

Ipsos MORI December Political Monitor

Fieldwork: 11-13 December 2009

CON 43% (+6); LAB 26% (-5); LIB DEM 20% (+3)

Ipsos MORI's December Political Monitor (carried out by telephone between 11-13 December among 1,017 British adults aged 18 and over) shows, among those certain to vote, a **swing back to the Conservatives, particularly among ABC1C2 voters**.

Among those absolutely certain to vote, 43% intend to vote Conservative (up from 37% in November), 26% intend to vote Labour (down from 31%) and 20% for the Liberal Democrats (up from 17%).

The figures are a return to the average throughout the latter half of 2009 – with a Conservative share of the vote in the 40s and a Labour share of the vote averaging in the high 20s.

Economic optimism for the next year has declined as well. Around a third (32%) now think that the economy will improve over the next 12 months (compared with a high of 46% last month), but, for the first time since July, more (36%) think it will get worse. Ipsos MORI's Economic Optimism Index therefore stands at -4.

One factor which may have had an impact on our figures this month is that **the percentage of Conservative voters who are certain to vote has increased from 61% to 68% since last month**, while at the same time, among Labour supporters this has decreased slightly (from 51% to 49%). It may be that the Pre Budget Report and subsequent reaction has resulted in shoring up Conservative voters' determination to get to polling booths, as well as curtailing economic optimism among the public as a whole.

The government and Gordon Brown's ratings have also declined since last month – fewer than three in ten (28%) are satisfied with the way Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister (compared with 34% last month) and one fifth (21%) are satisfied with the government (down from 25%).

Satisfaction with David Cameron has also declined since November, with a net satisfaction score of +6 now compared to +13 in November.

Nick Clegg remains, on balance, the most popular of the three main party leaders: his net satisfaction is now +13 (down slightly from +15 last month) although a third (33%) are not able to answer.

Over two thirds (69%) believe **the result of the next general election is important to them personally**, an almost identical figure to November. Again, this is higher amongst Conservative supporters than Labour supporters (84% and 76% respectively) Three in ten (28%) believe it is not personally not very or at all important to them.

Technical Details

Ipsos MORI interviewed a representative sample of 1,017 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Interviews were conducted by telephone 11-13 December 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.

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, 51%, 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 (530)

Q1a/b

%

Conservative	43
Labour	26
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	20
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	2
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	4
British National Party	2
Other	1

Conservative lead (±%) **+17**

<i>Would not vote</i>	*
<i>Undecided</i>	6
<i>Refused</i>	4

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: 1,017 British adults 18+

	%
Conservative	37
Labour	31
Liberal Democrats (Lib Dem)	18
Scottish/Welsh Nationalist	3
Green Party	3
UK Independence Party	4
British National Party	2
Other	1

Conservative lead (+%) +6

Would not vote	11
Undecided	9
Refused	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: 1,017 British adults 18+

	%
10 – absolutely certain to vote	51
9	6
8	9
7	6
6	3
5	10
4	2
3	3
2	2
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: 1,017 British adults 18+

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know	Index
	%	%	%	%
Government (Q3)	21	73	6	-52
Brown (Q4)	28	63	8	-35
Cameron (Q5)	44	38	18	+6
Clegg (Q6)	40	27	33	+13

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)	235	48	44	8	+4
Brown (Q4)	235	54	34	12	+20
Cameron (Q5)	295	78	12	9	+66
Clegg (Q6)	142	65	23	12	+42

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	32
Stay the same	29
Get worse	36
Don't know	3
Ipsos MORI Economic Optimism Index (EOI)	-4

Next general election

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

Base: 1,017 British adults 18+

	May 2005* %	June 2008 %	Nov 2009 %	Dec 2009 %
Very important	45	38	35	37
Fairly important	35	30	33	32
Not very important	11	17	21	19
Not at all important	6	12	8	9
No opinion	3	2	3	3
Very/fairly important	72	68	68	69
Not very/at all important	25	29	29	28
Net important	+47	+39	+39	+41

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