

# THE NATIONAL

THE NEWSPAPER THAT SUPPORTS AN INDEPENDENT SCOTLAND



**Today:** We burst the Unionist bubble and expose the lies told by Better Together in 2014



# Vote No to save Scotland's place in the EU!

**W**HAT is the process for removing our EU citizenship?" Better

Together asked Twitter that in 2014. The answer – drumroll, please – was “voting Yes”.

A Yes vote would ensure Scotland lost all the benefits of EU membership, we were told, because we'd have to get to the back of the mythical membership queue behind bigger, more worthy nations, and once we'd reached the front we'd get a knock-back anyway, because of the power of the much-quoted Spanish veto.

But, in the words of former Spanish Consul General Miguel Angel Vecino, joining the European Union is not like “waiting in a shop for your turn to arrive”, it depends on meeting stated criteria, and Scotland already does.

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Voting Yes will mean Scotland leaves the European Union.

**WE SAY:** Voting No did that – a Yes majority could help this country rejoin the influential and stable EU, regaining entry to the massive single market.



Fabian Zuleeg, of the European Policy Centre, has said rejection for Scotland would be “inconceivable” and Lord Kerr, a former government minister and Secretary General of the European Convention, described queue claims as being “all balls”, saying that accession negotiations for an independent Scotland would be “very swift”.

The No majority did secure Scotland's place in the European Union – but only for 21 months. The Brexit referendum which was dismissed as a distant possibility as Scotland considered its future was speedily called as then-prime minister David Cameron basked in the No win and gambled on another victory in a ballot allowed to appease Eurosceptics in his party.

And now we're here, six and a half weeks away from the

deadline for leaving the EU against our will.

Scotland voted to Remain in the EU, but as a part of the UK, that's not enough to keep us there. The Leave majorities returned in England and Wales are wrenching us out of the almost 30-strong European “family of nations”, our biggest growing export market.

And calls from Scottish ministers to respect the wishes of Scotland's people and avoid a No-Deal crash-out go unanswered. There are still no concrete answers on what withdrawal will look like, but Boris Johnson has said he's prepared to leave without a deal and former cabinet minister Amber Rudd claim he's actively preparing for it, at the expense of any attempt at securing agreement on trade and the movement of people.

But there is cross-party consensus at the Scottish Parliament that leaving will be bad for our economy and our population. Universities and



charities are also warning about what Brexit will do to their sectors and society in general.

Parliament has been suspended and a General Election – our third since 2016 – is on the cards.

Against this chaotic backdrop, it's hard to give any credence to the indyref argument that Yes would mean uncertainty and No would ensure strength and stability.

But Europe has signalled that it

is ready to consider an application by an independent Scotland.

Last year Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's chief Brexit negotiator, said there is “no big obstacle” to accession for a newly sovereign Edinburgh.

And as many as 50 Green politicians from across the continent put their names to a letter pledging that an independent Scotland would be “most welcome as a full member of the European

Union”. Germany's Terry Reintke said: “The question of Scotland's constitutional future and its relationship with the EU is for the people in Scotland to decide. Irrespective of what they choose to do, we want to send a strong, cross-party, cross-national message that the door to a common European future remains open.”

That old tweet doesn't just look dated, it looks disingenuous.

## Remain in the Union to keep food prices low

**E**NGLAND subsidises your weekly shop and independence would see costs skyrocket, Better Together said.

The campaign claimed costs are lower “because we are part of the UK” and, “if Scotland votes Yes, the costs of getting food to Scotland would be passed on to Scottish customers instead of being spread across the UK.”

Some big supermarkets came out to back that message, with the chief executive of Morrisons amongst them. He said the hike would be down to the introduction of a new regulatory regime.

The chairman of the John Lewis Partnership, which owns

Waitrose, told the BBC, new pricing strategies were an “economic consequence of a Yes vote”. Asda's head also said his business might increase its mark-up.

Better Together said the difference could be as high as 16%. But Tesco called that claim “entirely speculative”, telling one customer in a written response that it would “continue to offer the best prices, whatever the outcome of the referendum”.

There are plenty of factors that influence the cost of your shopping, one of which is sourcing – where your produce comes from.

Major chains like Tesco have been buying more from Scottish makers and growers

in response to consumer demand. If that trend was to continue and even accelerate after independence – something that would certainly please the farming and food and drink sectors – it could actually drive till prices down.

That's already the case in Ireland and our food and drink sector is a massive success story.

