

The Electoral Commission Winter Research 2010

Topline Results (20th December 2010)

- ICM Research interviewed 1,205 adults in the United Kingdom aged 18+ (1,005 interviews in Great Britain and 200 booster interviews in Northern Ireland).
- Interviews were conducted by telephone between 10th and 13th December 2010.
- A nationally representative sample of the 18+ population of the United Kingdom was interviewed with quotas set by age, gender and region. Data are weighted to match the profile of the UK population by a range of variables including age, gender, region, social grade, tenure and work status.
- Where possible, trend data have been shown taken from previous waves of Winter Research as well as from other surveys. Please note that, unless otherwise stated, surveys prior to January 2008 were conducted face-to-face rather than by telephone. Caution should be exercised when comparing findings between the different methodologies and any changes treated as indicative.
- Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't knows/not stated.
- Results are based on all respondents (1,205) unless otherwise stated.
- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than half a percent.
- Study undertaken by ICM Research on behalf of The Electoral Commission.

1. I would like you to think back, very carefully, to the last General Election on 6th May 2010. Some people were not able to vote in that election. Can you remember if you did actually cast your vote at that election?

SINGLE CODE

	%
Yes	78
No	21
Don't know	1

2. From what you have seen or heard, can you think of any elections or referendums that are due to take place in the UK in the next 12 months? [IF YES: specify]

[IF NECESSARY: that is between now and December 2011].

DO NOT READ OUT. IF YES, CODE ALL ELECTIONS/REFERENDUMS MENTIONED.

IF UNABLE TO SPECIFY – DO **NOT** PROMPT/PROBE.

	%
Yes but cannot specify any	6
Yes – 1 or more correct mention	16
Yes – 1 correct mention	13
Yes – 2 correct mentions	3
Yes – 3 correct mentions	*
Yes – 4 correct mentions	*
Yes – 5 correct mentions	*
Incorrect	3
Not aware of any/don't know/can't remember	74

	%
Yes but cannot specify any	6
Referendum on Alternative Voting System/AV	8
English local elections	7
Scottish Parliament election	3
UK General Election	2
Welsh Assembly election	1
London Assembly / London Mayoral election	1
European Parliament election	1
Northern Ireland Assembly election	1
Northern Ireland local elections	1
Referendum on increased powers for the Welsh Assembly	*
Other	2
Not aware of any/don't know/can't remember	74

3. In general, how confident, if at all, are you that elections are well run in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]? Are you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER

	%
Very confident	18
Fairly confident	49
Not very confident	19
Not at all confident	12
Don't know	2
Confident	67
Not confident	31

VOTING

4. Which of these statements best describes your attitude towards voting at General Elections?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER OF 1 TO 3.

	Jan 2005	Dec 2005 - Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%
I always vote at General Elections	64	64	65	63	59	70
I sometimes vote at General Elections	20	20	19	23	25	18
I never vote at General Elections	11	11	11	9	8	8
I've not been eligible in the past to vote at a General Election	4	4	4	4	8	4
Don't know	*	2	1	*	*	0

5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the actual process of voting at elections in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]? Are you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER.

	May 2003	Dec 2005 - Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	26	30	21	32	31	28
Fairly satisfied	48	48	54	43	43	45
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	10	14	9	11	12
Fairly dissatisfied	9	6	3	7	8	7
Very dissatisfied	5	1	1	5	4	6
Don't know/no opinion	3	7	7	4	4	2
Satisfied	74	77	75	75	73	74
Dissatisfied	14	7	5	11	12	13

6. Why do you say you are dissatisfied with the actual process of voting at elections in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?
PROBE FULLY. DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

Base: All who are dissatisfied with the process of voting (141)

