



Review of 2006

December 2006

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Introduction

Welcome to our Review of 2006. Inside you will find results from the huge range of different projects we have undertaken this year. It is research which illustrates the value of the Social Research Institute's ability to offer an integrated approach – using both qualitative and quantitative methods where relevant, able to call on genuine experts in diverse policy areas and specialists in researching various target audiences or in different research techniques, combining seamlessly into single project teams.

This was the year when the government struggled on with public service reform, but hit new lows in terms of public confidence in the NHS (despite levels of satisfaction with actual treatments remaining higher than before). It was a year when, for the first time ever, race and immigration became the key issues that Britons saw facing the country. A year when ratings of both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition fell. A year when, compared to the rest of the G6 countries, Britons were the most negative about their government's handling of crime.

At the same time, of people in all the major industrial economies we were most positive about our own and about the country's economic circumstances. It's a funny old world, and with our new international network, we will be looking at it in ever more detail.

Of course, some things never change. In a more diverse society than ever, it is revealing how little attitudes to both the monarchy and the principles of the NHS and welfare state change over time.

In our own world, we see the same pattern - we undertook one million on-line interviews but also more traditional in-house face-to-face interviews (albeit using laptops) than ever. Continuity and change. Perhaps it's what helps keep us all sane.

Finally, 2006 has been the year when the British public started to wake up to its biggest challenge, climate change - but we need to become more worried!

Ben Page
Chairman
Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute

As Tony Blair's decade in Downing Street seems likely to end within months, it is natural at this point to take stock, reflect on the Blair legacy, and consider the challenges facing his successor. There is not only the short-term political problem of winning the next election, but more profound questions whose implications stretch years into the future. "Britain at the crossroads" is an over-used cliché, but it has seldom been a more appropriate metaphor than now.

Politically the government has been at a low ebb in 2006 - both voting intentions and satisfaction ratings are well below the levels achieved for most of the last nine years. But this is not necessarily a harbinger of future electoral disaster. Mr Blair's worst satisfaction rating, 23% satisfied and a net score of -44, is still higher than the low point reached by Margaret Thatcher in her last year in office (Chart 1) - after which, it will be remembered, her party under a new leader won the next election.

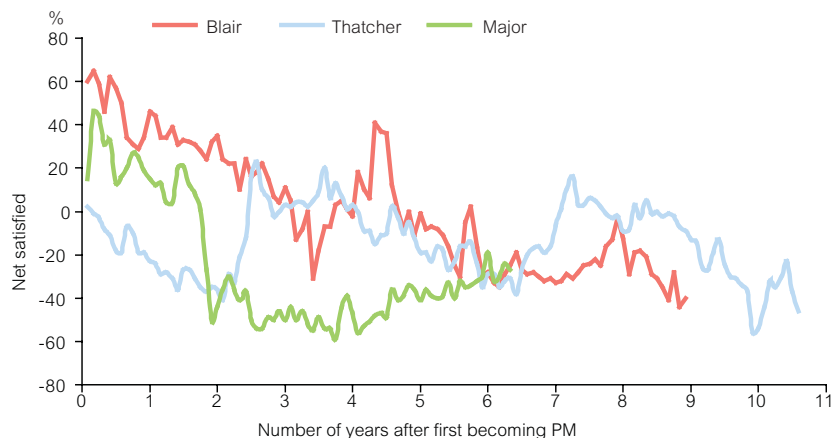
If Labour's new leader is to be Gordon Brown, as most seem to assume, he at least has the merit of being judged on balance by the public as doing a good job as Chancellor (Chart 2). On a personal level, Mr Brown's ratings are also sound: in June, 53% of the public said they thought he was a strength to his party against 27% who judged him a weakness, while a majority felt Tony Blair was now a weakness (54% to 33%). Meanwhile David Cameron was felt to be a strength for the Tories by 48% and a weakness by only 17%. But his ratings have slipped in 2006: as with his Tory predecessors, the "don't knows" seem mostly to be making up their minds against him rather than for him. (Chart 3). All to play for, maybe?

What issues must the new Prime Minister face up to? Iraq, for one: "foreign affairs/defence" remains high on the public's list of "the most important issues facing Britain today" in the monthly Ipsos MORI Political Monitor (chart 4), and a third now say Iraq may help decide their vote at the next election - almost twice as many as said so at the 2005 general election.

Looking to the future

[1] BLAIR'S RATINGS TUMBLING ... LIKE THATCHER'S?

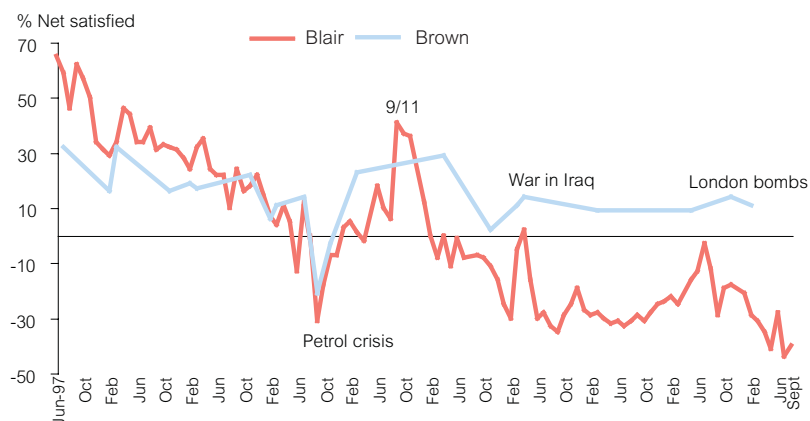
Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way ... is doing his/her job as Prime Minister?



Base: c. 1,000/2,000 GB residents aged 18+ each month
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

[2] BROWN'S JOB RATINGS SURPASS BLAIR'S

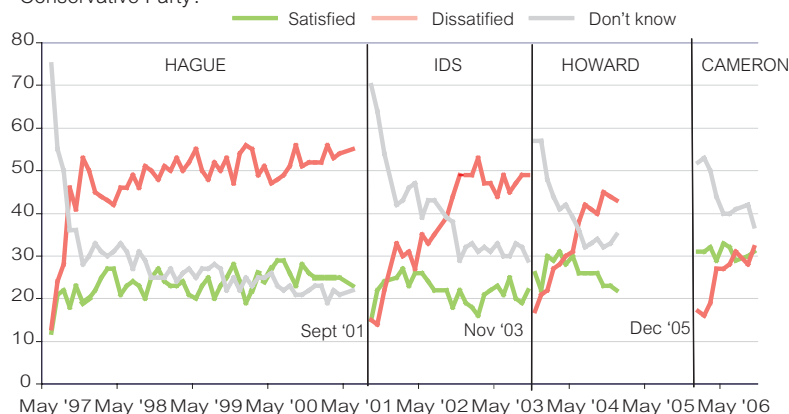
Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Tony Blair/Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister/Chancellor of the Exchequer?



Base: c. 1,000 GB residents aged 18+ each month
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

[3] SATISFACTION WITH TORY LEADERS

Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way...is doing his job as leader of the Conservative Party?



Base: c. 1,000 GB residents aged 18+ each month
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

Race relations and immigration, the National Health Service, education and crime/law & order are also frequently mentioned as important, and these are the issues that have tended to predominate over the past few years when major news stories have not driven other issues into the headlines. Almost as notable is the absence of concern about economic issues - unemployment, inflation or the economy generally. In the 1970s and early 1980s these issues were far more frequently mentioned as important than any others; their absence now is probably a tribute to Gordon Brown's successful stewardship of the economy, but he will be uncomfortably aware that governments get far less public credit for their successes than they suffer for their perceived failures.

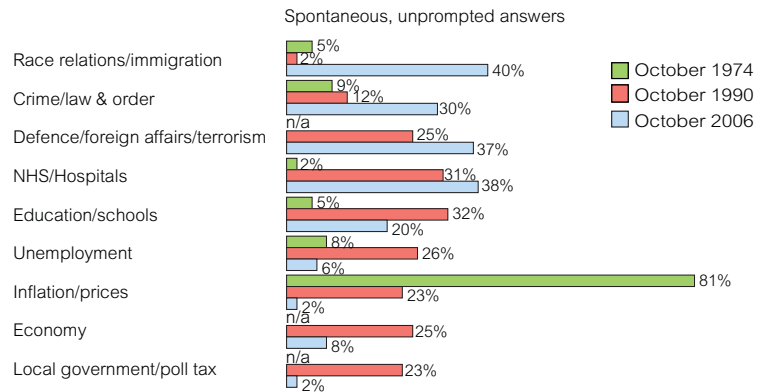
The "important issues" question, though, probes only one facet of public concerns. It tends to produce a ranking of "top of the mind" issues from the national political agenda - even though respondents' answers are unprompted, and not artificially constrained in any way to follow this pattern. But the public is also prepared to recognise wider threats when prompted, notably that of global warming (Chart 5). We also frequently find that, when we direct their attention towards it, many are much more exercised about their local environment and quality of life than about national or international issues. It is this concern about more parochial difficulties that justifies the importance the government gives to its "Respect" agenda (though, as chart 6 shows, many of the public admit they themselves have been guilty of some of the anti-social habits they so deplore).

The fact that these global and local issues rarely feature highly as "issues facing the country" may be a symptom of wider disjunction between what the public worries about and what they think of as "political". But many of the strategic decisions which now face Britain depend on repairing this connection - the public's commitment and involvement, at the ballot box and in their everyday lives, must move hand-in-hand for any solution to be workable.

What worries the public

[4] MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING BRITAIN

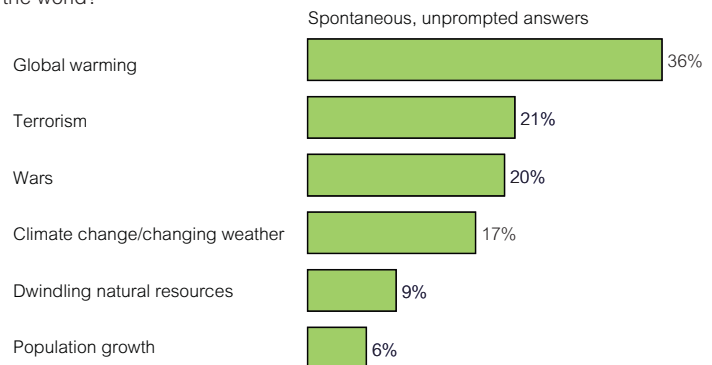
Q What would you say is the most important issue facing Britain today?
What do you see as other important issues facing Britain today?



Base: c. 1,000/2,000 GB residents aged 18+ each month
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

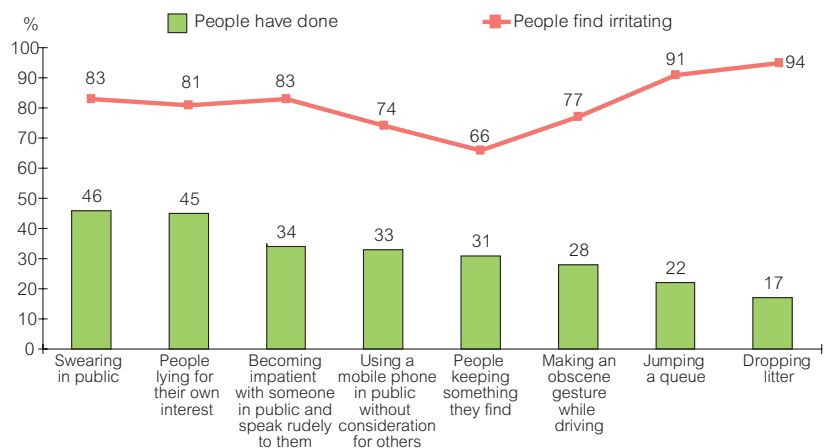
[5] ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES POSE GLOBAL THREAT

Q What issues, if any, do you think are the most serious threats to the future wellbeing of the world?



Base: 1,002 GB residents aged 16+
Source: Ipsos MORI

[6] IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS TOO



Base: 1,003 GB residents aged 18+, 2-4 December 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/Respect Task Force

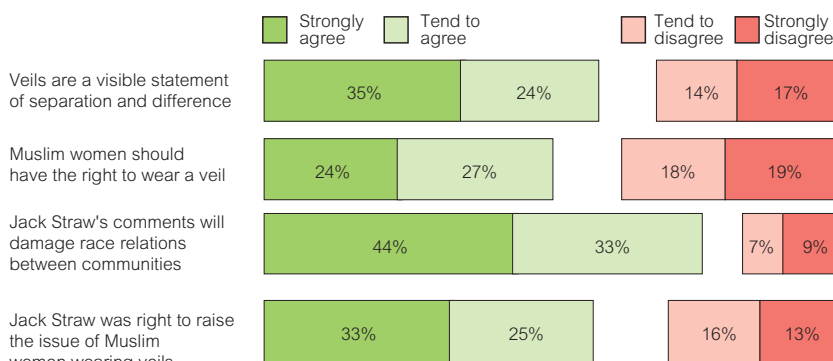
Perhaps the most fundamental question facing Britain is the future nature of British society itself, a question given further urgency by the international situation and its impact on community relations in Britain. How can we reconcile the varied needs and aspirations of a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-faith population? The potential issues that may divide us are not hard to find - though in some cases Britain's patchwork population turns out to have more in common, and to be more mutually tolerant, than the pessimists might fear. Take the recent controversy over Jack Straw's remarks about Muslim women wearing veils. We found (Chart 7) that the public believe Muslim women have a right to wear a veil (though many make an exception of teachers, policewomen or TV newsreaders while doing their jobs); they think, too, that Mr Straw's remarks will damage community relations, yet that he was right to make them. (A separate poll conducted on Ipsos MORI's new monthly London Omnibus survey for the Evening Standard, found similar sentiments among residents in the capital.) Live and let live seems to be the predominant feeling.

