

Ipsos MORI April Political Monitor

Fieldwork: 17-19 Apr 2009

CON 41%(-1) LAB 28%(-4) LIB DEM 22%(+8)

Ipsos MORI's April Political Monitor (carried out by telephone between 17-19 April among 1,011 British adults aged 18 and over) shows that among those absolutely certain to vote, the Conservative Party lead the Labour Party by thirteen points. The Conservatives are now on 41% (down one point since last month) and Labour has fallen to 28% (from 32% last month). The main beneficiaries of this are the Liberal Democrats, who are now on 22%, up by eight points since last month.

David Cameron's personal ratings remain high, with more than half (52%) satisfied with the way he is doing his job as leader of the Conservatives. Despite this however, the proportion of people who feel that the **Conservatives are ready to form the next government** has dropped from 54% in September 2008 to 41% now.

Almost two-thirds (62%) say that they personally know someone who has been made redundant in the past six months, and 86% describe the current state of the British economy as 'poor'.

However, despite these challenges, there is a clear sense of optimism about the future. Just three in ten (30%) now say they think their personal financial circumstances will get worse over the next few months, compared to 39% saying the same in November 2008. And more than two-thirds (68%) feel the **British economy will be in a good state in five years' time**, up from 54% in April 2003. This sense of positivity about the future is reflected in Ipsos MORI's monthly Economic Optimism Index:

Those who think the economy will get worse over the next 12 months only just outnumber those who think it will improve; the proportion of those who think it will improve in the next twelve months has increased by 12 points since last month to 35%, while 37% feel it will get worse (a 15-point drop since last month). **The Economic Optimism Index (those who think it will get better minus those who think it will get worse) is therefore -2, a 27 point improvement on last month and the most positive score we have measured since February 2001.** This suggests an increasing belief that the slump is bottoming out.

Other key findings from this month's Monitor include:

- The Conservatives hold a five point lead over Labour (30% vs. 25%) on being seen as **the party with the best policies on managing the economy**, a significant fall in their lead since last summer
- **The majority (71%) are satisfied with their standard of living**, although more than one in five (22%) are dissatisfied, up 10 points from 2003
- Over two in five (44%) of those in full-time work are concerned about the **possibility of being made redundant** in the next year, but more than half (55%) are not concerned
- The public are split between wanting a society which emphasises the **social and collective provision of welfare** (47%) and preferring a society where individuals are **encouraged to look after themselves** (49%). Similarly, 51% prefer a society which emphasises **similar incomes and rewards** for everyone and 44% prefer a society which allows people to **make and keep as much money as they can**
- On balance, more people think that a future Government should **raise taxes** (53%) rather than **reduce spending on public services** (35%) if it has to reduce its debts

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,011 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 17th-19th April 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 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.

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, 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 (549)

Q1a/b
%

Conservative	41
Labour	28
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	22
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	3
Green Party	2
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	1
Other	2

Conservative lead (+%) +13

<i>Would not vote</i>	*
<i>Undecided</i>	4
<i>Refused</i>	4

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: 1,011 British adults 18+ %

Conservative	37
Labour	32
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	20
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	4
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	2
Other	*

Conservative lead (+%) +5

<i>Would not vote</i>	11
<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: 1,011 British adults 18+ %

10 – absolutely certain to vote	52
9	7
8	8
7	5
6	4
5	8
4	1
3	2
2	1
1 – absolutely certain not to vote	9
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: 1,011 British adults 18+

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Index %
Government (Q3)	23	70	7	-47
Brown (Q4)	32	60	8	-28
Cameron (Q5)	52	29	19	+23
Clegg (Q6)	39	25	35	+14

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)	259	53	42	5	+11
Brown (Q4)	259	67	26	6	+41
Cameron (Q5)	294	80	11	10	+69
Clegg (Q6)	152	70	21	9	+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: 1,011 British adults 18+

Improve	35
Stay the same	25
Get worse	37
Don't know	3
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)	-2

Personal Financial Circumstances

Q8 Do you think that your personal financial circumstances will improve, get worse or stay the same over the next 12 months?

