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## Scotland goes to polls in historic vote

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The Scottish electorate have begun voting on whether the country should stay in the UK or become an independent nation.

Ballot papers contain the question "Should Scotland be an independent country?" with a simple Yes or No answer.

Turnout is expected to be high, with reports of queues at polling stations as they opened at 7am. Around 97 per cent of those eligible to vote registered, so the turnout is expected to easily beat 63.6 per cent, which was the highest proportion of Scottish voters to have cast a ballot at a previous referendum, in the 1979 vote on devolution.

In 1997, by contrast, only 60.2 per cent of those who could vote did so. The highest turnout in any Scotland-wide vote was in the UK General election of 1950, which saw 80.9 per cent. By comparison, the Quebec independence referendum of 1995 saw 93.5 per cent turnout.

16 and 17 year olds are voting in the UK for the first time. Louise Cameron, chair of the Scottish Youth Parliament said she hoped turnout would be high among the age group.

"Today, we will witness one the greatest acts of self-determination in history where our country will go to the ballot box to decide the course of its own future.

"We have an opportunity to prove that when 16 and 17 year olds are given the right to vote, they will use it. If turn out is high, we have a mandate to secure the right for 16 and 17 year olds to vote in all future elections," she said.

The count will begin after polls close at 10, when the national count collation process begins at the

Royal Highland Show ground. Chief counting officer Mary Pitcaithly told Holyrood: “The single, most important aspect of my role is to deliver a result that is trusted and accepted. The security, integrity and accuracy of the process are vital.”

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