	%
Voting system	52
The voting system is unfair	31
I don't agree with the First Past the Post system / I would prefer Proportional Representation (PR)	14
Because of the voting system, my vote doesn't count	13
The party/candidate I support has no chance of being elected under this voting system	3
Prefer to vote for Prime Minister not local MP	1
Ease/convenience of voting	21
Difficulty in getting to a polling station	11
Voting is too confusing / I don't understand the system	5
Voting at a polling station takes too long	4
There should be more choice on how and where to vote	3
Elections should not be held on a Thursday/should not be held on a working day	1
Should be able to vote online	1
Politicians / the political system	15
Politicians do not deliver on what they promise	7
Don't like/trust politicians	6
There is no point in voting / it doesn't make any difference	6
You never see politicians except at election time	*
Other	23
The procedure for voting is open to fraud and abuse	5
Can't be bothered with it	2
Many people do not vote	1
Other	17
Don't know	6

7. Thinking generally about elections, which one of the following would you say is most important for you when you vote?

READ OUT 1 TO 4. RANDOMISE ORDER. SINGLE CODE

	Dec 2004	Dec 2005 - Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
My vote being safe from fraud or abuse	36	32	31	26	28	30	26
Voting being easy and convenient to do ¹	-	-	-	-	-	27	26
Voting being secret – that is without anyone else knowing how I voted	15	16	13	26	22	26	26
Having a choice of methods to cast a vote (such as by post or in person at a polling station)	7	7	7	19	16	15	17
Voting being convenient	18	16	17	15	17	-	-
Voting being easy to do	16	21	23	9	13	-	-
Other	*	1	*	1	*	*	*
Do not vote	-	-	-	-	*	-	2
None/Nothing/No answer	4	4	6	2	1	*	1
Don't know	4	3	3	0	1	2	*

8. How confident, if at all, are you that you know how to go about casting your vote at an election?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER.

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%
Very confident	68	66	69
Fairly confident	24	27	25
Not very confident	4	5	3
Not at all confident	3	2	3
Don't know	1	1	*
Confident	92	93	94
Not confident	7	6	6

¹ 'Easy' and 'convenient' merged from 2008.

REGISTRATION

9. How confident, if at all, are you that you know how to go about registering to vote?
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER.

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%
Very confident	57	55	68
Fairly confident	30	34	24
Not very confident	7	7	4
Not at all confident	3	3	3
Don't know	3	1	*
Confident	88	89	92
Not confident	10	10	7

10. As far as you are aware, are you registered to vote in an election in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?
PROBE IF YES/NO: Are you definitely sure you are registered to vote/not to vote or do you think you are probably/probably not registered to vote?
SINGLE CODE

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%
Yes, am definitely registered to vote	88	89	91
Yes, am probably registered to vote	7	6	5
No, probably not registered to vote	1	2	2
No, definitely not registered to vote	2	2	1
Don't know	1	1	1

11. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the system of registering to vote in Great Britain/Northern Ireland?
READ OUT. REVERSE ORDER. SINGLE CODE.

	May 2003	Dec 2005 -Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	26	30	19	43	43	46
Fairly satisfied	49	48	56	39	39	40
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	10	14	9	10	8
Fairly dissatisfied	7	6	3	4	3	3
Very dissatisfied	4	1	2	2	2	1
Don't know/no opinion	4	7	7	3	3	2
Satisfied	75	77	75	82	82	85
Dissatisfied	11	6	5	5	5	5

12. Why are you dissatisfied with the system of registering to vote in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?

PROBE FULLY. DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Base: All who are dissatisfied with the system (54)

	%
Difficult/confusing	25
I don't know how to register to vote	15
It is too confusing/I don't understand the system	6
They do not promote/advertise where/when to register	3
It is not easy/they could make it easier	2
Inconvenient	19
It is cumbersome/takes too long	11
It is inconvenient	6
Should be able to register to vote over the telephone	2
Should be able to register to vote online	2
Should not have to re-register every year	2
Not secure	12
The system of registering to vote is open to fraud and abuse	12
There are not enough checks	4
Mistakes/problems	11
The post is unreliable	7
The council makes mistakes with my personal details	2
The council is slow to update my personal details	1
Other	25
There should be more limitations on who can vote	1
Other	24
Don't know	15

13. Why are you satisfied with the system of registering to vote in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?

PROBE FULLY. DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.

