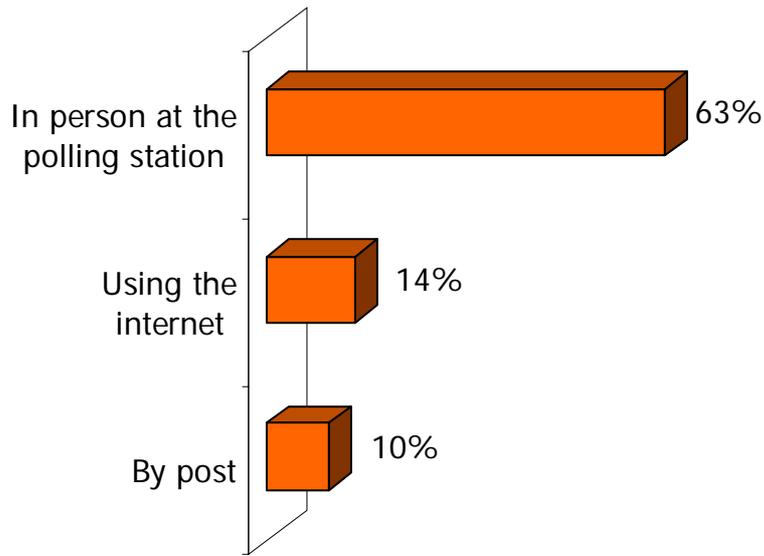
Base: All	Gender			Age		
	Total	Male	Female	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+
Unweighted base	1,004	457	547	272	385	341
	%	%	%	%	%	%
In person at a polling station	86	86	87	83	87	87
By post	46	46	46	44	45	47
Using an electronic machine in a polling station / other locations	41	47	37	48	50	27
In person somewhere other than a polling station	41	45	37	47	44	32
Using the internet	35	41	30	53	37	17
By telephone	22	22	22	25	27	14
Using Digital TV	19	23	15	25	20	11
By mobile phone text message	17	17	17	29	16	7
Don't know	1	2	1	3	2	*

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a finding of less than 0.5% but more than 0.

When asked for a clear preference in a follow up question, around three quarters expressed a preference for maintaining the electoral status quo. Two thirds (63%) said they would prefer

to vote in person at a polling station, while 10% said they would prefer to vote by post. In addition, 3% preferred the option of the telephone and 2% preferred the option of voting in person somewhere other than a polling station. Although 14% said they would prefer to use the internet to vote other methods which utilise new technology were only mentioned by very small numbers; 3% preferred an electronic machine in a polling station / other locations, 3% preferred the telephone, 2% preferred text messages and 1% preferred to use digital TV.

**Chart 9: Which method of voting would you prefer?**

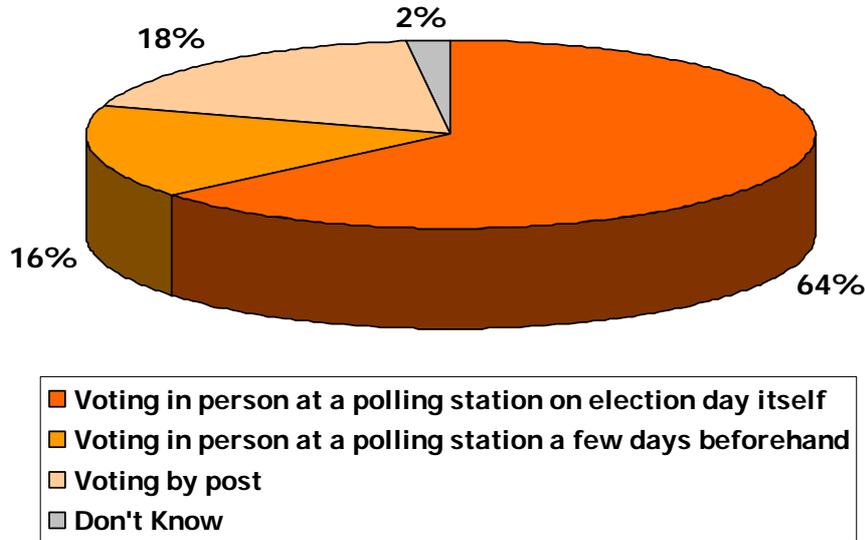


Base: All respondents (1,004)

The final question about different methods of voting asked about which method of voting people would opt for out of voting in person at a polling station on Election Day, voting in person a few days beforehand and voting by post.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the previous questions, just under two in three (64%) opted for the tried and trusted method of voting in person at a polling station, the remainder opted for either postal voting or voting in person at a polling station a few days beforehand (18% and 16%, respectively).

**Chart 10: If you had a choice between the following, which would you choose?**



Base: All Respondents (1004)

Comparisons with the Welsh and English surveys suggest a relative lack of interest in postal voting in Scotland. While it was the second most popular choice the 18% who said they would choose to vote this way was significantly lower than in both Wales and England (23% and 25% respectively).

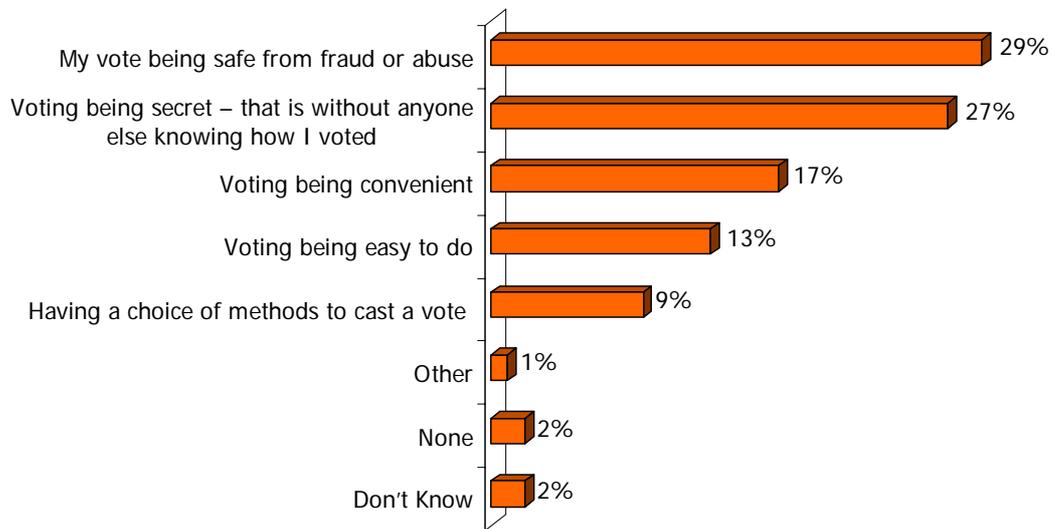
In Scotland, it is interesting to note that there were very significant differences in the voting preferences of people who did vote in May and those who did not. Those who did vote were far more likely to say they would choose to vote in person at a polling station on the day (74% compared with 51%). In comparison the proportion of non-voters who expressed a preference for voting in person a few days beforehand was double that of voters (22% compared with 11%). Similarly, non-voters were more likely than voters voting (24% compared with 14%).

### 4.3.2 Important considerations when voting

People's preferences for more traditional forms of voting may be largely explained by what they considered to be important considerations when voting. In general, secrecy and avoiding fraud were more important than convenience, ease and choice.

Three in ten respondents said that the most important considerations when they vote were their vote being safe from fraud and voting being secret (29% and 27% respectively). Notably fewer people rated voting being easy, convenient or having a choice of methods as the most important consideration (17%, 13% and 9% respectively).

**Chart 11: Thinking generally about elections, which one of the following would you said is most important for you when you vote?**



Base: All Respondents (1004)

Analysis of the sub-group data indicates some interesting differences in priorities by age.

For 38% of older people voting being secret was a priority, this compares with 23% of 35 – 54 year olds and 19% of 18 - 34 year olds). Younger people, on the other hand, were more likely than those aged 35 – 54 to say that it was important that voting is easy to do (21% compared with 15%), or that it is convenient (16% of 18 - 34 year olds considered this important compared with 10% of people aged 55 or more).

**Table 15: Thinking generally about elections, which one of the following would you say is most important for you when you vote?**

Base: All	Age			
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+
Unweighted base:	1,004	272	385	341
	%	%	%	%
My vote being safe from fraud or abuse	29	30	33	24
Voting being secret	27	19	23	38
Voting being easy to do	17	21	15	18
Voting being convenient	13	16	14	10
Having a choice of methods to cast a vote	9	10	9	7



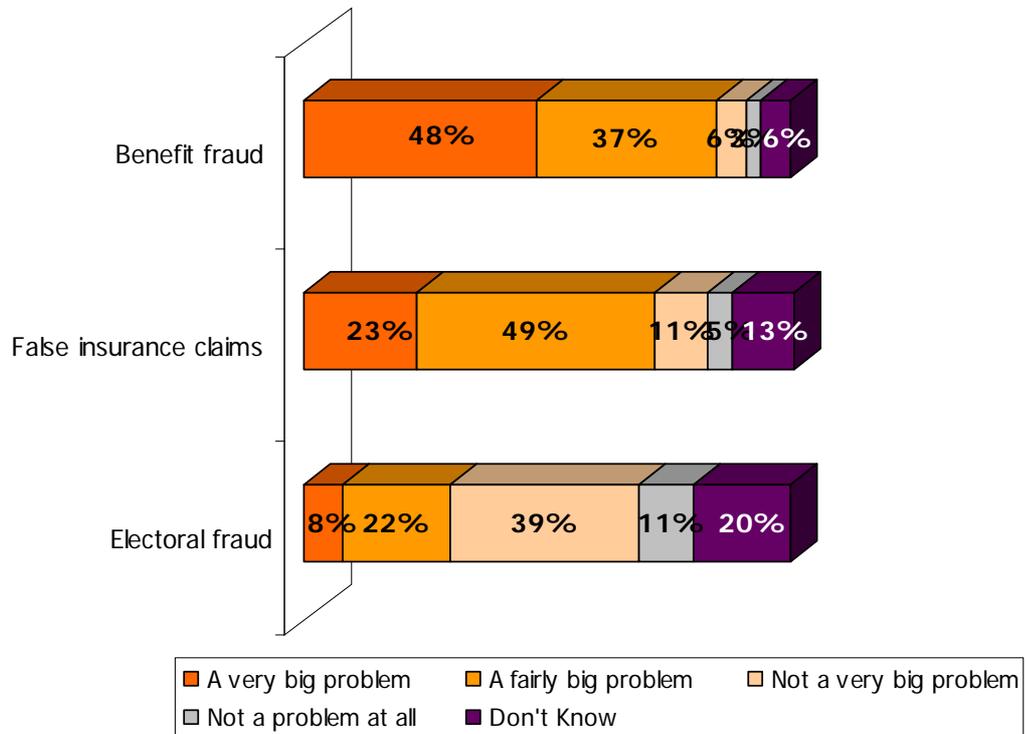
## 4.4 Attitudes to and knowledge of fraud

### 4.4.1 Extent to which different types of fraud were a problem

Respondents were asked how much of a problem they considered three types of fraud to be; benefit fraud, false insurance claims and electoral fraud. The first two types of fraud were included in the survey to provide a comparative benchmark.

