



Scottish Social Attitudes
Survey 2006
Core Module
Report 1: Attitudes Towards
Public Services in Scotland

SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY 2006
CORE MODULE
REPORT 1:
ATTITUDES TOWARDS PUBLIC SERVICES IN
SCOTLAND

Rachel Ormston and Clare Sharp
Scottish Centre for Social Research

Scottish Government Social Research
2007

This report is available on the Scottish Government Social Research website only www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch.

The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent those of the Directorate or Scottish Ministers.

© Crown Copyright 2007

Limited extracts from the text may be produced provided the source is acknowledged. For more extensive reproduction, please write to the Chief Researcher at Office of Chief Researcher, 4th Floor West Rear, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the various organisations who have contributed to funding the *Scottish Social Attitudes* Survey over the last few years – the Economic and Social Research Council, the Leverhulme Trust, and the Scottish Government Office of Chief Researcher.

We would also like to thank everyone involved in the preparation of this report – John Curtice and Catherine Bromley for their advice and helpful comments during the analysis and reporting stages, as well as Niamh O’Connor, Louise Virdee and colleagues at the Scottish Government who have provided useful feedback on each draft report.

Thanks are also due to our colleagues in NatCen’s operations and computing departments (particularly the Copper Team and Sandra Beeson), to Ann Mair at the Social Statistics Laboratory at Strathclyde University, and to our team of interviewers and supervisors.

Finally, thanks to all those respondents who gave up their free time to take part in the survey.

Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report, and for all interpretation of the data, lies solely with the authors.

Rachel Ormston
Clare Sharp

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
NOTE ON THE USE OF ‘SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE’ IN THIS REPORT	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
BACKGROUND	4
THE DATA	5
2. PRIORITIES FOR THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE	5
DIFFERENT GROUPS, DIFFERENT PRIORITIES?.....	6
3. PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICES.....	8
4. WHICH GROUPS THINK THAT HAVING A SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT IS INCREASING STANDARDS?.....	9
DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES.....	9
BUT ATTITUDES ALSO MATTER	11
5. CHANGES IN PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT.....	13
6. PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE LAST YEAR.....	15
STANDARDS IN PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ECONOMY AND GENERAL STANDARD OF LIVING IN THE LAST YEAR.....	16
PUBLIC SERVICE PERCEPTIONS OVER TIME.....	17
7. HOW DO PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS COMPARE WITH PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICES?..	18
WHAT EXPLAINS DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICES COMPARED WITH PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS IN THESE SERVICES IN THE LAST YEAR?.....	19
8. CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC SERVICES	22
WHO GETS THE CREDIT AND WHO GETS THE BLAME?	25
9. WHAT EXPLAINS CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY OVER TIME?	26
10. CONCLUSION.....	29
REFERENCES	31
ANNEX A ADDITIONAL TABLES.....	32

PREFACE

This report is the latest in a series based on a module of questions in the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey on public attitudes to government and public services in post-devolution Scotland. The module was funded from 2004 to 2006 by the Scottish Executive's Office of the Chief Researcher. The main focus of this report is perceptions of the impact of devolution on public services in Scotland and perceptions of public service standards in the last year. A separate report in the same series focuses on public trust and other measures of engagement with government (Ormston & Sharp, 2007).

Note on the use of 'Scottish Executive' in this report

On 3 September 2007 the Scottish Executive changed its name to The Scottish Government. This decision was based on clear evidence¹ that the term "Scottish Executive" was confusing or meaningless to many members of the public. The fieldwork on which this report is based was conducted in 2006, before the official name change, and the questions therefore referred to the Scottish Executive. The term Scottish Executive is therefore used throughout the following report.

¹ Including that reported in previous years *Scottish Social Attitudes* surveys

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2006, health and crime were considered by the public to be the top priority areas for the Scottish Executive.
- With regard to public services, between 22% and 30% thought the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards across the key areas of health, education and public transport. However, between 52% (for education) and 62% (for the health service) thought that the Scottish Parliament was making no difference.
- More people thought that standards over the previous twelve months had increased as opposed to decreased, in relation to education, public transport, the general standard of living and the strength of the economy. However, for the health service, a higher proportion said that standards had fallen than thought they had increased (42% and 20% respectively).
- A positive assessment of standards in public services in the last twelve months did not necessarily imply a positive assessment of the impact of the Parliament on services (and vice versa). This suggests that judgements about the performance of public services in the last twelve months may be driven by different factors to judgements about the overall impact of devolution on public services.
- Perceptions of the impact of the Parliament on public services appeared to be more strongly related to attitudinal factors, such as constitutional preference. Those who were more positive about devolution and the devolved institutions also tended to be more positive about the impact of the Scottish Parliament on standards in public services. These factors were not as strongly related to general perceptions of recent public sector performance.
- A key implication of this is that improving public perceptions of the performance of Scottish public services may not necessarily improve their assessment of the impact of devolution and the devolved institutions on those services.
- This implication is reinforced by the finding that a significant proportion of people still attributed recent standards in public services to either UK government policies or some other reason.
- However, people in 2006 were much more likely than people in 2001 to attribute responsibility for standards in health and education to the Scottish Executive, and less likely to attribute responsibility to the UK government. This was true across all socio-demographic and attitudinal groups – men and women, younger and older people, people who support devolution and those who would prefer Westminster rule were all more likely to attribute responsibility for standards in public services to the Scottish Executive in 2006 than they were in 2001. However, with regard to the health service, a majority of people still felt that standards in this area were a result of UK government policies.
- In 2006 the Scottish Executive was still more likely than the UK government to be given credit for perceived increases in standards, and the UK government was generally more likely to be blamed for perceived falls in standards. However, as

awareness of its responsibilities increases, the Scottish Executive appears to be picking up not only an increasing share of the credit for perceived improvements in standards, but also an increasing share of the blame for any perceived falls.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, key areas of policy making have been devolved to Scotland, with the aim of allowing Ministers and MSPs to align their policy agendas more closely with the needs of the Scottish people. It was hoped that devolving control over key areas, like health, education and public transport, would facilitate improvements in public services in Scotland. Since 2004, the Scottish Executive² has funded a module of questions in the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey covering public attitudes to government and public services in Scotland. The module aims to contribute to evaluations of public services in Scotland and to inform the devolved policy agenda.

1.2 This report builds on previous *Scottish Social Attitudes* reports for the Scottish Executive Office of Chief Researcher (particularly Bromley & Given, 2005 and Given & Ormston, 2007), and is based on data from the 2006 SSA. It starts by summarising public views on priorities for Scottish Executive action over the last three years, before moving on to discuss findings from two sets of questions about standards in public services.

- The first set of questions focused on the *impact of the Scottish Parliament* on the health service, education and public transport. Do people think having a Scottish Parliament has increased, reduced, or made no difference to standards in these areas?
- The second set asked people whether they thought standards in the health service, education and public transport, as well as the economy and general standards of living, had increased, fallen, or stayed the same *in the last 12 months*.

The former were designed to tap attitudes to the *impact of devolution* on public services in Scotland, while the latter provide an up to date measure of perceptions of the *performance of key services* more generally, irrespective of what this is attributed to.

1.3 The report discusses the two sets of questions separately first, drawing out key differences in attitudes towards health, education and public transport and examining trends in assessments over time. It then considers whether perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on services differed from views on public service performance in the last 12 months. Did some people believe that standards in the health service, for example, had increased in the previous year, while still believing that having a Scottish Parliament has made no difference to this area? It is argued that differences in the groups who gave positive answers to each suggest that perceptions of the impact of devolution on services are driven by somewhat different considerations from those which drive perceptions of public services in general. Improving public perceptions of the performance of public services in general may not, therefore, automatically lead to much more favourable assessments of the impact of devolution.

1.4 The final section of the report examines who, in 2006, the Scottish public actually held responsible for recent standards in public services – was it the Scottish Executive, the UK government, or did they attribute them to something else altogether? Trends since 2001 are explored: these confirm findings from earlier reports that people are gradually becoming

² See note below Preface (page 1) on use of ‘Scottish Executive’ in this report.

more likely to view the Scottish Executive, rather than the UK government, as responsible for key devolved policy areas. Finally, the report considers whether this shift towards seeing the Scottish Executive as responsible has occurred among all groups of people in Scotland, or whether the beliefs of some groups have shifted more rapidly than those of others.

1.5 The key questions this report addresses are summarised in the box below.

Key questions

- What are the public's priorities for Scottish Executive action?
- What effect do people think having a Scottish Parliament is having on public services in Scotland?
- How do people rate the performance of public services in Scotland in the last year and how has this changed over time?
- How do perceptions of the impact of having a Scottish Parliament on public services compare with views of public services in the last 12 months?
- How have perceptions of responsibility for standards in public services changed over time?

The data

1.6 The data come from the *Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA)* survey, conducted by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen). *SSA* is an independent survey that aims to provide high quality survey data on a wide range of social and political attitudes in order both to inform public policy and to facilitate the academic study of public opinion. This report details the survey's most recent findings based on interviews conducted in 2006/7. Between August 2006 and early January 2007, a random sample of 1,594 adults aged 18 plus resident in Scotland was interviewed, representing a response rate of between 56% and 58%³. Interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes, using computer assisted personal interviewing. Ninety per cent of respondents also completed a paper-self completion questionnaire. Further technical details about the survey are included in a separate technical report. (Cleghorn, Ormston & Sharp, 2007).