Determining Britain's future nature as a secular or religious society goes beyond the Islamic question. Faith schools are another issue of recent controversy - not only Muslim schools, but accusations of Christian fundamentalist involvement in foundation schools and whether non-Darwinian theories of creation should have a place in school science lessons. Apparently there is no overwhelming majority that utterly rejects creationism or "Intelligent Design": our survey for Horizon found that when presented with brief summaries of the three theories (Chart 8), only around half the public felt the description of the "evolution theory" best described their own view. Further, 44% said they thought creationism should be taught in school science courses, and 41% that intelligent design should be, while 15% went so far as to say that the evolution theory should not be taught. How deep-rooted these attitudes are is uncertain, but the secularist preference for a broad consensus of agnosticism seems far off.

Society and community

[7] MUSLIM WOMEN AND VEILS

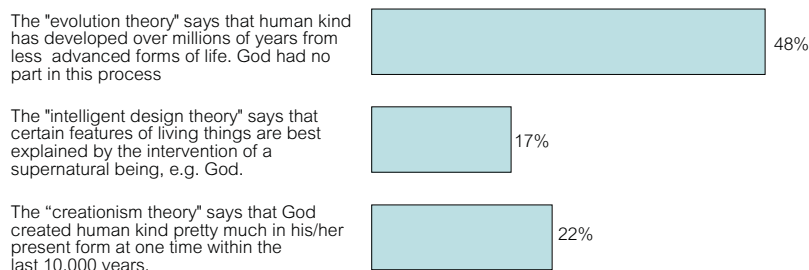
Q As you may have seen or heard, the Labour Cabinet Minister Jack Straw recently suggested that Muslim women concealing their faces in veils is bad for race relations. For each statement ... please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree.



Base: 1,023 GB residents aged 18+, 11 October 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/ITV Tonight with Trevor McDonald

[8] HOW WAS THE WORLD CREATED

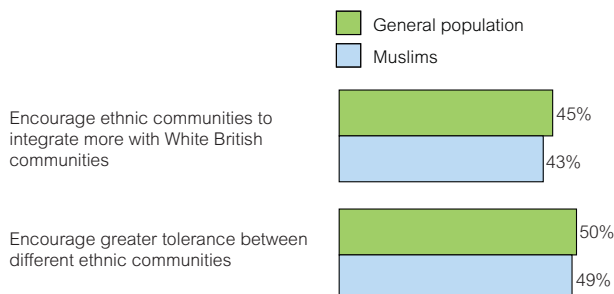
Q I am going to read out three different theories or explanations about the origin and development of life on earth. Can you tell me which of the following theories best describes your view?



Base: 2,112 GB residents aged 18+, 10-15 January 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/BBC Horizon

[9] INTEGRATION OR TOLERANCE?

Q Given the threat to Britain from terrorism, we should..



Base: 1,004 GB general public aged 16+ and 204 GB Muslims aged 16+, 8-9 August 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/BBC

So, tolerate differences or try to iron them out? When we proposed integration and toleration as alternative solutions to the threat from terrorism (Chart 9), we found an even split in opinion – among Muslims as well as the general public.

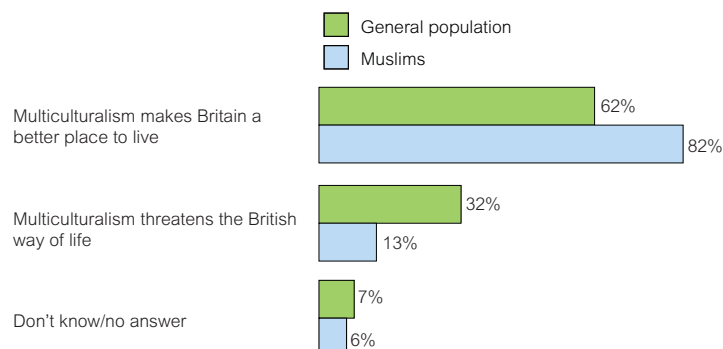
For many years the watchword of the race relations lobby has been "multiculturalism", but more recently CRE chair Trevor Phillips disowned it – yet most of the public find it unthreatening (Chart 10), and two-thirds (68%) disagreed that the policy of multiculturalism is a mistake that should be abandoned. But in any case, are multiculturalism and integration mutually exclusive? Most British Muslims say they support British laws and culture, and do not believe Islam is incompatible with British democracy. Indeed, Muslims advocate integration in some respects more strongly than non-Muslims: they are more likely than other Britons to demand that Muslim clerics should preach in English, and that immigrants be made to learn English (Chart 11). Most Muslims feel immigrants should pledge their primary loyalty to Britain (76%) and should integrate fully into British society (73%).

Any "nation" must look partly to its heritage to define its national identity, and therefore if in the future we are to be united in a common "Britishness", we may need to forge a common appreciation of history. History means a lot to most Britons. (In June 2006, our survey for the History Matters campaign found 79% of adults said they were interested in history). A good test case may be the ability to reach an amicable consensus on Britain's past role in the slave trade: should we pay more attention to the centuries for which Britain was a major promoter of slavery, or to Britain's taking the lead in abolishing it and suppressing the slave trade in the 19th century? In a survey to mark the 200th anniversary of the trade being made illegal throughout the British Empire (Chart 12), a substantial minority said they feel present-day governments should in some respect take responsibility for the crimes of the past, but the majority favour marking the anniversary in other ways.

Multiculturalism

[10] MOST ACCEPT MULTICULTURALISM

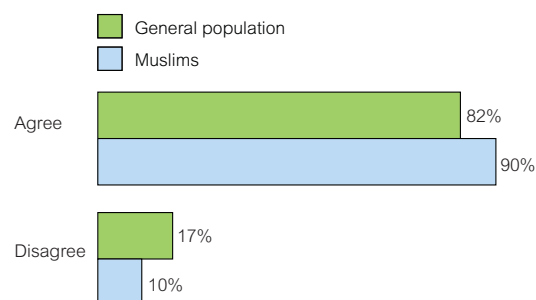
Q Tell me which one of the statements comes closest to your view.



Base: 1,004 GB general public aged 16+ and 204 GB Muslims aged 16+, 8-9 August 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/BBC

[11] IMMIGRANTS SHOULD LEARN ENGLISH

Q Immigrants who become British citizens should be made to learn English?



Base: 1,004 GB general public aged 16+ and 204 GB Muslims aged 16+, 8-9 August 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/BBC

[12] COMMEMORATING SLAVERY

Q Next year is the two hundred year anniversary of Parliament's abolition of the slave trade in the former British Empire. Please could you tell me which of the following statements best describes your view about what should happen to mark the anniversary?



Base: 1,033 GB residents aged 15+, 15-21 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Set All Free

The recent publication of the Stern Report has, for the moment, pushed global warming and climate change to the top of the political and media agendas. In terms of overall impact on our lives and those of future generations, if Stern is right, all political questions are far outweighed by environmental ones (and their economic impact).

Most people in Britain feel they know at least "a fair amount" about the issue (Chart 13). Two-thirds believe they have personally seen evidence of climate change, and less than a quarter that "too much fuss is made about climate change nowadays". Moreover, two-thirds say that "Britain can make a real difference in stopping global climate change" (Chart 14).

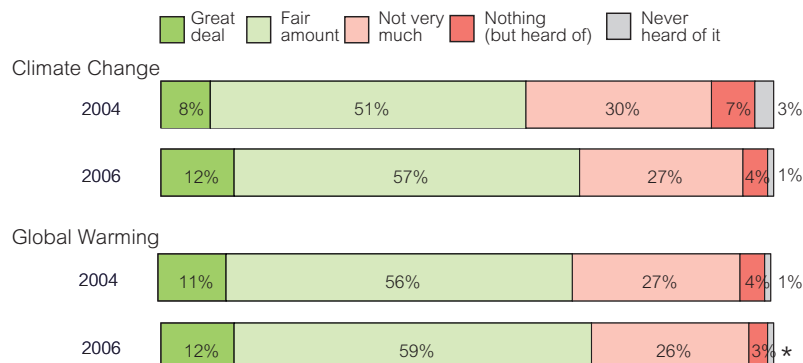
Yet there is still little public pressure on government to act. Only a quarter of the public say that protecting the natural environment will be an important factor in deciding how they will vote, and one in ten that it is one of the most important issues facing the country. (Since younger people are more likely to think Britain can make a difference, the pressure may eventually grow, but it is easy to ignore for the moment, since the young are much less likely than the old to vote.) Politicians who favour coercive measures tread warily for fear of an electoral backlash: the public may proclaim support for green taxes or for putting the squeeze on air travel (as chart 15 shows, they express support for a tax on flying to fund environmental action, and 68% said they thought "Protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic growth in the air travel industry"), but might they renege in the privacy of the polling booth?

The debate over David Cameron's "blue-green" Conservatism suggests the political class still see the environment as a niche issue with potential for party point-scoring, rather than a major crisis where unanimity will be unavoidable. It is the public's lack of vocal urgency that leaves this room for manoeuvre. If Stern turns out to be unduly alarmist, this ambivalence may be justified; but if he is right, woe betide the last flat-earthers to jump on the bandwagon.

Facing up to climate change

[13] MAJORITY FEEL THEY KNOW ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

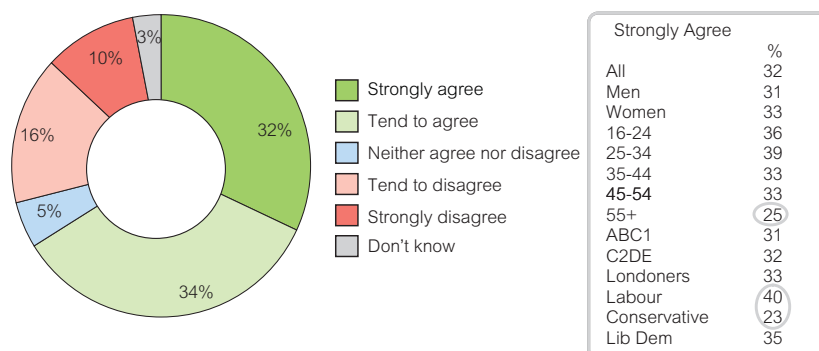
Q How much, if anything, do you know about...?



Base: c. 1,000 GB residents 16+ each survey
Source: Ipsos MORI

[14] CAN BRITAIN DO ANYTHING?

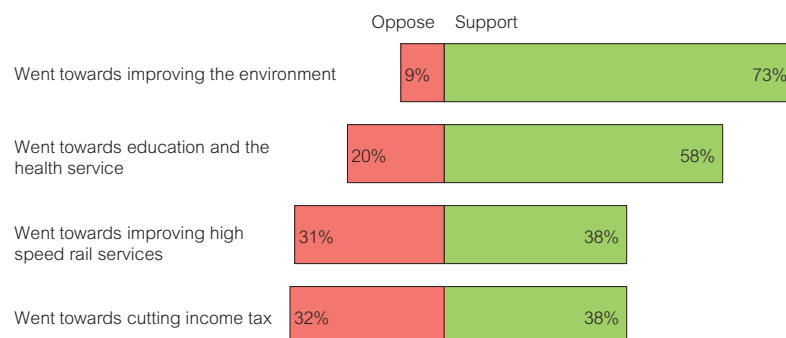
"Britain can make a real difference in stopping global climate change"



Base: c. 1,002 GB residents 16+
Source: Ipsos MORI

[15] SUPPORT FOR GREEN TAXES ON FLYING

Q Suppose taxes on flying were raised so as to add about £20 to the cost of a return flight to Paris and around £200 to a return flight to Australia. If this were the case to what extent would you support or oppose a higher tax on air travel if all the money raised...?



Base: 2,050 GB residents aged 16+, 8-12 June 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Airfields Environment Trust

How acceptable does the public find the inconvenience of practical responses to cut carbon emissions? To meet Britain's international obligations, major changes will be needed in at least two everyday spheres, transport and energy.

Some people, at least, say they are altering their behaviour. Reported car usage, one of the main generators of greenhouse gases, has fallen dramatically in Britain over the last couple of years: Chart 16 shows the number of people personally driving a car five or more days a week has fallen from over half in 2003 to four in ten this year. In London, the number has halved in three years - though here, of course, the introduction of the Congestion Charge in February 2003 has probably been a major factor.

One obstacle to reducing car use is inadequacy of public transport alternatives, and almost two-thirds of the public sympathise with the argument that enough is not currently being spent on improving public transport in order to reduce greenhouse emissions. (Chart 17)

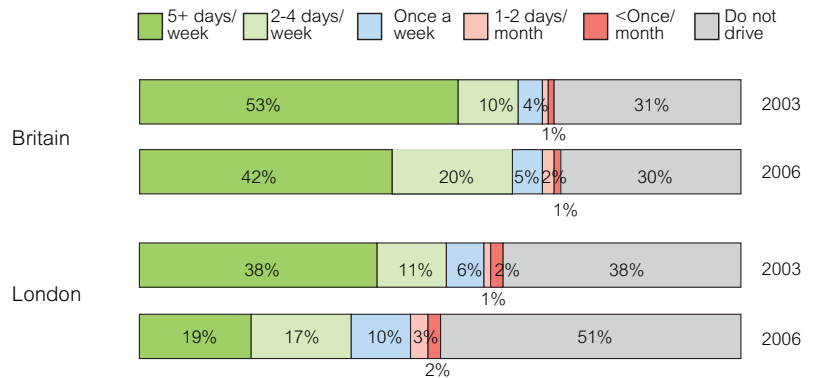
To maintain future economic growth and prosperity while reducing emissions requires new and reliable low carbon power sources, a central theme in the government's Energy Review paper, published in June. Our survey of MPs for the Nuclear Industry Association in June-July finds they increasingly view nuclear power as part of the solution (Chart 18): three in five MPs now support replacing existing nuclear power stations when they are phased out, even though only 44% are actually favourable towards nuclear energy. Most of the public also now expect nuclear energy to be part of the future mix of energy sources, though they see renewables (wind and solar energy) as most important for the future.

