

Ipsos MORI September Political Monitor

Fieldwork: 12-14 September 2008

Ipsos MORI's September Political Monitor, carried out by telephone between 12-14 September 2008 among 1,017 adults age 18 and over, shows the Conservative party on 52% and the Labour party on 24%, a **Conservative lead of 28 points**. This is both the highest Conservative lead ever recorded by Ipsos MORI, and also the **largest conservative share we have ever recorded**. Of those certain to vote, 12% express support for the Liberal Democrats, although the share is higher among the public as a whole.

Other key findings from this month include:

- The Tories are now seen to be better than Labour on a range of key party characteristics, including:
 - Having the **best team of leaders** (38% to Labour's 20%)
 - **Best understanding the economic problems facing Britain** (36% Conservative vs. 27% Labour).
 - Labour is seen to be more likely than the Tories to **promise anything to win votes** (40% Lab vs. 36% Con)
 - The parties are equal on **best understanding Britain's social problems** (26% Con vs. 25% Lab), but on this measure the LibDems rate well at 18%.
- Half of respondents (51%) agree that **Gordon Brown is doing a reasonable job in difficult circumstances**, and 42% disagree.
- But over half of British adults (54%) now believe that the **Conservatives are ready to form the next government**, with three in ten (30%) disagreeing
- Almost two-thirds (63%) agree that **British society is broken**, and a quarter (27%) disagree.
- Half (49%) agree that **David Cameron represents modern Britain** and a third (36%) disagree.
- Just over three quarters (76%) of the public are dissatisfied with the way the **Government is running the country**, and less than one in five (18%) are satisfied.
- Seven in ten (69%) are dissatisfied with the way **Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister**, and a quarter (24%) are satisfied.
- Almost half of British adults (48%) are satisfied with the way **David Cameron is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party**, and a third (32%) are dissatisfied; one in five (20%) say they don't know.
- A third (32%) are satisfied with the way **Nick Clegg is doing his job as leader of the Liberal Democrats**, and a quarter (24%) are dissatisfied. However, over two in five (44%) still say that they don't know.
- Seven in ten (70%) believe that the **general economic condition of the country will get worse over the next 12 months**.
- The poll also contains data on what the public like/dislike about Brown & Cameron

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative quota sample of 1017 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 12th-14th September 2008. 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%. This is especially important to keep in mind when calculating party lead figures.

Just over half the public, 55%, said they were ‘absolutely certain to vote’.

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

IF UNDECIDED OR REFUSED AT Q1

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

Base: All absolutely certain to vote (556)	Q1/2 %
Conservative	52
Labour	24
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	12
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	4
UK Independence Party	1
Other	3
Conservative lead (±%)	+28
<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 Q1

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

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+ %

Conservative	45
Labour	29
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	14
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	4
Green Party	4
UK Independence Party	1
Other	3

Conservative lead (+%) +16

<i>Would not vote</i>	9
<i>Undecided</i>	9
<i>Refused</i>	1

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: 1,017 British adults 18+ %

10 – absolutely certain to vote	55
9	6
8	7
7	5
6	4
5	8
4	2
3	2
2	1
1 – absolutely certain not to vote	9
Don't know	2
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: 1,017 British adults 18+

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't know %	Index %
Government (Q3)	18	76	6	-58
Brown (Q4)	24	69	7	-45
Cameron (Q5)	48	32	20	+16
Clegg (Q6)	32	24	44	+8

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)	239	45	46	9	-1
Brown (Q4)	239	51	43	6	+8
Cameron (Q5)	356	79	12	9	+67
Clegg (Q6)	128	60	23	17	+37

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: 1,017 British adults 18+

	%
Improve	12
Stay the same	16
Get worse	70
Don't know	1
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)	-58

Additional Questions in September 2008

Q8-11. Which party do you think... the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats or some other party?

Base: All

		Labour %	Cons %	Lib Dems %	Other %	None %	Don't know %	Con lead %
Q8	Has the best team of leaders	21	39	8	7	11	13	+18
Q9	Is most likely to promise anything to win votes	40	36	5	5	3	11	-4
Q10	Best understands Britain's social Problems	25	27	17	8	9	14	+2
Q11	Best understands the economic problems facing Britain	27	36	9	7	9	12	+9

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Conservatives are ready to form the next Government?

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+

	July 2008 %	Aug 2008 %	Sept 2008 %
Strongly agree	19	21	19
Tend to agree	26	37	35
Neither agree nor disagree	9	10	12
Tend to disagree	18	14	15
Strongly disagree	22	15	15
Don't know	4	3	4
Total agree	45	58	54
Total disagree	40	29	30
Net Agree	+5	+29	+24

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that British society is broken?

