

# Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2021

Public attitudes to Gaelic in Scotland –  
Technical information



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# Introduction

In 23rd September- 24th October 2021, ScotCen conducted a survey amongst its panel members including a module of questions funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig on attitudes towards the Gaelic language and heritage in Scotland<sup>1</sup>.

This document outlines some of the technical information related to the survey and associated dataset, including questionnaire wording, sample design, fieldwork approach, and information on the weighting approach.

## Key figures

<b>Fieldwork dates</b>	23/09/21 – 24/10/21
<b>Total complete interviews</b>	1,365
<b>Web interviews</b>	1169 (86%)
<b>Telephone interviews</b>	196 (14%)
<b>Survey response rate (SSA)<sup>2</sup></b>	39%
<b>Overall response rate (SSA)</b>	12%
<b>Survey response rate (BSA)<sup>1</sup></b>	79%
<b>Overall response rate (BSA)</b>	9%

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<sup>1</sup> The module of questions on Gaelic, funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, was within a panel survey which also included other modules of questions commissioned by other funders

<sup>2</sup> The survey respondents were recruited from the ScotCen Panel (previous completers of the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey in 2015, 2016, 2017 or 2019) or of the British Social Attitudes Survey 2018, 2019 or 2020 who were living in Scotland. As these cases have different patterns of non-response, the response rate is provided separately for these.

Further detail is provided in Section 2 'Sampling and fieldwork.'

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# 1 Survey dataset

This section summarises the information included in the survey dataset.

## 1.1 Sampling and weighting information

### 1.1.1 Sampling information

As the sample design for the Scottish and British Social Attitudes Surveys (SSA / BSA) (and therefore the ScotCen Panel which is recruited via the SSA / BSA surveys) involves stratification and clustering (see Section **Error! Reference source not found.**), these design features affect standard errors and should therefore be taken into account in analysis, and variables are provided to allow for this:

- Panel\_PSU indicates the Primary Sampling Unit from which the panellist was recruited in their SSA / BSA survey
- Panel\_Strata\_sc indicates the sampling stratum from which the panellist was selected

### 1.1.2 Non-response weight<sup>3</sup>

As a random probability sample, estimates are affected by non-response. In order to ensure the sample is representative of the population, a set of non-response weights has been computed to adjust for non-response to the recruitment survey (SSA / BSA), refusal to join the panel, and non-response in the survey of panel members itself.

Essentially, Sep21\_Weight\_SSA is a product of these three weights and should be used for the general analysis of the survey results.

## 1.2 Survey paradata

Two of the features of the ScotCen panel that distinguish it from other methods used in polling are that it uses both web and telephone fieldwork to boost response rates and allow coverage of those without access to the internet, and that it uses a longer fieldwork period to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take part, not just those that are 'readily available'.

Two pieces of survey paradata are included in the dataset to reflect these features:

- Sep21\_IntDate gives the date on which the survey was completed
- Sep21\_IntMode gives the mode in which the survey was completed (online or on the telephone)

## 1.3 Questionnaire data

The substantive questions carried by the survey are indicated in the variable name with the preface 'Sep21\_SSA21\_'.

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<sup>3</sup> More information about the non-response weight is provided in Section 3

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## 1.4 Fed-forward data

One of the features of the panel is that, because it was recruited via the Scottish or British Social Attitudes surveys and we regularly interview our panellists, we possess a wealth of background information on our respondents. This not only allows us to develop better response propensity models (Section 3), but also allows for analysis by a greater range of background variables<sup>4</sup>.

These variables are indicated with the preface 'FF\_' where the data is directly from the SSA or BSA questionnaire, or 'Cur\_' where it has been subsequently updated.

The following variables are included in this dataset as standard:

- Latest sex
- Latest age category (grouped) (DV)
- Latest highest educational qualification achieved
- Latest NS-SEC analytic class (grouped) (DV)
- Latest class identity
- Latest main economic activity (grouped) (DV)
- Latest subjective income
- Latest household income (2021) (grouped)
- Latest equivalised household income (2021) (grouped) (DV)
- Latest tenure (grouped)
- Latest number of people in household (DV)
- Latest household type (DV)
- Latest relationship status (grouped)
- Latest whether respondent has any children (0-18) in the household (DV)
- Latest ethnic group (grouped) (DV)
- Latest frequency of internet use (grouped)

## 1.5 Derived variables and back-coding

### 1.5.1 Derived variables

Additional derived variables<sup>5</sup> have also been computed based on the survey data and included in the dataset:

The following 5 dependent variables are the top 5 languages that respondents stated that they can speak (at LgFISpe\_Language1-4) for those who can speak another language other than English fluently:

- FIFrench - French is one of other languages spoken
- FISpanish – Spanish is one of other languages spoken
- FIItalian - Italian is one of other languages spoken
- FIGerman – German is one of other languages spoken

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that the data for these variables may have been collected before the panel survey was conducted.