One problem with windpower is its impact on the micro-environment. Ipsos MORI Scotland research in the Western Isles, likely a prime site for windfarms, found 50% of residents thought their impact on the local environment would be worthwhile given the wider benefits, but 44% felt the harm caused to the local environment and wildlife would be worse than any wider benefits that would be gained.

Environmental solutions

[16] REPORTED CAR USAGE PLUMMETING

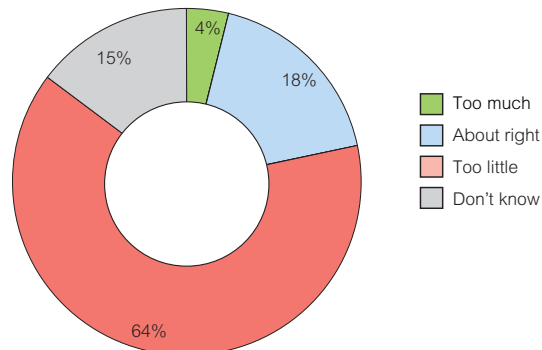
Q How often, if at all, do you personally drive a car nowadays...?



Base: 2,019 (2003)/1,002 (2006) GB residents aged 16+
Source: Ipsos MORI/FIA Foundation

[17] SPEND ON GREEN TRANSPORT, SAY PUBLIC

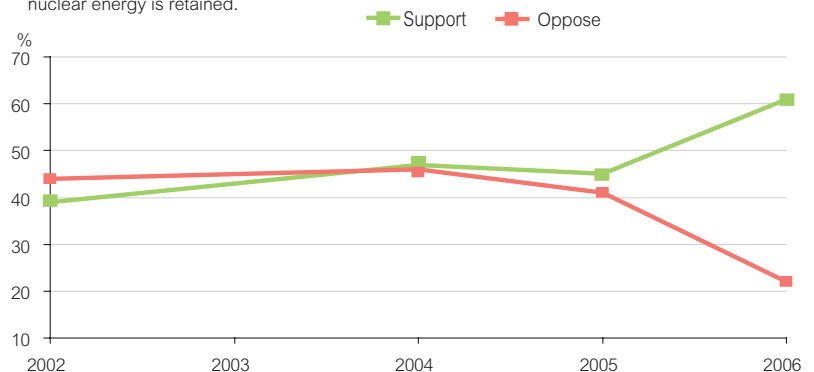
Q A recent Parliamentary report found that between 1990 and 2004 Greenhouse gas emissions from road transport rose by 10%. Environmental groups believe that improving public transport will help to reduce traffic and thus reduce Greenhouse emissions. Do you believe that the Government is currently spending too little, too much, or about the right amount on improving public transport?



Base: 972 GB residents aged 15+, 31 August-11 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/RMT

[18] SWING AMONG MPs TOWARDS NUCLEAR POWER

Q To what extent do you support or oppose the building of new nuclear power stations in Britain to replace those being phased out over the next few years? This would ensure the same proportion of nuclear energy is retained.



Base: c. 100 (frontbench and backbench) Members of Parliament each survey
Source: Ipsos MORI/Nuclear Industry Association

The long-term future of the political system in Britain is another challenge that must be faced eventually, as the traditional models of representative democracy and participation seem increasingly weakened by public disengagement.

Who is it who is becoming most disengaged? Ipsos MORI's Social Issues Omnibus is designed to be able to answer such questions, allowing analysis of results by key measures such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, ethnic diversity, voting behaviour, internet and other technology use, religion and rurality. Our summary indicator of engagement is the long-established MORI Socio-Political Activism scale. Those adults who say they have done at least five of ten listed activities in the last two or three years are classified as activists. In the first three quarters of 2006, 8% of British adults were activists. But activism was commoner in rural England (12%), where as chart 19 shows all ten individual figures were higher. Activism is much lower than average in deprived (6%) and very deprived neighbourhoods (4%), and also in areas with very high "ethnic fractionalisation" (4%), in other words where many racial groups live together and none predominates.

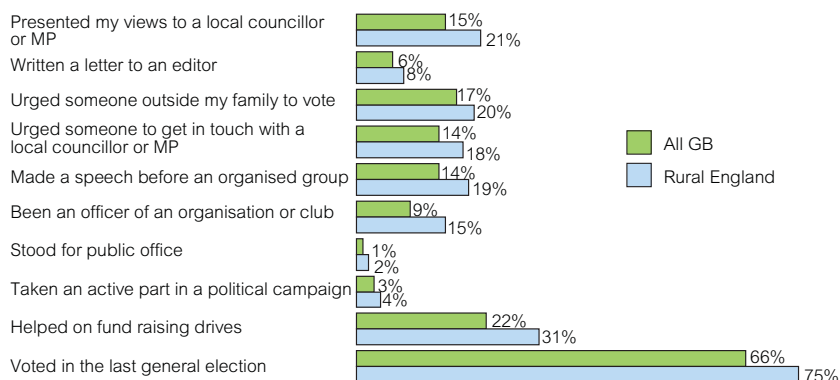
One group who certainly feel themselves excluded from decisions are the young. Research on the Ipsos MORI Schools Omnibus earlier this year among English 11-16 year olds found that half felt that they do not get enough say in decisions that affect them; furthermore, it is the older children - who might reasonably expect their age and maturity entitles them to more of a say - who most feel ignored. (Chart 20).

Probably fundamental to engagement is the public's attitude towards political parties. Plenty of recent research has found evidence of widespread negative or cynical attitudes, but some of Ipsos MORI's work in 2006 has produced more hopeful findings. In a survey in August-September for the Young Foundation, 45% said that they think political parties are good for a democratic system and only 6% that they are bad; and although other surveys have found how much the public values "independence", only 25% agree that Britain would be better off if political parties did not exist and all politicians were independent. (Chart 21.)

Democracy and engagement

[19] GREATER PARTICIPATION IN RURAL AREAS

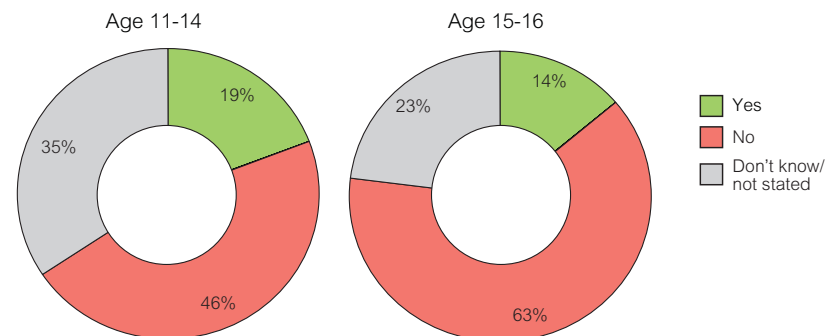
Q Which if any of the following have you done in the last two or three years?



Base: c. 33,000 GB residents aged 15+, January-September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI Social Issues Omnibus

[20] CHILDREN FEEL LEFT OUT

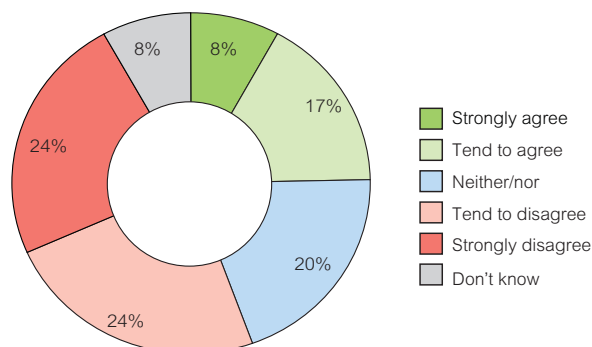
Q Do you think you have enough say in decisions that affect you, for example in individual services and local and national decision making?



Base: 2,129 pupils aged 11-16 in England, 24 February - 18 May 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI /Office of the Children's Commissioner

[21] POLITICAL PARTIES SEEN AS WORTHWHILE

Q Do you agree or disagree that "Britain would be better off if political parties did not exist, and all politicians were independent"?



Base: 973 GB residents aged 15+, 31 August-7 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/The Young Foundation

At the same time, fewer than a quarter believe that parties are open and transparent, and the most popular approaches to making parties more appealing would be for them to involve people more in local decision making and for them to listen more to the public. (Chart 22).

Controversy over the funding of parties - in the spotlight at the moment following recent loans and "cash-for-peerages" allegations, and under investigation by Sir Hayden Phillips - is another factor which discredits them with the public, and increasing their public funding is an unpopular response: in August we found only 28% favour parties being funded mainly or wholly from public money (Chart 23), though this represents a 14% swing towards public funding since we polled (with slightly different question wording) in 2003.

But polls that probe the issue tend to find contradictory public attitudes, for few know much about the subject or understand its intricacies. For this reason, the Electoral Commission had Ipsos MORI conduct a programme of day-long deliberative workshops, to seek insight into latent attitudes to party funding, which would inform policy debates and feed into the Phillips Review. Participants debated the relevant merits and disadvantages of public and private funding of political parties and based on these, thought about trade offs and priorities for party funding reform.

Knowledge of both the current system of funding and how it is regulated was generally low at the outset; but after debate and considering the information they were given to deliberate over, participants were able to agree on a number of guiding principles that they felt should underpin any reformed party funding system. (Chart 24). These all related to the perceived need for heightened democratic renewal and public engagement, and included transparency, accountability, controls on party spending and fairness for all parties regardless of size. Although there was little agreement on what the balance between public and private funding of parties should be, it was widely felt that public funding might help to increase voter turnout through increased campaigning at a local level, and work to engage young people in politics - with some participants suggesting that it should be targeted for these purposes.

The future of political parties

[22] WHAT WOULD MAKE POLITICAL PARTIES MORE APPEALING?

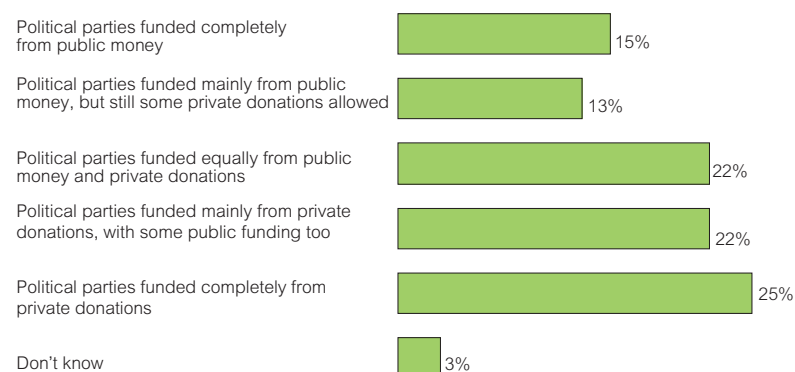
Q Which two or three of the following changes to political parties would help to make political parties more appealing to you?



Base: 973 GB residents aged 15+, 31 August-7 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/The Young Foundation

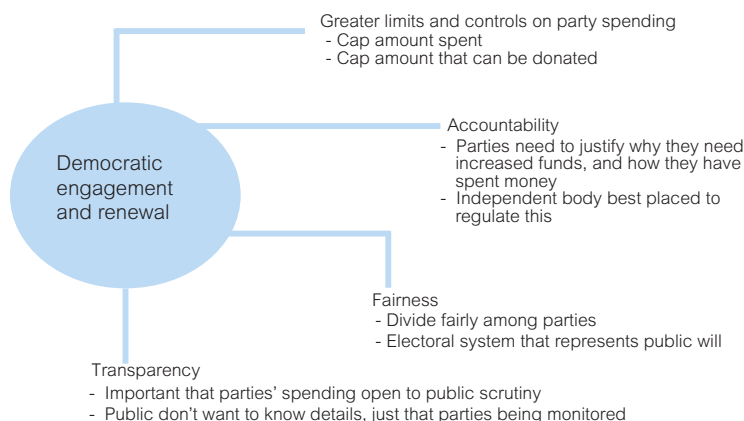
[23] PUBLIC FUNDING OF PARTIES NOT POPULAR

Q Which of the following best reflects your view?



Base: 962 GB residents aged 18+, 25-28 August 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Electoral Commission

[24] PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING



Source: Ipsos MORI qualitative research for the Electoral Commission

Government policy cannot concentrate only on the needs of the majority, naturally. Minority groups or those with specific needs are a crucial target for policy research. Such groups are diverse, of course – indeed, those who need minority consideration in at least one respect must make up the vast majority of the population!

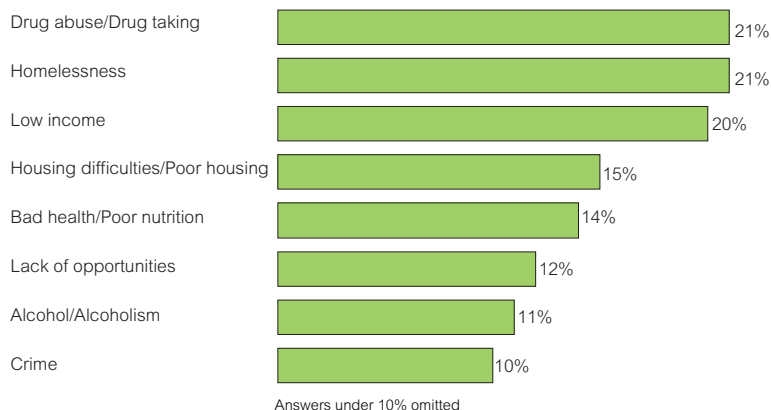
Ipsos MORI has wide experience of such potentially difficult research. Recent projects have included surveys of British Muslims (see p 7), research among drug users, partly using peer-interviewers recruited by our Participation Unit, and with other hard-to-reach groups such as travellers and gypsies and hard-to-research groups such as young people. Equally, we research less problematic but no less important minorities such as rural communities and retired people – who we can now interview where appropriate through our newly-introduced “Silver Omnibus” service.