<i>Base 1,011 British adults</i>		November 08	April 09
		%	%
	Improve	14	17
	Stay the same	45	51
	Get worse	39	30
	Don't know	2	2
	NET improve	-25	-13

Standard of living

Q9 The things people can buy and do – their housing, furniture, food, cars, recreation and travel – make up their standard of living. How satisfied or dissatisfied do you feel about your standard of living at present?

<i>Base: 1,011 British adults 18+</i>	1988	1989	2003	2009
	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	16	18	23	19
Fairly satisfied	58	57	55	52
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	8*	8	9	7
Fairly dissatisfied	10	11	9	13
Very dissatisfied	8	6	3	8
Don't know	-	*	1	*
TOTAL satisfied	74	75	78	71
TOTAL dissatisfied	18	17	12	21
NET satisfied	+56	+58	+66	+50

*Includes don't knows

State of the economy

Q10 How would you describe the current state of the British economy? Would you say it is...

Q11 And what state do you think the British economy will be in, in 5 years' time?

<i>Base: 1,011 British adults 18+</i>	Q10 Current state			Q11 In 5 years' time	
	Nov. 2000	Apr. 2003	Apr. 2009	Apr. 2003	Apr. 2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	8	4	*	5	6
Fairly good	64	59	13	49	62
Fairly poor	19	26	52	22	19
Very poor	4	6	34	8	6
Don't know	5	5	1	16	7
TOTAL good	72	63	13	54	68
TOTAL poor	23	32	86	30	25
NET good	+49	+31	-73	+24	+43

Redundancy

Q12 How concerned if at all would you say you are about the possibility of being made redundant or becoming unemployed over the next twelve months?

	October 2008	January 2009	April 2009
	% (452)	% (461)	% (436)
<i>Base: British adults in full-time work</i>			
Very concerned	23	22	18
Fairly concerned	20	27	26
Not very concerned	27	21	26
Not at all concerned	28	29	29
Don't know	*	1	1
TOTAL very/fairly concerned	43	49	44
TOTAL not very/not at all concerned	55	50	55

Q13 And do you personally know anyone who has been made redundant in the past six months?

	%
<i>Base: 1,011 British adults 18+</i>	
Yes – more than five	19
Yes – five or fewer	43
No	38
TOTAL yes	62

Best party on the economy

Q14 Which party do you think has the best policies on managing the economy, the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats or some other party?

	Aug 2008	Jan 2009*	April 2009
	%	%	%
<i>Base: 1,011 British adults 18+</i>			
Labour	23	29	25
Conservatives	38	30	30
Lib Dems	7	9	10
Other	5	8	7
Don't know/None	27	25	19
Conservative lead over Labour	+15	+1	+5

*In August/January 'none' was not given as an option

Conservatives ready to govern?

Q15 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Conservatives are ready to form the next Government?

Base: 1,011 British adults 18+	July 2008 %	Aug 2008 %	Sept 2008 %	April 2009 %
Strongly agree	19	21	19	13
Tend to agree	26	37	35	28
Neither agree nor disagree	9	10	12	16
Tend to disagree	18	14	15	19
Strongly disagree	22	15	15	17
Don't know	4	3	4	7
TOTAL agree	45	58	54	41
TOTAL disagree	40	29	30	36
NET Agree	+5	+29	+24	+5

Society

Q16 People have different views about the ideal society. For each of these statements, please tell me which one comes closest to your ideal.

Base: 1,011 British adults 18+	Jan 2006 %	Apr. 2009 %
A society which emphasises the social and collective provision of welfare	48	47
A society where individuals are encouraged to look after themselves	46	49
No opinion	6	4

Q17 People have different views about the ideal society. For each of these statements, please tell me which one comes closest to your ideal.

Base: 1,011 British adults 18+	Jan 2006 %	Apr. 2009 %
A society which allows people to make and keep as much money as they can	46	44
A society which emphasises similar incomes and rewards for everyone	48	51
No opinion	6	5

Government debt reduction

Q18 Many experts are concerned about the increasing public debt, which is the amount the Government has to borrow to pay for social security and public services like schools and hospitals.

If a future Government had to reduce its debts, there are likely to be two main choices, either increasing taxes, or making cuts to public services. In your view, should they concentrate more on reducing spending on public services or on increasing taxes?

Base: 1,011 British adults 18+	%
Reducing spending on services	35
Increasing taxes	53
Neither	4
Both equally	5
Other	1
Don't know	3