Evidently, there is still a relatively high level of confidence in the electoral process as electoral fraud is not seen as a serious problem when compared alongside insurance of benefit fraud. Benefit fraud is seen as a problem by 85% of people, 72% considered false insurance claims to be a problem while just 30% felt that electoral fraud is a problem in the UK.

**Chart 12: How much of a problem, if at all, do you think electoral fraud is in the UK?**



Base: All respondents (1004)



Despite the problems associated with the election in Scotland concerns about electoral fraud were significantly lower than in both England and Wales (30% compared with 41% and 39% respectively). Table 16 shows the full breakdown of responses to this question in each country.

**Table 16: How much of a problem, if at all, do you think electoral fraud is in the UK?**

Base: All who voted	Scotland	Wales	England
Unweighted base:	1,004	1,000	1,000
	%	%	%
A very big problem	8	11	13
A fairly big problem	22	28	28
Not a very big problem	39	31	35
Not a problem at all	11	9	7
Don't know	20	21	16
<b>All a problem</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>All not a problem</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>

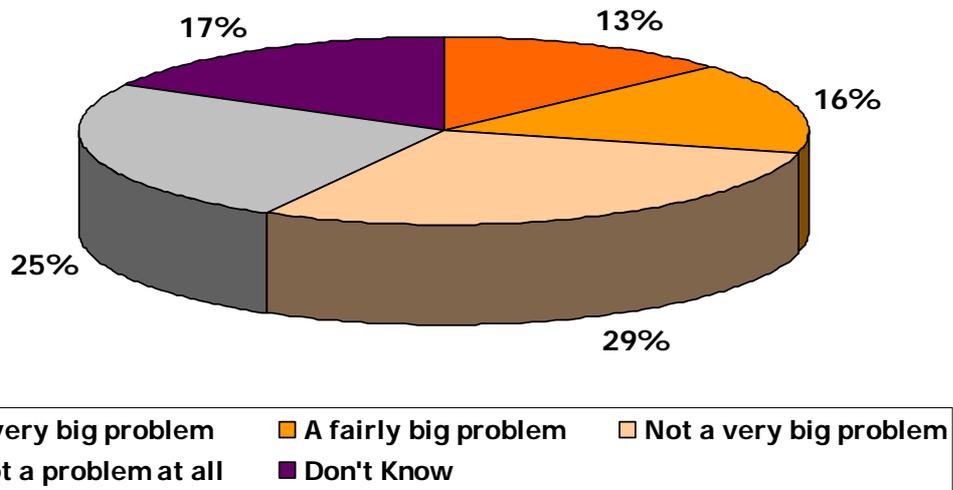
It should be noted that people in Scotland were also less concerned than their English and Welsh counterparts about the other types of fraud. This may suggest that their lower concern about fraud simply arose because they are less concerned about the incidence of fraud in society in general.



#### 4.4.2 Extent to which fraud was considered a problem in the elections on May 3rd

The proportion of people who felt that electoral fraud was a problem in the elections on May 3<sup>rd</sup> is the same as the proportion who felt that electoral fraud is a problem in the UK in general (30%).

**Chart 13:** To what extent, if at all, do you think electoral fraud was a problem in the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3<sup>rd</sup>?



Base: All respondents (1004)

Comparison with the Welsh and English data is particularly telling on this question. Although people in Scotland were less inclined than those in Wales and England to feel that electoral fraud is a problem in the UK they were far more likely to feel that electoral fraud was a problem in the recent elections (30% compared with 12% and 23% respectively). This may well be an indication that the problems that arose with the Scottish elections have been interpreted by some voters in Scotland as 'electoral fraud'.

**Table 17: To what extent, if at all, do you think electoral fraud was a problem in the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3<sup>rd</sup>?**

Base: All who voted	Scotland	Wales	England
Unweighted base:	1,004	1,000	1,000
	%	%	%
A very big problem	13	3	5
A fairly big problem	16	9	18
Not a very big problem	29	33	33
Not a problem at all	25	27	21
Don't know	17	21	24
<b>All a problem</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>All not a problem</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>53</b>

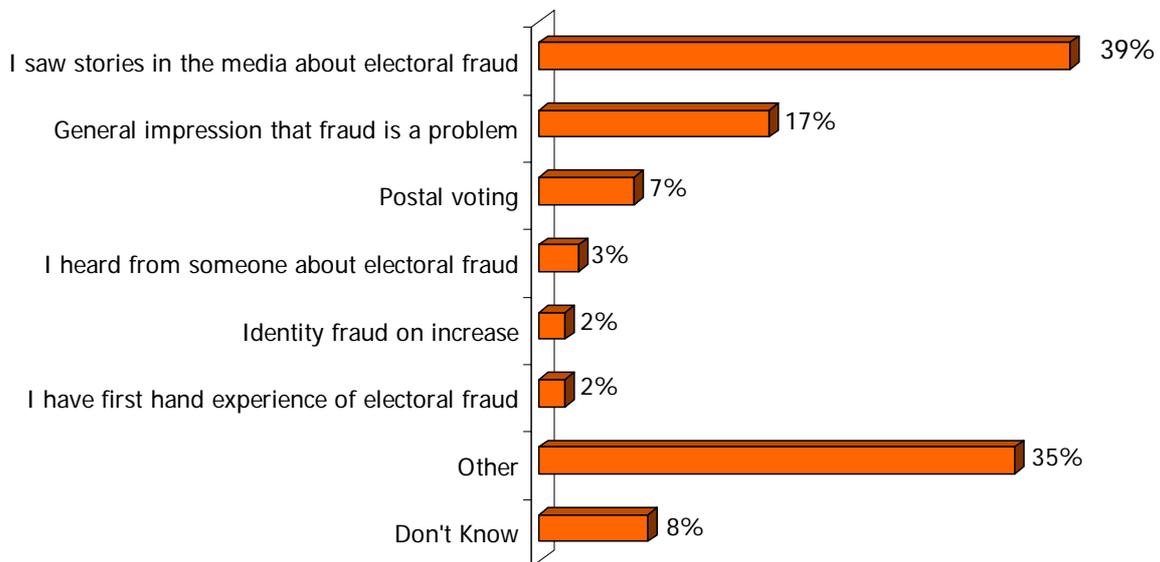


#### 4.4.3 Stories in the media affect perceptions of electoral fraud

Respondents who thought that electoral fraud was a problem in the May elections were asked what it was that made them think that way.

The highest proportion (39%) mentioned the media; this suggests that media reports of the conduct of the election helped raise concerns about electoral fraud in the election. We might note too that far more people in Scotland mentioned the media as the source of their concern than did so in Wales (27%) where there has not been any particular publicity about rejected ballots. The only other reason for suspecting that electoral fraud was a problem which was mentioned by a significant proportion was a general impression that fraud is a problem (17%).

**Chart 14: What makes you think that electoral fraud was a problem?**



Base: All who think electoral fraud was a problem in the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (293)

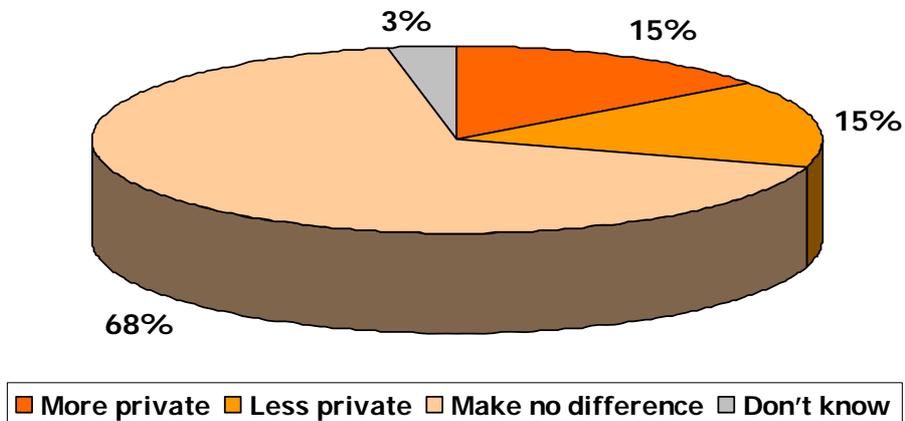
#### 4.4.4 Would the need to sign before being given a ballot paper have an impact upon privacy or electoral fraud?