After years of domestic and international growth, it is worth a record £15 billion to the economy and this is forecast to double by 2030.

Whisky is not just Scotland's biggest food and drink export product, it's the UK's, and is worth £4.7bn a year.

There's also the small point of corporation tax to contend

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Voting Yes will make your weekly shop more expensive.

**WE SAY:** There are many factors affecting the price of goods, most of those controlled by Westminster. Independence would let Scottish leaders do deals to help our consumers and keep producers, keeping groceries as affordable as possible. Brexit is the real threat to prices.



## There's no need to vote Yes – Labour will kick out the Tories!

**T**HAT was according to Ruth Davidson as she addressed her party's low popularity in Scotland.

The MSP went on record before the referendum to say that voters worried about continued Tory rule from Westminster need not vote Yes – because there was a Labour take-over on the cards.

Davidson, then leader of the Scottish Tories, predicted David Cameron would lose the next General Election, held eight months after indyref, as Ed Miliband was swept into Downing Street.

We all know how that turned out.

A buoyant Cameron secured a majority as the Labour and LibDem votes collapsed.

In fact, Labour achieved its worst result in almost 30 years, with Better Together figureheads Jim Murphy and Douglas Alexander knocked out of their seats.

That ushered in a newly confident Tory party that no longer had to seek compromise deals with old coalition partners the LibDems. And while Cameron is no longer running the UK Government, his party still is.

We are in the midst of an unprecedented boorach which has brought the UK parliamentary system to its knees. Parliament has been suspended, Brexit is just a few short weeks away and Scotland's highest court has ruled that the Prime Minister has acted unlawfully. And even against this backdrop, Labour is still languishing in the polls.

A YouGov poll released last week found the party's popularity has slipped again, falling two points in a week to 23% in a survey about General Election voting intentions.

For Scotland, the level was a dismal 8%.

Labour isn't going to save Scotland. It can't even save itself.

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Don't vote Yes, Labour will save Scotland from the Tories.

**WE SAY:** Cameron and Davidson may be gone, but the Tories are still in charge and Labour's chances of gaining control of Downing Street are increasingly small. Anyway, shouldn't it be up to Scotland whether we want a Tory government?





# Vote NO for a fairer society

**A** NO vote would help deliver this, according to then-prime minister David Cameron and Johann Lamont, then-Scottish Labour leader and Better Together campaigner.

But the difference between the haves and have-nots has become even more entrenched after a decade of Westminster-imposed austerity.

According to the Institute for Public Policy Research, the UK is the fifth most unequal state in Europe, with more than one fifth of people living below the poverty line after housing costs – and most of these households are in work.

Almost one in three children living in poverty and the income of the richest 20% is six times higher than the poorest 20%. As much as 44% of the UK's wealth is held by 10% of the people.

Wage growth has stalled, more people are turning to food banks and the UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty, Philip Alston, says "ideological" cuts to public services, like the imposition of Universal Credit, are to blame.

On a fact-finding tour of the UK last year, Alston, who met with ordinary people, said he'd heard of children attending school with no food in their stomachs, people living in unheated homes and "story after story" of suicidal thoughts or attempts.

The UK's social security safety net has been "deliberately removed and replaced with a harsh and uncaring ethos", he reported.

The Trussell Trust food bank network has experienced a 73% increase in need

over the past five years. Last year its 135 Scottish branches gave out more than 210,600 emergency parcels and, over the recent summer holidays, it warned it was expecting record demand.

Operations manager Laura Ferguson said: "More and more families across Scotland are struggling to make ends meet, unable to afford food and facing hunger as a result. This isn't right."

The Trussell Trust also blames Universal Credit – a driver of rent arrears in the council and social sectors – for exacerbating poverty and the grassroots Back to School Bank network – established after indyref by campaigners who met during that activity – says more and more families are unable to afford uniforms for their children.

The two-child cap cuts off benefits for third or subsequent children, regardless of a family's circumstances, and the hated rape clause forces women to identify their sons and daughters as the product of sexual violence if they wish to access the continued support allowed in these cases.

Charities say that's stigmatising and traumatising and could make things worse for families.

Meanwhile, cases of people with long-term and limiting health issues and whose social security payments are cut continue to emerge. They include people with terminal conditions who have been ruled fit to work and mobility payments reduced for those who cannot get about unaided.

Those put through the assessment process for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) have reported "humiliating" and "intrusive" ordeals.