<sup>5</sup> Derived variables are variables added to the dataset after data collection that are grouped based on variables (questions asked of respondents) that are in the raw dataset

- 
- FIScotsDoric – Scots / Doric is one of other languages spoken
  - FIOther – Other language was specified

Other DVs:

- Lngimp1DV - Which of the following languages do you think is most important for children in Scotland aged 5 to 15 to study?
- LngImp2DV - Which do you think is the second most important for children aged 5 to 15 to study
- LikeGIDV - Whether Gaelic one of two most important languages for children in Scotland aged 5 to 15 to study
- GaelLingDV – knowledge of Gaelic (combined measure of speaking and understanding Gaelic)
- GaeExp2DV - Exposure to Gaelic (combined measure of exposure during childhood and through the media in the last 12 months)
- LangGaeDV - How do you feel when you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Gaelic? (grouped)

## 1.5.2 Back-coding

Any open-text responses (where respondents selected ‘other’ and typed a response) to the following variables have been back-coded<sup>6</sup>:

- LangFlu - Where respondents had stated that they don’t speak any other languages (or entered ‘none’) this was back-coded to ‘No’ under Do you speak a language other than English fluently?

And any responses given within the ‘Other’ (open text) response categories for the following that can be back coded into one of the existing other response categories for this variable:

- LngImp1 or LngImp2 - In schools in Scotland where children are being taught using English all children have to study two languages in addition to English. Which of the following languages do you think is most important for children in Scotland aged 5 to 15 to study? (list of seven languages)

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<sup>6</sup> Back-coding is where any text responses to a question ‘Other’ category can be coded within one of the existing response options for that question/variable



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## 2 Sampling and fieldwork

The ScotCen Panel is based on a random probability design, with panel members originally selected at random and considerable effort put in to maximise participation in order to minimise bias.

The majority of the respondents of this survey were recruited from the Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA). A sub-set of the sample were recruited from the British Social Attitudes survey (BSA) who are living in Scotland. Thus, all respondents to this survey are living in Scotland when they took part.

### 2.1 SSA / BSA recruitment

ScotCen Panel members are recruited from the Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA) which interviews those aged 16 and over<sup>7</sup> across Scotland (including the Highlands and Islands). NatCen panel members are recruited from the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA) which interviews those aged 18 and over across Britain (south of the Caledonian canal).

The SSA and BSA are high-quality, random probability surveys: this means that households and individuals are selected at random, and then considerable effort is expended by field interviewers to achieve an interview, including visiting the selected addresses multiple times.<sup>8</sup>

For SSA in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019 fieldwork was conducted face-to-face as was BSA 2018 and 2019, with individuals selected at random. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the BSA 2020 wave was conducted using a 'push-to-web' methodology, with up to two participants in a household allowed to take part and encouraged to take part online (although an opt-in telephone option was also available).<sup>9</sup>

Those interviewed as part of the SSA / BSA were asked to join the Panel at the end of the SSA / BSA interview. Panel members recruited from SSA 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019 or BSA 2018, 2019 and 2020 (aged 18-24 only<sup>10</sup>) who had not subsequently left the panel or become 'inactive' were approached to participate (no quotas were used) and the random probability design was therefore maintained.

