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Referendum Debate

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[Home](#) > Yes Scotland Response: What advice would you give your representative in the next TV debate?

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The advice that the Yes campaign has offered and adhered to from day one is to set out a positive vision for Scotland's future.

The snap poll conducted at the end of the STV debate showed support for Yes at 47 per cent - with substantial increases among women and older voters. But a lot more work remains to be done.

TV debates are of course important, as part of the wider referendum debate being conducted the length and breadth of Scotland in the coming weeks.

The debate is about who is best placed and most trusted to make decisions about Scotland's future - the people who live and work here and care most, or a Westminster system that is out of step and out of touch with the priorities and aspirations of people in Scotland.

Our judgement is that positive will beat negative. And it is instructive that in the course of a two-hour debate, the No campaign's Alistair Darling didn't have a single positive word to say.

Everyone now agrees that Scotland is capable of being a successful independent country. Alistair Darling may have been mealy mouthed in his response to this during the debate, but

he didn't dispute the point - and neither did any of the MSPs in the Scottish Parliament when the First Minister challenged them to.

That is a point which needs to be stressed at every opportunity. It's not about 'could we', it's about 'should be' take this one opportunity to achieve a fairer, more prosperous, more democratic society.

When in this rich country we have 22,000 children dependent on foodbanks for the necessities of life.

When we have Europe's largest concentration of nuclear weapons just 25 miles from our largest city - with Westminster planning to spend over £100 billion more on a new generation of Trident nuclear weapons.

And when Scotland regularly gets landed with Tory governments that we have rejected in each and every election since the 1950s.

It's time to seize this opportunity of a lifetime. We can much better as a country - that is the Yes campaign's compelling message in this debate.

Stuart McDonald, senior researcher at Yes Scotland

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