Often as important as understanding a minority's needs is knowing how the rest of the population perceives them, which may dictate politically-acceptable solutions; where perceptions are misleading, it may be necessary to work at changing them. Recent Ipsos MORI surveys illustrate both understanding and misconceptions. Charts 25 and 26 show how almost all the public accept in principle that poverty is a problem, associating it with other social problems that they want solved. But more in-depth, qualitative research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found the public far from feeling UK poverty is a salient issue: obstacles to facing the problem from misunderstanding of key terms to a more deep-seated wariness about offering help in case it is co-opted by the “undeserving”. In Chart 27 we see evidence of a different problem, younger people's views of the needs of senior citizens being influenced by stereotypes that are at best only partly true. They feel that items like cars and credit cards are more essential to themselves than to the older generations, and assume their elders make less use of new technology (so that a landline rather than a mobile telephone is the norm). There is a grain of truth in this (see p 24), but it is too much an over-simplification for it to be allowed to drive policy.

Minority and needful groups

[25] ASSOCIATIONS WITH POVERTY

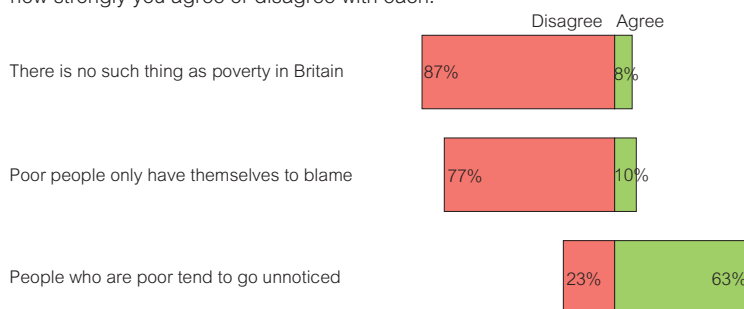
Q Which, if any, social problems or issues do you associate with poverty in Britain?



Base: 2,333 GB residents aged 15+, 17-22 Nov 2005 and 1-5 Dec 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/Church Urban Fund

[26] PERCEPTIONS OF POVERTY

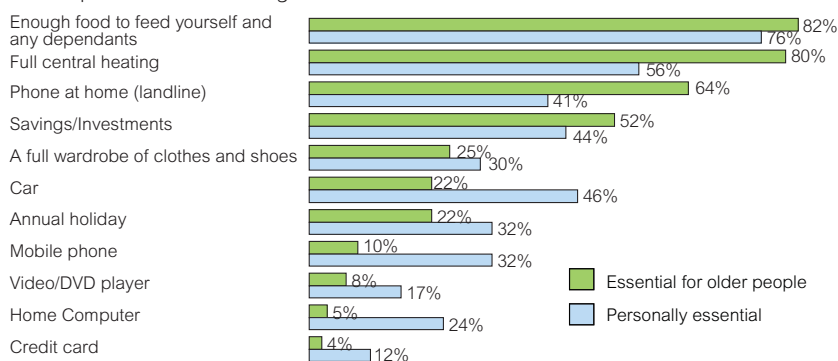
Q I'm going to read out some statements, and for each one I would like you to tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each.



Base: 2,333 GB residents aged 15+, 17-22 Nov 2005 and 1-5 Dec 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/Church Urban Fund

[27] DEFINING AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

Q Thinking about the lifestyle of older people aged over 54 and pensioners/your personal lifestyle, which, if any, of the following items would you consider essential for an adequate standard of living?



Base: 657 GB residents aged 18-40 in full-time or part-time work, 22 September-2 October 2005
Source: Ipsos MORI/Help the Aged

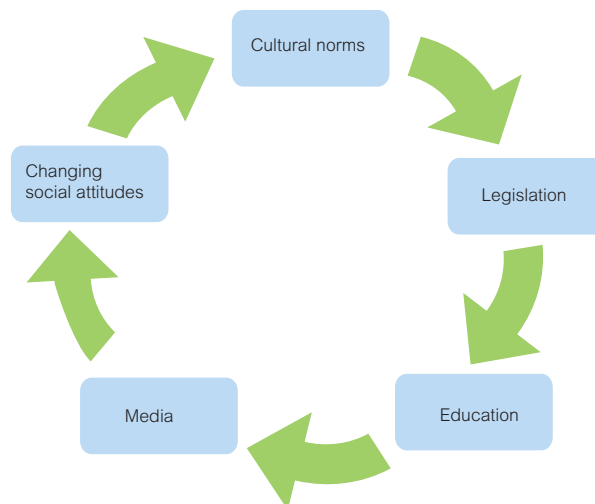
A central concept in modern government policy towards minorities of all sorts is the aspiration of “equality” – but how does the public view this? Ipsos MORI conducted eight focus groups for the Equalities Review to explore the question. We found that people have a clear and shared understanding of what equality means: more than just equality of treatment, it must amount to being given the same opportunities. This means that individual differences (such as religious beliefs or the needs of the disabled) must be taken into account in order for everyone to have an “equal chance”. All the groups recognised that there have been considerable advances towards equality (particularly in relation to ethnicity, gender and disability), largely driven by education and changing social attitudes, as well as by legislation. However, more subtle forms of inequality still exist, and many respondents feel it will be impossible to legislate against these, requiring instead changes in attitudes. Chart 28 illustrates the dynamic process in developing attitudes to equality, as group members saw it.

While achieving equality of opportunity seems a widely accepted aim, there is much less agreement on whether we should aim to eliminate inequalities of income. During the 1980s when Mrs Thatcher was in power, the majority of the public preferred “a society which allows people to make and keep as much money as they can”. A poll for The Sun this year (Chart 29), however, finds the intervening years have produced a significant swing towards egalitarianism, so that the public are now evenly divided on the matter.

One threat to increasing equality is the danger that those apparently inconvenienced by a particular policy may come to believe Orwell’s dictum that “... some animals are more equal than others”. A poll of Londoners, conducted on Ipsos MORI’s new monthly London Omnibus survey for the Evening Standard, found (Chart 30) that a significant minority of Londoners perceive a favouritism towards Muslims, a situation which cannot be good for peaceful community relations. Such findings illustrate the crucial importance of successfully communicating the case for and purpose of equality policies to prevent them becoming counter-productive.

Understanding “equality”

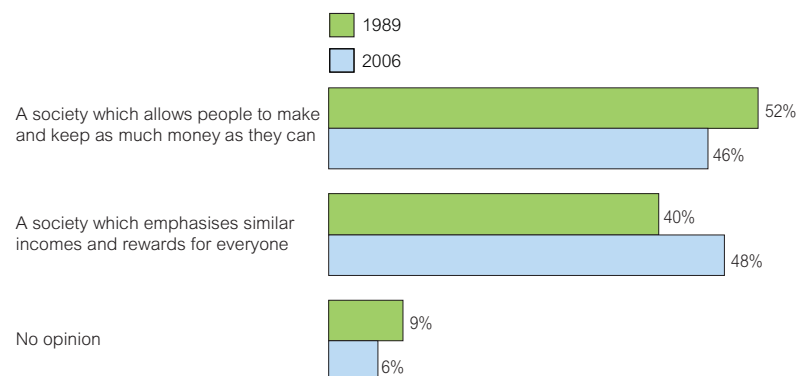
[28] PERCEPTIONS OF EQUALITY



Source: Ipsos MORI qualitative research for the Equalities Review, 28 Feb - 8 Mar 2006

[29] GROWING BELIEF IN EGALITARIANISM

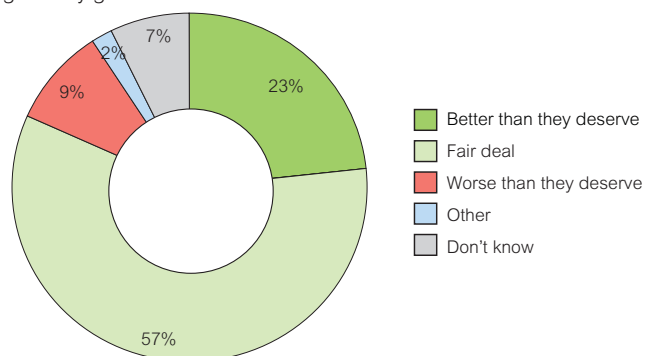
Q People have different views about the ideal society. Please tell me which one comes closest to your ideal.



Base: 1,498 GB residents aged 15+, 2-13 Mar 1989; 1,001 GB residents aged 18+, 12-17 Jan 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/The Sun

[30] MANY LONDONERS BELIEVE MUSLIMS GET A MORE THAN FAIR DEAL

Q In general would you say that Muslims in Britain tend to get a better deal than they deserve from this government's policies, or a worse deal than they deserve, or do they generally get a fair deal?



Base: 1,005 Greater London residents aged 18+, 13-18 October 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Evening Standard

Rural England

One group with inevitably distinctive needs are people who live in rural areas. There is no single rural perspective, but for both policy makers and for researchers, the rural dimension is one that cannot be ignored.

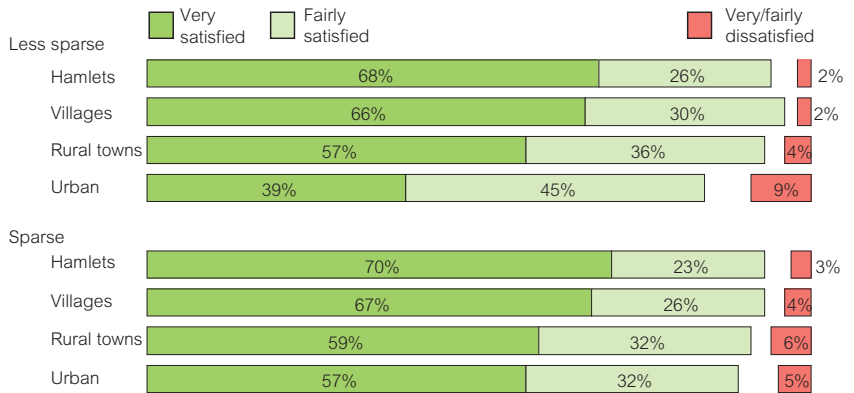
A new categorisation was introduced by the Office of National Statistics in 2004, defining "rural" settlements as being all those with population under 10,000, covering a fifth of the population of England; these are subdivided into small towns, villages and smaller settlements, and also into those where the surrounding area is sparsely populated and those that are "less sparse". Both typologies prove useful in distinguishing between communities with different policy needs and hopes for the future, or who see different changes affecting their local way of life and environment.

Over the past year, we have conducted considerable research, both qualitative and quantitative, for the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), exploring attitudes and opinions in rural England. Although people there tend to be happier with their lot than urban residents, and less dissatisfied with the local area (Chart 31), they have many concerns.

Perhaps the most disturbing finding our research produced was a lack of confidence among the rural population that government understands their needs. A comparison (Chart 32) of the views of the residents themselves and the views of MPs as to the policy issues with most impact on rural areas lends some justification to their scepticism, for there are some important aspects in which the two do not coincide - notably that MPs tend not to mention issues such as crime or young people which are not distinctively rural yet still important and may pose different problems in rural areas. The two key concerns which rural people feel need most immediate attention in their areas (Chart 33) are transport - public transport, road safety and road maintenance are all frequently cited - and the young, facilities both for children and teenagers being high on the list. Just behind these as an immediate concern comes shopping facilities, but in the longer term the shortage of affordable decent housing and job prospects both rear their heads.

[31] MOST PEOPLE HAPPY WITH WHERE THEY LIVE

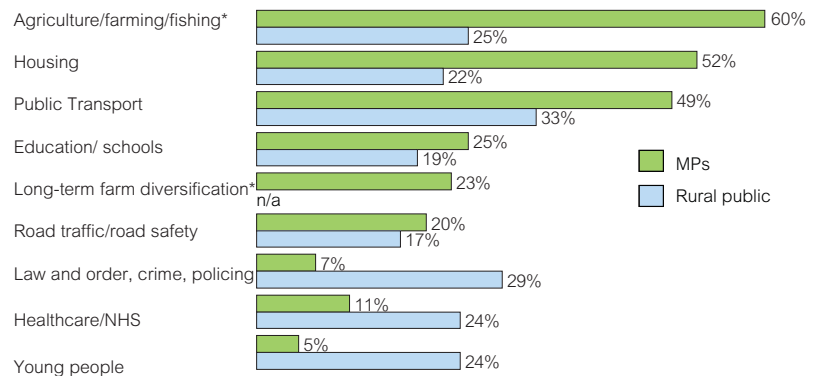
Q How satisfied are you with this area as a place to live?



Base: c. 500 residents aged 16+ in each category in England outside London, 17 Feb-27 Mar 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Commission for Rural Communities

[32] POLICY ISSUES WITH MOST IMPACT ON RURAL AREAS

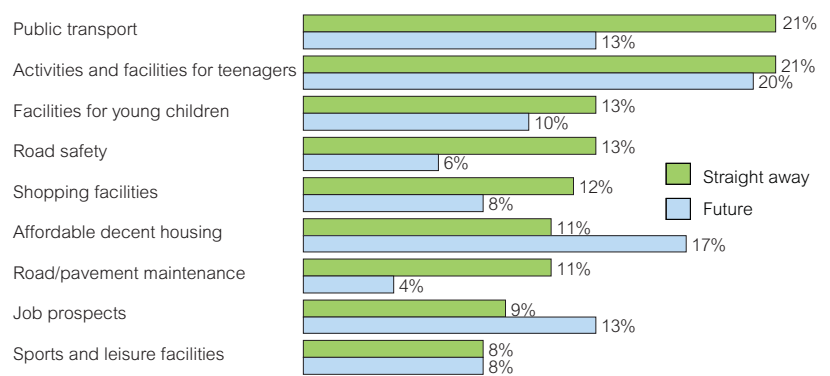
Q (To MPs) Which long-term policy issues would you say have a direct impact on rural areas and the people who live there?
Q (To rural public) Which if any, do you think the people who run the country from Parliament should prioritise for action because you feel these would have the greatest positive impact on rural areas and the people who live there?