### 2.2 Panel fieldwork

#### 2.2.1 Fieldwork design

The fieldwork approach for the panel survey employed a sequential mixed mode design, where panel members were first invited to participate in the research online (using multiple points of contact by post, email and text) before being contacted by

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<sup>7</sup> From 2016 adults aged 16 and over were able to participate in SSA (in SSA 2015 it was adults aged 18 and over)

<sup>8</sup> More details of the SSA sampling approach can be found here:

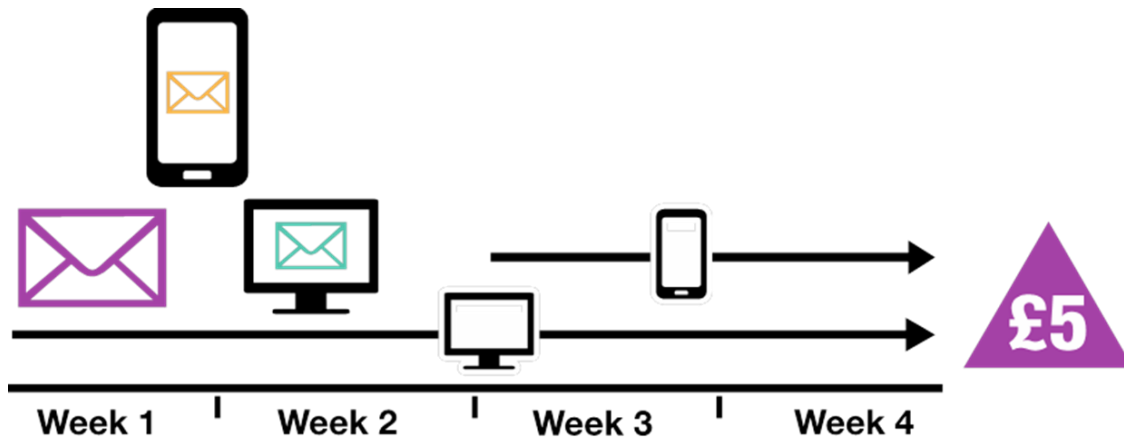
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-attitudes-2019-technical-report/documents/>

<sup>9</sup> More details of the BSA sampling approach can be found here: <http://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/>

<sup>10</sup> Only 18-24-year olds from BSA 2020 (who live in Scotland) were included in the sample in order to include a sufficient number of respondents in the overall sample within this age group. BSA 2020 was a web survey rather than face-to-face (unlike the previous years of SSA/BSA panel members).

telephone if they had not yet completed the interview after two weeks (and if telephone numbers were available). In this way we were able to access those who do not have regular access to the internet or, for instance, those who may have literacy or language barriers. A £5 love to shop gift card was sent as a 'thank you' to those who participated.

Figure 2:1 Fieldwork design



In contrast to conventional internet or telephone polls, the fieldwork period lasted for one month. This was to ensure that we could make repeated attempts to contact the selected individuals to try to secure their participation, rather than only including those that are 'readily' available. Web fieldwork ran from 23rd September to 24th October and Telephone fieldwork ran from 30th September to 23rd October.

## 2.2.2 Response rates

The probability design allows us to apply statistical theory to the study, including tests of statistical significance or the 'margin of error'. Response rates are a simple indicator of quality for surveys of this sort and are provided in Table 2:1 and 2.2.

In addition to the majority recruited from the SSA survey a sub-set of respondents were recruited from BSA. As these two samples have different patterns of non-response, the response rates are presented separately.

This survey achieved a 39% response rate among the ScotCen panellists recruited from SSA invited to participate. When taking account of non-response at the SSA interview and then also at the point of recruitment to the panel, the overall response rate was 12%. A response rate of 79% was achieved among the NatCen panellists invited to participate. When taking account of non-response at the BSA interview and then also at the point of recruitment to the panel, the overall response rate was 9%.

Table 2:1 Survey response	From SSA	From BSA
<b>Response to the survey</b>		
Issued	3,091	206
Deadwood	415	0
Achieved	1,203	162
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Overall response<sup>11</sup></b>		
Issued (SSA / BSA)	11,490	1,925
Deadwood (SSA / BSA)	1,232	183
Productive (SSA / BSA)	4,781	649
Recruited to panel	3,544	401
Response rate (SSA / BSA)	47%	37%
Panel recruitment rate	74%	62%
Panel deadwood	47	2
<b>Overall survey response rate</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>9%</b>

<sup>11</sup> A sub-sample of panellists recruited from BSA were issued (those living in Scotland, and those aged 18-24 for from BSA20). In addition, BSA20 used a push-to-web methodology, meaning the number of eligible individuals per address and the number of deadwood addresses is not known. These response rates are therefore estimates, based on the assumption that response rates for BSA in Scotland and for people aged 18-24 were the same as for the study as a whole, that 10% of addresses issued were deadwood, and that an average household contained 1.9 eligible adults.

