

Ipsos MORI February Political Monitor:

Fieldwork: 13-15 Feb 2009

CON 48%(+4) LAB 28%(-2) LIB DEM 17%(n/c)

Ipsos MORI's February 2009 Political Monitor (carried out by telephone between 13-15 February among 1,001 British adults aged 18 and over) shows that among those absolutely certain to vote, the Conservative Party voting intention share has increased by four points to 48% since January, and the Labour Party share has fallen by two points to 28%. The Conservatives therefore have a twenty percentage point lead among those absolutely certain to vote. Public satisfaction with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and with the Government have also decreased from last month (see below), although satisfaction with both remain higher than their lowest points in July 2008.

Other key findings from this month's Monitor include:

- Prime Minister **Gordon Brown**'s personal ratings have fallen since January 2009: almost two thirds (64%) are now dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job as Prime Minister, and a quarter (26%) are satisfied, giving a net score (the percentage satisfied minus the percentage dissatisfied) of -38. This compares to last month's figures of a third (33%) satisfied with Brown, and three in five (59%) dissatisfied, yielding a net figure of -26.
- Overall satisfaction with the **Government** has also decreased since last month. Just over a fifth (21%) are satisfied with how the Government is running the country, and seven in ten are dissatisfied (70%). This compares to 27% satisfied and 65% dissatisfied in January 2009.
 - Satisfaction with the Government among Labour supporters has dropped notably: in January 2009, 56% were satisfied and 36% dissatisfied, giving a net score of +20. This month, 45% are satisfied, and the same percentage are dissatisfied, giving a net score of 0.
- The public's opinion of how **David Cameron** is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party has shown a slight increase since last month: 43% are satisfied and 34% dissatisfied, yielding a 'net' figure of +9, which is a three point increase from last month (last month's figures are 44% satisfied and 38% dissatisfied).
- Similar to last month, around a third (35%) of the public are satisfied with the way **Nick Clegg** is doing his job as leader of the Liberal Democrats, and a quarter (26%) are dissatisfied. As in previous months, however, the most frequent response to this question is 'don't know' (39%).
- Those who think the **economy will get worse** over the next 12 months still far outnumber those who think it will improve. The proportion of those who feel the economic condition of the country will improve in the next twelve months is 20%, while 60% feel it will get worse. In both cases these findings are the same as in January. The Economic Optimism Index (those who think it will get better minus those who think it will get worse) therefore remains at -40.

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,001 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 13th-15th February 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, 50%, 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 (510) Q1a/b

	%
Conservative	48
Labour	28
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	17
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	2
Green Party	1
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	2
Other	1
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Conservative lead (+-%)	+20
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<i>Would not vote</i>	1
<i>Undecided</i>	4
<i>Refused</i>	3

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: 1,001 British adults 18+	%
Conservative	39
Labour	31
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	19
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	1
British National Party	2
Other	1

Conservative lead (+%) +8

<i>Would not vote</i>	12
<i>Undecided</i>	6
<i>Refused</i>	3

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	50
9	6
8	9
7	6
6	3
5	9
4	2
3	2
2	1
1 – absolutely certain not to vote	12
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: 1,001 British adults 18+

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Index %
Government (Q3)	21	70	9	-49
Brown (Q4)	26	64	10	-38
Cameron (Q5)	43	34	23	+9
Clegg (Q6)	35	26	39	+9

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)	257	45	45	10	0
Brown (Q4)	257	57	36	7	+21
Cameron (Q5)	295	74	14	12	+60
Clegg (Q6)	140	68	15	17	+53

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	20
Stay the same	17
Get worse	60
Don't know	2
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)	-40