

Ipsos MORI January Political Monitor

Fieldwork: 26-28 January 2010

CON 40% (-3); LAB 32% (+6); LIB DEM 16% (-4)

Ipsos MORI's January Political Monitor (carried out by telephone between 26-28 January among 1,001 British adults aged 18 and over) shows, across those certain to vote, a **sharp swing back to Labour**.

Among those certain to vote, 40% intend to vote Conservative (down from 43% since last month), 32% intend to vote Labour (up from 26%), and 16% for the Liberal Democrats (down from 20%). This Labour vote share is the highest we have recorded since March 2009. Assuming votes swing evenly across the country, these vote shares would translate into a hung parliament, with the Conservatives around 9 seats short of an overall majority.

A factor which may have had an impact this month is a return to a more optimistic economic outlook after the recent GDP figures, as well as recent improved unemployment figures. **Economic optimism for the next year has improved on last month**. Almost half (44%) now think that the economy will improve over the next 12 months (compared with only 32% last month), and 24% think it will get worse. Ipsos MORI's Economic Optimism Index therefore stands at +20.

Further, the December Monitor was conducted in the aftermath of the Pre-Budget Report, which appeared to curtail economic optimism. Ratings for voting intention and economic optimism have broadly returned to the levels in November.

The government and Gordon Brown's ratings have also improved – a third (33%) are now satisfied with the way Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister (compared with 28% last month) and a quarter (25%) are satisfied with the Government (up from 21%).

Satisfaction with David Cameron has declined since December, with a net satisfaction (the percentage satisfied minus percentage dissatisfied) score of +3 now compared to +6 in December and +13 in November.

Nick Clegg remains, on balance, the most popular of the three main party leaders; his net satisfaction is now +16 (an increase of three points since last month) although a third (32%) say they don't know.

This month, we also asked the public whether or not they **like both Gordon Brown and David Cameron, and their respective parties**. Three fifths (61%) said they do not like Gordon Brown – which represents a small improvement for Brown since July 2008 when 65% disliked him. Dislike of his party remains largely unchanged (57% now compared to 55% in July 2008). Attitudes to Cameron have worsened over the last 18 months, however. Almost half now dislike Cameron (46%) compared to 36% in July 2008.

Despite general economic optimism, and the recent GDP figures, most of the public still feel Britain is still in **recession**; three quarters (77%) believe that the recession in Britain is not yet over, and only one in ten (9%) believe that the economy will return to where it was before the recession within a year.

Q1-6 were sponsored by The Mirror, and Q7-12 by the Observer.

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,001 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 26-28 January 2010. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't know" categories, or multiple answers. An asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half a per cent. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote, are undecided or refuse to name a party and in the headline figures, those who are not absolutely certain to vote.

Voting intention

Voting intention polls between elections are a measurement of how a representative sample of the public think they would vote at a given point in time. Voting intentions in “peacetime” (non-election periods, such as this one) should be regarded as useful indicators of the political mood rather than predictions of a future electoral result. Voting intentions should be read in conjunction with other political indicators.

Voting intentions: those “absolutely certain to vote”

We regard the voting intentions of those “absolutely certain to vote” as the most useful trend indicator, since it includes only those voters whose frame of mind is nearest to those who actually vote at elections. Please note that this measure is not based on the assumption that this is the group who will vote at the next general election, as this population are not accurately identifiable at this stage of a parliament.

Please also note that the ‘margin of error’ on these figures is c.±4% for each figure; this means that a party share figure of 30% could actually fall anywhere between 26% and 34%, though it is far more likely to fall at 30% than at the extreme ends of this range. This is especially important to keep in mind when calculating party lead figures.

Half of the public, 52%, say they are ‘absolutely certain to vote’ in an immediate General Election.

Q1a **How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?**

IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED AT Q1a

Q1b **Which party are you most inclined to support?**

Base: All absolutely certain to vote (519) Q1a/b

	%
Conservative	40
Labour	32
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	16
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	3
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	3
British National Party	2
Other	1

Conservative lead (±%) +8

<i>Would not vote</i>	1
<i>Undecided</i>	7
<i>Refused</i>	2

Voting intentions: all naming a party

The voting intention figures based on all those giving a voting intention is the measure with the longest pedigree; our regular trends on this basis go back to the 1970s. When turnouts were much higher than is usual today, this offered a good approximation to actual voting behaviour; in more recent years it has over-represented Labour’s real electoral strength, since more supporters of Labour than of other parties fail to vote.