2. PRIORITIES FOR THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

2.1 Respondents were asked to choose what they thought the Scottish Executive's highest priority should be from a list of seven key issues. The results show that public priorities have changed little over the last three years of the survey (Table 1). Improving people's health and

³ The precise figure given for response rates depends on whether dwelling units whose eligibility to participate was unknown are included or excluded from the calculation. Dwelling units are coded as 'unknown eligibility' where the interviewer is unable to establish whether the property is occupied and residential. The higher response rate excludes dwelling units of unknown eligibility from the calculation, while the lower rate includes them. As some of the dwelling units whose eligibility was unknown are likely to be eligible and some ineligible, the true response rate probably lies somewhere between the two figures. For further details on response rate calculations, see the technical report (Cleghorn, Ormston & Sharp, 2007).

cutting crime were still considered to be the top priorities in 2006, with almost half choosing either one or other of these. The economy and education have appeared in either third or fourth positions over the last three years, whilst public transport continued to be given least priority, relative to other issues. Scotland is not alone in prioritising health – the British Social Attitudes survey also shows that health is the top priority for extra government spending across Britain as a whole.⁴

Table 1 What should be the Scottish Executive’s highest priority? 2004, 2005 and 2006 (column %)

	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%
Improve people’s health	27	26	24
Cut crime	22	23	24
Help the economy to grow faster	16	18	14
Improve standards of education	17	15	16
Improve housing	12	10	12
Improve the environment	4	4	6
Improve public transport	1	1	2
Sample size	1637	1549	1594

Base = all respondents.

Note: not all columns add to exactly 100% due either to rounding or because of small proportions saying either ‘don’t know’ (1% in 2006) or giving some other top priority (less than 3% in 2006).

Different groups, different priorities?

2.2 Do different groups of the population have different priorities for Scottish Executive action? Data from the last three years of *SSA* (2004 to 2006) were combined (giving a combined sample size of 4,780) to allow a detailed exploration of differences across key sub groups (see Table A.1 in Annex A for full findings). Priorities varied by age, educational qualification and affluence, but varied less by sex.⁵

Age

- The top priority for **older people**, aged 65 and over was *cutting crime*. Between 2004 and 2006, they were more likely than younger people to prioritise this (32%, compared with 22% of 18 to 24 year olds).
- Older people were also more likely than younger people to prioritise the *economy* (18%, compared with 6% of the youngest group).
- Health was the most common priority among 18-24 year-olds (27%).
- However, **younger people** (aged 18-24) were more likely than older people to prioritise:
 - *education* (18%, compared with 12% of the oldest group)
 - *housing* (17%, compared with 8% aged 65+), and

⁴ Source: 2005 British Social Attitudes survey data, National Centre for Social Research

⁵ All the difference discussed are significant at the 5% level.

- the *environment* (6%, compared with 3% aged 65+)

2.3 As discussed in the report on the 2005 findings (Given and Ormston, 2007), these findings reflect other research which has shown that while older people are less likely to be victims of crime they are more likely to be worried about it. Younger people's prioritisation of housing and education probably reflects the fact that these are often critical issues for this age group.

Educational qualifications

- The most common priority among those with **no qualifications** was *cutting crime*. They were more likely than those with higher-level qualifications to make this their top priority for Executive action (30%, compared with 17%).
- They were also more likely to prioritise housing (14%, compared to 9% of those with degrees or higher education qualifications).
- Those with **degree or higher education** qualifications were most likely to prioritise health (28%).
- They were also more likely to prioritise:
 - *education* (20%, compared with 11% of those without qualifications), and
 - the *environment* (6% compared with 3%).

Measures of affluence

2.4 Priorities varied by self-rated hardship (that is, how comfortable or difficult people say they find it to live on their current income), area deprivation (as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation⁶) and by household income. The general pattern shows that the top priority amongst **more affluent** groups was *health*, while **less affluent** groups prioritised *cutting crime* (both 28%). There is well a documented link between area-level deprivation and experience of crime. The 2004 Scottish Crime and Victimisation survey reports that households in the areas classified as most deprived experience more crime and anti-social behaviour than the least deprived areas.

2.5 Further:

- **more affluent** groups were more likely than less affluent or deprived groups to prioritise the *economy* and *education*, while
- **less affluent** groups were more likely to prioritise *housing*.

Again, this may reflect issues about the quality, choice and availability of housing to those on lower incomes.

Sex

⁶ For further details, see <http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview>. The areas SSA respondents lived in were matched to SIMD scores. ScotCen/NatCen's Survey Methods Unit then created quintiles from these (based on all datazones, not just the subset included in the SSA sample), with 1 being the least deprived and 5 being the most deprived.

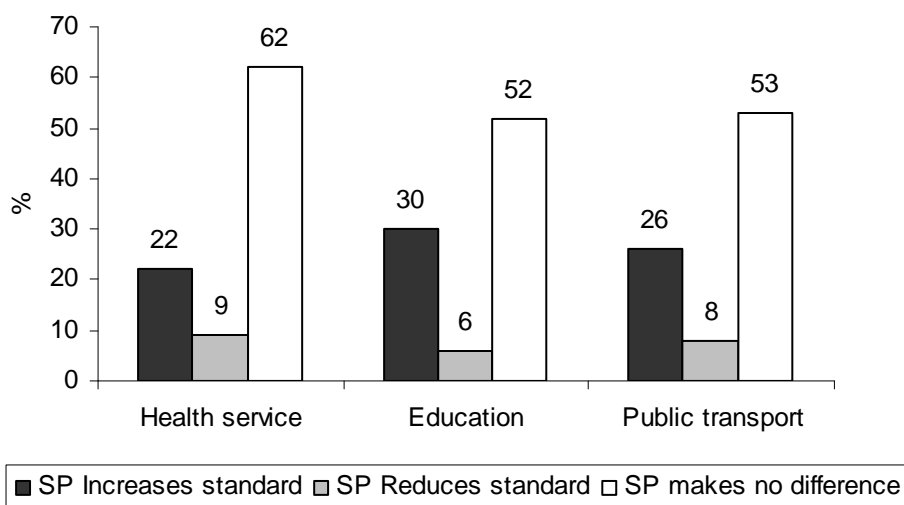
2.6 From 2004 to 2006, the top two priorities for both men and women were health followed by crime. However, there were also some small differences by sex, with men slightly more likely than women to prioritise the economy (18%, compared with 14%), and women slightly more likely to say improving health was most important (27%, compared with 24%).

3. PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICES

3.1 A key aim of devolution was to improve public services in Scotland by allowing policies on health, education and public transport to be tailored more closely to the needs and aspirations of people in Scotland. This section explores to what extent the public in 2006 believed devolution had delivered on this aim. The 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey asked people to say, from what they had seen and heard so far, whether they thought the Scottish Parliament was increasing, reducing, or making no difference to standards in the health service, education and public transport.

3.2 This first thing to note is that across all these areas, very few (9% or less) thought that the Scottish Parliament was reducing standards (Figure 1). Thus there is little evidence to suggest people think devolution is having a *negative* impact on public services. Between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 thought the Scottish Parliament was having a *positive* impact on public transport and education (26% and 30% respectively), while for health the figure was closer to 1 in 5 (22%). However, in 2006 the proportions who felt that the Parliament was making *no difference* (62% for health, 52% for education and 53% for transport) far outweighed the proportions who believed it was increasing standards in these key services. This was particularly the case with respect to health, which is not surprising given that, as this report will go on to show, more people attributed responsibility for standards in the health service to the UK government rather than the Scottish Executive.

Figure 1 Impact of Scottish Parliament on standards in public services (2006)



Base: all respondents (1,594)

4. WHICH GROUPS THINK THAT HAVING A SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT IS INCREASING STANDARDS?

4.1 This section explores a number of key questions: How do perceptions of the impact of devolution on public services vary among different groups? Who is most likely to think that the Scottish Parliament is increasing standards? Is this view more likely in particular demographic groups – for example, men versus women or younger versus older people? Or is it underlying attitudes and beliefs (e.g. whether people support devolution or independence) that drive views on this issue?

4.2 Analysis was conducted to determine which socio-demographic and attitudinal factors were significantly and independently associated with believing that the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in each of the public services discussed.⁷

4.3 Two sets of regression models were created – one including only demographic factors, for instance age, sex and social class, and one which also included attitudinal factors such as constitutional preference and trust in government. Key findings are summarised here. However, full tables showing the proportions in different groups who thought the Scottish Parliament was increasing, reducing or making no difference to standards in health, education and public transport in 2006 are included in the annex (Annex A, Tables A.2 to A.4).

4.4 While a wide variety of factors which may explain differences in attitudes were included in analysis, it is important to bear in mind that attitudes are often very complex and may be driven by a large number of other factors, not all of which can be measured by a single study.

Demographic differences

Age

4.5 Age was the only demographic factor significantly associated with views about the impact of the Parliament on public services after other demographic *and* attitudinal factors were controlled for in regression analysis. In particular, analysis showed that:

- Overall, younger people (aged 18-24) tended to be the age group who were most positive about the impact of the Parliament on standards in public services.
- They were particularly positive about the impact of the Parliament on **education** – half (52%) of 18-24 year-olds thought it was increasing the standard of education, compared with just a quarter (23%) of those aged 65 or older who said the same.

⁷ The main multivariate analysis technique used to inform this report was logistic regression. Logistic regression is a statistical technique used to summarise the relationship between a ‘dependent’ variable (in this case, belief that the Scottish Parliament is increasing standards) and one or more independent ‘explanatory’ variables (for example, age, sex, income etc). It is particularly useful when explanatory variables are related to each other (for example, social class and area deprivation), since it takes the relationships between these into account when determining which are statistically significant. Full results of this analysis are reported in a separate technical report (Cleghorn, Ormston & Sharp, 2007).

- In relation to **public transport**, those in the oldest age group (65 and above) were also more positive than those in the middle two aged groups (aged 25-64). For example, 35% of those aged 65 or older said having a Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in public transport, compared with just 23% of those aged 40-64 who said the same. These patterns reflect levels of service use, as both the youngest and oldest age groups were also more likely to be frequent users of public transport.