And while the Scottish Government is spending £125 million to support families with children and mitigate the bedroom tax – which cut payments to those with an "extra" bedroom in their homes – Alston warned that efforts of devolved administrations to make up for Westminster policies are "not sustainable".

He wrote: "For devolved administrations to have to spend resources to shield people from Government policies is a powerful indictment."

Westminster says its policies are helping the worst-off, but focusing cuts on women, children, people with disabilities and those on low incomes is not – according to think tanks, economists, academics and even the United Nations – making Scotland, or the UK, fairer.

And analysts say Brexit is likely to make inequality even worse, especially if we crash out without a deal.

Instead of bracing for the worst, we should be working towards a better lot for everyone in our society.



## UK protects YOUR jobs

**S**HIPBUILDING, the public sector, retail, finance – all of these are cushioned by the strength and stability of the United Kingdom, so Scots were told.

Project Fear went hard on employment and the economy, with agriculture, fishing and more all targeted.

The message was that independence would see big private employers relocate out of Scotland, would mean the loss of key Ministry of Defence contracts for shipyards, would force the closure of UK Government offices and would decimate the high street.

Glasgow's historic shipyards were guaranteed a contract for 13 frigates in the event of a No vote, with then-defence secretary Philip Hammond and the MoD both stating that this was the "most effective location" for work on the navy vessels.

In an independent Scotland, the public was told, the yards would have to live off of the "scraps from the UK table", with negligible export work and impossible-to-beat foreign competition.

There was to be a frigate factory, Clyde workers were promised, that would keep their jobs safe for years.

But no contract was signed before the vote and at a review in 2015 the 13 Type 26 vessels were reduced to eight. Another five lighter ships were

to be built on the Clyde – before it transpired that this work would be carried out across the UK, not just in Glasgow.

The far lower order for the Clydeside yards killed off BAE Systems' frigate factory plan, which, it had been hoped, would increase the competitiveness of the site.

GMB union organiser Gary Cook told The National workers had been misled as indyref approached, saying: "It was all in the run-up to the referendum, where ship workers campaigned very hard to remain part of the UK. We believe we have been lied to."

Campaigning for support, Labour's Ed Miliband said civil service jobs like those at HMRC centres in East Kilbride and Dundee were at risk. Despite getting the result Better Together wanted, the axe still fell on the civil service in Scotland, with facilities cut in Aberdeen, Bathgate, Livingston and more.

While some jobs transferred to Glasgow and Edinburgh, others will end in redundancy and South Lanarkshire Council says the loss of the East Kilbride centre will rob the local economy of up to £30.7 million.

Meanwhile, B&Q boss Sir Ian Cheshire warned the DIY chain would put a pin in investment in the case of a Yes win, then announced a raft of closures in Scotland and the rest of the UK just six months after the vote.

And though Better Together also worked with steelworkers union Community, telling members a No vote would protect jobs, it took the Scottish Government, not Westminster, to save staff at Cambuslang and Motherwell after it brokered a deal with new buyer Liberty when former owner Tata announced closure plans that would have cost almost 300 posts.

In 2013, Alistair Darling also warned that independence could put support for farmers in jeopardy. That was in the same year that the UK Government decided to withhold £160 million in EU funding from the Scottish farmers it was intended for.

Despite pleas from farming leaders and Scots MPs, last year Michael Gove said it had been distributed elsewhere and couldn't be recovered. But in the last few days, new Chancellor Sajid Javid has magically found exactly £160m for our farming sector – just as Boris Johnson made his bid for a General Election.

Johnson himself said that "a pound spent in Croydon is of far more value to the country than a pound spent in Strathclyde".

If that's the attitude of those who govern us, what proof is there that we're really Better Together?

# Scotland can lead not leave the UK

**A**MONGST the promises of the No campaign was that Scotland would "lead the UK, not leave the UK".

That came from David Cameron himself and, talking up Scotland's place within the United Kingdom, the then-prime minister stated that constitutional change "would be like separating the waters of the River Tweed and the North Sea".

Scotland, it was suggested, would now be in the driving seat. We were in, we were told, a "partnership of equals".

But that was before voting closed.

Since then, Scotland's voice has been ignored on major issues, from drugs laws to EU membership and defence spending.

Authorities in Glasgow set out a plan to tackle that city's HIV crisis and drug deaths epidemic by setting up a drug consumption clinic to be staffed by medics, in line with international best practice.

