

Scottish Social Attitudes 2019: Attitudes to young people

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

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Introduction

The Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) Survey was established in 1999 by ScotCen Social Research, an independent research organisation based in Edinburgh, and part of NatCen Social Research, Britain's largest independent research agency. SSA is conducted annually, using face-to-face interviews with people selected using random probability sampling, to ensure findings are representative of adults across Scotland. The survey has provided an important source of data on attitudes to government and to the Scottish Parliament over the last 20 years, as well as attitudes to a wide range of other subjects. For the 2019 survey, 1,022 individuals aged 16 and above were interviewed between 30th August 2019 and 18th March 2020.

This paper presents the findings of the Scottish Government funded questions in SSA 2019 covering the amount of say young people should have in decisions that affect their lives. These questions were also asked in 2017. It examines whether attitudes have changed between 2017 and 2019, and whether attitudes varied by social groups.

Attitudes to young people

The Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) Survey 2019 asked respondents two questions about their views on how much say young people should have in decisions that affect their lives:

“How much say, if any, should 11 to 15 year olds in Scotland have in decisions that affect their lives?”

“How much say, if any, should 16 to 18 year olds in Scotland have in decisions that affect their lives?”

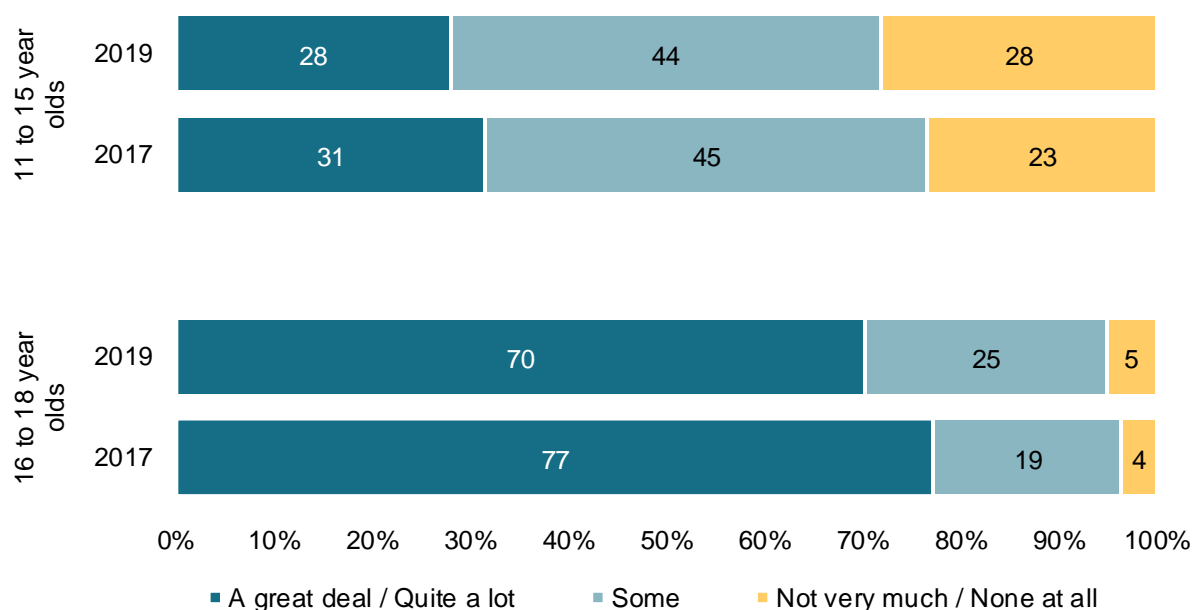
How much say young people should have in decisions that affect their lives

The majority of adults felt that young people aged 16 to 18 should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say in decisions that affect their lives. The proportion believing this for those aged 11 to 15 was much smaller.

- 70% of adults felt that those aged 16 to 18 should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 28% for those aged 11 to 15.
- Only 5% of adults felt that those aged 16 to 18 should have ‘not very much’ or ‘none at all’, compared with 28% for those aged 11 to 15.