*"Agriculture/farming/farm diversification/fishing" was given as a single response category in the survey of the public. Omits responses below 20% in both surveys. There were some differences in the lists of topics used
Base: 101 MPs, Winter 2005; c. 3,000 residents aged 16+ in rural England outside London, 17 Feb-27 Mar 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Commission for Rural Communities

[33] SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PRIORITIES IN RURAL AREAS

Q What are the main things you would like to see done to improve the quality of life for people who live in this area now? I mean the priorities which you think should be tackled straight away? And looking to the future, what are the main things you would like to see done in this area which you think are likely to improve the quality of life for future generations living here?



Omits responses below 8% on each question

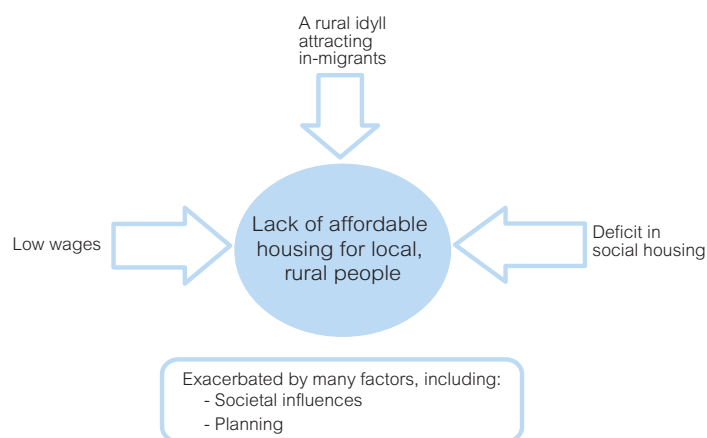
Base: c. 3,000 residents aged 16+ in rural England outside London, 17 Feb-27 Mar 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Commission for Rural Communities

Our recent research on rural housing issues illustrates the value of taking a comprehensive approach to exploring the needs of particular groups. The project was intended to inform the CRC's evidence to the Government's Affordable Rural Housing Commission, to generate ideas and solutions to rural housing problems, and also to raise awareness of housing issues and the CRC's role as an advocate for rural communities. The research included depth interviews with those facing housing issues and with vulnerable people such as the elderly and disabled, and group discussions with "seldom heard" residents, as well as open forums. The range of feedback was considerable, but above all highlighted the social and economic impacts the shortage of affordable local housing is already having on many communities. (Chart 34). Government has welcomed the AHRC report and new measures such as more flexible planning policy have already been introduced.

Rural transport is another problem likely to become more intractable, especially as the increasing policy momentum towards reducing car use for environmental reasons (see page 7) will have to confront rural dependence on the car for lack of an alternative. In urban areas, only just over two in five of those who travel to work by car see no alternative such as public transport or walking or cycling; but in rural areas, only 27% say they could use public transport and 12% could get to work under their own steam, leaving three in five entirely dependent on private cars.

There are similar patterns of rural car use for shopping (Chart 35), in which the dominance of sometimes distant supermarkets over small local shops plays its part. The Competition Commission is currently examining the state of the retail market for groceries in Britain. Our Summer 2006 survey of MPs found they are most likely to feel that the main issues the inquiry should address are the effect on small/independent retailers (38%) and monopolies (36%). The public are concerned, too, and strongly believe in the contribution that local shops make to the community; but the vast majority also believe that they benefit from the competition between supermarkets in terms of price, choice and quality (Chart 36).

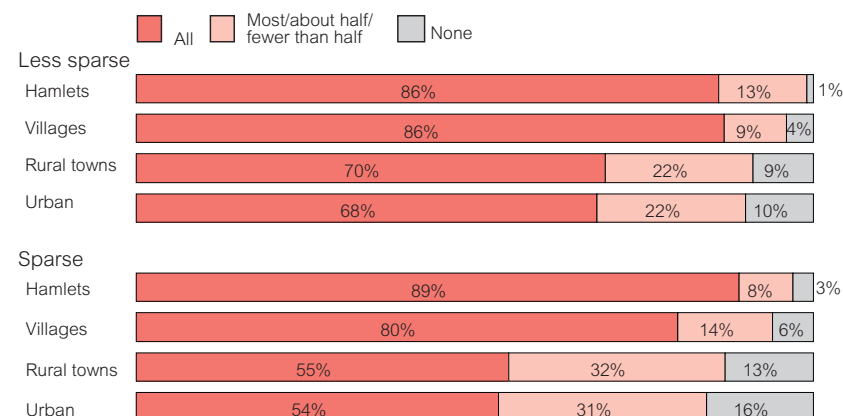
[34] CAUSES OF HOUSING PROBLEMS IN RURAL AREAS



Source: Ipsos MORI qualitative research for the Commission for Rural Communities

[35] RURAL DEPENDENCE ON CARS FOR SHOPPING

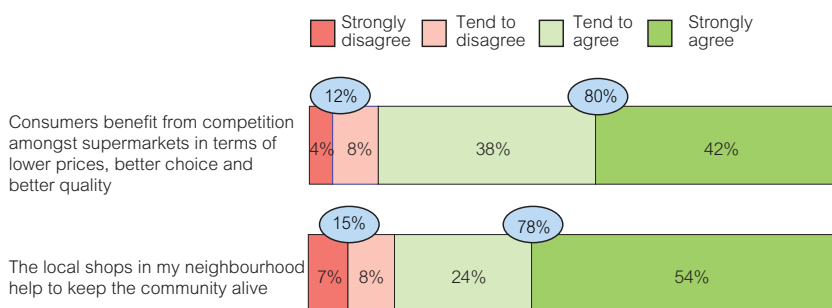
Q How many of these weekly main food shopping trips are made by car or van?



Base: c. 500 residents aged 16+ in each category in England outside London, 16 Feb-9 Mar 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Commission for Rural Communities

[36] PUBLIC ATTITUDES TO LOCAL SHOPS AND SUPERMARKETS

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: 1,002 GB residents aged 16+, September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI

Regardless of the bigger picture, the issue likeliest to determine whether the government can win a fourth term is delivery of public services. But Labour may only have the chance to play its strongest card again if it can avoid so disillusioning voters in the meanwhile that they lose interest in the issue and let some other criterion come to dominate the electoral agenda. This risk gives real importance to the public's present pessimism about the effectiveness of government public services policy, as measured in the quarterly Ipsos MORI Delivery Index. In September, only 31% believed that "In the long term, this government's policies will improve the state of Britain's public services" while 59% disagreed. Of individual services, the NHS is the one which people feel is most likely to decline in quality over the next few years. (Chart 37).

Education was a central campaigning plank of the present government's first successful election campaign in 1997, and has consistently been the public service on which the public is most prepared to give them credit. Optimism for the sector's future has recovered slightly from a low point in May (Chart 38) yet - unprecedentedly - in September this year more people who said education would be an important influence on their vote at the next election thought the Conservatives had the best policy on the issue than thought that Labour had.

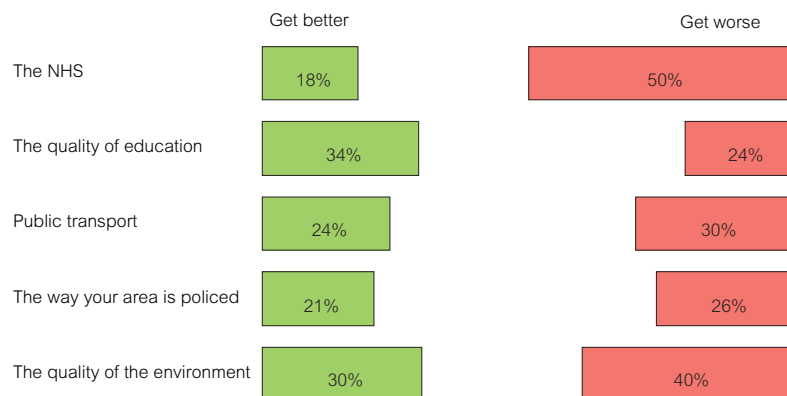
Naturally many individual factors feed into the public's perceptions of British education.

A survey of parents on the Ipsos MORI Social Issues Omnibus for the National College for School Leadership (Chart 39) explored the perceived importance of a number of different functions of schools, and how well headteachers were seen to be performing them. They proved to be rated highly for ensuring young people do well at exams and for preparing young people for Further or Higher Education, both viewed by parents as important. But parents also put a high value on more societally-centred functions such as creating well-behaved young people, preparing young people with skills needed for adulthood and preparing them for work, all functions at which headteachers are rated less highly - and which may be more important to non-parents.

Public services

[37] IPSOS MORI DELIVERY INDEX, SEPTEMBER 2006

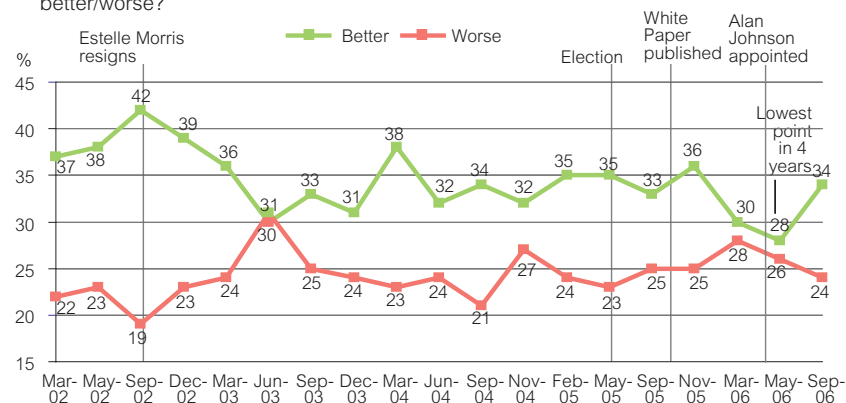
Q Thinking about...over the next few years do you expect it to...?



Base: 957 GB residents aged 18+, 8-10 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index

[38] OPTIMISM ON EDUCATION RECOVERS SLIGHTLY

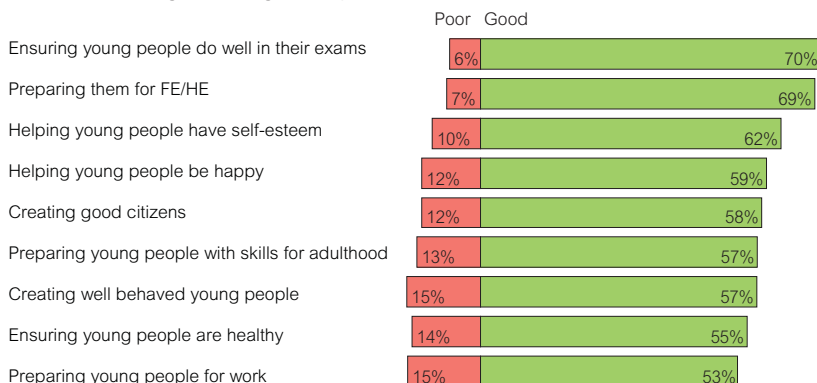
Q Thinking about the quality of education over the next few years do you expect it to get better/worse?



Base: c. 950 GB residents aged 18+ each survey
Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index

[39] HEADTEACHERS – DOING A GOOD JOB?

Q Thinking about the headteachers you may know, would you say the job they are doing in the following areas is good or poor?



Base: 1,093 GB parents, 2-21 March 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/National College for School Leadership

Probably the most contentious element of the government's public service reforms has been the increased involvement of the private sector, not least through the Private Finance Initiative. Research has consistently shown that most of the public instinctively prefer that public services should remain within the public sector, but also that most will accept private involvement if it can improve services or achieve better value for money.

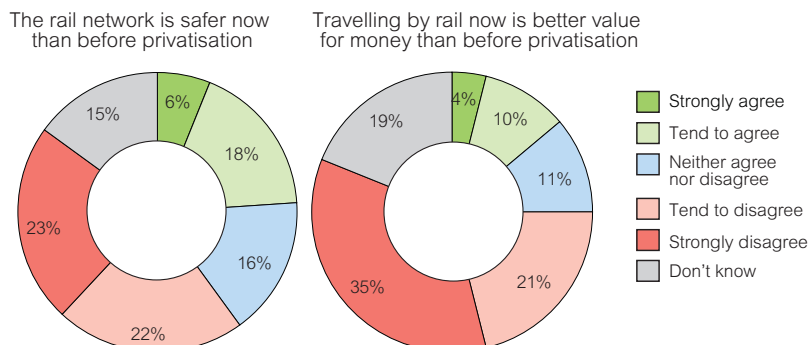
Of the major public services, it is public transport which relies most completely on private sector provision, following bus deregulation and rail privatisation under the last Conservative government. The latter was famously described as a "poll tax on wheels" for its potential to damage the government that introduced it, and ten years on many remain far from reconciled to the change. At the time, half the public (52%) opposed plans to allow private companies to run passenger trains on the British Rail network, with just a third (31%) supporting the plans. Now, 52% of the public say they have a favourable view of the rail sector as a whole, while 30% are unfavourable, and 28% feel the service is better now than when it was nationalised compared to 21% who feel it is worse; but they disagree by almost two-to-one (Chart 40) that the rail network is safer now than before privatisation, and a majority do not think a rail journey today offers better value for money than under British Rail. Another recent Ipsos MORI survey, for the RMT, found that two people in three currently think that passenger rail services should be run by the public sector rather than by the private sector. (Chart 41)

Given that many use public transport only rarely, coverage of transport issues in the media is likely to be influential, and hence understanding the views of transport journalists may be a crucial part of understanding public opinion. Ipsos MORI's Transport Journalists' survey (one of a wide range of surveys in our Key Audience Research programme) shows how journalists are more critical of local rail services (including the Underground/Metro) than of any other transport sector, though long-distance train services fare rather better (Chart 42) and ratings are improving.

