

## **National Assembly Wales Referendum Research March 2011 Topline**

- This data are based on 1,005 adults aged 18+ across Wales.
- Interviewing took place between 5 and 9 March 2011. Data are weighted to match the profile of the population.
- Where results do not sum to 100, this is due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. Base sizes are in brackets.
- An asterisk (\*) represents a value of less than one half of one percent, but not zero.
- Where possible, comparative data is provided from the 2007 Electoral Commission post-election research, conducted among 1,000 adults across Wales by telephone, after the 2007 National Assembly for Wales elections and Welsh local elections. Comparative data is also used where possible from the 2009 Electoral Commission post-election research, conducted among 502 adults across Wales by telephone after the 2009 European elections and from the 2010 Electoral Commission post-election research, conducted among 1,032 adults across Wales by telephone after the 2010 General Election.

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### **Summary of key results**

- Attitudes towards voting registration are positive, with nine in ten Welsh adults saying they are registered to vote and the same proportion saying they are confident they know how to register to vote.
- Further good news is that nine in ten people are satisfied with the process of voting at the referendum and two in three are confident that it was well run. However, a quarter of Welsh adults are *not very* or *not all confident* that the referendum was well run. Among people who actually voted, three quarters are confident that it was well run – which is in line with the finding after the General Election in May 2010.
- As in 2010, key reasons for voting include feeling it was important to do so or wanting to “have a say”. A significant reason for this referendum was also to support more independence for Wales. Again reflecting the 2010 findings, circumstances on the day are the most common reason for not voting. However, a significant number did not vote because of a lack of information, not being clear about the referendum or even not knowing the referendum was taking place
- Furthermore, just over a quarter of Welsh adults say they know *not very much* about what the referendum was about while almost one in ten say they know *nothing at all*.
- People who voted at a polling station are largely positive about their experience. Almost all were satisfied with the process of voting at a polling station. They found it easy to access the polling station and easy to complete the ballot paper. Indeed, most found the help and assistance at the polling station useful – agreement has increased on this measure since last year.
- Postal voters were equally satisfied with the process of voting and similarly positive about their experience. Postal voters feel it was easy to complete and return their ballot papers and only very few found filling in the ballot paper difficult. Although the same proportion of postal and polling station voters found filling in the ballot paper at least *fairly easy*, polling station voters were more likely to say it was *very easy*.
- Postal voters and polling station voters are equally confident that their vote was included in the count although polling station voters are more likely to say they are “very confident”.

- Concern that electoral fraud took place is lower now than was the case after the General Election in May 2010. The key reason for this concern is a distrust of politicians and people in politics.

## REGISTRATION, TURNOUT AND VOTING

- Q1. As you may know, there was a referendum in Wales on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March about the powers of the Welsh Assembly. Many people have told us they didn't manage to vote in the referendum on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. How about you – did you manage to vote in the referendum?

	2010 General Election*	2011 Referendum
	%	%
Yes	82	60
No	18	40
Don't know	-	-

\* In 2010 asked as: 'Many people have told us they didn't manage to vote in the General Election on Thursday 6th May. How about you – did you manage to vote in the General Election?

- Q2. People have many reasons for not voting. Why did you not vote in the referendum on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March? Why else?

<i>Base: All who did not vote (381)</i>	<i>%</i>
<b><i>Circumstances</i></b>	
I really intended to vote but circumstances on the day prevented me	4
I was away on 3 <sup>rd</sup> March/voting day	2
I forgot	13
Lack of time/too busy/I was busy at work	24
I couldn't get to the polling station/it was inconvenient	2
Medical/health reasons	6
<b><i>Administration</i></b>	<b>7</b>
I wasn't registered	3
Admin reason	*
I didn't receive a poll card	2
I didn't receive a postal vote/it arrived too late	2
I didn't know where my polling station was	1
<b><i>Elections not important</i></b>	
The referendum wasn't important	5
I didn't think there should have been a referendum/no need for referendum/don't believe in referendums	2
There was no point in voting because the Welsh Assembly is not important/can't do very much/can't change anything/has no power	4
<b><i>Disinterest/no point</i></b>	
I couldn't be bothered	8
I'm just not interested in politics	4
There was no point in voting because it was obvious who would win/my vote wouldn't have made a difference to the outcome	2
<b><i>Referendum choices</i></b>	
I didn't agree with either of the options on offer	2
I didn't like the campaigners/campaigns weren't inspiring	1
You just can't trust politicians to keep their promises	2
<b><i>No information/indecision/complicated</i></b>	
I didn't get any information	11
I didn't know enough about the different options	6
I couldn't decide which way to vote	2