Views on how much say those aged 16 to 18 and those aged 11 to 15 should have both moved significantly in the same direction between 2017 and 2019. The proportion of adults who felt that those aged 16 to 18 should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say fell, from 77% in 2017 to 70% in 2019. The proportion who felt that those aged 11 to 15 should have ‘not very much’ say or ‘none at all’ increased, from 23% in 2017 to 28% in 2019.

Figure 1: How much say 11 to 15 year olds / 16 to 18 year olds should have in decisions that affect their lives by age, 2017 and 2019 (%)



Base: all respondents

Variations in attitudes between subgroups

The amount of say people felt young people should have in decisions that affect their lives varied between subgroups of the population. The main differences between subgroups in the proportion who said they should have either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say are reported below. These differences are all statistically significant.¹

The amount of say adults felt those aged 11 to 15 should have varied across subgroups as follows:

- **Age** – Feelings that those aged 11 to 15 should have a lot of say were less common among the older age groups – 36% of 16-24 year olds said they should have either ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, falling to 19% of those aged 65 and over.
- **Gender** – Women were more likely than men to believe those aged 11 to 15 should have a lot of say – 31% of women believed young people in this age group should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 24% of men.
- **Children in household** – Those with children were more likely to say that young people aged 11 to 15 should have a lot of say in decisions that affect them – 35% of those with children aged up to 18 living in the household

¹ Tables for all subgroups are provided in the supporting documents, whether differences are significant or not.

believed those aged 11 to 15 should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 24% of those not living with children.

- **Young people aged 11 to 15 in household** – Adults living with at least one young person aged 11 to 15 were more likely to say people in that age group should have a lot of say in decisions affecting them – 41% of those living with someone aged 11 to 15 said that people of that age should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 26% of those not living with someone of that age.
- **Young people don’t respect British values** – Those who agreed that young people don’t respect British values were less likely to think that people aged 11 to 15 should have a lot of say in decisions affecting their lives – 22% of those who agreed with this statement felt that those aged 11 to 15 should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 39% of those who disagreed.

There was less variation in the amount of say adults felt that young people aged 16 to 18 should have in decisions that affect their lives than noted above in relation to the younger age group. Attitudes varied across subgroups as follows:

- **Age** – Those aged 65 and over were less likely than younger people to think that those aged 16 to 18 should have a lot of say in decisions affecting their lives – for example, 61% of those aged 65 and over said that 16 to 18 year olds should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say compared with 77% of those aged 25 to 39.
- **Marital status** – The proportion feeling that 16 to 18 year olds should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say was highest among those who were single / never married² (74%) and for those who were living with their partner / not married² (76%), and lowest for those who were widowed³ (57%). Of those who were married or in a civil partnership, 69% felt that 16 to 18 year olds should have at least ‘quite a lot’ of say.⁴
- **Young people don’t respect British values** – Those who agreed that young people don’t respect British values were less likely than those who disagreed to believe that 16 to 18 year olds should have a lot of say in decisions that affect their lives – 64% of those who agreed felt that young people in this age group should have ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of say, compared with 85% of those who disagreed.

² Nor in a civil partnership

³ Or the surviving partner in a civil partnership

⁴ Marital status is highly correlated with age. Those who are single/never married and those living with a partner are on average younger than those currently married, and those who are widowed are on average older than those currently married.

Tables

This section contains the 2017 and 2019 results for questions on attitudes to young people.

Table 1: How much say should 11 to 15 year olds in Scotland have in decisions that affect their lives? (2017 and 2019, column %)

	2017	2019
	%	%
A great deal	7	8
Quite a lot	24	19
Some	45	44
Not very much	17	21
None at all	6	7
(Don't know)	1	1
(Not answered)	-	-
Sample size	1234	1022

Table 2: How much say should 16 to 18 year olds in Scotland have in decisions that affect their lives? (2017 and 2019, column %)

	2017	2019
	%	%
A great deal	32	28
Quite a lot	45	42
Some	19	25
Not very much	3	4
None at all	1	1
(Don't know)	0	0
(Not answered)	-	-
Sample size	1234	1022

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The data collected for this social research publication

are available in more detail through Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics

are available for download alongside the publication

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors.

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