Service use

4.6 Positive perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on standards were also more prevalent among those likely to be ‘service users’. For example:

- A third (33%) of those who used **public transport** at least once a week thought having a Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in this area, compared with just 17% of those who did not use public transport at all (Annex, Table A.4).
- Users of the school system (as indirectly measured by whether there are children of school age living in the household) were more likely to say the Parliament was increasing standards in **education** (37% of those with school aged children said this, compared with 28% of those without school aged children – Annex A, Table A.3).
- The positive perceptions held by younger people, who are more likely to be current or recent users of the education system, also suggests that users’ views were on the whole more positive than those of non-users.
- Having a disability or long term illness was used as a proxy for **health service** use.⁸ Multivariate analysis⁹ found a higher likelihood of a positive evaluation among those with a disability or illness compared to those without.

Urbanity/rurality

4.7 Perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on **public transport** (but not health or education) varied by the type of area people lived in, from 32% in ‘accessible rural areas’ who thought devolution was increasing standards in public transport, to just 21% in ‘accessible small towns’ (Annex A, Table A.4).

Education, occupational sector and deprivation

4.8 Those with higher level qualifications were more like to be positive about the impact of the Scottish Parliament on standards in **education** - 32% of those with degree/higher level qualification said it was increasing standards, compared with 21% of those with no

⁸ The 2005 report examined ‘use of the NHS in the last year’. However, it was acknowledged that this may be of limited value given the very high proportion of people who have used any health services in the last year.

⁹ Where the relationship between different explanatory factors is controlled for. See footnote 7 and the *SS4* Core module technical report (Cleghorn, Ormston & Sharp, 2007).

qualifications. This is consistent with the finding that service users are more likely to report positive views (Annex A, Table A.3).

4.9 Those working in the public sector were more likely to provide a positive evaluation of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on the **health service** (26% said it was increasing standards, compared to 20% of those who worked in the private sector) (Annex A, Table A.2).

But attitudes also matter

4.10 While attitudes do vary significantly between the groups discussed above, multivariate analysis suggests that demographic factors, like age, service use and area, were in fact relatively less powerful than other attitudinal factors in explaining beliefs about the impact of the Scottish Parliament.

Constitutional preference¹⁰

4.11 As might be expected given that these questions are designed to measure views about the impact of devolution on public services, attitudes varied significantly by constitutional preference. The most common view across all groups, regardless of their attitudes to devolution in principle, was that having a Scottish Parliament was making no difference to standards in public services. However, supporters of either devolution or independence were more likely than those who would prefer not to have a Scottish Parliament to say the Parliament was having a positive impact. For example, 26% of those supporting devolution and 21% of those supporting independence thought having a Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in the health service, compared with just 6% of those in favour of Westminster rule (Annex A, Table A.2). Similar patterns are apparent for education and public transport.

Awareness of Scottish Executive activities

4.12 Respondents were asked how much they had seen or heard about the work of the Scottish Executive over the last 12 months. Thirty-five per cent said they had heard ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’, while a similar proportion (33%) had heard ‘not very much’ or ‘nothing at all’. Those who said they had heard ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ were more likely than those who had heard ‘not very much’ or ‘nothing at all’ to say the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in the health service, education and public transport. For example, 38% of those who had heard ‘a great deal’ felt that the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in education, compared with 20% of those who had heard little (Annex A, Tables A.2 to A.4).

¹⁰ The question about constitutional preference is not funded as part of the Office of Chief Researcher core module, but rather is part of the background classification data collected for SS4.

Perceptions of influence, trust and responsibility

4.13 Beliefs about which institutions have most influence over how Scotland is run and levels of trust in the Scottish Executive are discussed in detail in a separate report on the 2006 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey (Ormston & Sharp, 2007). However, trust in the Scottish Executive and perceptions of its influence were both strongly related to beliefs about the impact of the Parliament on services.¹¹

- Those who believed the Scottish Executive had most influence over how Scotland is run¹² were more likely than those who thought the UK government most influential to say the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in health and education (33% compared with 17% for the health service, and 39% compared with 27% for education – Annex A, Tables A.2 and A.3).
- Those who did not trust the Scottish Executive to make fair decisions¹³ were less likely to think the Scottish Parliament was having a positive impact on health, education and transport. For health in particular, the difference between those who trusted the Scottish Executive to make fair decisions and those who did not was considerable – only 5% of those who did not trust the Scottish Executive thought the Scottish Parliament was having a positive impact on standards in the health service, compared with 35% of those who trusted them ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ (Annex A, Tables A.2 to A.4).

4.14 Those who hold the Scottish Executive responsible for standards in key public services (findings on which are discussed later in this report) were also much more likely to think that devolution was having a positive impact on these services. For example, 46% of those who thought the performance of public transport in the previous 12 months was the result of Scottish Executive policies also thought having a Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in public transport, compared with just 26% who attributed recent standards in this area to UK government policies. As might be expected, the most common evaluation given by those who continued to attribute standards in key public services in Scotland to the UK government was that the Scottish Parliament makes no difference to standards (71% said this in relation to the impact on the health service, 60% in relation to education, and 62% in relation to public transport – Annex A, Tables A.2 to A.4).

4.15 These findings appear to reflect the ‘reverse symmetry’ in attributions of credit and blame (or in this case, attributions of credit vs. lack of impact), discussed further below. Where people believe the Scottish institutions have most influence, they are also generally more likely to think that this influence is having a positive impact.

¹¹ Questions about trust and influence both now ask about the Scottish Executive rather than the Scottish Parliament. However, prior to 2004, they asked about the Scottish Parliament. In response to criticisms that the two questions were not comparing alike institutions, a split sample experiment was undertaken in which half the sample were asked about the Scottish Parliament and half about the Scottish Executive. The experiment concluded that in practice it makes little difference which institution is asked about – people’s response will be broadly the same.

¹² As measured by a question which asked ‘Which of the following do you think has most influence over the way Scotland is run ... the Scottish Executive, the UK government at Westminster, local councils in Scotland or the European Union?’

¹³ As measured by a question which asked ‘How much do you trust the Scottish Executive to make fair decisions? (By fair decisions I mean decisions that are fair to different groups of people in Scotland).’ Answer options were ‘A great deal’, ‘quite a lot’, ‘some’, ‘not very much’ or ‘not at all’.

A note on ‘causation’ – which attitudes come first?

4.16 Of course, the precise nature of the relationship between beliefs about the impact of the Parliament on public services and broader attitudes towards the devolved institutions is not obvious from these findings. For example, one might think being more aware of Scottish Executive activities could lead people to believe they are having a positive impact on public services. However, perhaps it is simply that those who are predisposed to think devolution will have a beneficial impact pay most attention to the activities of the Executive and Parliament. Similar observations could be made with respect to many of the relationships between attitudes reported above. What is clear, however, is that assessments of the impact of the Parliament on public services in particular appear to be bound up with both support for devolution in principle, and general awareness and perceptions of the impact of the devolved institutions in practice.

5. CHANGES IN PERCEIVED IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

5.1 Questions on the perceived impact of the Scottish Parliament on standards in health and education have been asked in previous years of *SSA*, as well in the 1997 Referendum and Election Surveys¹⁴. However, earlier questions were asked prospectively, with respondents asked to say what impact they think the Scottish Parliament *would have* on services. Bearing in mind these differences in question wording, it is possible to examine whether views on the impact of devolution on the health service and on education have changed over time. Taking attitudes to the health service first, Table 2 shows that:

- There is a clear difference in *prospective aspirations* for devolution (i.e. what impact people thought the Parliament *would have* on services, as asked up till 2003) and *current perceptions* (what impact people think it *is having*, as asked in 2006).
- ‘**Pre-devolution**’ measures (as collected by the Election and Referendum studies, both conducted in 1997) show that prior to its creation, almost two-thirds (65% just after the referendum on devolution) expected that having a Scottish Parliament would improve standards in the health service. Just a quarter (28%) felt that standards would not change.
- Data from the 1999 and 2001 *SSA* surveys reflect feelings in the ‘**early days**’ of devolution. Whilst a majority (around a half) still believed the impact of the Scottish Parliament on the health service would be positive, expectations appeared to have been dampened somewhat compared with pre-devolution figures. The proportion who felt that the Parliament would have a negative impact on the health service remained low, at less than 10%, but there had already been an increase in the proportion who felt that the Scottish Parliament would make no difference to health service standards (42% in 2001, compared with 25% after the 1997 election).

¹⁴ These studies were also carried out by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (or NatCen Scotland, as it was at the time), and employed almost identical sampling and methods to *SSA*, as well as including many questions that were later carried on that survey.

- By the **end of the first term** of the new Parliament (2003), more people felt that the Parliament would make no difference to health service standards than felt it would have a positive impact (46% compared with 37%).
- The 2006 data show what people thought **seven years on** from the introduction of the Scottish Parliament. This time, people were asked to say what impact they think the Parliament 'is' having on standards. As discussed above, the majority view was that the Parliament was making no difference (62%), while around 1 in 5 thought that the Parliament was having a positive impact on standards in the health service.
- Thus early positive aspirations about the likely impact of devolution on public services appeared to weaken in the early years, then give way to more sceptical views of its actual impact after almost two terms of the Scottish Parliament. That said, the proportion who thought having a Scottish Parliament was making things worse remained very low (fewer than 1 in 10).

Table 2 Impact of the Scottish Parliament on standards in the health service (column %)

	1997 ¹ (Pre-devolution)	1997 ² (Pre-devolution)	1999 ³ (Early days)	2001 ⁴ (Early days)	2003 ⁴ (End of first term)	2006 ⁵ (Seven years on)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Better/increase	59	65	49	45	37	22
Worse/reduce	6	6	4	9	10	9
No difference	25	28	41	42	46	62
Don't know	10	1	6	4	7	7
All	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	882	657	1482	1605	1508	1594

Base = all respondents.