Public services

[40] PRIVATISED RAIL AFTER TEN YEARS

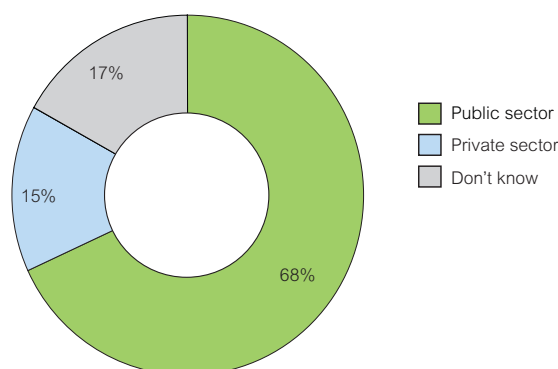
Q It is 10 years since the rail system in Britain was privatised. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.?



Base: 1,010 GB residents aged 16+, 27-29 January 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI

[41] PUBLIC STILL OPPOSE PRIVATISED RAIL

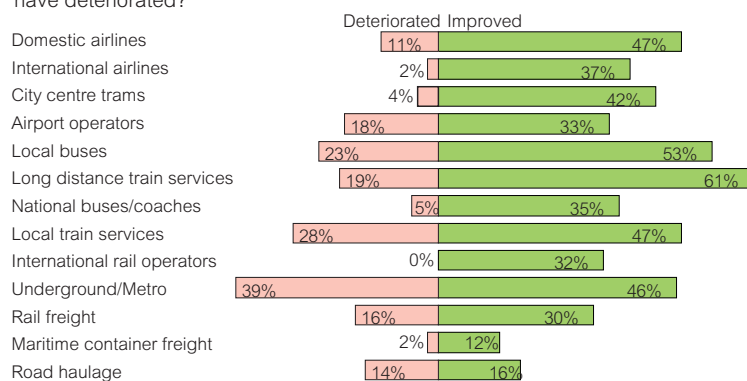
Q Do you believe that passenger rail services, such as overground trains and the Tube network, should be run by the public or private sector?



Base: 972 GB residents aged 15+, 31 August-11 September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/RMT

[42] JOURNALISTS LEAST POSITIVE ON RAIL SECTOR

Q Over the past five years which of these modes of transport do you believe have improved in terms of the overall quality of service they provide in Britain? And which have deteriorated?



Base: 57 Transport Journalists, 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI Key Audience Research

Of all Britain's public services, the NHS is perhaps the one most valued by the public. (In January, 59% of the British public agreed that "Britain's National Health Service is one of the best in the world".) While they are almost constantly fearful for its future, the Delivery Index has found a steadily worsening climate of pessimism in 2006. For the first time since the quarterly surveys began in 2002, half (50%) the British public think that the NHS will get worse over the next few years, compared with fewer than one in five (18%) who think it will get better, giving a net score of -32. At the time of the 2005 General Election this score was +9. (Chart 43).

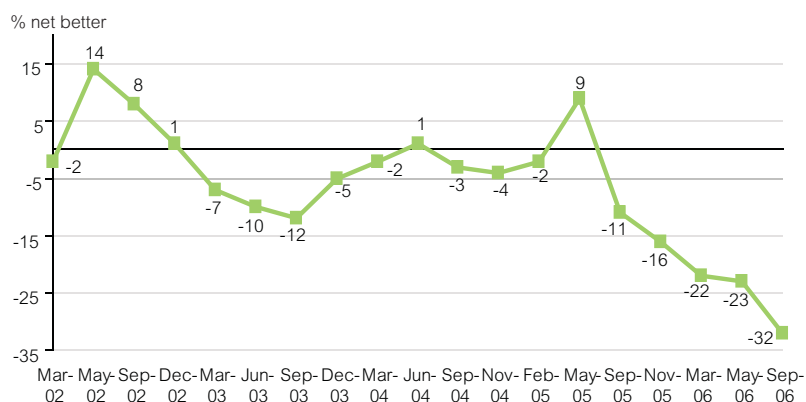
Two problems seem to contribute to public dissatisfaction with the NHS and probably other public services as well - unrealistic expectations, and failing communication between those with knowledge or direct experience of the service and those who rely on second-hand reports and impressions. A simple example of the latter is the flagship Patient Choice policy - still, under a third of patients say they knew about it before visiting their GP (and indeed not many more recall being offered a choice when they did see their GP), our work for the Department of Health shows. (Chart 44.)

Similarly, patients themselves rate the NHS significantly higher, across a whole range of services and functions, than do the public as a whole (Chart 45). *Lost in Translation*, a report produced with the NHS Confederation, looked at the reasons behind this perception gap. A clue lies in the fact that patients and the public agree about GP services, given around an 80% satisfaction rating by both. GP services are used on average four to five times each year by every person in the UK, so when the public are surveyed about GP services, almost all can respond on the basis of personal experience. But on other types of hospital or primary care, most must rely on other sources and may be influenced by personal factors. Our figures show that the most important driver of public attitudes to the NHS is political - support for the Government correlates with higher satisfaction - followed by age, poor experiences of A&E, NHS staff bad-mouthing the service and media coverage.

The National Health Service

[43] PESSIMISM ON FUTURE NHS CONTINUES TO GROW

Q Thinking about the NHS over the next few years do you expect it to get better/worse?

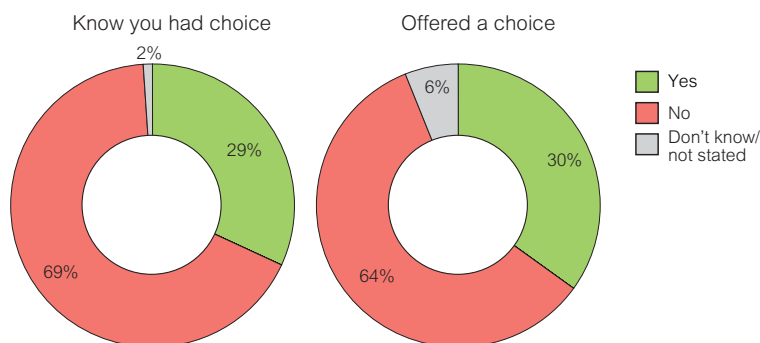


Base: c. 950 GB residents aged 18+ each survey
Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index

[44] AWARENESS OF PATIENT CHOICE LOW

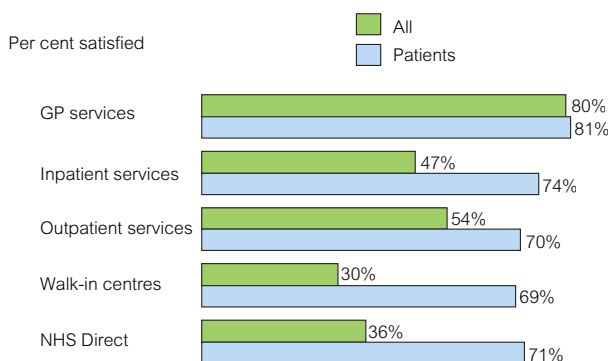
Q Before you visited your GP, did you know that you now have a choice of hospitals that you can go to for your first hospital appointment?

Q Were you offered a choice of hospital for your first hospital appointment?



Base: 78,777 patients referred for a first outpatient appointment, 22 May - 4 Jun 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Department of Health National Patient Choice Survey

[45] PATIENTS RATE NHS BETTER THAN PUBLIC AS A WHOLE



Source: Ipsos MORI surveys, Winter 2005

This correlation between support for the government and confidence in the NHS may also indicate that cynicism about politicians and their motives is a factor in driving down satisfaction with public services. We find indications of the same problem in other research.

Labour supporters are consistently strongly positive about the likely effects of the government's policies on public services generally (Chart 46), while Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are overwhelmingly negative. Although a similar differential applies to the future of the NHS, even the government's supporters are less bullish. Labour voters were more likely in September to predict the NHS will get worse rather than better (net score -4), but much less so than Tories (-46) or Lib Dems (-45). Of course, this has potential to create a vicious circle. If dissatisfaction with the government drives down satisfaction with the NHS, and the government is reliant on restoring satisfaction with the NHS to recover its own popularity, both might go into a downward spiral.

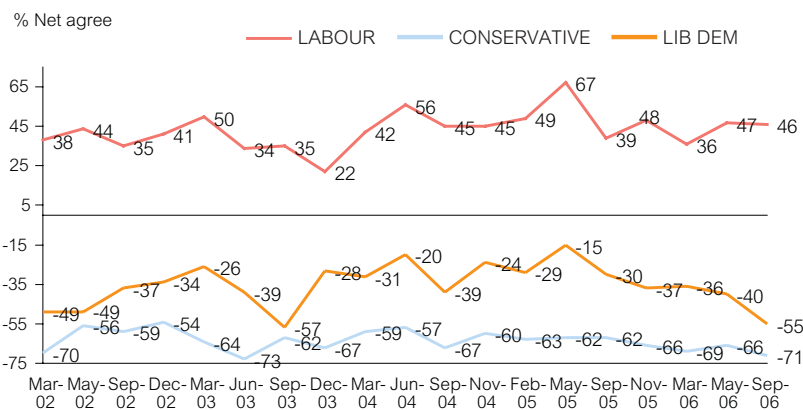
Unrealistic expectations are another hurdle. Research carried out with the Institute of Public Policy Research in August found that expectations of the NHS held by the general public are running ahead of what the health service can deliver (Chart 47); barely a quarter say the NHS should provide the most effective and value for money treatment, and those who do are predominantly middle class (and therefore perhaps more likely to be able to afford alternatives). By contrast, expectations on performance – how quickly they expect to see their GP or how long they are prepared to wait in Accident and Emergency – differ little by class, however.

The public is clear that the greatest priorities for national health should be the big killer diseases, cancer and heart disease (Chart 48). Far fewer would give priority to chronic but not-immediately-fatal conditions, though in practice these inevitably consume a much greater proportion of NHS resources.

The National Health Service

[46] POLITICAL DIFFERENCES IN OPTIMISM ON PUBLIC SERVICES

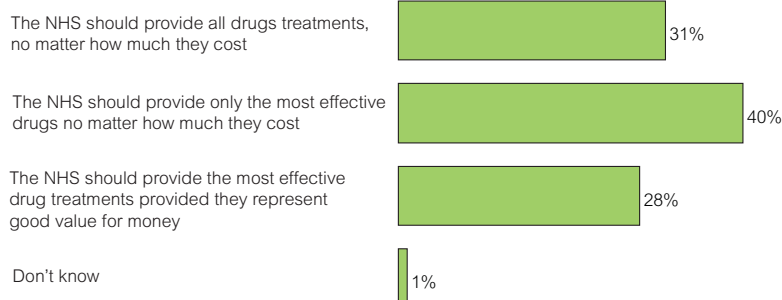
Q Do you agree or disagree... "In the long term, this government's policies will improve the state of Britain's Public Services"



Base: c.950 GB residents aged 18+ each survey Source: Ipsos MORI Delivery Index

[47] UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE NHS

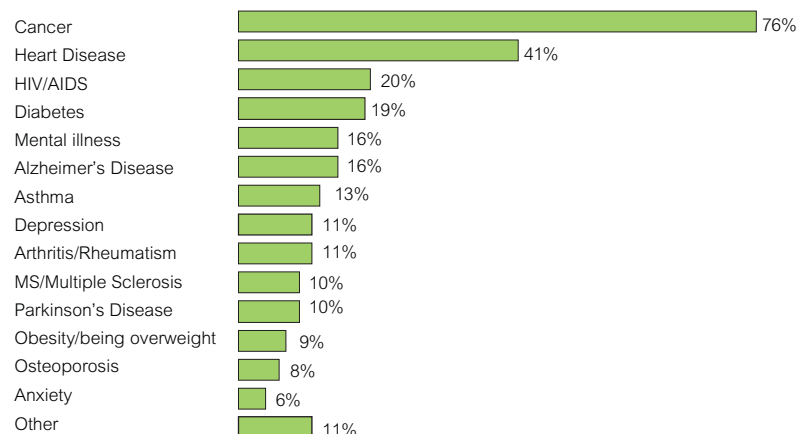
Q Which one of the following statements most closely matches your view?



Base: 1,003 GB residents aged 15+, 11-13 August 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/ Institute for Public Policy Research

[48] PRIORITIES FOR HEALTHCARE FUNDING

Q Which, if any, illnesses or diseases do you think should be a national health priority?



Base: 5,994 GB residents aged 15+, 28 July-17 August 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Cancerbackup

Law and order or crime is a perennial public concern (chart 49), often closely associated with dissatisfaction with the government. A survey by the Ipsos MORI International Social Trends Unit - the quarterly International Social Trends Monitor - finds just 29% of British people say they are confident in the current government when it comes to cracking down on crime and violence, lower than in Germany (57%), Italy (48%), France (44%), the USA (44%) or Spain (36%).

What do the public themselves think is the solution? Consistently in recent years, more of the public have named "better parenting" and "more police on the beat" as the things which would do most to reduce crime. (In 2004, 57% picked better parenting and 49% more police on the beat, while at the other end of the scale only 11% opted for jailing more offenders and 19% for introducing a national identity card.) Qualitative research helps us understand what it is in police patrolling on foot that people find reassuring. (Chart 50).

Nevertheless, the public instinct is for harsh sentencing, especially for the crimes they consider most serious - particularly crimes against children. While only 23% now say (in a survey for The Sun in January) they support the death penalty for the murder of an adult stranger, 43% believe it is appropriate for the murder of a child. (The same proportion, 42%, of the British public said in February that Saddam Hussein should face the death penalty if convicted, whereas 52% thought instead that he should spend the rest of his life in prison, according to a cross-national poll by Ipsos Public Affairs for Associated Press.) The apparent waning in recent years of support for capital punishment should not be interpreted as a wider sympathy for more lenient sentencing, however, and tabloid campaigns on the issue seem to strike many chords. More than three-quarters of the public disagree with "current policy that prisoners serving life sentences for murder may be released after a certain period of time" (chart 51). Their preferred solution to prison overcrowding is to build more prisons, not to jail fewer people or make sentences shorter.

