



# WINTER TRACKING RESEARCH

## Data topline and key findings

Prepared by: GfK Social Research

Date: 2 March 2018





## Research background and technical note

The Electoral Commission is an independent public body established under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The Electoral Commission's aim is to ensure integrity and public confidence in the democratic process, as well as regulate party and election finance, and set standards for well-run elections.

Since 2004, the Electoral Commission has commissioned an annual survey, measuring public attitudes in the UK towards elections and the voting process.

The Electoral Commission commissioned GfK UK to conduct the latest wave of the Winter Tracker. GfK conducted 1,300 online interviews with representative samples of electors – that is adults aged 16+ in Scotland (reflecting the voting age in Scotland) and 18+ in the rest of the UK, eligible to vote at general or local government elections. The samples were drawn from the online panels managed by CINT and Toluna.

Fieldwork ran from 15 January to 5 February 2018.

Quotas were set on: region, age, gender, working status and social grade, to ensure the sample is representative of the UK adult population (16+ in Scotland, 18+ in the rest of the UK).

Two boost samples were included, to enable separate analysis:

- The number of interviews in Northern Ireland was boosted to 200
- The number of interviews in local authorities in England holding local government elections in May 2018 was boosted to 500<sup>1</sup>

Five areas are taking part in the voter ID pilot during the May 2018 local government elections. Electors in Bromley, Gosport, Woking, Watford and Swindon will be required to show a form of identification before being allowed to vote. This could be their polling card or a form of ID. While the focus of the Winter Tracker is not related to the ID pilot, 15 respondents have been identified as living in these five areas. They will be required to show a form of identification before voting at the May 2018 local government elections.

Weights were applied at the analysis stage to re-balance the impact of these boosts, and to correct for any other minor demographic differences between the interviewed sample and known population profiles taken from the Census.

Weighted and unweighted sample profiles are shown below. With the exception of the Northern Ireland boost, the impact of the weighting is minimal. The effective sample size for the total sample is 1136.

---

<sup>1</sup> In May 2018 there will be local government elections in about half of the wards in England, representing just less than half of the UK population. The full list of local authorities holding local elections is appended

### Sample profile

Region	Unweighted	Weighted
Wales	5%	5%
Scotland	8%	9%
England in local authorities holding local elections in May 2018	39%	47%
England in local authorities not holding local elections in May 2018	33%	37%
Northern Ireland	15%	3%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48%	49%
Female	52%	51%
<b>Age</b>		
16 - 24	9%	11%
25 - 34	17%	18%
35 - 54	36%	34%
55 +	38%	37%
<b>Working status</b>		
Men working full time	26%	28%
Men not working full time/not working	22%	21%
Women working part or full time	30%	30%
Women not working	22%	21%
<b>Social grade<sup>2</sup></b>		
ABC1	54%	50%
C2DE	46%	50%

This wave marks a change in methodology for the Winter Tracker. Since 2008, interviews were conducted by telephone, and prior to this fieldwork was conducted face-to-face. This is the first year in which the Winter Tracker has been conducted online and this change was expected to result in different response patterns. Specifically, self-completion means 'Don't know' options are readily available to respondents, as opposed to CATI interviewing where interviewers do not usually read out the 'Don't know' option and only select it if respondents specifically say they do not know. Not having an interviewer asking questions can also impact on results by eliminating social desirability<sup>3</sup>.

To maximise comparability between this first online wave and waves conducted by telephone, in 2017 Electoral Commission asked ICM to conduct a small parallel run survey, asking the same questions by telephone and online to see what impact the change in method would have. The results of the parallel run survey were used to inform changes to the first online survey in 2018: many of the differences in response related to proportions giving a 'no answer' option (either a

<sup>2</sup> Social grade was coded based on the occupational group of the Chief Income Earner in the household

<sup>3</sup> Tourangeau, R. & Yan, T. (2007). Sensitive Questions in Surveys. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(5), 859-883.; Kreuter, F., Presser, S. & Tourangeau, R. (2008). Social Desirability Bias in CATI, IVR, and Web Surveys: The Effects of Mode and Question Sensitivity. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(5), 847-865



middle response option (e.g. 'Neither agree nor disagree'), or 'Don't know'). In order to minimise the impact of the change in method, some questions were modified to exclude the 'no answer' option: changes were discussed with and signed off by Electoral Commission.

Trend data from previous waves have been included in the Topline Results and are referenced in the Key Findings section. Because of the change in method, changes over time have not been tested for significance, but are mentioned in the Key Findings section. Comments are made when it is believed changes are more likely caused by the changes in method or by removing an answer option.

Where results do not add up to 100%, this is due to rounding. Questions with multiple responses are labelled as such.

A dash (-) indicates no respondent selected that answer. An asterisk (\*) indicates a value of less than one half or one percent, but not zero. NA indicates an answer was not available in a particular region or in a particular survey wave.

