



Press statement

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TRUST IN DOCTORS HIGHEST OF ALL PROFESSIONS

Public faith in doctors remains as high as it has ever been, according to a new poll carried out by Ipsos MORI for the Royal College of Physicians. The annual poll found that more than nine out of ten British adults said they would trust doctors to tell the truth, the highest for any profession.

Following closely behind the medical profession, trust in teachers and professors remains stable compared with 2008 and is now at 88% and 80%, respectively, for 2009. Other professions that came towards the top of the poll included judges (80%), clergymen/priests (71%) and scientists (70%).

At the other end of the scale, politicians have replaced journalists as the profession least trusted to tell the truth, down eight percentage points on last year to 13%.

Government ministers have also experienced a decline in trust, from 24% to 16%. On the other hand, the public's faith in journalists to tell the truth has risen by three points from last year's figures to 22%.

More than 2,000 adults were asked by Ipsos MORI to say whether they generally trusted 16 different types of people to tell the truth or not. Ninety-two per cent of the public said they trusted doctors to tell the truth when the survey was conducted in September 2009. same as the previous year.

Professor Ian Gilmore, President of the Royal College of Physicians, said:

“For doctors to provide the best care they are capable of, both on an individual level and as a profession, it is vital that they earn and keep the trust of patients. Even though the world of medicine is changing rapidly with new developments in technology, drugs and infrastructure, it is heartening to know that the public's level of trust in doctors has been maintained. This gives us a good basis to move forward into the future, where care will be a true partnership between the doctor and patient.”

Sir Robert Worcester, Founder of MORI, said: “MORI began tracking public trust in various occupations 25 years ago, and in all that time, doctors have been the one group trusted by the most people in this country. It is very difficult to do better than that, but over the years, people's trust in doctors to tell the truth has risen from a low of 82% to these past two year's 92%, a remarkable achievement.

Politicians have not fared so well. They talk about ‘restoring trust in politicians’. I have news for them. For the past four or five years only about one person in four has said they trust politicians to tell the truth, and prior to that, they hovered around the 15% mark, but this year, following the expenses scandal, broken by the national newspapers, chiefly the

Telegraph and the Sunday Times, politicians hit a 25 year low, with just 13% of the public say they have faith in what politicians say. On the other hand, journalists have been rewarded by moving up the trust ladder, from bottom rung up two rungs, by increasing marginally their standing, from 19% last year, to 22% this, while trust in Government Ministers also fell, from 24% to just 16% trusting what they say.”

Notes to Editors

1. Ipsos MORI interviewed a nationally representative quota sample of 2,023 adults aged 15 and over throughout Great Britain from 4-10 September 2009. Quotas were set within output areas by age, gender, work status and housing tenure; and the survey data were weighted by age, gender, social grade, region, rurality, work status, housing tenure, ethnicity and deprivation.
2. The Royal College of Physicians of London provides a huge range of services to our 20,000 Members and Fellows and other medical professionals. These include delivering examinations, training courses, continuous professional development and conferences; undertaking clinical audits; publishing newsletters, guidelines and books; hospital medicine, through to maintaining the College's historical collections. We also lead medical debate, and lobby and advise government and other decision-makers on behalf of our members.
3. For further information or a copy of the full report, please contact Zoë Horwich, Communications Officer at the RCP on 020 7035 1354/ email zoe.horwich@rcplondon.ac.uk
4. The table with trends, 1983-2009, can be found at www.ipsos-mori.com, and at www.rcplondon.ac.uk