1. Election Study (May to July 1997) - 'And as a result of this Scottish Parliament, would the standard of the health service in Scotland become better, worse or would it make no difference?'

2. Referendum Study (Sept to Oct 1997) - 'And as a result of this Scottish Parliament, will the standard of the health service in Scotland become better, worse or will it make no difference?'

3. In 1999 the question was 'And as a result of this Scottish Parliament, will the standard of the health service in Scotland become better, worse or will it make no difference?'

4. In 2001 and 2003 the question was (And as a result of having a Scottish Parliament) will the National Health Service in Scotland become better, worse or will it make no difference?'

5. In 2006 the question was (From what you have seen and heard so far) do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is increasing the standard of the health service in Scotland, reducing the standard of the health service in Scotland, or is it making no difference?'

Note: not all columns add to exactly 100% due either to rounding or because a small number of people have not answered.

5.2 A similar picture is seen with respect to education (Table 3):

- Early prospective aspirations for devolution were very positive. Just after the 1997 referendum, 71% thought having a parliament would increase the standard of education.
- However, these gradually tailed off in the early days of devolution (to 43% by 2000).
- SSA started asking about current perceptions of the impact of the Parliament earlier with respect to education than health. As soon as the question shifted to asking what

impact the Parliament *is* having (from 2001 onwards), less positive reactions emerged - only between a quarter and 3 in 10 have said the Parliament is increasing standards in education over the last 5 years.

- Although there has been a recent increase in the proportion saying the Scottish Parliament is making standards better (from 23% in 2003 to 30% in 2006), it is too early to say whether this is the start of a trend towards more positive perceptions of devolution's impact on education standards.

Table 3 Impact of the Scottish Parliament on education standards (column %)

	1997 ¹ (Pre-devolutio n)	1997 ² (Pre-devolutio n)	1999 ² (Early days)	2000 ³ (Early days)	2001 ⁴ (Early days)	2002 (Early days)	2003 (End of one term)	2006 (Seven years on)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Better/increase	62	71	56	43	27	25	23	30
Worse/ reduce	25	3	3	3	5	6	7	6
No difference	4	19	35	49	59	58	59	52
Don't know	10	7	5	-	9	11	11	11
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	882	676	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508	1594

Base = all respondents.

1. 1997 Election Study – ‘And as a result of this Scottish Parliament, would the quality of education in Scotland become better, worse or would it make no difference?’

2. In the 1997 Referendum study and 1999 SSA the question was ‘Will a Scottish Parliament increase the standard of education in Scotland, reduce the standard of education in Scotland, or will it make no difference?’

3. In 2000 the question was ‘Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is going to increase the standard of education in Scotland, reduce the standard of education in Scotland, or will it make no difference?’

4. In 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2006 the question was (From what you have seen and heard so far) do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is increasing the standard of education in Scotland, reducing the standard of education in Scotland, or is it making no difference?

Note: not all columns add to exactly 100% due either to rounding or because a small number of people have not answered.

6. PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE LAST YEAR

6.1 As discussed in the introduction, two sets of questions about standards in public services were included in the 2006 SSA. The previous section focussed on beliefs about the overall impact of devolution on public services by examining attitudes towards the impact of the Scottish Parliament on key areas. This section examines views on how standards in public services have changed *over the last year*, shifting the focus to views about the recent performance of key services in general. People were asked to say whether they thought standards in the following public services had increased, stayed the same or fallen in the previous 12 months:

- the standard of the health service in Scotland
- the quality of education in Scotland, and
- public transport in Scotland.

6.2 In addition, people were asked whether they thought:

- the general standard of living had increased, fallen or stayed the same since 2005, and
- whether the economy had got stronger, weaker or stayed the same over that period.

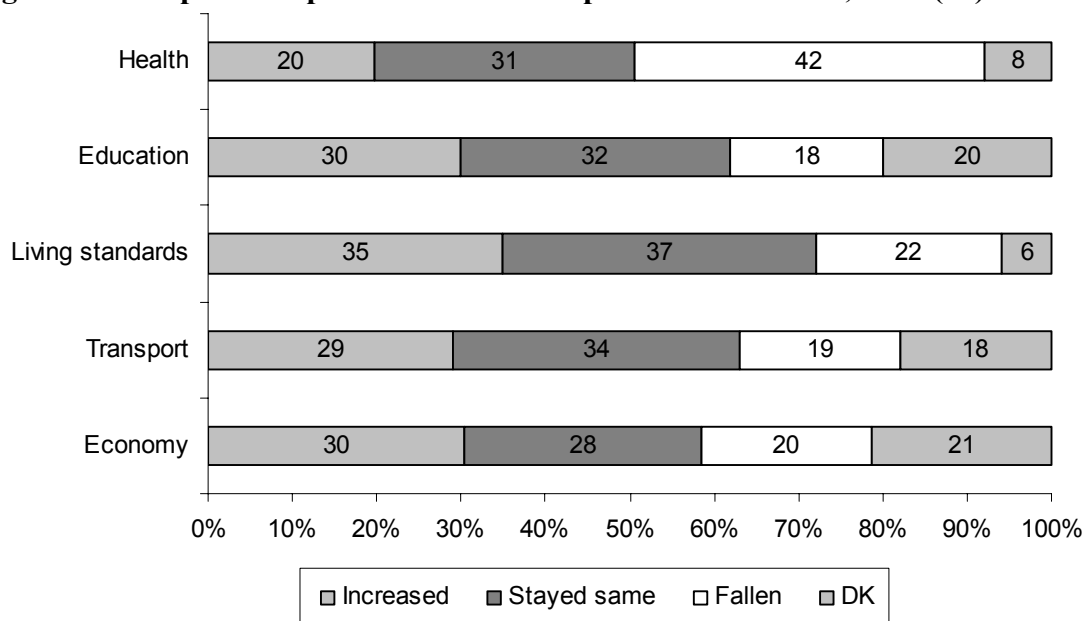
Standards in public services, the economy and general standard of living in the last year

6.3 In four of the five areas asked about, a higher proportion said that standards had increased as opposed to decreased in the previous year. For example, 30% said the quality of education had increased, compared with just 18% who thought it had fallen. Similarly, more people thought the general standard of living, the economy and public transport had increased or strengthened in the previous 12 months than thought they had fallen or got weaker (Figure 2).

6.4 However, as in previous years, the health service compared poorly against the other areas in terms of public assessments, with a much higher percentage of respondents (42%) saying that standards in this area had fallen in the last year than said they had increased (20%). With regard to this relatively poor view of the health service, it should be noted that rather more positive views have been found in other research when people were asked to consider individual health services, such as GPs or hospital inpatients. It has been suggested elsewhere that factors other than direct experience of the health service are influencing attitudes, including press coverage and word of mouth (Rose & Glendinning, 2004).

6.5 Around 2 in 10 people said ‘don’t know’ when asked to rate recent standards in education, transport and the economy. It may be that people who were not ‘users’ of certain services were simply not able to provide an opinion. This is evident for transport, where ‘Don’t knows’ were particularly high (40%) among those who ‘never’ used public transport.

Figure 2 Perceptions of public services over past twelve months, 2006 (%)



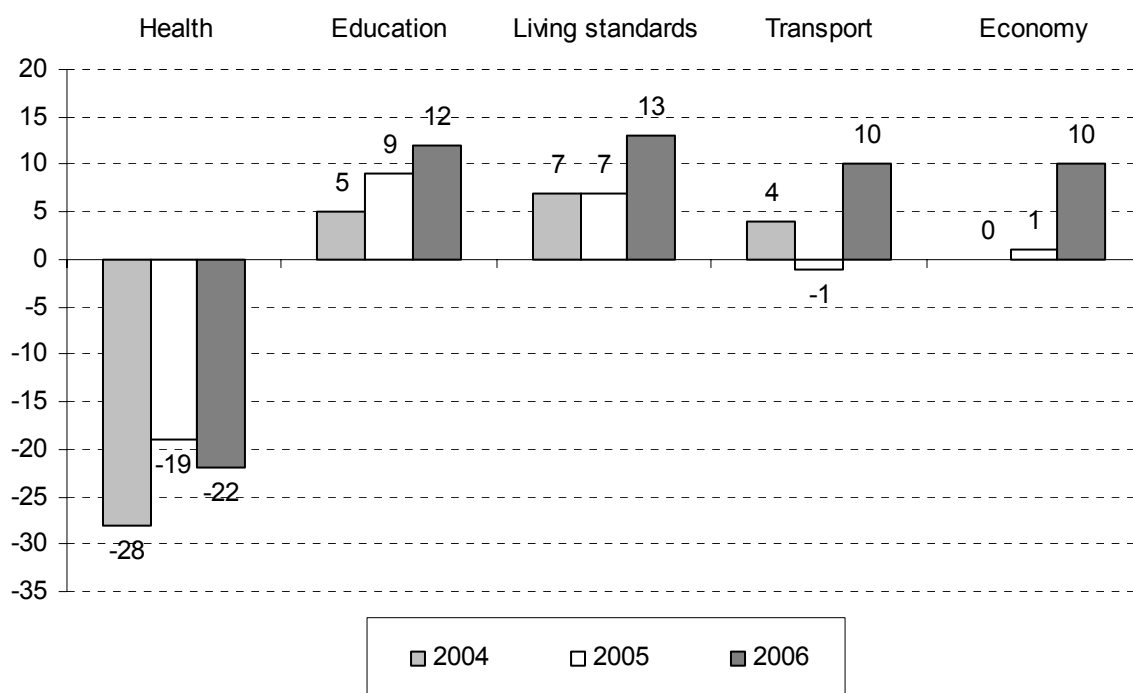
Base: all respondents (1,594)

Public service perceptions over time

6.6 SSA has now collected three years' worth of data on people's perceptions of standards in these five areas in the previous 12 months, allowing us to examine trends. The results are presented in the form of 'net balance scores' in Figure 3. Net balance scores are calculated by subtracting the percentage who said standards had fallen from the percentage who said they had increased. Positive scores indicate that more people said standards had increased than said they had fallen. A negative figure indicates the opposite. They are thus a useful way of summarising the overall balance of opinion on an issue.

