

Falkirk Council : Education Services

Strategy on Educating Young People for the Referendum in Falkirk Schools

1. Background

- A referendum on independence for Scotland will take place on 18 September 2014.
- All 16 and 17 year olds are now entitled to vote in the referendum.

2. Guidance Issued to Education Authorities

- Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES), Education Scotland, The Electoral Commission, School Leaders Scotland and other groups have issued a guidance note: 'Political literacy and the referendum on independence for Scotland'. This guidance note places 3 broad aims on schools to ensure that young people:
 - (i) are registered;
 - (ii) know how to cast their vote; and
 - (iii) are politically literate and equipped to engage in the referendum debate.
- The guidance is clear that young people should receive information in a consistent manner, which is clear, politically balanced and accessible.

3. Supporting Young People to Learn About the Referendum

- Education Senior Management Team (ESMT) and Secondary Headteachers have agreed that, in addition to promoting registration, each school will:
 - (i) Explain the layout of a polling station and the process of casting a vote.
Note: We will get a 'mock-up' of a polling booth set up in each school.
 - (ii) Host a presentation and question/answer session with both the 'Yes Scotland' and the 'Better Together' groups in each school.
Note: Such a presentation and question and answer session can only take place if both parties attend.
- In addition, as part of the normal curriculum for developing political literacy, there will be additional learning opportunities for young people, for example as part of Modern Studies.

4. Timelines

- All secondary schools will hold their referendum presentation between February and June 2014.

5. Inviting 'Yes Scotland' and 'Better Together' Groups

- To ensure consistency schools will contact both campaign groups to:
 - agree a date when both groups can attend;
 - confirm who will be the panel members; and
 - ensure both groups are aware of the final arrangements and processes.
- The contacts have been agreed by both national Groups and are:
Yes Scotland Group - Toni Giugliano (0141 221 4767)
toni.giugliano@yesscotland.net
Better Together Group - Ross MacRae (0141 225 6288)
ross@bettertogether.net
- Each group is allowed to bring up to **2** people to participate in the session.

6. Inviting Local Elected Members

- Local Elected Members will be invited to attend the debate but will not be entitled to participate other than as one of the people nominated by the Yes Scotland or Better Together groups.

7. Scheduling of the Events

- All pupils who will be eligible to vote in the Referendum will be invited to attend.
- These events will be scheduled to take place during the pupil day.
- Schools will plan these events to take place during February-June 2014.

8. Format of Events

- Events will be chaired by the Headteacher or Depute Headteacher.
- Each group ('Yes Scotland' and 'Better Together') will be given around 15 minutes to present their agreement/case.
- This will be followed by questions from pupils.