It works in Denmark, Canada and Germany but it can't even be tried in Scotland, because the UK Government refuses to allow it – even though lives are at stake.

And while campaigners and MSPs have called on the £31 billion Trident scheme to be scrapped, nuclear warheads will continue to be stored near our biggest city because Westminster says so.

Churches, trade unions and the Scottish Parliament have all voiced their opposition to the renewal of this Cold War weapons system.

And not only has research shown that the public is also against it, but voters believe the Scottish Parliament should have the final say on Trident.

But none of that matters to Westminster – so much for Scotland leading the UK.

Meanwhile, it goes without saying that Scotland's anti-Brexit majority has done nothing to determine the outcome of that vote, or the Government's handling of it.

Despite the will of the people being clearly expressed in our Remain vote, Scotland is to be taken out of the EU.

No special arrangements are to be made to protect our interests, and without a Yes majority there is nothing we can do about it.

Northern Ireland also voted to Remain, while Wales voted to Leave.

But even if every voter in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland chose to vote in the same way in a contest, they would add up, based on the most current levels, to 7,454,100 – still far smaller than England's 38,693,900.

In June last year the House of Commons voted through a "power grab" on Holyrood.

In the Commons, Government minister David Lidington talked down the clock

during the 15 minute interval left to discuss what would happen with powers over devolved areas like fishing, farming and more when Brexit does happen.

No-one else had the chance to speak and MPs agreed to let those powers go to Westminster, not Holyrood.

That doesn't feel like a partnership of equals, does it?

So how serious was Cameron's proposal? Probably not very, seeing as he brought in a law change preventing our MPs from having a say on some matters affecting our budget.

Under English Votes for English Laws (EVEL), Scottish MPs cannot vote on England-only matters, regardless of the impact on Barnett consequential – the payments directed to Scotland under the Barnett Formula as a proportion of the cash boosts allotted to projects elsewhere.

The SNP, Labour and the LibDems say this contravenes the spirit and intention of the Smith Commission, which was set up to fulfil Unionist promises made during indyref.

Even the Scottish Conservatives have a problem with the rule-change, with Stirling MP Stephen Kerr choosing the day Boris Johnson became Prime Minister to lead a call for a review of EVEL, stating: "The sooner it is gone, the better."

In a Westminster system which denies Scotland say on matters both domestic and cross-border, and in a Union so imbalanced, what chance is there that Scotland could ever take the lead?

That would require systematic change so thorough that it is frankly unimaginable.

To get things done, we have to do them ourselves by delivering a Yes majority.

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Lead the UK, not leave the UK.

**WE SAY:** We're not allowed to get rid of nuclear weapons, we're not allowed to take actions that could save lives and we're not even allowed to stay in the EU after voting for it. We're not leading the UK, we have to leave it – for all our sakes.

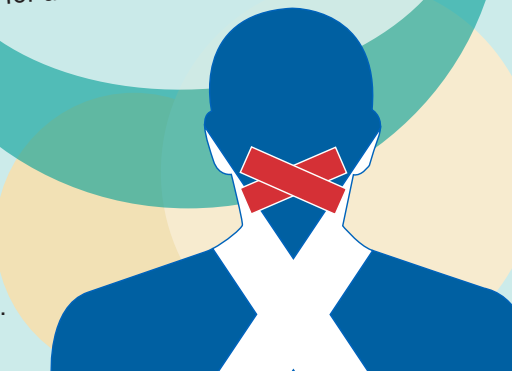
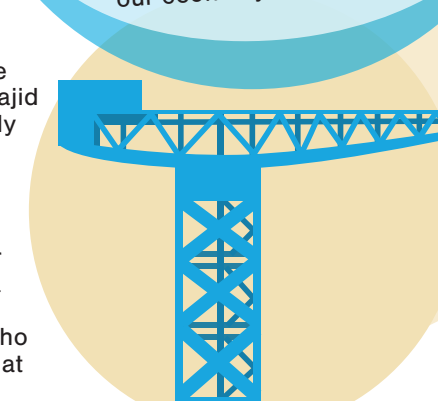
**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** A No majority will help build a fairer UK.

**WE SAY:** Inequality is up thanks to rising in-work poverty, child poverty and welfare cuts. Being part of the UK isn't helping the worst-off, it's harming them – and that hurts us all.