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+

	%
Strongly agree	35
Tend to agree	28
Neither agree nor disagree	7
Tend to disagree	16
Strongly disagree	11
Don't know	3
Total agree	63
Total disagree	27
Net Agree	+36

Q14. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that David Cameron represents modern Britain?**

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+	%
Strongly agree	16
Tend to agree	33
Neither agree nor disagree	10
Tend to disagree	18
Strongly disagree	18
Don't know	5
Total agree	49
Total disagree	36
Net agree	+13

Q15. **To what extent do you agree or disagree that Gordon Brown is doing a reasonable job in difficult circumstances?**

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+	%
Strongly agree	15
Tend to agree	36
Neither agree nor disagree	5
Tend to disagree	16
Strongly disagree	26
Don't know	1
Total agree	51
Total disagree	42
Net agree	+9

Q16- Q17 **What would you say are the main things you like about the party leaders? Please say whatever springs to mind.**

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+

	Gordon Brown	David Cameron
	%	%
Age	*	9
Personality	4	9
Family man	4	8
Good speaker/orator	1	8
Ordinary person/ in touch with the people	3	8
Modern/fresh view/ a change	*	7
Overall image (looks/style/image)	1	6
Good leader/strong leader/statesman	4	5
Seems a nice man/kind/caring	3	5
Family policies/agenda	1	4
Good/sound judgement/integrity	5	4
Honest/truthful	4	4
Understands the problems facing Britain	2	3
Best man for the job	1	2
Environmental agenda	*	2
Loyalty to the party	2	2
Rides bicycle	0	2
Straightforward	*	2
Experienced/ economic experience	10	1
Confident	*	1
Charismatic	0	1
Energetic	0	1
Intelligent	2	1
Listens to what people want	*	1
Tries hard/works hard	3	1
His work with the NHS	0	1
Awareness of social issues	0	1
Good policies	1	1
Means what he says/follows through	1	1
Policies on youth/education	*	1
Sincere	1	1
Good in a crisis	1	*
Nationality/origin (i.e. Scottish/English)	2	*
Patriotic	1	*
Strays from party line/maverick	*	*
Worked outside of politics	*	*
Determined	1	*
Other	3	2
Nothing/I don't like anything about him	44	25
Everything/I like everything about him	0	*
Don't Know	11	15

Q18- Q19 **What would you say are the main things you dislike about the leaders? Please say whatever springs to mind.**

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+

	Gordon Brown	David Cameron
	%	%
Can't trust him/untrustworthy	13	9
Dithers/lack of conviction/indecisive	12	4
Not a good leader / lacks stature / lacks statesmanship	10	3
Makes promises he can't /doesn't keep	7	5
Overall image (looks/style/image)	7	5
Incompetent	6	1
Out of touch	6	3
Economic track record	5	1
Weak person/not strong enough	5	3
Don't like his policies	5	2
Boring	4	*
No principles/backtracks/u-turns/bottler	3	2
Too serious/sober	3	*
Arrogant/pompous	3	4
Image abroad/international presence	2	*
Poor listener	2	*
Lack of charisma	2	*
Poor speaker/communicator	2	1
Personality	2	*
Nationality/origin (i.e. Scottish / English)	1	*
Not intelligent enough	1	*
Party allegiance	1	3
Straying from party values/maverick	1	*
Lack of confidence	1	*
Poor people skills	1	0
Power hungry/do or say anything to get votes	1	1
Lack of policies	1	1
His party/team are all the same	1	*
Ignores problems/buries head in the sand	1	0
The way he came to power/was not voted in	1	0
Riding a bicycle	0	1
Too right wing	0	1
Jumps on the bandwagon	0	1
Too casual	*	1
Too posh	*	5
Smarmy/smug/slimy/sleazy	*	4
Lack of experience	*	3
Tax policy/raising taxes	*	0
Too left wing	*	*
No substance	*	1
Too negative	*	1
Manipulative	*	*
Not genuine enough/too shallow	*	3
Other	4	4
Nothing/ I don't dislike anything about him	11	21
Everything/ I dislike everything about him	5	3
Don't Know	10	22

Q20. **People have different views about this country and about Prime Ministers. For each of these pairs of statements, please tell me which one comes closest to your ideal.**

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+	%
I would prefer a Prime Minister who mainly trusts his own judgement and experience to make decisions	32
I would prefer a Prime Minister who mainly acts on the views and opinions of the general public to make decisions	64
No opinion	4

Q21. **People have different views about this country and about Prime Ministers. For each of these pairs of statements, please tell me which one comes closest to your ideal.**

Base: 1017 British adults 18+	%
I would prefer a Prime Minister who is generally similar to me in terms of background and experience	24
I would prefer a Prime Minister who is better qualified than me in terms of background and experience	71
No opinion	5