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## 3 Non-response weights

Non-response to ScotCen Panel surveys can occur at any one of three stages: the surveys used for recruitment (SSA and BSA, the Scottish and British Social Attitudes surveys), the request to join the panel at the end of that interview and the survey of panel members itself. Weights are computed to adjust for non-response at each of these three stages; the panel weighting process is carried out separately for BSA and SSA respondents. The final weight (Sep21\_Weight\_SSA) is a combination of the (composite) non-response weights calculated (separately) for BSA and SSA respondents; each one is the product of the three weights described. We use this three-stage system because the variables associated with non-response can be different at each stage. With this system we also can maximise the use of the data collected from the Scottish or British Social Attitudes Survey (SSA/BSA). The following describes the three stages of weighting:

- a. **SSA / BSA survey weight:** the panel members were recruited from the SSA 2015, 2016, 2017 or 2019 waves or BSA 208, 2019 or 2020 (living in Scotland). The SSA and BSA surveys each have weights that adjust for unequal selection probabilities and address-level non-response; each set of weights is calibrated to population estimates to make them representative of the general population in terms of region, gender and age.<sup>12</sup>
- b. **Panel weight:** this weight adjusts for non-response at the panel recruitment stage where some people interviewed as part of the original survey (SSA/BSA) chose not to join the panel. A logistic regression model is used to compute the probability of response of each panel member, contingent on a standard set of socio-demographic variables. The model is weighted by the respective survey (SSA/BSA) weight. The panel non-response weight is the inverse of these probabilities and adjusts for non-response using the following variables: age and sex groups, region (region of Scotland for SSA), household type, household income, education level, ethnicity, tenure, social class group, economic activity, political party identification and interest in politics.<sup>13</sup> The panel non-response weight is multiplied by the SSA weights to produce a composite panel weight that makes the panel representative of the population.
- c. **Survey weight:** this weight adjusts for non-response to a particular panel survey. A logistic regression model is used to compute the probabilities of response of each participant, contingent on the same standard set of variables used at the previous stage. The model is weighted by the panel weight from the previous stage. The panel survey weight is equal to the inverse of these probabilities of response. The final survey weight is produced by multiplying the survey weight by the (composite) panel weight.

As mentioned above, steps b and c were carried out separately for BSA and SSA; the weights were then combined (and scaled) to produce the final survey weight.

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<sup>12</sup> More details on the SSA weight can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-attitudes-2019-technical-report/documents/> (Page 7). More details of the BSA weighting approach can be found here: <http://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/>

<sup>13</sup> The characteristics that are likely to change with time for an individual and whose distribution differed between 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019 SSA sample have been entered into the model in interaction with SSA year.

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## 4 Questionnaire

{ASK ALL}

### LngImp1

NOTE: Scottish 'Gaelic' is usually pronounced 'GAH-LICK'. (Irish 'Gaelic' is usually pronounced GAYH: LICK.)"

In schools in Scotland where children are being taught using English all children have to study two languages in addition to English.

WEB: Which of the following languages do...

TEL: I am going to read a list of options, please tell me which one of the following languages...

...you think is most important for children in Scotland aged 5 to 15 to study?

1. French
2. Spanish
3. Mandarin Chinese
4. Russian
5. Gaelic
6. Polish
7. German
8. Other (specify)

{ASK IF LngImp1=1-7}

### LngImp2

And which do you think is the second most important for children aged 5 to 15 to study?

1. French
2. Spanish
3. Mandarin Chinese
4. Russian
5. Gaelic
6. Polish
7. German
8. Other (specify)

### Attitudes to Gaelic

We would now like to ask you a series of questions about Gaelic, which as you may know is a language spoken in Scotland.

{ASK ALL}

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## UndGael

Can you **understand** Gaelic at all, even if it's just the odd word?

1. Not at all
2. The odd word
3. A few simple sentences
4. Parts of conversations
5. Most conversations
6. All conversations

{ASK ALL}

## SpGael

Can you **speak** Gaelic at all, even if it's just the odd word?

1. Not at all
2. The odd word
3. A few simple sentences
4. Parts of conversations
5. Most conversations
6. Fluent speaker

{ASK IF SpGael=1-5}

## LikeGI

How much, if at all, would you like to be able to speak Gaelic better than you do now?