6.7 The net balance scores for education and for living standards show a gradual improvement over the last 3 years. Overall scores for public transport and the economy increased considerably from 2005 to 2006 (from -1 to +10 for public transport and from +1 to +10 for the economy). However, in contrast with the other 5 areas, scores for the health service have remained consistently negative, with no improvement in scores from 2005 to 2006.

Figure 3 Net balance scores for perceptions of public services (2001 to 2006)



Base = all respondents. Sample size: 2004 = 1637, 2005 = 1549, 2006 = 1594

7. HOW DO PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS COMPARE WITH PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON PUBLIC SERVICES?

7.1 Are people's assessments of standards in public services in the last 12 months different from their views about the impact of the Scottish Parliament on these services? An initial look at the data suggests that people were indeed answering these two sets of questions differently.

- First, people were clearly much more likely to say that standards in key public services had fallen over the previous 12 months than they were to say that the Scottish Parliament has had a negative impact on public services. Taking public transport as an example, just 8% said that the Scottish Parliament was reducing standards in this area (Figure 1, above). However, 19% believed that standards in public transport in Scotland had, in fact, fallen in the previous year (Figure 2).
- Second, positive perceptions of standards in health, education and public transport in the last 12 months were not necessarily related to thinking that the Scottish Parliament was having a positive effect on these services. For example, in 2006 45% of those who believed standards in the health service had improved in the previous year nonetheless thought the Scottish Parliament was making no difference to standards in health (Table 4). This is unsurprising given the finding (reported in Bromley and Given, 2005 and Given and Ormston, 2007, and discussed again below) that people do not always attribute responsibility for standards in health (or education, or public transport) in Scotland to Scottish governing institutions.
- This relationship obviously works both ways – believing the Scottish Parliament was having a positive impact on a public service was not necessarily associated with giving a positive assessment of the *recent* performance of that service. For example, 34% of those who thought that the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in education nevertheless believed that standards in education in the previous 12 months had either fallen or stayed the same (Table 5).

Table 4 Perceptions of the Scottish Parliament's impact on standards in public services, by perceptions of standards in the last 12 months (column %)

	Standards in the health service have increased in the last 12 months	Standards in education have increased in the last 12 months	Standards in public transport have increased in the last 12 months
	%	%	%
SP has increased standards	45	57	57
SP made no difference	45	36	36
SP has reduced standards	6	2	3
Don't know	4	5	4
All	100	100	100
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>313</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>466</i>

Table 5 Perceptions of standards in the last 12 months, by perceptions of the Scottish Parliament’s impact on standards (column %)

	SP has increased standards in the health service	SP has increased standards in education	SP has increased standards in public transport
	%	%	%
Standards have increased in the last 12 months	41	56	63
Standards have not changed in last 12 months	30	25	22
Standards have fallen in last 12 months	23	9	6
Don’t know	6	9	9
All	100	100	100
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>347</i>	<i>441</i>	<i>418</i>

What explains differences in perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on public services compared with perceptions of standards in these services in the last year?

7.2 These differences suggest that judgements about the performance of public services in the last 12 months may be driven by different factors to judgements about the overall impact of devolution on public services. Given the difference in question wording, it might be expected that judgements about the impact of the Parliament on public services would reflect views about devolved government in Scotland in general. For example, if someone is not in favour of devolution, you might expect they would be reluctant to say it was having a big impact on public services. On the other hand, there is perhaps less reason to think that assessments of recent public service performance will be linked to judgements about devolution and the devolved institutions. Given this, we might anticipate finding some of the following differences in responses to the two sets of questions:

- We might expect a stronger association between constitutional preference and the impact of having a Scottish Parliament than between constitutional preference and perceptions of standards in the last 12 months. Were supporters of devolution or independence more willing to say things had not been going well over the previous 12 months than to say the Scottish Parliament has not delivered?
- We might also expect to find that awareness of the activities of the devolved institutions is more closely linked with assessments of the impact of the Parliament on public services than with assessments of standards in those services in general.
- Attitudes towards the impact of the Scottish Parliament may be more closely associated with trust in politicians, while views about recent standards may reflect ‘lower-level’ assessments based on actual experience of schools, hospitals, buses, etc.
- We might expect that those who think the Scottish Executive has most influence over how Scotland is run will be more likely to be positive about the impact of the Parliament on services than those who believe the UK government is most influential. Moreover, we might also expect that the difference between these groups will be

greater with respect to their attitudes to the impact of the Parliament on services than with respect to their perceptions of standards in public services in general.

- Another possibility is that when assessing the impact of the Parliament, people are more influenced by their political affiliations. For example, SNP supporters may (at the time of the survey fieldwork) have been more willing to say that the Scottish Parliament was having a positive impact than to say that things had recently been going well under a Scottish Executive which was then headed by other parties.

7.3 In order to test some of these assumptions, a comparison was made between those factors found to be associated with positive perceptions of standards in the last 12 months (full tables for which are included in Annex A), and those associated with positive perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament. A summary comparing key factors associated with each set of statements is given below (Table 6). Those factors found to be significantly associated with holding a positive perception of standards are marked by a tick (a cross indicates factors which were not significantly associated with positive perceptions).

Table 6 Factors significantly associated with positive perceptions about standards in public services

	Belief the Scottish Parliament has increased standards in ...			Belief standards in the last 12 months have increased in ...		
	Health service	Education	Public transport	Health	Education	Public transport
Age	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Urban-rural	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
Constitutional preference	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Level of awareness of Scottish Executive activities	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Perceptions of influence of SE vs. UK	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Trust in Scottish Executive to make fair decisions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beliefs about responsibility for public service performance in the last 12 months	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Service use	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Party identification	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗

7.4 This comparison and the analysis which informs it suggest some key differences in factors associated with assessments of the impact of the Scottish Parliament, compared with assessments of recent performance in public services. In relation to the hypotheses outlined above, attitudes to the impact of the Parliament on public services did indeed appear to be much more closely associated with attitudes to devolution and the devolved institutions in general than are attitudes to the recent performance of public services *per se*. In particular, analysis showed that:

- Whilst constitutional preference was important in predicting perceptions of the *impact of the Scottish Parliament* on health, education and public transport, it was not significantly associated with perceptions of standards in public services *in the last 12 months*. As discussed at paragraph 4.11, those who supported either devolution or independence were more likely than those supporting Westminster rule to say the

Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in these areas. But they were no more likely to think standards had increased in the previous 12 months.

- Level of awareness of Scottish Executive activities was important when people were assessing the impact of the Scottish Parliament, but not significant when assessing standards in the last 12 months. People with more awareness of the Scottish Executive were more likely than those with little awareness to say the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards. But perceptions of recent standards in public services did not appear to be particularly related to awareness of action the Scottish Executive may have taken in these and other areas.
- Trust in government appears to be related to *both* perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament on public services *and* perceptions of the recent performance of those services. However, there is some evidence to support the hypothesis that there would be a stronger relationship between trust in the Scottish Executive and attitudes to the impact of the Parliament on services than between trust and perceptions of public services more generally. For example, those with high levels of trust were much more likely than those with low trust to think the Scottish Parliament was increasing standards in the health service (35% compared with 5% - a gap of 30 percentage points). The equivalent figures for those who thought standards in the health service had increased in the last 12 months were 29% for the ‘high trust’ group and 10% for the ‘low trust’ group – a smaller gap of 19 percentage points.
- Beliefs about who has most influence over how Scotland is run were associated *both* with perceptions of the impact of the Scottish Parliament (for health and education), and with assessments of standards in the last 12 months (for education and public transport). However, in relation to the impact of the Parliament on education there was a fairly big difference in the views of people who thought the Scottish Executive had most influence vs. those who thought the UK government most influential (39%, compared with 27%). On the other hand, there was little difference in the views of these two groups with respect to education standards in the last 12 months (30%, compared with 27%).¹⁵ Thus, in relation to education at least, it seems true that judgements about the impact of the Parliament on standards are more strongly associated with beliefs about the influence of the devolved institutions than with perceptions of recent standards.
- The final hypothesis discussed above, that views about the impact of the Parliament on public services might be more closely related to party political views than views about the general performance of public services, does not in fact appear to be supported by the 2006 data. Party political identification was not significantly related to any of the questions about the impact of the Parliament on public services in multivariate analysis, once other factors were controlled for.

¹⁵ In fact, although an association was found between beliefs about who has most influence over how Scotland is run and assessments of education standards in the last 12 months, the biggest difference was between those who think local councils in Scotland are most influential and others – 39% of those who think local councils most influential think standards have increased in the last 12 months, compared with 26-30% for those who think the UK government, Scottish Executive or EU most influential.

7.5 To summarise, this report has demonstrated that it is possible to be positive about the recent performance of public services in Scotland without being positive about the impact of the Parliament on those services. It has also shown that views about recent public service performance do not seem to be as strongly related as views about the impact of the Parliament on those services to support for devolution in principle, awareness of the activities of the devolved institutions, or perceptions of the relative influence of the UK government vs. the Scottish Executive over how Scotland is run. One implication of these findings is that improving public perceptions of the performance of Scottish public services will not necessarily be associated with any corresponding improvement in assessments of the impact of devolution and the devolved institutions.

8. CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STANDARDS IN PUBLIC SERVICES

8.1 We have just seen that perceptions of public services in general did not necessarily reflect perceptions of the impact of the devolved institutions. In order to more fully understand the extent to which people attribute the recent performance of key public services to the devolved institutions, the final section of this report examines *who* people thought was responsible for standards in the previous year.

8.2 For each of the five areas covered, respondents were asked to say what they thought standards in this area were ‘mainly the result of’ – UK government policies, Scottish Executive policies, or some other reason? Data for 2006 confirms and strengthens some of the trends that were starting to emerge in earlier years (see Given and Ormston, 2007 and Bromley and Given, 2005).

8.3 The Scottish Executive is in fact primarily responsible for policies relating to the health service, education and public transport in Scotland.

- In two of these areas, public transport and education, by 2006 the proportion who attributed responsibility for standards to Scottish Executive policies (31% for public transport and 33% for education) clearly outweighed the proportion who attributed it to the UK government (13% and 20% respectively – see Table 7).
- In relation to the health service, in 2006 more people still thought standards were the result of UK government rather than Scottish Executive policies (32% compared with 25%).
- But across all three areas, the trend over time is towards an increasing proportion attributing responsibility to the Scottish Executive, and a falling proportion thinking UK government policies are responsible for standards.

Table 7 Responsibility for standard of public services, 2001 to 2006 (column % within service area)

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%	%	%
Standard of the health service					
UK government policies	53	38	42	39	32
Scottish Executive Policies	11	21	20	23	25
Other reason	16	17	18	14	18
(UK and SE equally)	4	7	7	5	7
Don't know	8	8	9	9	10
Not answered ¹⁶	7	8	5	10	8
All	100	100	100	100	100
Quality of education					
UK government policies	40	30	29	28	20
Scottish Executive Policies	19	25	28	30	33
Other reason	14	12	15	12	15
(UK and SE equally)	3	7	5	4	5
Don't know	5	7	7	6	6
Not answered	19	19	16	20	20
All	100	100	100	100	100
Public transport*					
UK government policies	n/a	n/a	17	20	13
Scottish Executive Policies	n/a	n/a	28	28	31
Other reason	n/a	n/a	29	21	25
(UK and SE equally)	n/a	n/a	5	4	4
Don't know	n/a	n/a	8	6	9
Not answered	n/a	n/a	13	21	18
All	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>

Base = all respondents.

* these questions were only asked from 2004 onwards

Note: not all columns may add to exactly 100% due to rounding.

¹⁶ Respondents who were unable to say whether standards have increased, fallen or stayed the same were not asked the follow up question about what standards are the result of. These respondents fall into the 'not answered' category here. They are included in the base for this table however, so that we can assess the proportion of the Scottish population as a whole who attribute standards in public services to different reasons.

8.4 Responsibility for economic policy is divided between Westminster and the Scottish Executive, with the UK Treasury having a greater role to play in creating a stable macroeconomic environment. Fiscal and monetary policy, international trade and currency, and competition and employment law are reserved areas of policy, whilst policy areas such as economic development, skills and training, local taxation, planning, education, health and inward investment are devolved to the Scottish Executive.

- There does not appear to have been much change in the proportion attributing responsibility to the Scottish Executive in either of these areas over the last few years – around 3 in 10 attributed the performance of the economy to Scottish Executive policies, while around 2 in 10 said the same about the general standard of living (Table 8).
- However, the proportion who hold the UK government responsible has fallen with respect to both these areas (from 42% in 2005 to 33% in 2006 with respect to the general standard of living, and from 30% in 2005 to 21% in 2006 with respect to the economy).
- The shift here, in fact, seems to have been towards either seeing the Scottish Executive and UK government as *equally* responsible, or thinking the performance of the economy and public services are the result of something other than government policies altogether.

Table 8 Responsibility for general standard of living and economy, 2001 to 2006 (column % within area)

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006
	%	%	%	%	%
General standard of living					
UK government policies	53	43	38	42	33
Scottish Executive Policies	12	18	18	17	21
Other reason	18	16	24	19	22
(UK and SE equally)	5	10	7	5	8
Don't know	7	8	9	10	9
Not answered	6	7	5	7	6
All	100	100	100	100	100
Economy*					
UK government policies	n/a	n/a	28	30	21
Scottish Executive Policies	n/a	n/a	28	27	28
Other reason	n/a	n/a	17	13	18
(UK and SE equally)	n/a	n/a	6	5	7
Don't know	n/a	n/a	5	5	4
Not answered	n/a	n/a	17	22	21
All	n/a	n/a	100	100	100
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>

Base = all respondents.

* these questions were only asked from 2004 onwards

Note: not all columns may add to exactly 100% due to rounding.

8.5 In fact, while across all five areas the gap between the proportion attributing responsibility to the UK government and those attributing it to the Scottish Executive is gradually narrowing, with the exception of public transport, this does not appear to be a straightforward shift from one to the other. For example, in relation to the economy there has been a 9 percentage point decrease from 2005 to 2006 in the proportion who say its performance is the result of UK government policies, but only a 1 point increase in the proportion who attribute it to the Scottish Executive. Instead, the shift has occurred in the proportion attributing the performance of the economy in the last 12 months to ‘some other reason’ (13% in 2005 up to 18% in 2006). Although it is not possible to say what these other factors are, one hypothesis might be that people are thinking about the impact of global events on the economy.

Who gets the credit and who gets the blame?

8.6 The section above discusses who people thought was responsible overall for standards in public services, but does not tell us who is ‘credited’ for perceived increases in standards and who is ‘blamed’ for perceived decreases. Results for 2006 show that the Scottish Executive was more likely than the UK government to be given the credit for increases in standards across all five areas (Table 9). In contrast, the UK government was more likely to be blamed for falling standards in all areas except public transport. This ‘reverse symmetry’ has been a common feature since these questions were first asked in 2001.

8.7 However, earlier reports on the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey speculated that, as more people overall started to attribute responsibility to the Scottish Executive and fewer to the UK government, this pattern would begin to weaken. That is, they anticipated that the Scottish Executive would start to pick up both more of the credit from those who think public services are improving and more of the blame from those who think standards are falling. The data over time appear to confirm this theory. An example is highlighted in Table 8. In 2001, 24% of those who thought standards in the health service were increasing attributed this to the Scottish Executive, while by 2006 this figure was 41%. Similarly, in 2001, just 8% of those who thought standards in the health service were falling attributed this to the Scottish Executive, while by 2006 this figure was up to 20%. Similarly, with respect to education the gap between those who ‘blame’ the UK government and those who ‘blame’ the Scottish Executive has shrunk from 33 percentage points in 2001 to just 9 in 2006.

8.8 Previous *SSA* reports (e.g. Park and McCrone in Bromley et al, 2006 and Given and Ormston, 2007) have highlighted this double edged sword in relation to health and education – as the public become more aware that these are areas of Scottish Executive responsibility, they also become more likely to hold them responsible for *both* perceived improvements and perceived declines in health and education. The 2006 data provide some tentative evidence that a similar shift may be occurring with respect to public transport. For example, in 2006 29% of people who thought standards in transport had fallen attributed this to the Executive – up from 24% in 2004. Even with respect to the general standard of living in Scotland, an area not wholly within the control of Scottish Executive policies, a greater proportion of people attributed perceived falls in standards to the Executive in 2006 (18%) compared with 2001 (7%).

Table 9 Attribution of ‘credit’ and ‘blame’ for standards in last 12 months to the Scottish Executive and UK government, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 (column % within area¹⁷)

	% of those who say standards have.....									
increased (credit)				fallen (blame)				
	01	03	04	05	06	01	03	04	05	06
Standards in Health Service are result of ...										
Scottish Executive policies	24	46	32	45	41	8	16	17	18	20
UK government policies	54	30	43	32	24	64	48	51	52	44
Standards in Education are result of										
Scottish Executive policies	35	43	46	46	50	18	25	20	26	28
UK government policies	45	31	28	30	22	51	45	50	47	37
General standard of living is result of ...										
Scottish Executive policies	21	31	21	26	30	7	12	18	13	18
UK government policies	54	36	35	44	28	64	60	48	56	51
Standards in public transport are result of ...*										
Scottish Executive policies	n/a	n/a	44	53	53	n/a	n/a	24	25	29
UK government policies	n/a	n/a	13	16	14	n/a	n/a	29	35	20
Economy is result of ...*										
Scottish Executive policies	n/a	n/a	46	47	47	n/a	n/a	30	27	26
UK government policies	n/a	n/a	25	32	19	n/a	n/a	42	44	42

* these questions were only asked from 2004 onwards

9. WHAT EXPLAINS CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY OVER TIME?

9.1 Have attitudes towards responsibility for public services shifted across the board since the earlier years of devolution, or is it specific groups of people who are now much more likely to see the Scottish Executive as responsible for standards in public services? Is it, for example, people who know more about Scottish Executive activities, people with an interest in politics, or those who support parties which have been in government in Scotland up to 2006 who are most likely to have moved towards thinking the Scottish Executive is responsible for key areas?

9.2 Tables 10 and 11 show the proportions who attributed responsibility for standards in health and education to the Scottish Executive and the UK government respectively for key demographic and attitudinal groups in 2001 and 2006. The first thing to note is that the increase in the proportion attributing responsibility for both health and education to the Scottish Executive and the corresponding decrease in the proportion attributing it to the UK government has occurred across all socio-demographic and attitudinal groups. Men and women, younger and older people, people who support devolution and those who would prefer Westminster rule were all more likely to think the Scottish Executive responsible for standards in health and education in 2006 than they were in 2001 (Tables 10 and 11).

¹⁷ Since results are only presented for 2 of the categories in these questions – Scottish Executive policies and UK government policies – these will not tally to 100%.