**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Voting No protects Scottish jobs and industry.

**WE SAY:** Voting No didn't protect shipbuilding promises, didn't stop civil service cuts and didn't prevent big businesses from shutting up shop. A Yes majority gives us the levers we need to protect our economy.





# A No vote could save your life ... stay in the UK to protect the NHS

**R**EMAINING in the United Kingdom would "secure the best future" for Scotland's NHS, it was claimed. The health service here is fully devolved to Holyrood and campaigners said giving Edinburgh overall control would reduce spending and damage standards.

compulsory and GPs are obliged to consider which hospital offers the best deal rather than which will give the best outcome for patients. "In Scotland, we are not going down this road - but the more Westminster cuts Scotland's budget, and the more the state withdraws from direct NHS

provision in England, the greater Scotland's budget will be squeezed as a consequence because of the way the Scottish Parliament is funded."

Despite recruitment gaps, research by the Nuffield Trust health think tank shows there are more GPs per head in Scotland than the UK as a whole, at 76 per 100,000 people to just 60.

But, as with so many other areas of public life, it is feared that Brexit withdrawal will reduce the number of health staff available at all levels - and lead to medicine shortages. This includes supplies of insulin for those with diabetes and radio-isotopes needed to treat cancer.

Medical union BMA Scotland, the Royal College of Nursing, the Royal College of Midwives, Unison and the TUC are amongst those to express their concerns about what will happen if No Deal is reached.

They said "no responsible government" should take risks that could prove fatal.

Last week NHS Lothian revealed its No-Deal planning, which includes serious cuts to services for women - already predicted to be hardest hit by Brexit due to family responsibilities, lower-paid work and more precarious jobs.

Cervical screening, post-natal checks and long-term contraception could be affected, along with dental treatment and eye tests, as the health board works to put "vital" frontline services first.

These include palliative care, GP practices, community nursing, vaccinations for children and more.

Earlier this year US President Donald Trump said profit-making American companies would be able to bid for "phenomenal" post-Brexit deals in those circumstances.

Then-health secretary Matt Hancock moved to quell the outrage that followed and Labour's Jeremy Corbyn said: "Our NHS is not for sale".

But there is still no certainty about what will happen after October 31.

Trump said: "I think everything with a trade deal is on the table. So NHS or anything else, or a lot more than that. But everything will be on the table, absolutely."

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said her government's view is that "Scotland's NHS is not and must never be 'on the table' in a trade negotiation with President Trump, or anyone else for that matter".

And let's remember that funding for NHS Scotland is determined by the settlement from London, through the Barnett Formula.

So to get full say over this - let's remember that Westminster can overrule Holyrood if it chooses, even shutting the Parliament - Scotland must achieve independence.

Only then can we set the terms of negotiations about our most vital and cherished institutions.



The argument went that membership of the larger UK economy acts as a safeguard against over-reliance on oil as a source of tax revenue.

The take from the oil and gas sector has varied wildly in recent years as a result of global pressures.

Labour's Jackie Baillie, who was on the board of Better Together, said Scotland had the "best of both worlds" under the status quo, taking decisions about the NHS but getting the "investment needed to sustain" it from the overall UK tax pool.

Alternatively, NHS For Yes co-founder Dr Willie Wilson said independence offered the best protection, saying: "Privatisation and commercialisation are now rampant in the health service south of the Border. This means that competitive tendering is now

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** UK cash keeps NHS Scotland afloat - and protects it from risks.

**WE SAY:** The UK has put the health service in jeopardy, with staffing, budgets and even the supply of life-saving and a prolonging drugs now under a cloud. Backing the Union gives no protection to NHS Scotland.



# For a green revolution vote No

**O**NLY a No win could deliver the renewables revolution that Scotland - and the world - needs, it was claimed.

Ed Davey, then the UK energy secretary, said that Scotland could "lose billions in renewable energy subsidies with a Yes vote and would put our green energy revolution at risk".

He said £530 million in subsidies - more than one third

of the UK total - for wind, wave and tidal schemes were funnelled into Scotland, and independence would "slam the brakes on wind farm projects".

And he claimed the ambitious carbon capture project which Peterhead power station was in the running for - aimed at tackling climate change - would be in jeopardy, with £1 billion of public investment now withheld due to a border change.