It has already been mentioned in Section 3 of this report that there are plans to introduce a requirement to sign before receiving a ballot paper across the UK. People in Scotland were asked whether they thought this change would make their vote more private, less private or whether it would make no difference. They were also asked what the effect would be on electoral fraud.

People were clearly divided on the issue of privacy. More than two thirds (68%) thought that having to sign for a ballot paper would make no difference to *the privacy of their vote*, while 15% felt it would be more private and the same proportion felt it would be less private.

In comparison a third (35%) of people in Scotland felt that this change would lead to a decrease in *electoral fraud*. Half (51%) felt that it would make no difference and just 7% felt the change would lead to an increase in electoral fraud.

**Chart 15: If the voting system is changed so that people were required to sign before being given their ballot paper, do you think this would be make your vote more private, less private or would it make no difference?**



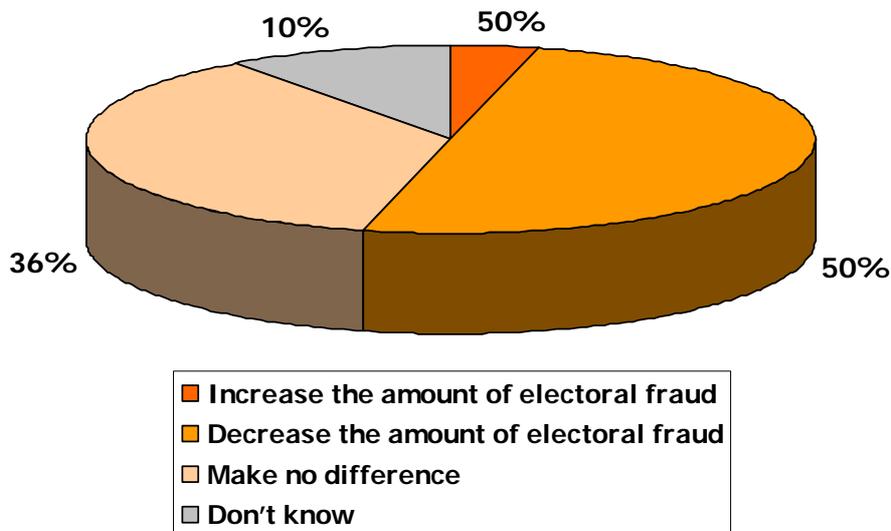
Base: All respondents (1004)

People aged between 18-34 were more likely to say that signing would make no difference to electoral fraud than older groups (59% compared to 44% of 35-54 year olds and 47% of those aged 55 or more).

The small number of people who voted by post in the May elections (92) were also asked whether a change in the system whereby a signature and date of birth were required would increase or decrease the amount of electoral fraud. As Section 3 of this report has already mentioned this change was introduced in both England and Wales for the elections in May.

Half of these respondents (50%) felt that this change would lead to a decrease in electoral fraud, while just 4% felt it would lead to an increase. Just under two in five (36%) felt that this change would make no difference. As these findings are based upon a small base size they should be taken as indicative rather than definitive.

**Chart 16: If the system in Scotland was changed so that a signature and date of birth were required, do you think it would increase the amount of electoral fraud, decrease the amount of electoral fraud, or would it make no difference?**



Base: All who voted by post (92)

We might reasonably conclude that there does not seem to be any reason why introduction of the change should prove more difficult in Scotland than it did in England and Wales.

#### ***4.5 Comparing perceptions and attitudes towards voting at a polling station and postal voting***

This section of the report focuses upon people's perceptions of voting in person at a polling station or by post. Regardless of how the respondent voted or indeed whether they even voted all respondents were asked about their perceptions of the different methods of voting.

Removing the people who said don't know in relation to rating four key attributes of the two methods means that the data for both methods is comparable. Table 19 below shows the proportion of people who thought that each method was safe, convenient, good at providing privacy and safe from fraud or abuse. The data suggests that lower take up and awareness of postal voting in Scotland had an impact upon people's ability to respond to these questions as the level of don't knows was far higher than those in relation to voting in person.

Clearly, in relation to each attribute, voting at a polling station was viewed more favourably than voting by post. Whilst opinions about the ease and convenience of both methods were similar there were significant differences between the proportion who felt that voting in person was good at providing privacy and the proportion who felt the same about postal voting (89% compared with 76%). The difference between the proportion who felt that voting in person was safe from fraud or abuse and those who felt that postal voting was safe from fraud and abuse was even more marked (88% compared with 50%).

**Table 18: Rating different attributes of voting at a polling station and voting by post**

Base: All except those who said Don't know	Being easy	Being convenient	Being good (at providing privacy)	Being safe
Weighted base:	958	975	944	945
	%	%	%	%
Voting at a polling station	86	88	89	88
Weighted base:	728	835	828	879
	%	%	%	%
Voting by post	81	85	76	50



The data suggests that overall older people were more likely than their counterparts to view both methods of voting positively. Analysis of the data by voters and non-voters is interesting as it shows that while voters were generally more positive about voting in person their ratings of postal voting were very similar to those of non-voters.

Nine in ten (91%) people aged 55 and above felt that voting at a polling station was easy. In comparison, 84% of people aged 18 – 34 and 82% of people aged 35 – 54 felt that voting in person was easy to do. As Table 20 below shows, this trend is also evident in relation to postal voting. People aged 55 and above and people aged 35 – 54 were more likely than 18 - 34 year olds to say that postal voting was also easy to do (83% compared with 74%).

Further to this, there was a gulf in perceived ease of voting between those who actually did vote in the May elections and those who did not. Ninety per cent of voters felt that voting in person was easy to do, while 80% of non-voters felt the same way. The comparison with postal voting is interesting as it shows that voters were no more likely than non-voters to say that postal voting was easy to do (80% compared with 82%).

**Table 19: How would you rate voting at a polling station and by post in terms of being easy to do (by age and whether they voted in May elections)**

Base: All except those who said Don't know	Age				Voted in elections	
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
Weighted base:	958	251	362	324	537	420
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting at a polling station is easy to do	86	84	82	91	90	80
Weighted base:	728	211	269	231	382	346
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting by post is easy to do	81	74	83	83	80	82



Older people were more likely than their younger counterparts to rate voting at a polling station as being convenient (93% compared with 88% of 35 – 54 year olds and 83% of 18 – 34 year olds). When it came to postal voting there was no significant difference between the three age groups.

Voters were significantly more likely than non-voters to rate voting at a polling station as being easy to do (94% compared with 80%). However, there was no significant difference in relation to the perceived convenience of postal voting amongst these groups.

**Table 20: How would you rate voting at a polling station and by post in terms of being convenient (by age and whether they voted in May elections)**

Base: All except those who said Don't know	Total	Age			Voted in elections	
		18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
Weighted base:	975	262	365	326	539	435
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting at a polling station is convenient	88	83	88	93	94	80
Weighted base:	835	233	317	275	438	398
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting by post is convenient	85	82	85	86	85	84

Nine in ten people aged 35 or over rated voting at a polling station as being good at providing privacy for voters (91% of those aged 55+ and 90% of 35 – 54 year olds). This compares with 84% of younger people aged 18 – 34. This pattern was also evident in relation to postal voting; 82% of older voters felt that this method provided privacy while just two thirds of 18 – 34 year olds felt the same.

The proportion of voters who rated voting at a polling station as being good at providing privacy is notably higher than the proportion of non-voters who said the same (91% compared with 84%). This trend was repeated when people were asked to rate postal voting in terms of providing privacy, 79% of voters thought postal voting was good for this and 72% of non-voters said the same.



**Table 21: How would you rate voting at a polling station and by post in terms of being providing privacy for the voter (by age and whether they voted in May elections)**

Base: All except those who said Don't know	Age				Voted in elections	
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
Weighted base:	944	247	352	324	536	407
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting at a polling station is good at providing privacy for voters	89	84	90	91	91	86
Weighted base:	828	235	315	260	432	396
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting by post is good at providing privacy for voters	76	68	76	82	79	72

Ninety four per cent of people aged 55 and over thought that voting at a polling station was safe from fraud or abuse, in comparison 86% of 35 – 54 year olds and 85% of 18 – 34 year olds said the same. The proportion of people who thought that postal voting was safe from fraud or abuse was low across the board, but older voters were still more likely than their younger counterparts to say that this method was safe (60% compared with 45% of 35 – 54 year olds and 46% of 18 – 34 year olds).

Ninety one per cent of voters thought that voting at a polling station was safe from fraud or abuse, while the proportion of non-voters who said the same was significantly lower (83%). However, there was no difference between voters (49%) and non-voters (52%) on the question about how safe postal voting is from fraud and abuse.



**Table 22: When it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say that voting by post was ... (by age and whether they voted in May elections)**

Base: All except those who said Don't know	Age				Voted in elections	
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
Weighted base:	945	254	352	321	527	417
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting at a polling station is safe from fraud or abuse	88	85	86	94	91	83
Weighted base:	879	247	335	279	472	407
	%	%	%	%	%	%
% saying that voting by post is safe from fraud or abuse	50	46	45	60	49	52

#### 4.5.1 Analysis of Attitudes towards voting in Person and by post

The data suggests that both older people and those who voted in the May 2007 election tended to have a more favourable view of both voting in person and of voting by post. However, we know that older people are also more likely to vote. We thus cannot be sure from our analysis so far whether it is simply the case that those who exercise their franchise tend to have a more favourable view of the voting process or whether, alternatively, older people do have more favourable views irrespective of the fact that they are more likely to vote.