Q1a **How would you vote if there were a General Election tomorrow?**

IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED AT Q1a

Q1b **Which party are you most inclined to support?**

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	%
Conservative	38
Labour	34
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	17
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	2
British National Party	2
Other	1

Conservative lead (+%) +4

<i>Would not vote</i>	10
<i>Undecided</i>	10
<i>Refused</i>	2

Certainty of voting

Q2 **And how likely would you be to vote in an immediate General Election, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote, and 1 means that you would be absolutely certain not to vote?**

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	%
10 – absolutely certain to vote	52
9	7
8	9
7	6
6	3
5	8
4	2
3	2
2	3
1 – absolutely certain not to vote	8
Don't know	1
Refused	*

Satisfaction Ratings

Satisfaction among general public age 18+

- Q3 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?
- Q4 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister?
- Q5 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way David Cameron is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party?
- Q6 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Nick Clegg is doing his job as leader of the Liberal Democrats?

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know	Index
	%	%	%	%
Government (Q3)	25	67	8	-42
Brown (Q4)	33	59	8	-26
Cameron (Q5)	43	40	17	+3
Clegg (Q6)	42	26	32	+16

Satisfaction among party supporters

BASE: PARTY SUPPORTERS ONLY

- Q3 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?
- Q4 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister?
- Q5 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way David Cameron is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party?
- Q6 Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Nick Clegg is doing his job as leader of the Liberal Democrats?

Base: All party supporters

		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know	Index
	Base	%	%	%	%
Government (Q3)	253	50	39	11	+11
Brown (Q4)	253	61	32	8	+29
Cameron (Q5)	308	77	13	10	+64
Clegg (Q6)	125	73	15	12	+58

Economic optimism in Britain

- Q7 Do you think that the general economic condition of the country will improve, stay the same, or get worse over the next 12 months?

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	Improve	44
	Stay the same	28
	Get worse	24
	Don't know	3
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)		+20

Next general election

Q8 How important is it to you personally who wins the next general election?

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	May 2005* %	June 2008 %	Nov 2009 %	Dec 2009 %	Jan 2010 %
Very important	45	38	35	37	40
Fairly important	35	30	33	32	30
Not very important	11	17	21	19	18
Not at all important	6	12	8	9	9
No opinion	3	2	3	3	3
Very/fairly important	80	68	68	69	70
Not very/at all important	17	29	29	28	27
Net important	+63	+39	+39	+41	+43

*Question wording: 'How important is it to you personally who wins the general election?'

Q9 From what you know, which one of the following statements best describes your own view?

	%
The recovery from recession is well underway	12
The recession is over in Britain	8
The recession in Britain is not yet over	64
Britain is still in deep recession	13
Don't Know	3

Q10 Overall, how soon do you think it will be before the economy has returned to where it was before the recession?

	%
Under 6 months	2
Over 6 months to one year	7
Over one to two years	24
Over two to three years	23
Over three years to five years	18
Over five years	20
Don't know	7

Q11 Which of these statements comes closest to your views of Gordon Brown and the Labour Party

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	July 2008 %	January 2010 %
I like Gordon Brown and I like the Labour Party	18	20
I like Gordon Brown but I do not like the Labour Party	11	15
I do not like Gordon Brown but I like the Labour Party	21	19
I do not like Gordon Brown and I do not like the Labour Party	44	42
Don't Know	5	5
Like Gordon Brown	29	35
Like the Labour Party	39	39
Do not like Gordon Brown	65	61
Do not like the Labour Party	55	57

Q12 Which of these statements comes closest to your views of David Cameron and the Conservative Party

Base: 1,001 British adults 18+

	July 2008 %	January 2010 %
I like David Cameron and I like the Conservative Party	35	27
I like David Cameron but I do not like the Conservative Party	19	18
I do not like David Cameron but I like the Conservative Party	8	12
I do not like David Cameron and I do not like the Conservative Party	28	34
Don't Know	11	9
Like David Cameron	54	45
Like the Conservative Party	43	39
Do not like David Cameron	36	46
Do not like the Conservative Party	47	52