

Ipsos MORI March Political Monitor:

Fieldwork: 13-15 Mar 2009

CON 42%(-6) LAB 32%(+4) LIB DEM 14%(-3)

Ipsos MORI's March Political Monitor (carried out by telephone between 13-15 March among 1,007 British adults aged 18 and over) shows that among those absolutely certain to vote, the Conservative Party lead the Labour Party by ten points. The Tories are now on 42% and Labour is on 32%. In addition, optimism about the economy over the next 12 months, while still on balance negative, is at its highest level in 18 months.

Satisfaction with the Government and with all three party leaders has increased since last month. Satisfaction with the way David Cameron is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party has returned to the level it was in August 2008, which was the highest rating for Cameron Ipsos MORI has ever recorded.

Other key findings from this month's Monitor include:

- Prime Minister **Gordon Brown**'s personal ratings have increased since last month: one in three (34%) are satisfied with the way he is doing his job as Prime Minister, and three in five (59%) are dissatisfied, giving a net score (the percentage satisfied minus the percentage dissatisfied) of -25. This represents an improvement for Brown, as last month a quarter (26%) were satisfied, and two thirds (64%) dissatisfied with his performance.
- Overall satisfaction with the **Government** has also increased slightly since last month. Just over a quarter (26%) are satisfied with how the Government is running the country, and two thirds are dissatisfied (67%). This compares to 21% satisfied and 70% dissatisfied in February.
- Public opinion on how **David Cameron** is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party has shown a marked increase since February 2009: 52% are satisfied (up nine points from last month) and 30% dissatisfied (down four points), yielding a net figure of +22. This is a thirteen point 'net' increase (from last month's net figure of +9) and matches the highest satisfaction rating we have ever recorded for David Cameron (in August 2008).
- Just under two in five (38%, up from 35% last month) are satisfied with the way **Nick Clegg** is doing his job as leader of the Liberal Democrats, while a quarter remain dissatisfied (26%, no change from last month). Over a third (36%, down three points from 39% last month) say they don't know.
- Those who think the **economy** will get worse over the next 12 months still outnumber those who think it will improve; however, economic optimism is now at its highest level since August 2007. The proportion of those who feel the economic condition of the country will improve in the next twelve months is 23%, while over half (52%) feel it will get worse. The Economic Optimism Index (those who think it will get better minus those who think it will get worse) is therefore -29, an 11 point improvement on last month and the most positive score we have measured since August 2007.

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,007 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 13th-15th March 2009. 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.

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.

A. 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 the public, 49%, 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 (522) Q1a/b

	%
Conservative	42
Labour	32
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	14
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	2
Other	1
Conservative lead (+-%)	+10
<i>Would not vote</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Undecided</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Refused</i>	<i>2</i>

B. 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: 1,007 British adults 18+	%
Conservative	39
Labour	33
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	17
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	2
Other	1
Conservative lead (+%)	+6
<i>Would not vote</i>	10
<i>Undecided</i>	8
<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: 1,007 British adults 18+	%
10 – absolutely certain to vote	49
9	7
8	9
7	8
6	4
5	8
4	1
3	2
2	1
1 – absolutely certain not to vote	10
Don’t know	1
Refused	*

Satisfaction Ratings

A. 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: 1,007 British adults 18+

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Index %
Government (Q3)	26	67	7	-41
Brown (Q4)	34	59	7	-25
Cameron (Q5)	52	30	18	+22
Clegg (Q6)	38	26	36	+12

B. 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

	Base	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Index %
Government (Q3)	271	55	36	8	+19
Brown (Q4)	271	64	28	7	+36
Cameron (Q5)	312	80	13	8	+67
Clegg (Q6)	137	69	20	11	+49

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: 1,007 British adults 18+

	%
Improve	23
Stay the same	23
Get worse	52
Don't know	1
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)	-29