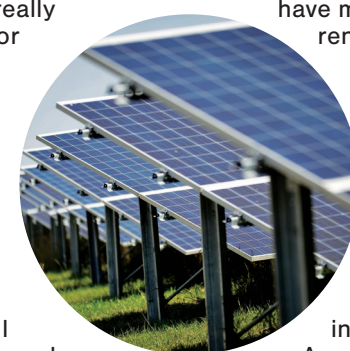
And David Cameron said

there was the chance to make renewables a "really great industry for people in Scotland - but we will do that only if we keep our country together".

But after the No majority was returned, the UK Government still pulled that cash and

instituted support changes that have made it harder for the renewables sector.

Cuts were made to subsidies aimed at encouraging the uptake of solar panels and wind turbines, despite pleas from sector leaders, environmental charities and individual companies. According to industry



experts, that could cost the Scottish economy £3bn.

And the carbon capture cash was pulled just six months before it was supposed to be awarded, grounding the project before it had even begun.

With much of our environmental law passed at EU level, campaigners now fear Brexit will trigger a rule-change which harms the environment, potentially encouraging the use of pollutants and damaging wild spaces.

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Vote No to boost renewable energy and fight climate change.

**WE SAY:** Scrapped schemes and broken promises - we aren't Better Together when it comes to green power or the environment.

# The UK will ensure that your pension is safe

**P**ROJECT Fear certainly didn't hold back when it came to older people and retirement. As part of its appeal to older voters, it went hard on the message that Yes would cost senior citizens their pensions and force more into working for longer.

The UK state pension was hailed as "a great example of how we share good things across the UK" in campaign material, which stated that the status quo means "we can support all our pensioners in the same way whether times are good or bad".

Independence, it was argued, would slash cash for retirees, push the retirement age up and see other services hammered to allow the new Scottish Government to meet commitments to older people.

But in the five years since then, pensions - now the lowest in the developed world - have come under a prolonged attack focused on women and those in age-gap relationships.

Changes to women's state pension age were introduced without giving those affected time to put aside the money they would need to cover the gap.

Women born in the 1950s have organised into the WASPI campaign to press for "justice", but Westminster has so far ignored their calls - even though almost four million are said to be affected.

Many will have to work years longer than they planned and though the UK Government claimed reversing the change and giving those affected more time to prepare would cost £30 billion, research commissioned by the SNP put this at just £8bn - a fraction of the stated cost. Meanwhile, thousands more who have partners of working age have had their entitlement reduced in what charity Age UK called a "substantial stealth cut".

New pensioners with partners younger than 65 can no longer claim pension credit - a means-tested top-up payment for the poorest - because of that age difference.

The change will cost them more than £7000 a year.

And a think tank headed by former Tory work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith has now suggested raising the state pension age to 75 for both sexes.

That's despite the fact that health inequalities mean many will never reach that age. While average life expectancy in Scotland is now 81 for women and 77 for

men, those figures are as low as 70 and 63 in Glasgow's Parkhead area. Better Together said Scotland had more reason to worry about pension provision than other parts of the UK because "Scotland's people are getting older at a faster rate than the rest of the UK".

This was probably supposed to mean we have an ageing population, not that ageing here is somehow accelerated, and there's some truth in it - but not for the reasons the No campaign put forwards.

Increasingly restrictive UK immigration rules drawn up to appease Tory heartlands and Brexit hardliners will have a disproportionately high impact on Scotland, preventing working-age people from coming into the country to pay taxes and take up roles in health, social care and other sectors. The reduced income tax take will put pressure on national and local budgets, and a lack of available labour may threaten vital services, especially in remote and rural areas.

The Scottish Government has urged Westminster to rethink a likely earnings minimum for incomers which is less than Scotland's average wage.

It has also called for the powers needed to find solutions to the problems analysts say are set to come as a result of UK Government decisions.

But because we're all supposedly Better Together, there's been no allowance for Scotland's unique circumstances.

Pensions are under threat in the UK. That's something we should all be scared of.

**BETTER TOGETHER SAID:** Voting Yes will cost you your pension.

**WE SAY:** Women and the worst-off have had payments cut since indyref - and a top Tory ex-minister wants us all to work until 75. Yes isn't the danger, No is.





# SUMMER OF '14: OUR MAGAZINE



To mark the fifth anniversary of the indyref, we've published a fantastic magazine featuring some of Scotland's best writers. To read what Iain Macwhirter, Ruth Wishart, Hugh MacDonald, Nicola Sturgeon, Alan Cumming, Carolyn Leckie, the Wee Ginger Dug and many more feel about 2014, order your special souvenir copy today:

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