In fact the answer appears to differ depending on which particular characteristic of voting is being assessed. In the case of both ease of use and of convenience there is no statistically significant association with age once we take into account whether someone voted or not. However, there is some evidence that younger people are less likely to regard either form of voting as being particularly good at providing privacy, while they are also more likely to be sceptical about how safe the two methods are from abuse and fraud. This remains the case if we not only take into account whether or not someone voted in May but also their reported level of interest in politics (see next table). However, it should be noted that here 'younger people' is purely a relative term. So far as both the perceived privacy and safety of voting in



person are concerned, we find that all those aged 64 and under are more sceptical than those aged 75 and over. Those aged 35 and under are neither consistently nor significantly different in their views than those aged 35 - 54. Much the same is true of the perceptions of voting by post, though here we should note that age is only just significantly associated with perceptions of privacy at all. This analysis should not thus be cited as evidence of a particularly 'disengaged' younger generation, though it may help to explain why younger people are more willing to consider using newer methods of voting.

**Table 23: Rating the privacy and safety voting in person and by post (by interest in politics, whether respondents voted and age)**

	Voting in person		Voting by post	
	Privacy	Safety from fraud	Privacy	Safety from fraud
Interest in politics	.19 (.07)*	.12 (.08)	-.09(.07)	-.20 (.07)*
Voted	.17 (.05)*	.21 (.05)*	.15 (.05)*	-.04 (.05)
Age				
18 – 24	.93 (.34)*	1.29 (.34)*	.84 (.33)*	.82 (.32)
25 - 34	1.07(.29)*	.83 (.28)*	.56 (.29)*	.92 (.28)
35 – 44	.75 (.29)*	1.06 (.29)*	.39 (.30)	1.05 (.29)
45 – 54	.65 (.28)*	.77 (.28)*	.22 (.29)	.70 (.28)
55 – 64	.76 (.29)*	.62 (.29)*	.24 (.30)	.53 (.29)
65 - 74	.45 (.31)	.38 (.30)	.25 (.32)	.40 (.31)

*Main entries are logistic regression parameter coefficients from ordinal regression. Entries in brackets are associated standard errors. \* = significant at the 95% level*

Attitudes towards the safety of postal voting from fraud are worth a little further consideration. As we have already noted those who voted on May 3<sup>rd</sup> are not more likely to regard voting by post as safe. Meanwhile our further analysis now demonstrates that those who are interested in politics are significantly less likely to think that postal voting is safe from fraud. Indeed, amongst those who are very interested in politics no less than 41% felt that voting by post was unsafe, compared with 31% of those who were fairly interested, 27% of those who were not particularly interested and just 25% of those who were not interested at all. This is clearly a striking exception to the general pattern that those who are most



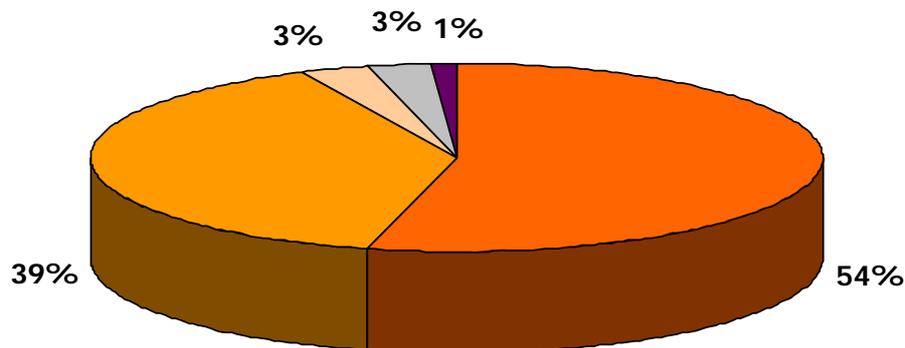
strongly engaged in the political process are most likely to approve of current voting arrangements. One possibility is that those who are most interested in politics are more aware of some of the adverse media publicity attached to voting by post in recent years. Another is that they are better acquainted with current procedures for postal voting and thus more aware of how they might be flouted.

#### 4.5.2 Overall satisfaction with voting methods

To conclude this section of the questionnaire everyone who had voted in the elections was asked about their satisfaction with the method of voting that they used. The data indicates that satisfaction with both methods of voting is very high.

Nine in ten (93%) people who voted at a polling station said they were satisfied with this process, in fact more than half (54%) were very satisfied.

**Chart 17: Overall, how satisfied were you with the process of voting at a polling station?**



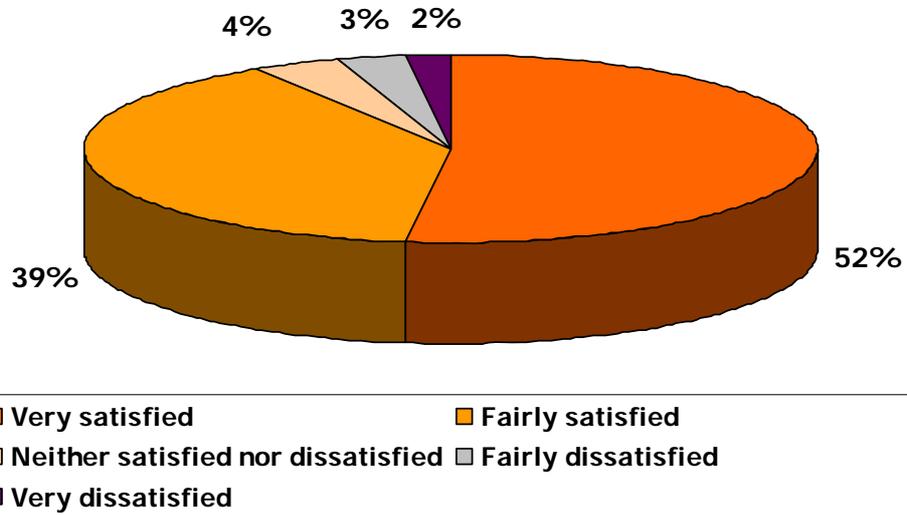
Base: All who voted at a polling station (452)

As satisfaction is high across the board, there were few notable differences amongst sub-groups. However, the oldest group of voters were again significantly more likely to say they were very satisfied with voting at a polling station (64% compared with 46% of those aged 35 – 54 and 49% of 18 – 34 year olds).



As with voting at a polling station, satisfaction with postal voting is very high; 91% of postal voters were satisfied (with 52% being very satisfied).

**Chart 18: Overall, how satisfied were you with the process of voting by post?**



Base: All who voted by post (92)

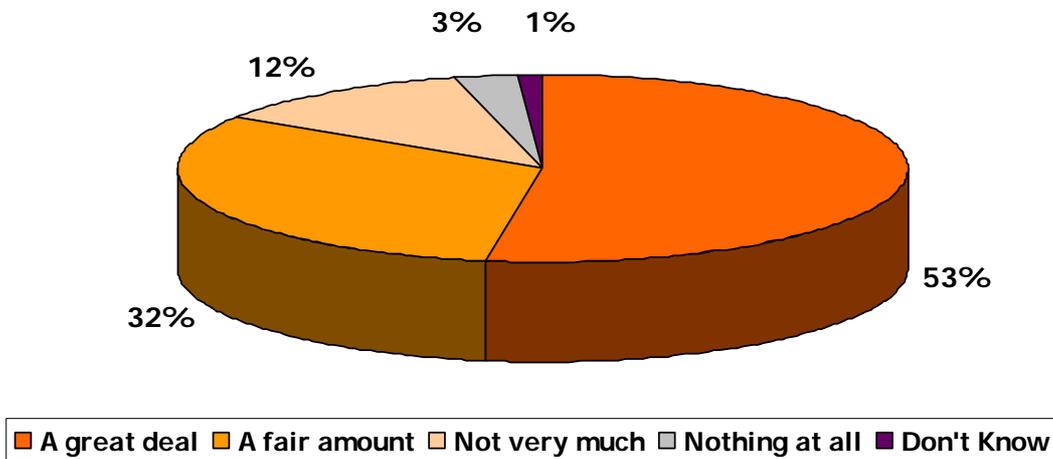
The base size for postal voters is too low to allow for analysis of sub-groups on this question.

## 4.6 Information and publicity prior to the election

### 4.6.1 Awareness of information about the election for the Scottish Parliament

In the weeks leading up to the elections more than half (53%) of people in Scotland saw, heard or read a great deal about the elections for the Scottish Parliament. In addition, a third (32%) said they were exposed to a fair amount of information about the election and 12% saw some information but not very much. This means that information about the election failed to reach only a small proportion of voters (just 3% saw nothing at all).

**Chart 19:** In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear or read about the Scottish Parliament election?



Base: All respondents (1004)

People in social class AB – who were most likely to have voted – were exposed to more information than any other group: 63% saw a great deal of information compared with 53% of people in social class C1, 45% of people in social class C2 and 51% of people in social class DE.

People who voted in the May elections were more likely than non-voters to say that they were exposed to a great deal of information prior to the election (60% compared with 44%). In all, 21% of non-voters said that they were exposed to either not very much or nothing at all, compared to just 9% of people who did vote.

**Table 24: In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear or read about the Scottish Parliament election?**

Base: All	Social class					Voted in elections	
	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE	Yes	No
	1,004	214	312	214	264	599	404
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	53	63	53	45	51	60	44
A fair amount	32	26	33	35	32	31	32
Not very much	12	10	12	16	10	8	16
Nothing at all	3	2	1	2	6	1	5
Don't know	1	-	*	3	1	1	2

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a finding of less than 0.5% but more than 0.