Base: All who are satisfied with the system (1,035)

	% ²
Easy / clear	71
It is easy to register to vote	56
The system is clear and easy to understand	24
There is good promotion / advertising of where/when to register	6
Convenient	22
It is convenient	20
It does not take long	4
Secure	3
The system is secure from fraud and abuse	3
Other	19
It works/no problem	5
It is good that people have to re-register every year	3
It's a fair/honest system	1
Everyone has the opportunity to vote	1
It comes through the post	1
You receive a reminder	1
Wide choice of voting methods	1
You can vote online	1
Don't know	8

14. As you may know, forms are sent out to households every year to keep the electoral register up to date. These forms are usually delivered in August or September. As far as you know or remember, did you or your household receive a form this year?

SINGLE CODE.

Base: All Great Britain respondents

	Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	(1,067)	(1,282)	(1,000)	(1,017)	(1,005)
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	84	73	86	82	90
No	5	10	4	6	4
Can't remember	5	8	7	10	6
Don't know	5	8	3	2	*

² For responses of below 1%, please see data tables.

15. The electoral registration form you received this year required someone to provide or confirm the names of all people living in the household who are eligible to vote. Did you, or someone else in your household, provide or confirm your details?
PROMPT TO PRECODES. MULTICODE OK FOR 1 & 2.

Base: All Great Britain respondents who recall receiving a form (917)

	%
Yes - me	73
Yes – someone else in household	21
No – did not confirm	5
Don't know/can't remember	2

16. For which, if any, of the following people in your household did you provide or confirm electoral registration details?
[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: if asked: By electoral registration details we mean the information needed to get on or stay on the electoral register)
READ OUT. MULTICODE

Base: All Great Britain respondents who confirmed details themselves (692)

	%
Self	96
Partner/spouse	50
Other family members	22
Other non-family members	1
Other	*
Don't know/can't remember	*

17. Electoral registration details can be confirmed in a number of ways. Which, if any, of the following ways was used to provide or confirm the electoral registration details (for your household)?
READ OUT. SINGLE CODE ONLY

Base: All Great Britain respondents whose household confirmed details (857)

	%
By post	65
Internet / Online	15
By phone	11
Someone called at my home	6
Text message	1
Other	*
Don't know	*
Can't remember	2

18. Thinking about the system of registering to vote [INSERT: IN GB/NI], how confident are you that...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE

		Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Don't know
...in general, voters' personal details are held securely	%	15	54	20	7	4
...your own personal details are held securely	%	16	54	19	8	3
...the system prevents people who should not be on the register from registering	%	9	47	23	8	12

19. Thinking about the last time you registered to vote, how easy or difficult did you find it to provide or confirm the details (you may have done this using a paper form, on the Internet or by telephone)?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER

	%
Very easy	64
Fairly easy	26
Neither easy nor difficult	3
Fairly difficult	1
Very difficult	1
Don't know/can't remember	1
I have never registered to vote	3
Easy	90
Difficult	2

20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

I have enough information to know how to go about registering to vote

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER

	%
Strongly agree	59
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	6
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	3
Don't know	1
Agree	88
Disagree	6

21. How confident, if at all, are you that your registration details on the electoral register are accurate and correct?

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: if asked: by electoral register we mean the list of names that people who are registered to vote are included on]

[NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: if asked: accurate and correct includes whether you are registered to the correct address or under the correct name)

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER

	%
Very confident	63
Fairly confident	31
Not very confident	3
Not at all confident	1
Don't know	2
Confident	95
Not confident	4

22. You mentioned that you are [INSERT: not very confident/not confident at all] that your details on the electoral register are accurate and correct. Why do you say that?

WRITE IN.

Base: All who are not confident that their details on the electoral register are accurate and correct (45)

	N
Lack of efficiency/accuracy	11
Might not be secure/safe/confidential	10
Details not updated/change of address not acknowledged	7
Not familiar with the system	2
Other	9
Don't know	11

23. Are you currently registered for a postal vote? That is, registered to send your ballot paper through the post, rather than having to go to a polling station?