I didn't know there was a referendum	9
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
I am not Welsh/from Wales so didn't think it was appropriate	2
I don't vote	1
Religious reasons	*
Other	2
None of these/no reason	1
Don't know	1

Q3. **People have many reasons for voting in elections and referendums. Why did you vote in the referendum on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March?**

<i>Base: All voters (624)</i>	%
It is important to vote /It is my civic duty/ everyone should vote/ People fought to win the right to vote for me/ others	44
I wanted to have a say	25
To support devolution / more independence for Wales	16
It is my right to vote	15
I always vote	11
If people don't vote then you have no right to complain/ have an opinion	6
To get a change	5
Not happy with the government/ to send a message to the government	4
Concerned about local issues	3
I don't want more independence for Wales	3
To defeat stop the other side from winning	2
Like/ pleased with the government	2
Because an important issue was at stake	2
I was urged/ persuaded to vote by a family member/ friend	1
Because I was sent a ballot paper in the post	1
Other	2
None of these/no reason	1
Don't know	2

Q4. **Which of these statements best describes your attitude towards voting at elections for the Welsh Assembly? PROMPT: By this I mean voting to elect members to the Welsh Assembly, not this referendum**

	%
I always vote at elections for the Welsh Assembly	59
I sometimes vote at elections for the Welsh Assembly	23
I never vote at elections for the Welsh Assembly	13
I've not been eligible in the past to vote at elections for the Welsh Assembly	5
Don't know	*

- Q5. As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register, that is, the official list of people who can vote, either where you are living now or somewhere else?

	2007 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
Yes – where living now	86	90	94	91
Yes – somewhere else/another address		4	3	4
No	12	5	2	2
Don't know	1	2	1	3

- Q6. How confident, if at all, are you that you know how to go about registering to vote? Would you say...

	%
Very confident	66
Fairly confident	21
Not very confident	7
Not at all confident	4
Don't know	2

## VOTING PROCESSES AND PRIORITIES

- Q7. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the actual process of voting at the referendum on 3<sup>rd</sup> March?

<i>Base: All who voted (624)</i>	%
Very satisfied	66
Fairly satisfied	24
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4
Fairly dissatisfied	3
Very dissatisfied	2
Don't know	1

- Q8. You said that you were dissatisfied with the process of voting at the referendum on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Why were you dissatisfied? Anything else?

<i>Base: All dissatisfied with the process of voting (36)</i>	%
<i>NB. Very small base size</i>	
<b>Voting system</b>	
The voting system was unfair	1
There was no point/My vote won't count	7
<b>Ease/Convenience of voting</b>	
Difficulty in getting to a polling station	5
Voting is too confusing / I don't understand the system	4
There should be more choice on how and where to vote	12
<b>Referendum</b>	
Didn't understand what the referendum was about	20
Didn't understand the question/what I was being asked	20
Not enough information	10
Lack of media coverage	7
The referendum was unnecessary/waste of time/money	6
Didn't like either of the options	3
<b>Other</b>	
Don't like/trust politicians	1
The procedure for voting is open to fraud and abuse	5
Many people do not vote	2

Other	12
None of these/no reason	2
Don't know	7

Q9. **How confident, if at all, are you that the referendum was well run on Thursday 3rd March? Are you...**

<i>Base:</i>	2009* <i>All voters</i> (250) %	2010** <i>All voters</i> (524) %	2011 <i>All voters</i> (624) %	2011 <i>All</i> (1,005) %
Very confident	52	27	36	26
Fairly confident	36	46	41	41
Not very confident	5	20	12	15
Not at all confident	1	7	9	10
Don't know	5	*	3	7

\*In 2009 asked as: 'How confident are you that the election/s was/were well administered on June 4th?'

\*\* In 2010 asked as: 'How confident, if at all, are you that the election(s) was/were well run on Thursday 6th May? Are you...'