1. A great deal
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. Not at all

{ASK ALL}

## GICont

During the last 12 months, how often have you heard, read or seen Gaelic on TV, radio, online or through apps?

TELEPHONE NOTE: IF THEY SAY IT VARIES PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT HOW OFTEN ON AVERAGE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

1. More than once a week
2. About once a week
3. Less than once a week but at least once a month
4. Less often than once a month
5. Never

{ASK ALL}

### **GaelCh**

Did you ever hear Gaelic being spoken when you were a child, either at home or among your wider family or community?

1. Yes
2. No

{ASK ALL}

### **GaeSign**

During the last 12 months, how often have you seen Gaelic used on road, street, or other public signs?

TELEPHONE NOTE: IF THEY SAY IT VARIES, PLEASE ASK THEM TO THINK ABOUT HOW OFTEN ON AVERAGE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS."

1. More than once a week
2. About once a week
3. Less than once a week but at least once a month
4. Less often than once a month
5. Never

{ASK ALL}

### **SignsGE**

Which of the following options best describes what you think about having road, street or other public signs in Scotland in both Gaelic and English?

1. Should be in Gaelic and English across Scotland
2. Should be in Gaelic and English where Gaelic is spoken
3. Should be in English only

{ASK ALL}

### **Gael50**

Thinking about Scotland in 50 years' time, do you think Gaelic will be spoken by more, fewer or about the same number of people as now?

1. More people than now
2. About the same number of people as now
3. Fewer people than now

{ASK ALL}

### **GFpref**

Again, thinking about Scotland in 50 years' time, how many people would you **like** to be speaking Gaelic? More, fewer, or about the same number as today?

1. More people than now

- 
2. About the same number of people as now
  3. Fewer people than now

{ASK ALL}

### **GaelFav**

In some parts of Scotland, any parent can choose to send their children to a primary school where most of the lessons are taught using Gaelic. In a Gaelic school, teachers teach subjects like maths or history using the Gaelic language rather than English.

Are you in favour of or against having some primary schools in Scotland where all the teaching is in Gaelic rather than English?

TELEPHONE NOTE: If asked, this is sometimes called 'Gaelic medium education'."

1. Strongly in favour
2. Somewhat in favour
3. Neither in favour nor against
4. Somewhat against
5. Strongly against

{ASK IF GaelFav=1,2}

### **ShdGael**

Do you think these schools should be...

1. Everywhere in Scotland
2. Only in places where Gaelic is widely spoken

{ASK ALL}

### **GSch515**

Now thinking about children in Scotland who are being taught using English.

How much do you agree or disagree that those aged 5 to 15 should all be taught Gaelic as a school subject for an hour or two a week?

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Disagree strongly

{ASK ALL}

### **GSchCur**

How much do you agree or disagree that all children in Scotland aged 5 to 15 should be taught about Gaelic history and cultural heritage at school?

1. Agree strongly



- 
2. Agree
  3. Neither agree nor disagree
  4. Disagree
  5. Disagree strongly

{ASK ALL}

### **GaelSpn**

The Scottish Government currently spends £29m every year on promoting the use of Gaelic, for example in TV, education and publishing. This comes to around £5.20 for each person in Scotland.

Do you think this is ...

1. too much money,
2. too little money,
3. about the right amount of money?

{ASK ALL}

### **LangGae**

How do you feel when you hear people in Scotland speaking to each other in Gaelic?

1. Very comfortable
2. Comfortable
3. Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
4. Uncomfortable
5. Very uncomfortable
6. Never heard this language spoken

{ASK ALL}

### **GaelJob/ GaelAch/ GaelScot**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

GRID COLUMNS:

1. Agree strongly
2. Agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Disagree
5. Disagree Strongly

GRID ROWS:

1. Learning Gaelic improves someone's chances of getting a job.
2. Learning Gaelic gives someone a sense of achievement.
3. Learning Gaelic makes a person more Scottish.

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{ASK ALL}

**GimpSIf/ GimpHI/ GimpSco**

How important...

GRID COLUMNS:

1. Very important
2. Fairly important
3. Not very important
4. Not at all important

GRID ROWS:

1. ...is Gaelic to your own cultural heritage?
2. ... do you think Gaelic is to the cultural heritage of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland?
3. ...do you think Gaelic is to Scotland's cultural heritage?