Crime and policing

[49] CRIME ALWAYS A PUBLIC PRIORITY

Q What do you see as the main/other important issues facing Britain today? (Spontaneous, unprompted answers)



Base: c. 1,000 GB residents aged 18+ each month
Source: Ipsos MORI Political Monitor

[50] HOW FOOT PATROLS REASSURE THE PUBLIC

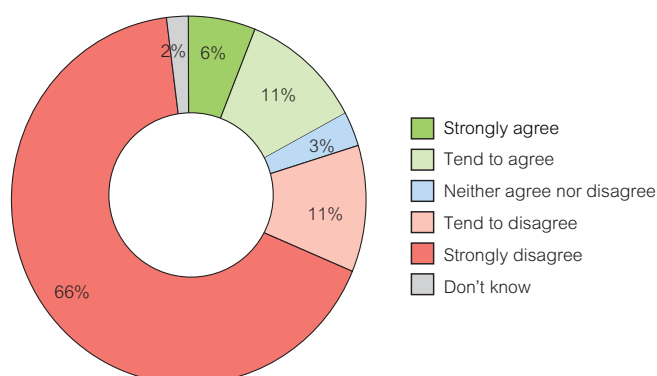
Q What makes for a reassuring presence?



Source: Ipsos MORI qualitative research for The Home Office

[51] LITTLE SUPPORT FOR PAROLE FROM LIFE SENTENCES

Q It is current policy that prisoners serving life sentences for murder may be released after a certain period of time. How strongly do you agree or disagree with this policy?



Base: 1,001 GB residents aged 18+, 12-17 January 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/ The Sun

Anti social behaviour

The belief that better parenting would cut crime is of course related to the perception that teenage crime is a particularly acute problem. More than two-fifths of adults say they feel worried for their own personal safety when they see groups of teenagers hanging around the streets (chart 52) - David Cameron's admonition to "hug a hoodie" will face considerable resistance from a nervous public.

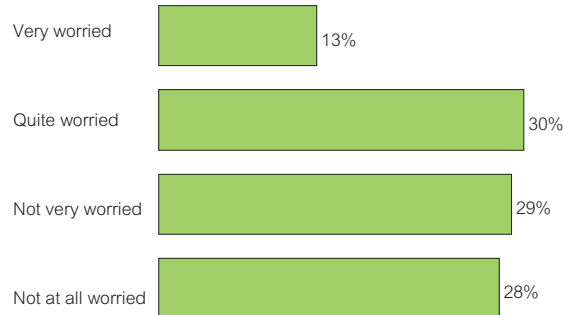
Doubtless many of these fears are media-driven. It is noteworthy that while 42% of people in the areas where concern about Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is highest think teenagers hanging around is a big problem, concern is nearly 10 percentage points higher among tabloid readers. (Some of the difference, though, probably arises simply from tabloid readership being highest in the areas with the worst problems.)

The perceived prevalence of ASB varies greatly across different areas; understanding why it does so may be the key to finding other ways of preventing it apart from simple deterrence. Deprivation is a strong predictor, as chart 53 shows, but by no means tells the whole story. We found five characteristics of areas that are strongly associated with perceptions of ASB as a local problem: the number of rural dwellings and co-habiting couples (both reducing perceptions of ASB), the numbers with low educational qualifications, or living in overcrowded housing and the scale of population turnover (all of which are associated with higher perceived levels of ASB as they increase).

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders - ASBOs - now have an eight-year pedigree, having been introduced in 1998, as were Parenting Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The public love ASBOs - four in five support their use - yet apparently more because they send out a message that the authorities are trying to do something about the problem than from any confidence in their efficacy. Nor is there great enthusiasm for prosecution as the best solution to low level crime - as chart 54 shows, most people would accept other expedients as the most appropriate way of dealing with a first offence.

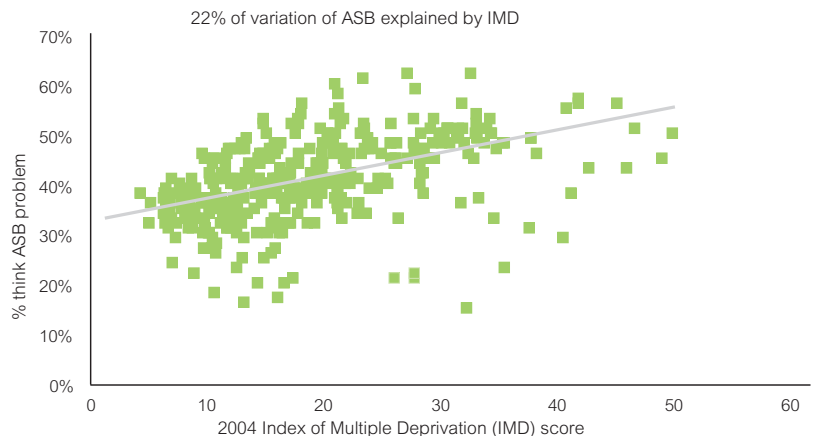
[52] TEENAGERS MAKE MANY FEEL UNSAFE

Q When you are out in your local area and you see groups of teenagers hanging around the streets, generally, how worried do you feel about your own personal safety?



Base: 708 GB residents aged 18+ who have seen teenagers hanging around, 24-26 March 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Channel 4 Dispatches

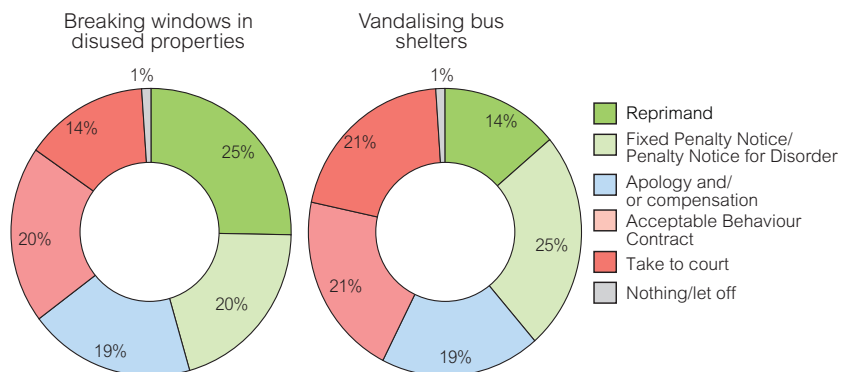
[53] ASB SEEN AS MORE OF A PROBLEM IN DEPRIVED AREAS



Base: c. 1,000 residents per local authority area
Source: BVPI surveys 2004

[54] ALTERNATIVES TO COURT FOR FIRST OFFENDERS

Q What, in your opinion, is the most appropriate way to deal with young people who have admitted doing the following but haven't done anything wrong before?



Base: 1,027 GB residents aged 16+, 13-30 March 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Home Office

Ipsos MORI also conducts considerable research at local and regional level around the UK. Our Local Government Research Unit is the largest provider of research to local government, and much work is also done at regional and devolved administration level, often drawing on the specialist expertise of our local teams - Ipsos MORI Scotland in Edinburgh, Ipsos MORI in Ireland (with an office in Belfast as well as Dublin in the Republic), and Ipsos MORI North in Manchester. This may involve not only surveys of local residents, but gauging the views of key stakeholders at all levels - service users, businesses, other government or public sector contacts, and not forgetting the client's own staff. They can track performance, offer evidence on how to improve, and allow benchmarking against similar institutions or organisations.

For the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) we have explored perceptions of that region since 2001. This year we found that significantly more British residents who live outside the North West associate the region with 'success' in 2006 than did five years ago (Chart 55), confirming the trend found in a 2003 survey. Meanwhile, North West businesses continue on balance to rate the region as a better place to do business than other parts of the UK, citing transport links and local infrastructure as particular strengths, and confidence is high in terms of prospects for the future.

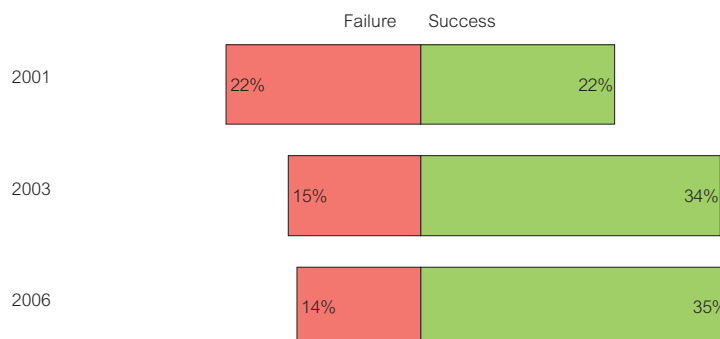
In Wales, Ipsos MORI was commissioned to conduct the first corporate level survey of stakeholders who engage with Welsh Assembly Government officials, assessing the level and quality of engagement between officials in Assembly Government departments and their stakeholders. Overall results were positive (Chart 56), in line with results from the 2004 Scottish Executive survey though marginally weaker than the Scottish Executive achieved in 2005. The findings helped identify several key areas for improvement.

Meanwhile in London in March, as part of our substantial and wide-ranging research programme for the Greater London Authority, we tested residents' perception of the impact of hosting the 2012 Olympics, and found at that point a strongly positive mood. (Chart 57).

Public sector stakeholders

[55] NORTH WEST PERCEIVED AS A SUCCESS

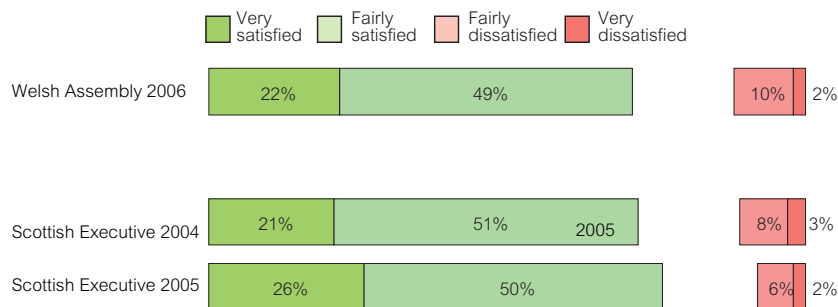
Q When you think of England's Northwest, do you think of success or failure?



Base: Residents aged 15+ in GB outside the North West (1,884 in 2006; c. 1,750 in 2001-3)
Source: Ipsos MORI/Northwest Regional Development Agency

[56] SATISFIED STAKEHOLDERS IN WALES

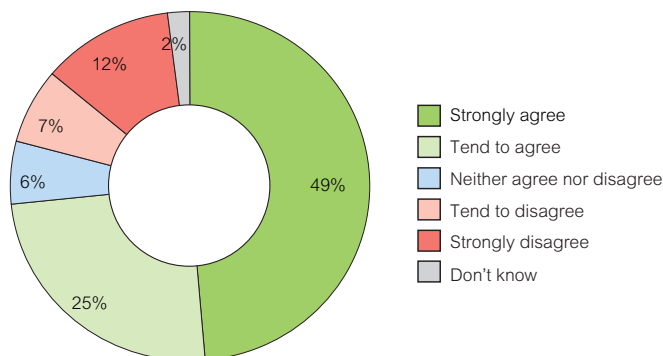
Q Over the last 12 months, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the way in which Assembly Government officials have worked with and involved other organisations?



Base: 1,130 Welsh Assembly Government stakeholders, 18 January-20 February 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Welsh Assembly Government

[57] LONDONERS POSITIVE ABOUT HOSTING THE OLYMPICS

Q In July 2005, the Olympic Committee announced that London will host the 2012 Olympic Games. From what you have seen or heard, do you agree or disagree that the Olympics will be good for London? Is that strongly or tend to agree/disagree?



Base: 1,004 Greater London residents aged 16+, 21-26 March 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Greater London Authority

Human Resources research - understanding the perceptions and motivations of staff - is as indispensable to public sector organisations as to private companies - maybe more so, if they need to maintain a public sector ethos which compensates their staff for uncompetitive salaries.

Our staff surveys consistently find that public sector workers have less faith in their leaders than private sector workers (Chart 58). The Workers' Index, jointly sponsored by The Work Foundation and Ipsos MORI, is a bi-annual survey which allows more detailed comparison between the private and public sector workforces: in 2006 it revealed that workers in the NHS are particularly reluctant to agree that "senior management have a clear vision of where this organisation is going" (Chart 59). In line with this, public sector workers also tend to be less happy with their organisation as an employer. (19% are critical, compared to 11% in the private sector.) More damagingly still, perhaps, scepticism is higher in the public sector - and highest among health workers - that the needs of customers or service users are put first (chart 60). Such staff attitudes can hardly be beneficial to the public's perception of service standards or satisfaction with the NHS.

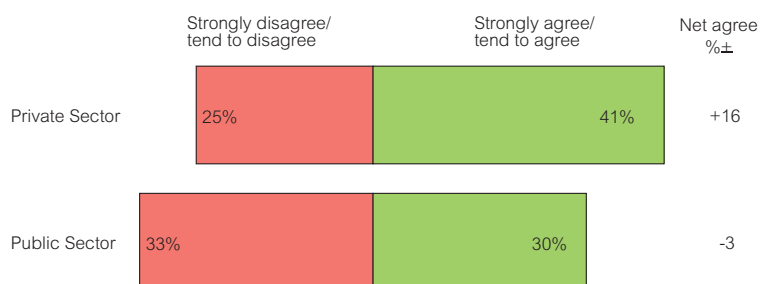
More detailed staff research is underway in the education sector. In partnership with the Universities of Nottingham and Leeds, Ipsos MORI is conducting a six-year longitudinal survey of trainee teachers for the DfES, the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) and the General Teaching Council (GTCE). Almost 5,000 trainees (a sixth of all trainee teachers in the UK) took part in the first wave of the research in 2003, with annual follow-up surveys due to continue until 2008.

Early findings include insight into what kinds of knowledge and skill trainees expect to develop in their initial training: most think it very important they should develop the ability to bring about pupil learning (91%) and to maintain discipline in the classroom (86%); many fewer rated developing the ability to deal with pastoral issues (35%) or awareness of research findings about effective teaching methods (23%) as important.