Q10. **Did you vote at the referendum...**

<i>Base: All voters</i>	2007* (541) %	2009* (250) %	2010* (524) %	2011 (624) %
In person at a polling station	80	78	76	73
By post	19	22	23	27
By proxy	1	-	1	*
Other	N/A	1	-	*
Don't know/can't remember	*	-	-	-

\*Asked as "Did you vote at the election(s)..."

Q11. **From what you have seen, heard or experienced, do you think that voting at the polling station for the Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March referendum was...**

	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
Very convenient	46	47	47
Fairly convenient	28	28	26
Neither convenient nor inconvenient	10	11	11
Fairly inconvenient	4	6	5
Very inconvenient	4	6	5
Don't know	8	3	7

Q12. **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the process of voting at a polling station? Would you say you are...**

<i>Base: All polling station voters</i>	2007 (434) %	2009 (194) %	2010 (406) %	2011 (465) %
Very satisfied	66	74	75	78
Fairly satisfied	30	22	20	19
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	2	2	2
Fairly dissatisfied	*	1	1	*
Very dissatisfied	*	1	1	1
Don't know	1	-	-	*

Q13. **Once you arrived at your polling station, how easy or difficult was it for you to get inside to vote? Was it ...**

<i>Base: All polling station voters</i>	2009 (194) %	2010 (406) %	2011 (465) %
Very easy	93	95	93
Fairly easy	6	3	6
Neither easy nor difficult	-	1	-
Fairly difficult		*	1
Very difficult	2	-	*
Don't know	-	-	-

Q14. *Not included due to very small base size*

Q15. **How useful, if at all, was the help or support available from polling station staff on how to vote? Was it...**

<i>Base: All polling station voters</i>	2009* (194) %	2010 (406) %	2011 (465) %
Very useful	72	51	63
Fairly useful	17	23	18
Not very useful	1	6	*
Not at all useful	-	6	1
Didn't use them/need them	-	13	17
Don't know	2	*	1

\*In 2009 asked as: 'How good or bad was the help or support available from polling station staff on how to vote ...?'

Q16. **And again thinking back to when you went to vote at the polling station how useful, if at all, were any written instructions on how to vote, such as a poster on display in the polling booth or guidance on the ballot paper? Were they...**

<i>Base: All polling station voters</i>	2009 (194) %	2010 (406) %	2011 (465) %
Very useful	57	41	54
Fairly useful	27	30	24
Not very useful	1	6	3
Not at all useful	1	6	2
Didn't use them/need them	-	14	17
Don't know	6	2	1

- Q17. **Some people said it was difficult to fill in the ballot paper when voting in the referendum. How easy or difficult did you find it to fill in the ballot paper for the referendum? Was it...**

<i>Base:</i>	2009 (250) <i>All voters</i>	2010 (524) <i>All voters</i>	2011 (620) <i>All voters*</i>	2011 (465) <i>All polling station voters</i>
	%	%	%	%
Very easy	78	86	86	88
Fairly easy	17	10	11	9
Neither easy nor difficult	2	1	2	2
Fairly difficult	3	2	1	1
Very difficult	-	*	-	-
Don't know	*	1	-	-

\*Excluding 4 voters who said they voted either "by proxy" or "other" at Q10

- Q18. *Not included due to very small base size*

- Q19. **From what you have seen, heard or experienced, do you think that voting by post for the Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March referendum was...**

	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
Very convenient	38	45	42
Fairly convenient	21	20	19
Neither convenient nor inconvenient	14	19	15
Fairly inconvenient	4	3	5
Very inconvenient	5	3	2
Don't know	19	11	17

- Q20. **Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the process of voting by post? Would you say you are...**

<i>Base: All postal voters</i>	2007 (103) %	2009 (55) %	2010 (113) %	2011 (155) %
Very satisfied	67	87	82	85
Fairly satisfied	27	11	16	12
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	-	-	1
Fairly dissatisfied	1	2	1	1
Very dissatisfied	0	1	-	1
Don't know	4	-	-	-

- Q21. **How easy or difficult was it to understand what you had to do in order to complete and return your postal vote? Would you say it was...**