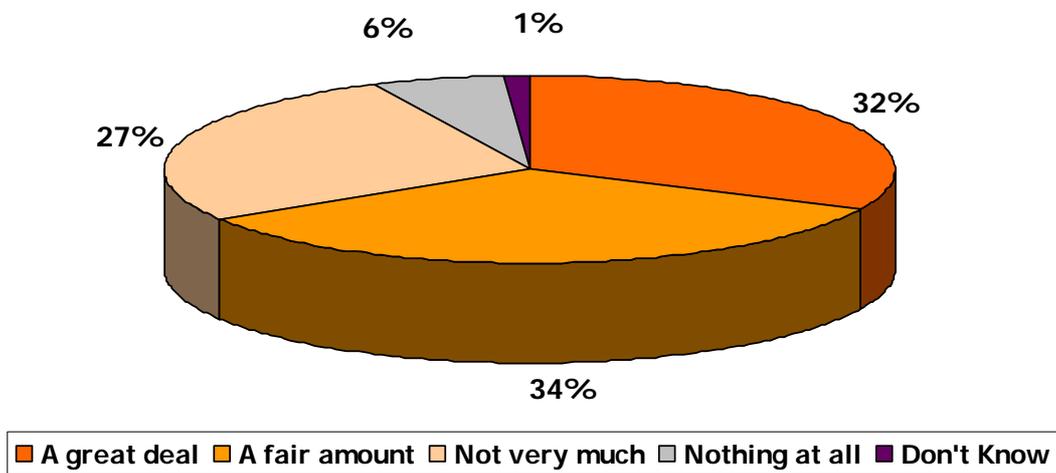


#### 4.6.2 Awareness of information about the local elections from the council

Although elections for local councils were held on the same day as the election for the Scottish Parliament the data suggests that the focus of the information provided was largely on the election to the devolved Parliament.

A third (32%) said that they were exposed to a great deal of information in the run up to the election; a similar proportion (34%) saw a fair amount of information. Just over a quarter (27%) were exposed to some but not very much information and 6% were exposed to no information at all.

**Chart 20: In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear or read about the local council election?**



Base: All respondents (1004)

Older people and those who voted in the May 3<sup>rd</sup> elections were most likely to have been exposed to a great deal of information. Two in five (39%) people aged 55 or more had seen, read or heard a great deal of information prior to the election, while 30% of 35 – 54 year olds and 28% of 18 – 34 year olds said the same. A third (35%) of voters said they were exposed to a great deal of information prior to the campaign, while 28% of non-voters said likewise.

**Table 25: In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear or read about the local council election?**

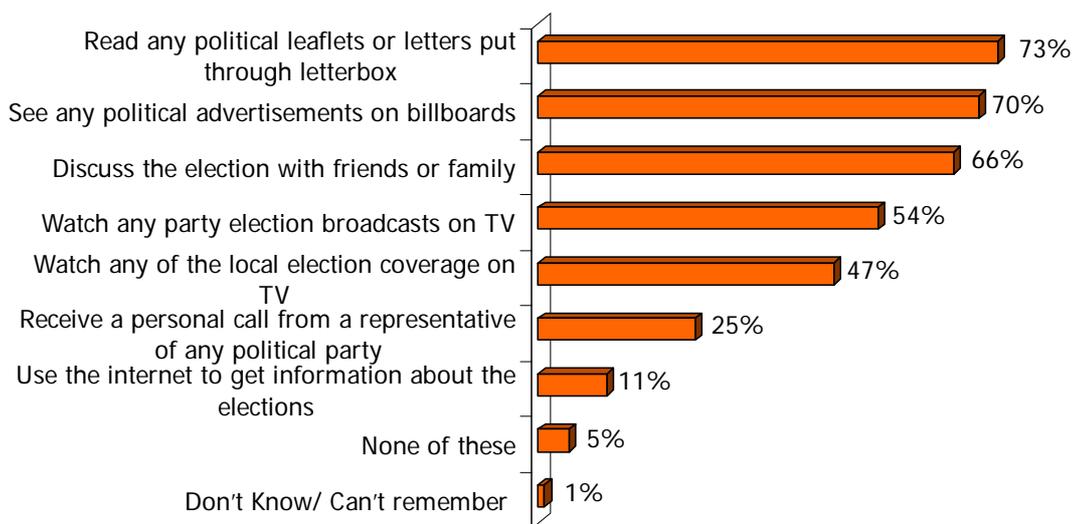
Base: All	Age				Voted in elections	
	Total	18 – 34	35 – 54	55+	Yes	No
	1,004	272	385	341	599	404
	%	%	%	%	%	%
A great deal	32	28	30	39	35	28
A fair amount	34	31	35	33	36	32
Not very much	27	36	24	23	25	29
Nothing at all	6	4	10	4	4	9
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	2

### 4.6.3 Getting information about the elections during the campaign

During the campaign people in Scotland were most likely to get their information about the elections from political leaflets that were put through their door (73%), political advertisements on billboards (70%) or by discussing the elections with friends or family (66%). Television is a common source of information: 54% had watched party election broadcasts and 47% watched local election coverage. In comparison the internet was used by far fewer people (11%). In addition, a quarter (25%) had received a personal call from a representative from a political party.

Comparison with the English and Welsh data indicates that more people in Scotland did everything. The 2007 elections in Scotland clearly mobilised people there, which is reflected in the higher turnout.

**Chart 21: During the Scottish Parliament and local election campaigns did you do any of the following?**



Base: All respondents (1004)

The internet is a more important source of information for people aged 18 – 34 than their older counterparts (17% compared with 11% of 35 – 54 year olds and 8% of those aged 55 or more), but it is a long way from being their primary source of information. They still get this from more traditional sources such as advertisements or billboards (77%).

Compared to younger people those aged 55 or more were more likely to get information about the election from political leaflets (83% compared with 68% of 35 – 54 year olds and 70% of 18 – 34 year olds), party election broadcasts on television (70% compared with 46% and 46% respectively), local election coverage on television (56% compared with 44% and 41% respectively) and personal calls from party representatives (35% compared with 22% and 17% respectively).

Another trend in the data indicates that people in social class AB were most likely to get information from political leaflets, discussions with friends and family and the internet.

**Table 26: During the Scottish Parliament and local election campaigns did you do any of the following?**

Base: All	Age				Social class			
	Total	18-34	35-54	55+	AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted base	1,004	272	385	341	214	312	214	264
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Read political leaflets / letters put through your door	73	70	68	83	83	70	68	73
See any political advertisements or billboards	70	77	69	68	77	76	67	61
Discuss the election with friends / family	66	66	67	63	79	65	61	62
Watch any party election broadcasts	54	46	46	70	52	55	48	59
Watch any of the local election coverage on TV	47	41	44	56	51	49	41	48
Receive a personal call from a party representative	25	17	22	35	27	26	21	24
Use the internet to get information	11	17	11	8	22	12	8	6
Don't know	1	1	1	*	-	*	2	2
No nothing	5	5	7	2	3	3	5	8

Note: An asterisk (\*) denotes a finding of less than 0.5% but more than 0.

## ***4.7 Voters' experience of voting at the polling station***

### **4.7.1 Assessment of the information provided at polling stations**

All respondents who voted at a polling station were asked how useful they found the information on how to fill out the ballot paper which was provided at the polling station. Given the high incidence of rejected ballot papers in Scotland this is a very important question and so it is interesting to note that 81% of people who voted at a polling station felt that the instructions were useful. Thirteen per cent did not find the instructions useful, with just 5% saying that they were not at all useful.

The small number of people who did not find the information useful were asked why. Although the base size for this question is small (weighted base size = 60) responses to this question suggest that most of these people did not require this information because they either knew how to vote already (19 out of 60 people) or thought it was obvious and did not need any help (7 out of 60). On the other hand, the data indicates that a sizeable proportion found the information unhelpful because it was hard to understand (19 out of 60 people) and 12 people did not even see the information. As only 19 of the full sample of 1004 found the information hard to understand, this is a positive finding for the information campaign.

### **4.7.2 How easy was it to fill in the different ballot papers?**

The changes that were made to the ballot papers for both the Scottish Parliament and local elections have already been discussed in Section 3. As a result of these changes it was felt that the ballot papers represented potential sources of confusion and misunderstanding and so questions about them were included in the survey.

Overall the data indicates that the majority of people in Scotland did not think the changes were confusing or misleading, as Table 28 below shows.

Four in five (82%) voters found the Scottish Parliament ballot paper easy to fill in, with 51% saying that it was *very* easy. Clearly, some people did experience problems on the day and this is reflected by the small numbers who claimed to have found it difficult (10%).

The findings in relation to the local election ballot paper are strikingly similar. Again, around four in five (83%) said that the ballot paper was easy to fill in, while just under one in ten (8%) found it difficult in some way.



Interestingly, when asked how easy or difficult voters found using two different voting systems the proportion who found it easy (77%) was notably lower than the proportions who found filling in the different ballot papers easy

**Table 27: How easy or difficult did you find ...**

Base: All who voted in each election	Filling in the ballot paper for the Scottish Parliament	Filling in the ballot paper for local elections	Using two different voting systems
Unweighted base:	594	596	599
	%	%	%
Very easy	51	56	41
Fairly easy	31	27	35
Neither easy nor difficult	4	4	7
Fairly difficult	7	6	9
Very difficult	3	2	4
Don't know	4	4	3
<b>Easy</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Difficult</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>

There appears to be a real consensus about the ease of completing both ballot papers and voting using two different systems as there are no significant differences to report amongst key sub-groups – which suggests that no particular group was more likely to find the ballot papers easy or difficult in comparison with their counterparts.

#### 4.7.3 Reasons for finding ballot papers difficult

Those people who had found either of the ballot papers difficult to fill in were asked why this was the case.

The base sizes for both questions were very small so the following findings should be taken as indicative rather than definitive data.



The most frequently cited reasons for experiencing difficulty with the Scottish Parliament ballot paper was that the layout was confusing (24 out of 60 people), the candidates were in a confusing order and instructions were unclear (both mentioned by 16 people).

The reasons for having difficulties with the local election ballot paper were very similar. Fifteen out of the 44 respondents found the local election ballot paper difficult to fill in because the layout was confusing, 14 felt that the instructions were not clear, 9 people did not know whether to use an 'X' or a '1' and 7 felt that the candidates were in a confusing order.

