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## Scotland's Future – blueprint for a fairer country

### Comprehensive guide for a new, prosperous society.

First Minister Alex Salmond today launched the “most comprehensive blueprint for an independent country ever published”: *Scotland's Future – Your Guide to an Independent Scotland*.

The guide, which runs to 670 pages and 170,000 words, outlines the shape of the thriving Scotland that will emerge in the event of a vote for independence in next year's referendum. It also offers a transformational vision of work and social policy, with a revolution in childcare at its heart.

The guide sets out the case for independence and outlines the journey, following a yes vote on September 18 next year, that Scotland will make to independence day on March 24, 2016.

The guide is structured in five parts:

- An overview of the case for independence, including why Scotland needs independence and what a newly independent Scotland will look like.
- A description of the strengths of Scotland's national finances, a projection of Scotland's opening financial position at the point of independence and the current Scottish Government's priorities for the first term of a Scottish Parliament if elected in the May 2016 elections.
- A detailed analysis of the changes needed across Scotland, the opportunities that independence provides for any future Scottish government to make those changes, and the particular priorities for action identified by this government.
- The timescale and process for Scotland to become an independent country following a yes vote; the transition that will take place and the negotiations and agreements that will be required. It also sets out the opportunities for a modern democracy with a written constitution and describes how equality and human rights will be protected and promoted.
- The answers to 650 detailed questions about the opportunities and practicalities of independence.

The guide, published today, includes details of the savings that can be made with independence, including half a billion pounds on defence spending and savings from no longer contributing to the funding of the Westminster Parliament.

It also outlines the Scottish Government's policies on issues such as currency, international representation - including independent and equal membership of the European Union - citizenship, defence and security, the harnessing of Scotland's natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations and the fiscal levers necessary to grow the Scottish economy.

The guide also details a range of policies that would be introduced if the current Scottish Government is elected to be the government of an independent Scotland, including:

- A transformation in childcare, helping more women into work and providing up to 35,000 jobs.
- A safe, triple-locked pension that meets Scotland's needs and puts more money in the pockets of our pensioners.
- A guaranteed minimum wage that rises alongside the cost of living to make sure the lowest paid get a fair wage for a fair days work.
- Basic rate tax allowances and tax credits that will also rise at least in line with inflation.
- A change to the way 'green levies' are paid for - saving families around £70 a year on their energy bills.
- A fairer welfare system, including a halt to the rollout of Universal Credit and the abolition of the 'Bedroom Tax'.
- A productivity and competitive boost to secure the position of Scottish business.

The First Minister said:

“This is the most comprehensive blueprint for an independent country ever published, not just for Scotland but for any prospective independent nation.

“But more than that, it is a mission statement and a prospectus for the kind of country we should be and which this Government believes we can be.

“Our vision is of an independent Scotland regaining its place as an equal member of the family of nations – however, we do not seek independence as an end in itself,

but rather as a means to changing Scotland for the better.

"We know we have the people, the skills and resources to make Scotland a more successful country. What we need now are the economic tools and powers to build a more competitive, dynamic economy and create more jobs.

"This guide contains policies which offer nothing less than a revolution in employment and social policy for Scotland, with a transformational change in childcare at the heart of those plans. Our proposals will make it far easier for parents to balance work and family life and will allow many more people, especially women, to move into the workforce, fostering economic growth and helping to boost revenues - which will in itself help pay for the policy.

"With these policies, we can begin the job of undoing the damage caused by the vast social disparities which have seen the UK become one of the most unequal societies in the developed world.

"And we believe it is only with the powers of Independence - by completing the powers of our national Parliament - that we will gain the tools we need to create a more prosperous and fairer society."

Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:

"We want as many people as possible across Scotland to read the guide and make up their own minds about Scotland's future.

"This is an incredibly thorough and detailed guide, which includes 650 questions about an independent Scotland – and delivers on the answers.

"When it comes to social equality, health, quality of life and economic performance, Scotland has too often lagged behind the performance of our near neighbours across Northern Europe – many of them countries of similar size to Scotland.

"We know that Scotland has huge natural resources and enormous talent among our communities and our workforce – but only independence will give us the ability to make the most of our potential. This is an unprecedented chance to transform our country for the better. Our employment and social policy proposals contained in this guide, including the revolution in childcare, show what is possible.

"It illustrates how the powers of independence can be used to benefit individuals, families, communities and the nation as a whole - and it has economic growth, jobs and fairness at its heart.

"This is the only detailed plan for Scotland's future, and today's publication marks a decisive shift in the debate on what that future should be."

Notes to Editors:

More details of how *Scotland's Future – Your Guide to an Independent Scotland* will be made available to the general public will be outlined by the Deputy First Minister in a statement to Parliament later today.

The guide, with a first print-run of 20,000 copies, has been designed to be as accessible and reader-friendly as possible. It is in a tablet size, similar to an iPad or Kindle, so lends itself well to being read as an e-book. A summary document will also be available in print and can be downloaded from the Scottish Government website here: [www.scotland.gov.uk/scotlandsfuture](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/scotlandsfuture)

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