<i>Base: All postal voters</i>	2009 (55) %	2010 (113) %	2011 (155) %
Very easy	69	73	71
Fairly easy	25	21	25
Neither easy nor difficult	1	1	1
Fairly difficult	2	2	3
Very difficult	3	-	*
Don't know	-	1	-



- Q22. **Thinking back to when you voted by post, how useful, if at all, were any written instructions on how to vote and return your vote, such as guidance on the ballot paper? Were they...**

<i>Base: All postal voters</i>	2010 (113) %	2011 (155) %
Very useful	65	64
Fairly useful	31	32
Not very useful	-	2
Not at all useful	-	*
Didn't use them/need them	2	1
Don't know	-	2

- Q23. **Some people said it was difficult to fill in the ballot paper when voting in the referendum. How easy or difficult did you find it to fill in the ballot paper for the referendum? Was it...**

<i>Base:</i>	2009 (250) <i>All voters</i> %	2010 (524) <i>All voters</i> %	2011 <i>All voters*</i> (620) %	2011 (155) <i>All postal voters</i> %
Very easy	78	86	86	80
Fairly easy	17	10	11	16
Neither easy nor difficult	2	1	2	2
Fairly difficult	3	2	1	1
Very difficult	-	*	-	-
Don't know	*	1	*	*

\*Excluding 4 voters who said they voted either "by proxy" or "other" at Q10

- Q24. **How confident, if at all, are you that your vote was included in the count? Are you...**

<i>Base:</i>	2010 <i>All postal voters</i> (113) %	2011 <i>All postal/proxy voters</i> (158) %	2011 <i>All voters</i> (624) %
Very confident	55	65	75
Fairly confident	37	28	21
Not very confident	3	*	1
Not at all confident	1	-	1
Don't know	2	7	3

- Q25. *Not included due to very small base size*

- Q26. **Some people have told us they intentionally spoiled their ballot paper by deliberately leaving the ballot form blank or by not voting 'yes' or 'no' in the instructed way. They did this to register a protest. Did you intentionally spoil your own ballot paper or not?**

<i>Base: All voters</i>	2009 (250) %	2010 (524) %	2011 (624) %
Yes	4	*	2
No	96	100	98
Don't know/can't remember	*	-	1

<b>REFERENDUM KNOWLEDGE</b>
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- Q27. How much, if anything, do you feel you know about what the referendum on 3rd March was about?

	%
A great deal	17
A fair amount	46
Not very much	28
Nothing at all	8
Don't know	1

<b>INTEGRITY OF THE REFERENDUM</b>
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- Q28. As you may know, there are many types of fraud such as benefit fraud and insurance fraud. From what you know or have heard, how much do you feel you understand about electoral fraud in the UK, that is fraud relating to elections and voting? Would you say you know...

	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
A lot	11	9	10
A little	31	32	34
Hardly anything at all	30	35	31
Nothing at all	26	23	24
Don't know	1	1	1

- Q29. How concerned, if at all, are you that electoral fraud and abuse took place at the referendum on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March? Would you say you are...

	2010 %	2011 %
Very concerned	13	11
Fairly concerned	24	16
Not very concerned	35	36
Not at all concerned	27	32
Don't know	2	6

Q30. **Why do you say that you are concerned that electoral fraud and abuse took place at the referendum on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March? Why else?**

*Base: All those concerned that electoral fraud and abuse took place (266)*

	%
Dishonesty of MPs/people in politics/elections	23
You cannot trust anyone	13
System/admin badly organised/don't trust system/admin	10
Wrong people voted in	10
Stolen votes	6
Don't trust postal service/possible to intercept postal votes	5
System lacks proper safeguards	5
Fraud and abuse generally a bad thing	4
Direct experience (i.e. I/someone I know was a possible/actual victim of electoral fraud/abuse)	3
Local experience (i.e. electoral fraud/abuse took place in my local area)	3
Press/media reports on electoral fraud/abuse	3
Other	10
Refused	2
Not stated	2
Don't know	15

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Q31. **How confident, if at all, are you that if a campaigning organisation or one of its members is caught breaking the rules on funding, the authorities will take appropriate action? Are you...**

	%
Very confident	19
Fairly confident	47
Not very confident	22
Not at all confident	7
Don't know	4