Working in the public sector

[58] PRIVATE SECTOR WORKERS MORE CONFIDENT IN MANAGERS

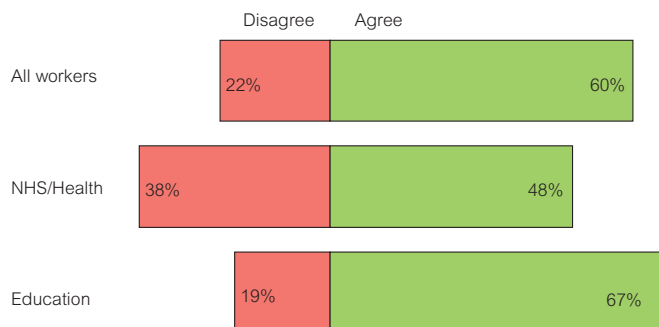
"I have confidence in the senior management team"



Base: Average findings of recent staff surveys in 117 organisations up to April 2006
Source: Ipsos MORInsight

[59] MANY HEALTH WORKERS DOUBT SENIOR MANAGEMENT'S VISION

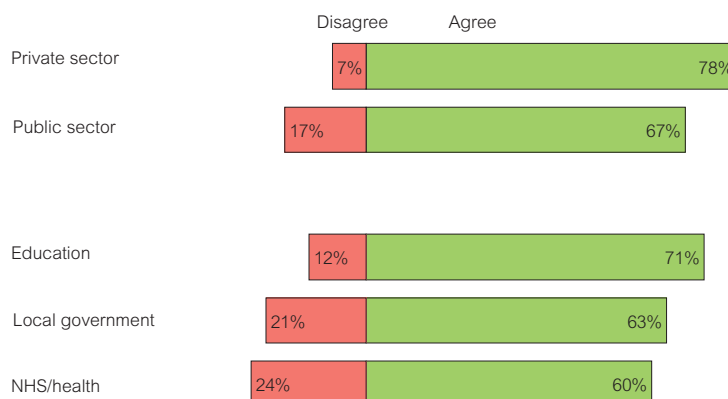
"Senior management have a clear vision of where this organisation is going"



Base: 2,551 employees in GB, October 2005-April 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Work Foundation

[60] PRIORITISING NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS OR SERVICE USERS

"My organisation puts the needs of its customers/service users first"



Base: 687 public sector and 1,298 private sector employees in GB, October 2005-May 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Work Foundation

Technology

The continuing pace of technological development offers many new opportunities, but can also be seen as threatening - to those who feel excluded, either for economic reasons or because they find the complexity of many devices intimidating, and also to those who believe the technology may be dangerous in itself.

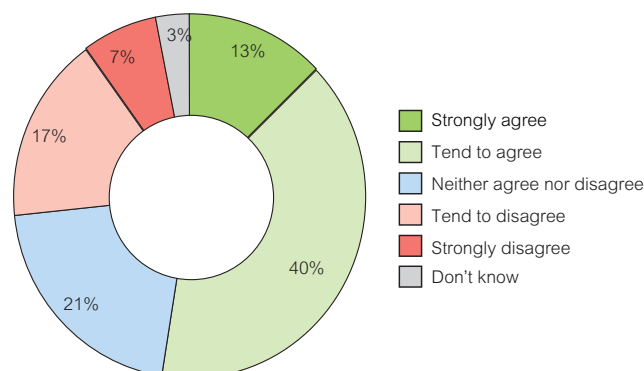
The question of whether significant health risks are associated with using mobile phones or with living close to their network masts is one of the most vocally debated of such controversies. Children are seen as especially vulnerable, and a report by Sir William Stewart in 2000 recommended they should only use mobiles in emergencies. However, Ipsos MORI research this year for Disney and O₂ finds that parents of 8-16 year olds believe the advantages of a child having a mobile phone outweigh any claimed health risks (Chart 61). They see the main benefits as being able at any time to make sure their children are safe, to contact their children, and children being able to contact their family. Their greatest concern is not any potential health risks, but that children can be mugged for their mobile, but this is still outweighed by belief in the safety benefits.

Use of technology is considerably lower than average among the older age groups, especially the over-75s (see chart 62), but nevertheless we find that many older people would like to benefit from it, though they are often held back because they don't know how to use it or haven't been taught. A quarter believe that new technology will help them to remain independent in their home as they get older, though a third say they are concerned that technology is complicated and confusing.

Our surveys of various groups of health service staff in 2005 and 2006 explored awareness and understanding of, and support for, the National Programme for IT within the NHS. (Chart 63) More staff are favourable to the National Programme than unfavourable, and it receives support among both frontline and managerial staff; nevertheless, more doctors than managers take an unfavourable view. A large majority of all staff groups, though, believe the National Programme will bring benefits to patient care.

[61] PARENTS BELIEVE MOBILE PHONE RISKS ARE JUSTIFIED

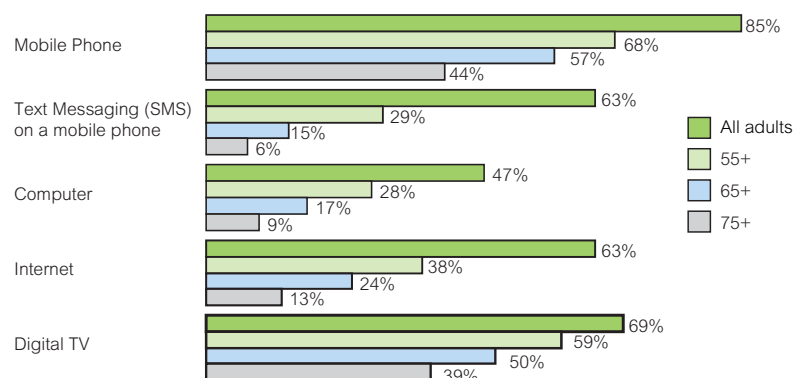
Q I am now going to read out some statements about children aged 8 and upwards and mobile phones. Please tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree.
"The overall advantages of a child using a mobile phone outweigh any claimed health risks"



Base: 343 parents/guardians of children aged 8-16 in GB, 13-19 January 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/Walt Disney Internet Group & O₂

[62] USES OF TECHNOLOGY AMONG SENIOR CITIZENS

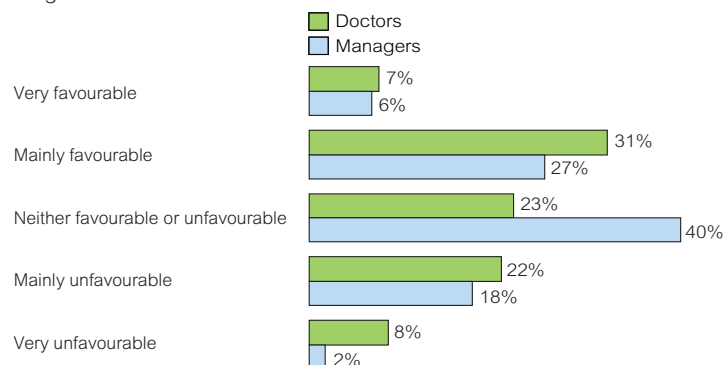
Q Which of these, if any, do you personally use?



Base: 32,767 GB residents aged 18+, January-September 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI Social Issues Omnibus Technology Tracker

[63] OPINIONS OF THE NHS NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR IT

Q How favourable or unfavourable is your overall opinion or impression of the National Programme for IT so far?



Base: 171 Doctors and 156 NHS managers in England Who have heard of the NPfIT, 23 Jan-23 Feb 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/NHS Connecting for Health

Gambling habits are very much a topical concern, with decisions due on Britain's first "supercasino" and the enforcement of an online gambling ban in the USA. We explored the prevalence of gambling by young people aged 12-15, for the National Lottery Commission. Those most likely to gamble include older children, those whose parents gamble, those with more disposable income, and those involved in other illegal behaviour such as truancy from school. Fruit machines are consistently the most popular form of gambling among this age group. (Chart 64). Reassuringly, comparison with earlier surveys back to 1997 finds reported rates of underage gambling rates are steadily declining over time.

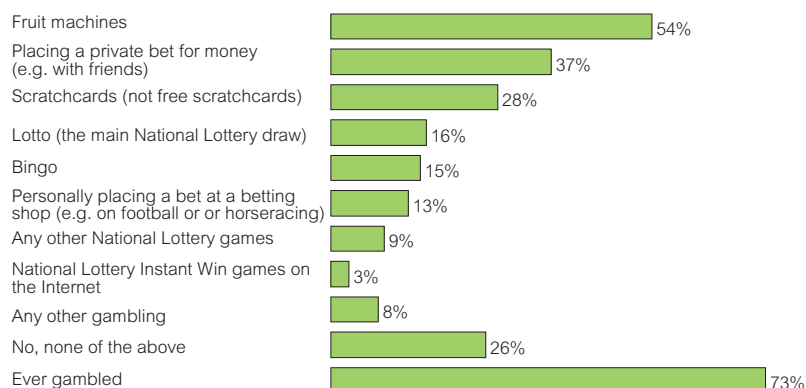
A telephone survey of recent users of coroners' courts across England and Wales measured experience of and satisfaction with various aspects of the Coroners' Service, as well as recruiting a small group of respondents to engage in more intensive discussion of the Coroners' Bill at the House of Commons. Users reported high satisfaction with the way they were treated by court staff, but the time taken by the whole process proved a much wider source of discontent. (Chart 65.) The research will inform Government plans to reform the Coroner system in the forthcoming Coroners Bill.

Often the most valuable function of survey research is to detect changes in public opinion. But some things never seem to change, and recording that can be valuable as well. Britain's attachment to the Monarchy has been rock-solid for as long as we have been measuring it. In April, 72% of British adults said they favoured Britain retaining the Monarchy while only 18% would prefer Britain to become a republic - as chart 66 shows, support that was unshaken even when the Royal Family seemed most under pressure in the 1990s. An impressive 85% said they were satisfied with the way the Queen is doing her job as Monarch, a better satisfaction rating than Tony Blair, or any British Prime Minister since Churchill during WW2, has achieved. Something for Gordon Brown - or whoever succeeds Tony Blair - to aim at?

Snapshots

[64] YOUNG PEOPLE AND GAMBLING

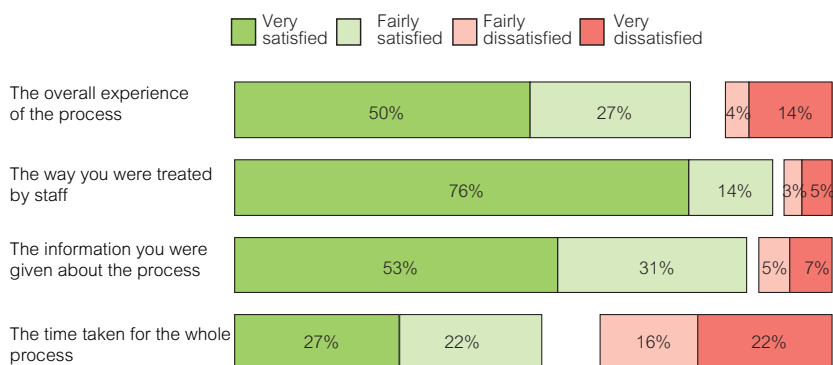
Q Please tell us whether you have ever played the following games for money.



Base: 8,017 young people aged 12-15 in England & Wales, 26 September 2005-10 February 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI/National Lottery Commission

[65] SATISFACTION WITH CORONERS' COURTS

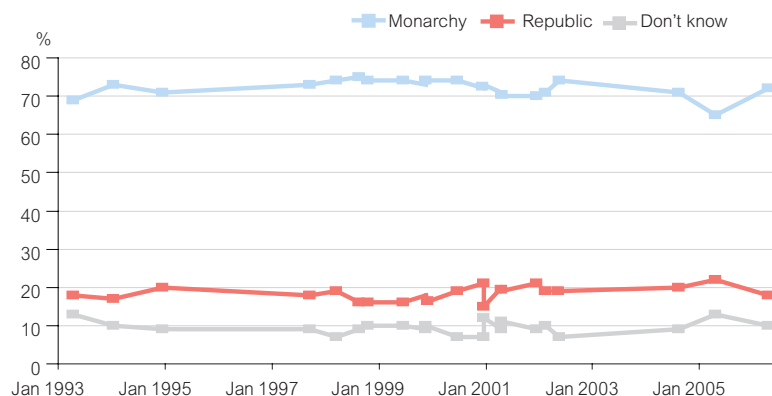
Q Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with ...?



Base: 147 recent users of Coroners' Courts in England & Wales, 19 June-4 July 2006
Source: Ipsos MORI

[66] ROYALIST BRITAIN

Q Would you favour Britain becoming a republic or remaining a monarchy?*



*Sometimes asked as "If there were a referendum...how would you vote?", in which cases "Don't know" includes "Would not vote"

Base: c. 600-2,000 GB residents aged 18+ each survey
Source: Ipsos MORI

Notes

Ipsos MORI's Social Research Institute works closely with national government, local public services and the not-for-profit sector to understand what works in terms of service delivery, to provide robust evidence for policy makers, and to bridge the gulf between the public and politicians. We do more than undertake accurate research: we produce information decision-makers can use.

Contacts

Ipsos MORI research staff who head the different research sectors within the Social Research Institute can be contacted on +44 (0)20 7347 3000

Central Government

Gideon Skinner and Alex Christopoulos

Charities

Jo Slaymaker and James Morris

Employee Research

Mark Gill and Michael Silverman

Education

Fiona Johnson and Sami Benyahia

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

John Leaman and Ed Langley

Ethnic Minority Communities and Social Cohesion

Kully Kaur- Ballagan and Rebecca Eligon

Housing

Richard Davis and Stephen Finlay

Local Government

Andrew Collinge and Colin Wilby

Medicine and Science

Michele Corrado and Adam Palenicek

NHS and Public Health

Jonathan Nicholls, Anna Carluccio and Emma Holloway

Policing and Crime

Ashley Ames and Rhonda Wake

Political

Mark Gill and Julia Clark

Regeneration/Planning

Jessica Vince and Leon Page

Reputation Centre

Stewart Lewis and Tim Burns

Technology

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Trinh Tu and Jayne Taylor

Youth, Children and Families

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