9.3 Moreover, for many groups the patterns in terms of who was more likely to think the Scottish Executive or UK government responsible were broadly the same in 2006 as in 2001. For example, those with ‘a great deal’ or ‘a lot’ of interest in politics were more likely than those with little interest to think the Scottish Executive responsible for standards in the health service and education in both 2001 and 2006 (Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10 Beliefs about responsibility for standards in the health service, by demographic and attitudinal factors, 2001 and 2006 (cell %)

	Scottish Executive is responsible for health standards			UK government is responsible for health standards		
	2001	2006	Change (2006-2001)	2001	2006	Change (2006-2001)
All	11	25	+14	53	32	-21
Sex						
Male	11	26	+15	57	31	-26
Female	11	25	+14	51	34	-17
Age						
18 to 24	11	23	+12	50	28	-22
25 to 39	7	23	+16	50	27	-23
40 to 64	13	26	+13	56	34	-22
65+	12	29	+17	55	36	-19
Educational qualifications						
None	12	25	+13	52	34	-18
Standard grades/GCSEs	11	22	+11	55	35	-20
Highers/A levels	9	27	+17	52	26	-26
Degree/Higher Education	11	27	+16	53	33	-20
Political party identification						
SNP	12	24	+12	59	37	-22
Lib Dem	13	27	+14	55	28	-27
Labour	13	27	+14	52	35	-17
Conservative	11	27	+16	58	36	-22
None	5	22	+17	47	23	-24
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	7	23	+16	54	41	-13
Devolution	11	28	+17	54	31	-23
Independence	14	26	+12	57	34	-23
Newspaper readership						
Tabloid	11	25	+14	57	38	-19
Broadsheet	13	32	+19	52	23	-29
None	10	22	+12	49	31	-18
Interest in politics						
Not much/none	9	22	+13	51	29	-22
A great deal/a lot	14	32	+18	55	32	-23

Table 11 Beliefs about responsibility for standards in education, by demographic and attitudinal factors, 2001 and 2006 (cell %)

	Scottish Executive is responsible for education standards			UK government is responsible for education standards		
	2001	2006	Change (2006-2001)	2001	2006	Change (2006-2001)
All	19	33	+14	40	20	-20
Sex						
Male	21	34	+13	39	22	-17
Female	16	33	+19	40	19	-21
Age						
18 to 24	20	28	+8	40	27	-13
25 to 39	16	31	+15	42	20	-22
40 to 64	21	36	+15	40	20	-20
65+	17	31	+14	35	18	-17
Educational qualifications						
None	15	30	+15	41	17	-24
Standard grades/GCSEs	16	27	+11	40	25	-15
Highers/A levels	26	36	+10	32	20	-12
Degree/Higher Education	20	40	+20	41	19	-22
Political party identification						
SNP	20	36	+16	45	24	-21
Lib Dem	24	33	+9	35	27	-8
Labour	20	39	+19	44	20	-24
Conservative	18	38	+20	31	18	-13
None	10	21	+11	33	20	-13
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	11	27	+16	34	29	-5
Devolution	21	36	+15	39	19	-20
Independence	19	34	+15	46	23	-23
Newspaper readership						
Tabloid	17	37	+20	43	21	-22
Broadsheet	26	38	+12	37	19	-18
None	15	27	+12	36	21	-15
Interest in politics						
Not much/none	12	26	+14	41	21	-20
A great deal/a lot	28	40	+12	36	20	-16

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 There has been little change over the last three years in the public's views on what should be the highest priority for the Scottish Executive, with health and crime remaining at the top of the list. Focusing on the views of particular groups, it was older people, those who were less affluent, and people with fewer educational qualifications who were most likely to say that crime should be the top priority. Health was the top priority for younger people, more affluent groups and those with more educational qualifications.

10.2 A key focus of this report was to explore the extent to which the public believes that devolution is improving public services in Scotland. In 2006, only a small minority felt that devolution was having a negative effect. The proportion who felt it had improved services varied from around a fifth (for health) to a third (for education and transport). However, for the majority of people, having a Scottish Parliament was not seen to make any difference to public services. This was especially the case for the health service, which may be partly explained by the common view that health is a UK government rather than Scottish Executive responsibility.

10.3 In general, younger people were most positive about the impact of the Parliament, as were service users. However it was attitudinal factors which were found to be more strongly related to beliefs about the impact of the Scottish Parliament. Not surprisingly, people with more favourable attitudes to the devolved institutions (e.g. supporters of devolution or independence, people who trust the Scottish Executive to make fair decisions) held the most positive views.

10.4 As well as seeking views on the impact of the Parliament on public services, the report also examined views on the performance of public services in the last 12 months, with respect to the health service, education, public transport, general standard of living, and the economy. With the exception of health, a higher proportion believed that standards had increased as opposed to decreased in these areas in the previous year. Moreover, 'net balance scores' suggest an improvement in the overall assessments for these services (except health) over the last three years. Public assessments of the health service, however, were poor by comparison, a theme that has been highlighted in previous *SSA* reports. It is not clear why the health service in particular attracts a more negative evaluation. Other research (e.g. Rose & Glendinning, 2004) has suggested that people are generally more positive in their assessments of individual health services such as GP services, implying that factors other than direct experience of the health service are influencing attitudes to the health service in general.

10.5 It is clear that in some cases people's assessments of standards in public services in the previous 12 months were different from their views about the impact of the Scottish Parliament on these services. In general, people were more likely to say that standards in public services in the last 12 months had fallen than to say that the Scottish Parliament was having a negative impact on services. In addition, a positive evaluation of standards in the last 12 months did not necessarily imply a positive evaluation of the impact of the Parliament on services (and vice versa).

10.6 It is suggested that judgements about the performance of public services in the last 12 months are driven by different factors to judgements about the overall impact of devolution on public services. Whereas perceptions of the impact of the Parliament seemed to be strongly related to attitudes about devolution and the devolved institutions, these factors did not seem to be as strongly related to perceptions of recent public sector performance. One implication of these findings is that improvements in public perceptions of the performance of Scottish public services may not necessarily be associated with any corresponding improvement in assessments of the impact of devolution and the devolved institutions in general.

10.7 Moreover, as noted in the reports on the 2005 core module (Given and Ormston, 2007), any conclusions drawn about the impact of devolution on public services based on data about perceptions of performance in the last 12 months also needs to take into account *who* people think is responsible for standards in these services. For example, if people think standards are improving, but do not attribute this to the Scottish Executive, then it is not clear that this reflects a positive evaluation of the impact of devolution on public services.

10.8 In fact, there has been a clear shift in perceptions of responsibility for standards in public services since 2001. By 2006, people were much more likely to attribute responsibility to the Scottish Executive, and less likely to attribute responsibility to the UK government. Indeed, this shift has occurred across all socio-demographic and attitudinal groups. However, despite an increasing proportion of people attributing responsibility for the health service to the Scottish Executive, in 2006 the majority of people still believed that standards in this area were a result of UK government policies. The reasons for this are unclear but one possible explanation might be related to the way the health service as an organisation is perceived. Whereas education and transport are perhaps more easily identifiable as services run from Scotland by the devolved institutions (possibly as a result of branding or perhaps because historically education and transport have been seen as distinctly Scottish-led public services), the health service may still be perceived by many as a UK wide body (the 'National' Health Service).

10.9 In keeping with the findings in earlier *SSA* reports, the 2006 results show that the Scottish Executive was more likely than the UK government to be given credit for perceived increases in standards, and the UK government was generally more likely to be blamed for perceived falls in standards. However, as people become more aware of its responsibilities, the Scottish Executive is picking up not only an increasing share of the credit for perceived improvement in standards, but also an increasing share of the blame for any perceived fall in standards.

REFERENCES

Bromley, C. and Given, L. (2005) *Public perceptions of Scotland after devolution*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Social Research.

Cleghorn, N., Ormston, R. and Sharp, C. (2007) *Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2006: Core Module Technical Report*. Scottish Government Social Research.

Curtice, J. (2007) *Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2005 Core Module Report 2: Trust and involvement in the governance of Scotland*. Scottish Executive Social Research.

Given, L. and Ormston, R. (2006) *Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2005 Core Module Report 1: Attitudes towards public services in Scotland*. Scottish Executive Social Research.

Ormston, R. & Sharp, C. (2007) *Scottish Social Attitudes survey 2006 Core Module Report 2: Perceptions of government in Scotland*. Scottish Government Social Research.