SINGLE CODE

Base: All who are probably/definitely registered to vote (1,163)

	%
Yes, am registered for a postal vote	34
No, am not registered for a postal vote	62
Don't know	5

INTEGRITY OF ELECTIONS

24. 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....?

READ OUT. REVERSE ORDER. SINGLE CODE

	%
A lot	10
A little	41
Hardly anything at all	28
Nothing at all	19
Don't know	2

25. How much of a problem, if at all, do you think electoral fraud, that is fraud relating to elections and voting, is in [INSERT: Great Britain/Northern Ireland]? Do you think it is...?

READ OUT. REVERSE ORDER. SINGLE CODE

	Dec 2003*	Apr 2005*	Dec 2005 – Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A very big problem	8	17	9	11	7	8	8	10
A fairly big problem	16	29	22	26	26	25	19	30
Not a very big problem	40	34	40	36	48	42	44	41
Not a problem at all	13	8	11	7	11	12	19	9
Don't know	24	11	19	21	9	13	9	10
A problem	23	46	31	37	33	34	27	40
Not a very big problem/not at all a problem	53	42	51	43	58	53	64	50

* Telephone survey

26. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say that [INSERT: a, b and c] is very safe, fairly safe, neither safe nor unsafe, fairly unsafe or very unsafe.

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH. REVERSE ORDER OF SCALE.

- a) Voting at a polling station
- b) Voting by post
- c) Registering to vote

26a) Voting at a polling station

	Dec 2005 - Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe	37	29	30	33	38	40
Fairly safe	46	49	51	50	48	46
Neither safe nor unsafe	9	10	10	9	8	5
Fairly unsafe	2	4	4	5	3	4
Very unsafe	*	1	1	*	1	2
Don't know	5	7	3	2	2	3
Safe	83	78	82	83	87	85
Unsafe	2	5	5	6	4	7

26b) Voting by post

	Apr 2005*	Dec 2005 - Jan 2006	Nov 2006	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe	6	8	5	8	8	10	10
Fairly safe	30	35	33	34	32	36	43
Neither safe nor unsafe	14	16	17	16	15	14	11
Fairly unsafe	27	26	25	29	29	25	19
Very unsafe	19	7	9	9	11	11	9
Don't know	4	9	10	5	5	5	8
Safe	36	42	38	42	40	46	53
Unsafe	46	33	34	37	40	36	28

* Telephone survey

26c) Registering to vote

	%
Very safe	22
Fairly safe	57
Neither safe nor unsafe	10
Fairly unsafe	7
Very unsafe	2
Don't know	3
Safe	79
Unsafe	9

PARTY FINANCE

READ OUT: I am now going to talk about political party finance, that is, how parties raise and spend money for campaigning and other activities

27. How confident, if at all, are you that when a political party or one of its members is caught breaking the rules of political party finance, the authorities will take appropriate action? Are you...

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE. REVERSE ORDER

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%
Very confident	7	7	7
Fairly confident	33	25	30
Not very confident	39	39	38
Not at all confident	21	30	23
Confident	41	31	37
Not confident	59	69	61

28. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH. REVERSE ORDER OF SCALE

- a) There is more information available to the public now than in the recent past about how political parties are funded and spend their money
- b) The spending of political parties and candidates at UK elections is open and transparent.
- c) The funding of political parties in the UK is open and transparent.

28a) There is more information available to the public now than in the recent past about how political parties are funded and spend their money

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010
	%	%	%
Strongly agree	20	25	23
Tend to agree	42	40	46
Neither agree nor disagree	14	13	10
Tend to disagree	12	10	10
Strongly disagree	7	8	8
Don't know	5	5	4
Agree	63	65	69
Disagree	19	17	18

28b) The spending of political parties and candidates at UK elections is open and transparent

	%
Strongly agree	8
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	17
Tend to disagree	24
Strongly disagree	17
Don't know	5
Agree	37
Disagree	40

28c) The funding of political parties in the UK is open and transparent

	%
Strongly agree	7
Tend to agree	27
Neither agree nor disagree	15
Tend to disagree	28
Strongly disagree	18
Don't know	5
Agree	34
Disagree	46