#### **4.7.4 Further analysis of the difficulties with ballot papers in Scotland**

Further analysis of the Scottish data reveals no consistent trends to indicate that particular social groups were more likely to report finding either ballot paper or having two different kinds of voting system easy or difficult. In short, undertaking these tasks was not something that one section of the population found significantly more difficult than another.

However, there were some other notable patterns of association between reported difficulty and responses to some of the other attitudinal questions included in the survey.

Firstly, those who felt more self-confident about other aspects of the voting process were more likely to regard these three tasks as easier. Table 28 below shows the reported level of difficulty of each task depending on how much people felt that they know about how to register to vote. It shows that people who felt that they know less about registering to vote were more likely to think that each of the tasks was difficult – except that is for those who know little or nothing at all about registration. Much the same pattern is also found if we examine how sure people were that they would know what to do if they wanted to vote at an election in person. These patterns suggest that, in part at least, answers to these questions reflect how comfortable or self-confident people felt about the electoral process in general rather than how they felt about the various ballot papers with which they were confronted on May 3<sup>rd</sup> or the use of two different electoral systems.



**Table 28: How easy was it to fill in Scottish Parliament / local election / two different ballot papers (analysed by how much respondents know about registering to vote)**

% say	How much respondents know about how to register			
	A great deal	A fair amount	Just a little	Hardly anything / nothing
	206	420	220	143
	%	%	%	%
<i>Parliament ballot paper</i>				
Very easy	64	48	45	55
Difficult	6	11	17	9
<i>Local ballot paper</i>				
Very easy	69	56	51	60
Difficult	7	8	10	13
<i>Two different systems</i>				
Very easy	55	38	36	46
Difficult	12	12	15	17

Secondly, as the next table shows, those who found the information at the polling station less than 'very useful' were more likely to report difficulty. This may indicate that there is some room for improvement in the information provided at polling stations.

**Table 29: How easy was it to fill in Scottish Parliament / local election / two different ballot papers (analysed by usefulness of polling station information)**

% say	Perceived usefulness of polling station information	
	Very useful	Fairly useful / not very / not useful
	221	206
	%	%
<i>Parliament ballot paper</i>		
Very easy	65	37
Difficult	4	18
<i>Local ballot paper</i>		
Very easy	70	44
Difficult	7	8
<i>Two different systems</i>		
Very easy	55	26
Difficult	8	18

Thirdly, the perceived difficulty of each of the three tasks is associated with people's level of satisfaction with the voting process. Those who were less satisfied were less likely to have regarded any of the tasks as easy. This is illustrated in the following table, which shows people's perceptions of the difficulty of the three tasks both for those who were 'very satisfied' with the process of voting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (be that at the polling station or by post) and for those who were not. Much the same pattern is also evident if we compare those who were very satisfied with the process of voting at elections in general with those who were not.

**Table 30: How easy was it to fill in Scottish Parliament / local election / two different ballot papers (analysed by satisfaction with the process of voting on May 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

% say	Satisfaction with process of voting on May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied / neither / Dissatisfied
	168	786
	%	%
<i>Parliament ballot paper</i>		
Very easy	67	37
Difficult	7	15
<i>Local ballot paper</i>		
Very easy	73	42
Difficult	5	12
<i>Two different systems</i>		
Very easy	56	28
Difficult	8	19

This last pattern could of course have arisen not because dissatisfaction with the voting process lead people to find the three tasks difficult (or because both were caused by some influence in common) but rather because the perceived difficulty of the three tasks was itself a source of voter dissatisfaction. In so far as this might be the case we might wonder whether one or more of the three tasks is more strongly associated with dissatisfaction than another.

To assess this we undertook multivariate analysis to establish the association between the perceived difficulty of each task and satisfaction with the process of voting, while taking into account the association between satisfaction and the other two tasks.

Table 31, below, shows the association between the perceived difficulty of the ballot papers / systems and dissatisfaction with the process of voting. The figures outside the brackets show the level of association (between 0 and 1), essentially the higher the number the closer the association between the two variables.



The table suggests that there is a weak association between the perceived difficulty of the parliamentary ballot paper and dissatisfaction with the voting process. The perceived difficulty of having two different electoral systems on the same day is most strongly associated with dissatisfaction with the voting process in general, while both that and the perceived difficulty of the local election ballot paper were more or less equally strongly associated with dissatisfaction with the process of voting (in person or by post) on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. These findings remain robust if we also take into account someone's age and their level of interest in politics.

**Table 31: The association between the perceived difficulty of each task and satisfaction with the process of voting**

	Satisfaction with process of voting on May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
	In general	On May 3 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>Parliament ballot paper</i>	.13(.10)	.19(.09)*
<i>Local ballot paper</i>	.21(.10)*	.36(.10)*
<i>Two different systems</i>	.38(.10)*	.32(.10)*

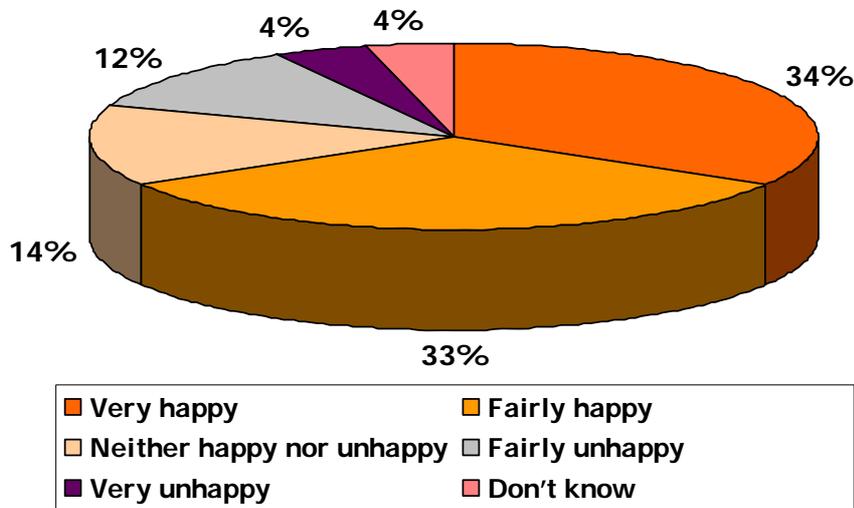
Main entries are logistic regression parameter coefficients from ordinal regression. Entries in brackets are associated standard errors. \* = significant at the 95% level.

#### 4.7.5 The requirement not to fold ballot papers

As ballot papers for both elections were being counted electronically voters at polling stations were asked not to fold their ballot papers. As this was a new requirement people who had voted at a polling station were asked whether or not they were happy to comply with this.

Two thirds (67%) said they were happy not to fold their ballot paper, but 16% were not happy with this requirement. Chart 21 shows the full breakdown of the findings for this question.

**Chart 22: Were you happy or unhappy not to fold the ballot paper at the polling station?**



Base: All who voted at a polling station (503)

There were no significant differences to report on this question, which indicates that the majority of people across the board were happy to accept the new requirement to fold their ballot paper.

#### 4.7.6 Reasons for dissatisfaction with voting in Scotland

It has already been noted in section 4.2.5 that people in Scotland were less satisfied with the process of voting in general and on May 3<sup>rd</sup> in particular than is the case in either Wales or England. The analysis above suggests – though no more - that of the three distinctive features of the elections in Scotland, the use of two different voting systems and the new STV local government ballot paper may be more important sources of dissatisfaction than the parliamentary ballot paper. This of course is not the same as saying that these were the more important sources of voter confusion in Scotland on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Finally, we should note that it is not apparent that, as we might expect, those with little or no interest in politics found the three tasks particularly difficult. For example while 53% of those who were very interested in politics found the parliamentary ballot paper very easy to complete, so also did 58% of those with little or no interest. It thus cannot easily be argued that either ballot paper or having two ballot papers was something with which the politically less interested had greater difficulty. Indeed, we should note that when it comes to being asked to vote using two different electoral systems, it was the most politically interested who were most likely to express difficulty. Amongst this group 19% said this was difficult, compared with 13% of those who were fairly interested in politics and just 7% of those with little or no interest. Perhaps, rather than expressing the difficulty they personally incurred, some people in this group might have been reflecting a degree of opposition to the idea of coincident elections; certainly it is amongst this group that people with views on the merits of coincident elections were most likely to be located. It may also be the case that people who are politically aware are more aware of the difficulties encountered because they think about what they are doing more than others.



## 5 Conclusion

This report casts important light on how the public in Scotland has reacted to some of the innovations that were introduced in the elections on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and to the difficulties that arose with certain aspects of those elections. At the same time it also provides useful evidence on how the public might react to further innovations in future.

It appears that the way the elections were conducted on May 3<sup>rd</sup> engendered a degree of dissatisfaction amongst the Scottish electorate. Compared with their counterparts in England and Wales, people in Scotland were less satisfied both with the actual process of voting in elections in general and with the process of voting on May 3<sup>rd</sup> (irrespective of whether they voted in person or by post) in particular. In addition they were also less likely to say that voting in person or by post was 'easy to do', and were somewhat less likely to think that the election on May 3<sup>rd</sup> was free of fraud. True, we cannot be sure that the difficulties associated with the elections in Scotland on May 3<sup>rd</sup> are responsible for the less favourable evaluations of the electoral process we have uncovered in Scotland, especially as we do not know whether the differences of opinion between Scotland and both England and Wales were present at previous elections. Moreover we have to bear in mind the possibility that our respondents' views reflect the adverse media publicity that certain aspects of the administration of the elections received rather than their own direct experience. Nevertheless, our evidence is certainly consistent with the claim that the May 3<sup>rd</sup> elections in Scotland dented public confidence in the conduct of elections.

