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Summary of our advice We have responded to the Scottish Government's request to provide advice and assistance by considering the wording and intelligibility of the proposed question for the referendum on independence for Scotland, which is: 'Do you agree that Scotland should be an independent country? Yes / No' To inform our assessment we carried out research with members of the public to see how well the proposed question meets our guidelines for intelligible questions, and whether it is easy for voters to use and understand. 1 We also wrote to people and organisations including the main political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament and would-be campaigners, to seek their views on the proposed question. We took account of views expressed by other individuals and groups who contacted us, and by members and committees of the UK and Scottish Parliaments. Our guidelines say that a question should be clear and simple, that is, easy to understand; to the point; and not ambiguous. It should also be neutral, which means it should not encourage voters to consider one response more favourably than another or mislead voters. In the research we looked at whether or not the question is clear, simple and neutral. We found that the question is written in plain language and is easy for people to understand and answer. It is clear to people what they are being asked to vote on. However, based on our research and taking into account what we heard from people and organisations who submitted their views on the question, we consider that the proposed question is not neutral because the phrase 'Do you agree ...?' could lead people towards voting 'yes'. Our recommendation The referendum result should be one that all voters and referendum campaigners can accept and have confidence in. For that reason, we recommend changing the way the question is asked, so that it is more neutral. Instead of asking 'Do you agree..?' we recommend the following wording: 'Should Scotland be an independent country? Yes/No' Information about independence A common theme that arose during our research was that people wanted more information about the pros and cons of independence before polling day, to be able to make an informed choice on how to vote. Download our reports You can download our: advice on referendum question for independence referendum for Scotland report on our research with voters which informed our views on the question 1. Our guidelines are reproduced in full in Appendix 3. ■ Back to content at footnote 1 Related content Report: Scottish Independence Referendum Read our report about the Scottish Independence Referendum Donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum View donations and loans reported by campaigners at the Scottish referendum Campaign spending at the Scottish referendum View data about campaign spending at the Scottish independence referendum Report: Regulation of campaigners at the independence referendum held on 18 September 2014 Read our report about regulation at the Scottish independence referendum