Park, A. and McCrone, D. (2006) 'The devolution conundrum?' in Bromley, C., Curtice, J., McCrone, D. and Park, A. (eds.) (2006) *Has devolution delivered?* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Rose, N., Glendinning, R. and Carr-Hill, R. (2004) *Public Attitudes to the National Health Service in Scotland*. Scottish Executive Social Research.
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/11/panhss/0>)

ANNEX A ADDITIONAL TABLES

Table A.1 Priorities for the Scottish Executive, by key demographic factors (combined data from 2004, 2005, and 2006 SSA)

% who say the Executive's highest priority should be...	Improve Health	Cut crime	Economy	Education	Housing	Environment	Public transport	Sample size
All	26	23	16	16	11	4	1	4780
Sex								
Men	24	23	18	16	10	5	2	2046
Women	27	23	14	16	12	4	1	2734
Age								
18-24	27	22	6	18	17	6	2	334
65+	23	32	18	12	8	3	1	1187
Education								
Degree /HE	28	17	17	20	9	6	2	1417
None	23	30	14	11	14	3	1	1236
Self-rated hardship								
Living very comfortably	27	24	17	16	9	4	1	2287
Finding it difficult / very difficult	23	22	13	14	17	6	1	632
Urban / rural residence								
Large urban	26	23	14	17	10	5	1	1578
Other urban	26	24	17	14	12	3	1	1202
Small accessible towns	23	24	16	17	12	4	2	514
Small remote towns	34	16	14	14	11	5	1	337
Accessible rural	24	21	19	16	10	4	1	667
Remote rural	25	19	17	13	13	5	3	482
SIMD								
Least deprived 20%	28	21	18	19	7	4	1	963
Most deprived 20%	22	28	12	14	14	6	2	874
Household Income								
£9,999 or less	23	28	13	14	13	6	1	1010
£10k to £19,999	25	25	16	14	14	4	1	1054
£20k to £37,999	27	20	16	17	11	5	1	1067
£38k plus	27	17	18	20	7	5	1	889

Table A.2 Impact of the Scottish Parliament on the health service

% who think that having a Scottish Parliament is...	...increasing the standard	...reducing the standard	...making no difference	Don't know	Net balance (increase-reduce)	Sample size
Age						
18-24	27	7	55	11	+20	108
25-39	18	8	64	9	+10	380
40-64	21	10	64	5	+11	707
65+	24	11	59	5	+13	396
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	6	14	76	4	-8	154
Devolution	26	8	59	6	+18	852
Independence	21	10	66	4	+11	478
Level of awareness of SE activities						
Not much/nothing at all	11	9	69	10	+2	526
A great deal	30	9	56	4	+21	563
Who has most influence						
UK govt	17	9	69	4	+8	592
SE	33	8	54	4	+25	384
Local councils	23	6	63	8	+17	281
EU	16	20	61	3	-4	188
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	5	13	78	4	-8	331
A great deal/quite a lot	35	6	53	6	+29	484
Who is responsible for standards in health service						
UK govt	17	8	71	4	+9	514
SE	35	13	51	1	+22	395
Self-reported disability or long term illness						
Does not have disability or illness	21	8	63	8	+13	1213
Does have disability or illness	24	12	61	3	+12	374
Occupational sector						
Private sector	20	8	65	7	+12	765
Public sector employer / charity / voluntary sector / nationalised industries	26	12	60	5	+14	537
All	22	9	62	7	+13	1594

Table A.3 Impact of the Scottish Parliament on education

% who think that having a Scottish Parliament is...	..increasing the standard	...reducing the standard	...making no difference	Don't know	Net balance (increase-reduce)	Sample size
Age						
18-24	52	3	31	15	+49	108
25-39	31	5	51	12	+26	380
40-64	28	7	57	8	+21	707
65+	23	8	54	14	+15	396
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	12	12	69	7	0	154
Devolution	33	5	50	11	+28	852
Independence	33	6	53	7	+27	478
Level of awareness of SE activities						
Not much/nothing at all	20	5	58	16	+15	526
A great deal	38	7	47	8	+31	563
Who has most influence						
UK govt	27	7	59	7	+20	592
SE	39	6	45	10	+33	384
Local councils	37	3	47	12	+34	281
EU	23	11	60	6	+12	188
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	11	11	70	8	0	331
A great deal/quite a lot	43	5	41	10	+38	484
Who is responsible for standards in education						
UK govt	28	8	60	4	+20	315
SE	46	8	43	2	+38	498
Whether school aged children live in household						
No children aged 4-15	28	6	53	12	+22	1287
Children aged 4-15	37	5	50	8	+32	307
Educational qualifications						
None	21	5	63	12	+16	394
Standard grade/ GCSE	30	7	53	10	+23	432
Higher/A level	39	5	43	13	+34	280
Degree/HE	32	7	50	11	+25	479
All	30	6	52	11	+24	1594

Table A.4 Impact of the Scottish Parliament on public transport

% who think that having a Scottish Parliament is...	...increasing the standard	...reducing the standard	...making no difference	Don't know	Net balance (increase-reduce)	Sample size
Age						
18-24	39	3	45	13	+36	108
25-39	20	7	59	13	+13	380
40-64	23	10	54	14	+13	707
65+	35	7	49	9	+28	396
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	13	12	66	10	+1	154
Devolution	29	8	51	12	+21	852
Independence	28	6	56	10	+22	478
Urban/rural area						
Large urban	26	8	57	9	+22	508
Other urban	28	7	46	19	+21	375
Accessible small towns	21	8	62	10	+13	187
Remote small towns	28	8	55	8	+20	113
Accessible rural	32	7	50	11	+25	219
Remote rural	23	7	55	15	+16	192
Level of awareness of SE activities						
Not much/nothing at all	19	7	58	15	+12	526
A great deal	33	9	49	9	+24	563
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	14	11	64	11	+3	331
A great deal/quite a lot	34	7	50	9	+27	484
Who is responsible for standards in transport						
UK govt	26	9	62	3	+17	183
SE	46	9	43	3	+37	498
How often use public transport						
Never	17	7	56	20	+10	332
Once a week or more	33	8	54	6	+25	475
All	26	8	53	12	+18	1594

Table A.5 Perceptions of health service standards in the last 12 months (2006)

% who say standards have...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Don't know	Net balance (increased - fallen)	Sample size
Scottish party identification						
SNP	16	24	55	6	-39	271
Lib Dem	23	39	31	7	-8	142
Labour	24	31	39	5	-15	532
Conservative	16	33	39	12	-23	207
None	20	29	37	13	-17	215
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	10	25	60	6	-50	331
A great deal/quite a lot	29	32	32	7	-3	484
Who is responsible for standards in health						
UK govt	15	29	57	-	-42	514
SE	32	35	33	-	-1	395
<i>All</i>	20	30	42	8	-22	1594

Table A.6 Perceptions of education standards in the last 12 months (2006)

% who say standards have...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Don't know	Net balance (increased – fallen)	Sample size
Age						
18-24	42	27	9	22	+33	108
25-39	31	33	15	20	+16	380
40-64	27	37	20	17	+7	707
65+	28	24	24	24	+4	396
Urban/rural area						
Large urban	30	34	17	19	+13	508
Other urban	34	27	18	21	+16	375
Accessible small towns	27	39	17	17	+10	187
Remote small towns	24	44	15	16	+9	113
Accessible rural	31	30	22	17	+9	219
Remote rural	17	29	24	30	-7	192
Who has most influence						
UK govt	27	37	20	15	+7	592
SE	30	37	15	19	+15	384
Local councils	39	26	16	18	+23	281
EU	26	27	23	23	+3	188
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	19	30	31	20	-12	331
A great deal/quite a lot	40	33	12	15	+25	484
Who is responsible for standards in education						
UK govt	32	35	33	-	-1	315
SE	45	39	16	-	+29	498
Whether school aged children live in household						
No children aged 4-15	27	30	20	-	+7	1287
Children aged 4-15	39	40	13		+26	307
<i>All</i>	30	32	18	20	+12	1594

Table A.7 Perceptions of public transport standards in the last 12 months (2006)

% who say standards have...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Don't know	Net balance (increased – fallen)	Sample size
Age						
18-24	37	34	17	12	+20	108
25-39	19	44	19	17	0	380
40-64	26	30	21	22	+5	707
65+	41	29	15	15	+26	396
Urban/rural area						
Large urban	33	35	20	12	+13	508
Other urban	25	33	19	23	+6	375
Accessible small towns	27	36	15	23	+12	187
Remote small towns	22	37	20	22	+2	113
Accessible rural	36	28	17	19	+19	219
Remote rural	22	35	19	24	+3	192
Who has most influence						
UK govt	25	39	20	17	+5	592
SE	32	32	20	16	+12	384
Local councils	32	33	20	16	+12	281
EU	33	27	16	23	+17	188
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	21	30	28	21	-7	331
A great deal/quite a lot	34	36	15	15	+19	484
Who is responsible for standards in transport						
UK govt	32	38	30	-	+2	183
SE	50	33	17	-	+33	498
How often use public transport						
Never	16	29	16	40	0	332
Once a week or more	40	34	23	3	+17	475
<i>All</i>	29	34	19	18	+10	1594

Table A.8 Perceptions of the economy in the last 12 months (2006)

% who say standards have...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Don't know	Net balance (increased - fallen)	Sample size
Sex						
Men	34	32	19	15	+15	701
Women	27	25	21	27	+6	893
Age						
18-24	37	31	3	29	+34	108
25-39	33	26	20	21	+13	380
40-64	31	30	21	18	+10	709
65+	22	27	26	25	-4	396
Self rated hardship						
Difficult to cope on present income	21	30	27	22	-7	177
Living comfortably	36	27	16	21	+20	803
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	18	36	29	17	-11	154
Devolution	32	29	17	21	+15	852
Independence	34	27	24	15	+10	478
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	14	28	39	19	-25	331
A great deal/quite a lot	43	27	13	19	+30	484
Who is responsible for the economy						
UK govt	28	33	40	-	-12	331
SE	50	31	18	-	+32	449
All	30	28	20	21	+10	1594

Table A.9 Perceptions of general standard of living in the last 12 months (2006)

% who say standards have...	...increased	...stayed the same	...fallen	Don't know	Net balance (increased – fallen)	Sample size
Self rated hardship						
Difficult to cope on present income	21	32	41	6	-20	177
Living comfortably	42	37	15	6	+27	803
Level of awareness of SE activities						
Not much/nothing at all	26	38	26	9	0	526
A great deal/a lot	42	35	19	4	+23	563
How much trust SE to make fair decisions						
Not very much/not at all	25	33	38	4	-13	331
A great deal/quite a lot	46	36	13	5	+33	484
Who is responsible for standard of living						
UK govt	29	37	34	-	-5	510
SE	49	32	18	-	+31	332
All	35	37	22	6	+13	1594

ISSN 0950 2254
ISBN 978 0 7559 6846 6
{Web only publication}

www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

RR Donnelley B53907 11/07

ISBN 978-0-7559-6846-6



9 780755 968466