Of course, to draw lessons as to what might be done in future in order to restore public confidence it would be useful to be able to ascertain which of the difficulties - or innovations - served to undermine confidence. Alas, because there were a number of such difficulties and innovations, this is far from a straightforward task; in any case it may well be the extent and combination of difficulties and innovations to which the Scottish public has reacted rather than any particular one.

Our analysis does provide some guidance as to how the public responded to three of the key innovations introduced on May 3<sup>rd</sup> - the new parliamentary ballot paper, the new local election ballot paper (and electoral system), and using two different electoral systems on the same day. First, fewer people said that the parliamentary ballot paper was 'very easy' to complete than said the local ballot paper was. This difference is of course consistent with the incidence of spoilt votes on the two papers. Second, however, neither task on its own was regarded as difficult as being asked to vote in two different ways on the same day.



Meanwhile, we have also been able to demonstrate that perceptions of the ease or difficulty of the three innovations were actually linked to levels of satisfaction with the process of voting. In particular the less easy someone thought it was to cope with having two different electoral systems on the same day, the less likely they were to be satisfied both with the process of voting in general and with the process of voting in person or by post on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. At the same time, if someone did not find the new local ballot paper easy they were less likely to have been satisfied with the process of voting on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thus perceptions of the ease or difficulty of the new innovations do seem to have been at least one of the influences on people's satisfaction with the electoral process.

There is perhaps just one small caveat to enter about these findings. Despite our best efforts, it is possible that the wording of our question on the ease or difficulty of completing two different papers on the same day inclined respondents to say the task was difficult in a manner that was not true of our questions on the two ballot papers. Simply mentioning (as we had to do) that there were two different systems may have been sufficient to incline people to feel the task was less than straightforward. But even if this is the case, it still suggests that holding two different elections using two different electoral systems on the same day is not something to which the public necessarily responds with enthusiasm.

So far as the fourth innovation is concerned, electronic counting, it appears that the request made of voters not to fold their ballot paper in order to make the process of scanning easier was not one that generated a high level of unhappiness. Still, the fact that only one in three were 'very happy' about doing this while one in six were unhappy suggests that there would be continued need for reassurance about the privacy of the vote should this request be repeated in future.

Meanwhile, this report casts some new light on other aspects of the electoral process in Scotland that, though not new on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, may well be the subject of future innovations. First of all, it appears that people in Scotland are somewhat less keen on voting by post than are people in England and Wales. It seems that the relatively low take-up in Scotland of the opportunity to vote by post is a reflection of a difference in public attitudes rather than, for example, any failure by electoral administrators in Scotland to make people aware of their right to vote by post should they so wish. Nevertheless, despite their relative scepticism about postal voting it is not apparent that people in Scotland are any less confident that those in England and Wales that postal voting is safe from fraud and abuse. To that extent at least, it is not evident that the failure to introduce in Scotland the requirement that postal voters should provide in advance a signature and date of birth as a means of verifying their



identity had any negative impact on public perceptions of the security of the postal vote in Scotland.

The limited enthusiasm in Scotland for voting by post is also reflected in attitudes towards other possible new ways of voting. The only method of voting that more than half of the public say they are willing to use in future elections is voting in person at a polling station. Evidently providing people with the opportunity to vote in person at a polling station is likely to have to remain a cornerstone of the electoral process for the foreseeable future. Still, we should note that there is greater stated readiness amongst younger people (and indeed amongst non-voters) to use alternative methods of voting, most notably the internet, albeit that even amongst this group voting in person is the single most popular method of voting. Internet voting may perhaps become increasingly acceptable as an alternative method, should a voter wish to use it, but as the experience of postal voting on demand has indicated, high expectations about the likely level of take-up of such an innovation are probably best avoided.

Still, one more immediate proposal for improving the security of voting in person at a polling station seems unlikely to meet much public resistance. As in England and Wales less than one in six people in Scotland think that being asked to sign for their ballot paper at a polling station will make their vote less private. But then, perhaps a key lesson of the election in Scotland is that what matters most for public confidence is how smoothly any innovation is introduced in practice, not what the public thinks hypothetically about it in advance.



## Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

		Unweighted		Weighted	
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Total		1,004	100	1,004	100
Gender	Male	457	46	476	47
	Female	547	54	528	53
Age	18 – 34	272	27	278	28
	35 – 54	385	38	373	37
	55+	341	34	332	33
Working status	Full-time	436	44	387	38
	Part-time	141	14	153	15
	Not working	424	42	462	46
Social class	AB	214	21	203	20
	C1	312	31	306	30
	C2	214	21	216	22
	DE	264	26	280	28
Voted in May 3 <sup>rd</sup> elections	Yes	599	60	542	54
	No	404	40	461	46

Note: Age data have been weighted in line with 2005 Census Mid-term estimates, Working status data have been weighted in line with the 2006 FRS Bluebook



## Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

### 2007 Scottish post-election survey final qu're

HELLO, MY NAME IS .... CALLING FROM GfK NOP RESEARCH. WE ARE CARRYING OUT A SURVEY IN SCOTLAND ABOUT ATTITUDES TO SOME CURRENT ISSUES. **CHECK RESPONDENT FITS THE QUOTAS**

QA – **Can I start by checking your postcode?**

RECORD CAREFULLY AND REPEAT BACK TO THE RESPONDENT TO ENSURE YOU HAVE IT DOWN ACCURATELY. IF REFUSE FULL POSTCODE TRY AND GET SECTOR ie SE1 9 etc.

QB – **Can I just check – do you live in Scotland?**

Yes – CONTINUE

No – THANK & CLOSE

**1. How interested, if at all, would you said you are in politics?**

Very interested  
 Fairly interested  
 Not particularly interested  
 Not at all interested  
 Don't Know

**2. Many people did not get along to vote at the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3rd. Did you vote at the elections on May 3rd?**

Yes both  
 Yes Scottish Parliament only  
 Yes local council only  
 No  
 Don't know

IF NO OR DK AT Q2 – IF YES, GO TO Q5

**3 Were you registered to vote or not – that is were you on the official list of people entitled to vote?**

Yes, registered to vote – GO TO Q5  
 No, not registered to vote – GO TO Q9  
 Don't know – GO TO Q5



GfK NOP Social Research

ASK ALL WHO SAID YES AT Q2

**4. At the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3rd, did you vote..READ OUT**

In person at a polling station

By Post

Or by Proxy

DO NOT READ Don't know

ASK ALL EXCEPT THOSE NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE

**5. Which of these best describes how often you vote in elections to the House of Commons..READ OUT?**

I always vote at House of Commons Elections

I sometimes vote

I never vote

I've not been eligible in the past to vote at House of Commons Elections

**DO NOT READ** Don't Know

**6. Which of these best describes how often you vote in Scottish Parliament elections? READ OUT**

I always vote at Scottish Parliament Elections

I sometimes vote

I never vote

I've not been eligible in the past to vote at Scottish Parliament Elections

**DO NOT READ** Don't Know

**7. Which of these best describes how often you vote in local council elections READ OUT?**

I always vote at local council elections

I sometimes vote

I never vote

I've not been eligible in the past to vote at local council elections

**DO NOT READ** Don't Know

**8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the system of registering to vote?**

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't Know

ASK ALL

**9. How much do you felt you know about how you can register to vote?**

A great deal

A fair amount

Just a little

Hardly anything

Never heard of

Don't Know



GfK NOP Social Research

10. **One of these statements is true and one is false. Please can you tell me which statement you think is true. READ OUT.**

- A. You can register to vote at any time of the year
- B. You can only register to vote in the Autumn of each year when your household receives an electoral registration form.

**DO NOT READ** Don't know

11. **If you wanted to vote in person at an election, how sure are you that you would know what to do? PROMPT FOR PRECODE**

- Very sure
- Fairly sure
- Not very sure
- Not sure at all
- Don't know

12. **And if you wanted to find out about where to vote and how to go about voting, how would you do it? UNPROMPTED. MULTICODE**

#### **Council**

- Contact my local council / registration officer
- Go to / collect a form from my local council offices / registration officer
- Get a form from / go to my local library
- Go to council website
- Via town hall

#### **Forms**

- Wait for a form / leaflet to come through the door (and return it)
- Get a form from / go to the post office
- Fill in a form (not specified where)
- Send/post it/the card back

#### **Other**

- Go to/get information from a local place
- Contact the Electoral Commission
- Ask friends / family / work colleagues
- Contact a political party or candidate
- Information from television / radio / newspapers
- Use the Electoral Commission website / aboutmyvote.com
- Use the VoteScotland.co.uk website
- Other internet / websites
- Wait for a canvasser to come to the door
- Gives information on the back of the polling card
- Citizen's advice bureau/ information centre

#### **Other**

- None of these / would not
- Don't know



**13. If you wanted to vote by post at an election, how sure are you that you would know what to do?**

Very sure  
 Fairly sure  
 Not very sure  
 Not sure at all  
 Don't know

**14. And if you wanted to apply to vote by post, how would you do it? UNPROMPTED. MULTICODE**

**Council**

Contact my local council / registration officer  
 Go to / collect a form from my local council offices / registration officer  
 Get a form from / go to my local library  
 Go to council website  
 Via town hall

**Forms**

Wait for a form / leaflet to come through the door (and return it)  
 Get a form from / go to the post office  
 Fill in a form (not specified where)  
 Send/post it/the card back

**Other**

Go to/get information from a local place  
 Contact the Electoral Commission  
 Ask friends / family / work colleagues  
 Contact a political party or candidate  
 Information from television / radio / newspapers  
 Use the Electoral Commission website / aboutmyvote.com  
 Use the VoteScotland.co.uk website  
 Other internet / websites  
 Wait for a canvasser to come to the door  
 Gives information on the back of the polling card  
 Citizen's advice bureau/ information centre

**Other**

None of these / would not  
 Don't know

**15. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the actual process of voting at elections?**

Very satisfied  
 Fairly satisfied  
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
 Fairly dissatisfied  
 Very dissatisfied  
 Don't Know



**16a. If you had a choice, which of these methods would you be prepared to use to vote at future elections?**

**READ OUT. MULTICODE**

**16b. And which one would you prefer? READ OUT THOSE CHOSEN AT 16a. SINGLECODE**

In person at a polling station

By post

Using the internet

By telephone

By mobile phone text message

In person somewhere other than a polling station (e.g. at a supermarket / train station)

Using digital TV

Using an electronic machine in a polling station and other locations

Don't know

**17 If you had a choice between the following, which would you choose? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

Voting in person at a polling station on election day itself

Voting in person at a polling station a few days beforehand

Voting by post

**DO NOT READ** Don't Know

**18 Thinking generally about elections, which one of the following would you said is most important for you when you vote? READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

Voting being easy to do

Voting being convenient

My vote being safe from fraud or abuse

Voting being secret – that is without anyone else knowing how I voted

Having a choice of methods to cast a vote (such as by post or in person at a polling station)

Other

None

Don't Know

**19 From what you know or have heard, how much of a problem, if at all, do you think the following types of fraud are in the UK?**

**a) False insurance claims b) Benefit fraud c) Electoral fraud, that is fraud relating to elections and voting**

A very big problem

A fairly big problem

Not a very big problem

Not a problem at all

Don't Know



**20 To what extent, if at all, do you think electoral fraud was a problem in the Scottish Parliament and local elections on May 3rd?**

- A very big problem
- A fairly big problem
- Not a very big problem
- Not a problem at all
- Don't Know

IF VERY OR FAIRLY BIG PROBLEM. OTHERS GO TO Q22.

**21. What makes you think it was a problem? DO NOT PROMPT. ALLOW MULTICODES**

- I saw stories in the media about electoral fraud
- General impression that fraud is a problem
- I heard from someone about electoral fraud
- I have first hand experience of electoral fraud
- Postal voting
- Identity fraud on increase
- Other (specify)
- Don't Know

**22. If the voting system is changed so that people are required to sign before being given their ballot paper, do you think this would make your vote more private, less private or would it make no difference?**

- More private
- Less private
- Make no difference
- Don't know

**23. And in your opinion, would this increase the amount of electoral fraud, decrease the amount of electoral fraud, or would it make no difference?**

- Increase the amount of electoral fraud
- Decrease the amount of electoral fraud
- Make no difference
- Don't Know



**24. How would you rate voting at a polling station in terms of...****being easy to do?**

Very easy  
Fairly easy  
Neither easy nor difficult  
Fairly difficult  
Very difficult  
Don't Know

**being convenient?**

Very convenient  
Fairly convenient  
Neither convenient nor inconvenient  
Fairly inconvenient  
Very inconvenient  
Don't Know

**providing privacy for the voter?**

Very good  
Fairly good  
Neither good nor bad  
Fairly bad  
Very bad  
Don't Know

**25. When it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you said that voting at a polling station is...**

Very safe  
Fairly safe  
Neither safe nor unsafe  
Fairly unsafe  
Very unsafe  
Don't Know

ASK IF VOTED AT A POLLING STATION (CODE 1 AT Q4). OTHERS GO TO Q27.

**26. Overall, how satisfied were you with the process of voting at a polling station?**

Very satisfied  
Fairly satisfied  
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
Fairly dissatisfied  
Very dissatisfied  
Don't Know



**27. How would you rate voting by post in terms of...****being easy to do?**

Very easy  
Fairly easy  
Neither easy nor difficult  
Fairly difficult  
Very difficult  
Don't Know

**being convenient?**

Very convenient  
Fairly convenient  
Neither convenient nor inconvenient  
Fairly inconvenient  
Very inconvenient  
Don't Know

**providing privacy for the voter?**

Very good  
Fairly good  
Neither good nor bad  
Fairly bad  
Very bad  
Don't Know

**28. And when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you said that voting by post was**

Very safe  
Fairly safe  
Neither safe nor unsafe  
Fairly unsafe  
Very unsafe  
Don't Know

ASK IF VOTED BY POST (CODE 3 AT Q4). OTHERS GO TO Q30.

**29. Overall, how satisfied were you with the process of voting by post?**

Very satisfied  
Fairly satisfied  
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
Fairly dissatisfied  
Very dissatisfied  
Don't Know



**30. In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear, or read about the Scottish Parliament election?**

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all
- Don't know

**31. In the weeks leading up to the election, how much did you see, hear, or read about the local council election?**

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all
- Don't know

**32. During the Scottish Parliament and local election campaigns did you do any of the following? READ OUT. ALLOW MULTICODES.**

- Read any political leaflets or letters put through your letterbox.
- Discuss the election with friends or family.
- Use the internet to get information about the elections.
- Watch any party election broadcasts on TV.
- See any political advertisements on billboards.
- Watch any of the local election coverage on TV.
- Receive a personal call from a representative of any political party.

- None of these
- Don't Know/ Can't remember

ASK IF VOTED AT A POLLING STATION (CODE 1 AT Q4). OTHERS GO TO Q35.

**33 How useful did you find help and information provided at the polling station on how to fill in the ballot paper?**

- Very useful
- Fairly useful
- Not very useful
- Not useful at all
- Don't know

IF FOUND INFORMATION NOT USEFUL (CODES 3 OR 4 AT Q33)

**34 Is that because... READ OUT**

- You knew what to do before you got to the polling station
- Or the information provided was difficult to understand
- Or it was obvious how to vote so you didn't need any help
- Or you didn't see any information
- DO NOT READ Don't know



ASK ALL WHO VOTED AT SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ELECTION (Q2 codes 1-2)

**35 How easy or difficult did you find it to fill in the ballot paper for the Scottish Parliament election?**

Very easy  
 Fairly easy  
 Neither easy nor difficult  
 Fairly difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Don't know

ASK ALL WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE (Codes 4-5 at Q35)

**36 Why did you find it difficult to complete? DO NOT PROMPT. ALLOW MULTICODES.**

Text too small  
 Instructions were unclear  
 Didn't know whether to use X or a 1  
 The candidates were in a confusing order  
 The parties were in a confusing order  
 Couldn't work out which parties the candidates represented  
 The layout was confusing  
 Other (specify)  
 Don't know

ASK ALL WHO VOTED AT LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTION (Q2 codes 1 or 3)

**37 How easy or difficult did you find it to fill in the ballot paper for the local council election?**

Very easy  
 Fairly easy  
 Neither easy nor difficult  
 Fairly difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Don't know

ASK ALL WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE (Codes 4-5 at Q37)

**38 Why did you find it difficult to complete? DO NOT PROMPT. ALLOW MULTICODES.**

Text too small  
 Instructions were unclear  
 Didn't know whether to use X or a 1  
 The candidates were in a confusing order  
 The parties were in a confusing order  
 Couldn't work out which parties the candidates represented  
 The layout was confusing  
 Other (specify)  
 Don't know



ASK ALL WHO VOTED AT A POLLING STATION (CODE 1 AT Q4)

**39 At the polling station you may remember that you were requested not to fold the ballot papers – were you happy or unhappy to do this?**

Very happy  
 Fairly happy  
 Neither happy nor unhappy  
 Fairly unhappy  
 Very unhappy  
 Don't know

ASK IF VOTED BY POST Q4 code 2

**40 In England and Wales people have to supply a signature and date of birth with their postal vote and these may be checked to see if the right person has voted. In Scotland that is not required. If the system in Scotland was changed so that a signature and date of birth were required, do you think it would increase the amount of electoral fraud, decrease the amount of electoral fraud, or would it make no difference?**

Increase the amount of electoral fraud  
 Decrease the amount of electoral fraud  
 Make no difference  
 Don't know

ASK ALL WHO VOTED (CODES 1-3 Q2)

**41 On May 3<sup>rd</sup> you were asked to vote in one way in the Scottish Parliament election and another way in the local election. How easy or difficult did you find this?**

Very easy  
 Fairly easy  
 Neither easy nor difficult  
 Fairly difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Don't know

**Thank you. We're nearly at the end of the survey. I have just a few more questions to enable us to ensure we have a representative proportion of the population.**

**42. What was your age at your last birthday?**

WRITE IN  
 Refuse



IF REFUSE ASK Q37b. OTHERS GO TO 38.

42b **Which of the following groups does your age fall into? READ OUT.**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75 or older
- Refused

42c. **And are you READ OUT**

- Working full-time
- Working part-time
- Or not at all?
- DK

Q43 INTERVIEWER RECORD GENDER

- Male
- Female

44. **Which of these groups do you belong to? READ OUT**

- A White British
- B White Irish
- C Any other White background (SPECIFY)
- D Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- E Mixed White and Black African
- F Mixed White and Asian
- G Any other mixed background (SPECIFY)
- H Asian or Asian British Indian
- I Asian or Asian British Pakistani
- J Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi
- K Any other Asian background (SPECIFY)
- L Black or Black British Caribbean
- M Black or Black British African
- N Any other Black background (SPECIFY)
- O Chinese
- P Any other ethnic group (SPECIFY)
- Refused

45 Standard SEG question

46 **Do you have any longstanding illness, disability or infirmity?** 'LONGSTANDING' MEANS ANYTHING THAT HAS TROUBLED YOU OVER A PERIOD OF TIME OR THAT IS LIKELY TO AFFECT YOU OVER A PERIOD OF TIME.

- Yes GO TO 42
- No GO TO END
- Don't know GO TO END



**47 Does this limit your activities in any way?**

Yes  
No

**48 Which, if any, of the following best describes how you see yourself?**

Scottish not British  
More Scottish than British  
Equally Welsh and Scottish  
More British than Scottish  
British not Scottish  
None of these  
(Don't know)

THANK & CLOSE