## Key findings

### Voting

- Seven in ten electors (71%) are confident that elections are well run in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, while a quarter (26%) express a lack of confidence. This is only slightly lower than in 2016 (76% were confident, 22% were not confident).
- Attitudes to voting in General Elections has remained stable since 2016, with three-quarters saying that they always vote (74% v 75% in 2016) and 17% saying that they sometimes vote (v 16% in 2016). In the case of the UK parliamentary election in June 2017, 82% of electors say they voted.
- In 2018, electors were asked for the first time about voting in local government elections, and they were less likely to say they vote in local government elections than general elections; 60% say that they always vote in local government elections, while around three in ten (28%) say they sometimes vote.
- In areas holding local elections on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, electors were asked how likely they were to vote in these elections: a majority (78%) say they are likely to do so, more than the proportion saying they always vote in local government elections (60%).
- While overall satisfaction with the actual process of voting in elections remains unchanged since last year (at 77%), a slightly greater proportion of electors say they are dissatisfied compared to 2016 (18% v 10%).
- When asked what would increase their satisfaction with the voting process, the most commonly selected items are voting online (23%), increased security against electoral fraud (20%), and a proportional voting system (20%). In a shift from 2016, a smaller proportion of electors indicate that more information on the parties and candidates standing and their policies would increase their satisfaction (only 16% mention this in 2018 compared with 31% in 2016).
- Overall confidence in knowing how to cast their vote at an election has returned to levels seen in 2015 and before. In 2018 92% say they are confident they know how to cast their vote, suggesting that the increase seen in 2016 was possibly noise in the data (97% said they were confident they know how to cast their vote in 2016).
- In 2018, people's knowledge of voting laws was explored for the first time: all were presented with four statements about voting and asked if they think each is true or false.
  - Most electors correctly think it is true that you can register to vote online (72%), though this is lower in Northern Ireland, where online registration is not available (51%).
  - However, there were fairly high proportions thinking that false statements about voting are true:
    - A quarter of electors (27%) incorrectly think it is true that you are at risk of getting a fine if you are not registered to vote.
    - Half of all electors (49%) incorrectly believe they have to take their polling cards to the polling station in order to vote.
    - A third (34%) incorrectly believe they have to take an ID to the polling station in order to vote. While a small number of these respondents (15 people) live in areas where pilots will be taking place during the May 2018 local government elections where electors will be required to present identification, it is notable that they form a minority of those thinking this is



true, as electors in other areas are not required to take ID to the polling station.

- Electors were asked which elections they know will definitely take place this year in their area. A third or more of electors in each nation do not know which elections are definitely taking place (45% in England, 36% Scotland, 48% Wales, 39% Northern Ireland say they do not know). In local authorities in England where local government elections are taking place on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 38% of electors correctly say local government/local/county council elections are taking place this year.
- Political activity in the previous 12 months was explored for the first time as part of this survey in 2018. Half of all electors say they had not engaged in any political activity in the previous 12 months (53%). The most common activity reported was signing an online petition (33%) while around one in ten say they had contacted a politician, government or local government official (11%), bought or refused to buy products for political or ethical reasons (10%) or signed a petition not on the internet (10%).

### Registration

- In line with earlier survey waves, the overwhelming majority of electors is certain that their name was on the electoral register. Most say they are registered at their current address (92%) and a few say they are registered at another address (4%). Among those registered to vote, four in ten (39%) say they are registered for a postal vote (the highest level seen, slightly up from 33% in 2016).
- Overall confidence in knowing how to register to vote is in line with previous years (90% expressed some confidence in 2018 v 94% in 2016 and 90% in 2015), but the proportion saying they are very confident (56%) has slipped back to levels last observed in 2009, and it is a clear drop compared to the last two years (74% in 2016 and 63% in 2015). While we could expect to see a drop in the number of people saying they are 'very satisfied' because of the change in research method<sup>4</sup>, it is likely that this also reflects an overall decline in confidence over time.
- 85% say they are satisfied with the system of registering to vote, slightly more than in 2016 (80%).
- When asked what would increase their satisfaction with the registration system, in line with 2016, the most popular change continues to be the automatic registration when people turn 18 (16 in Scotland), although a smaller proportion register this preference (26% versus 36% in 2016). A fifth (21%) say they want to be able to check online if they are registered or not, while 17% would be more satisfied if their details were automatically updated when they move house.
- Confidence that personal data is held securely continues to be high and increase year on year. In 2018 76% say they are confident their details are held securely (v 73% in 2016). There has been an associated decline in the proportion saying they are not confident (18% in 2018, down from 25% in 2016).

---

<sup>4</sup> Research commissioned by the Electoral Commission shows that when asked how confident they are that they know how to go about registering to vote, respondents interviewed by telephone (CATI) are more likely to say 'very confident' compared to respondents interviewed online (CAWI).

## Integrity of elections

- Electors were presented with several items relating to elections and were asked to what extent each of these items were a problem. A third of electors say bias in the media is a serious problem in Great Britain/Northern Ireland (35%), a substantial increase versus 2016 (25%). Low turnout is mentioned by 30% (in line with 2016, 31%). In 2018 a new item was included on the list for the first time “inadequate regulation of the money political parties spend on election campaigns”: almost a quarter (22%) say this is a serious problem.
- Voting in general is considered to be safe from fraud or abuse by over eight in ten (84%, versus 73% in 2016) and electors continue to express greater confidence in the safety of voting at a polling station (considered safe by 88%, versus 82% in 2016) than voting by post (73% - although this marks an increase from 2016 when 57% considered it safe). Almost nine in ten electors (88%) say they consider registering to vote to be safe from fraud or abuse (slightly higher than 80% in 2016).
- Views on electoral fraud were explored in more depth in 2018<sup>5</sup>. Around three quarters of electors (71%) say they would report electoral fraud if they saw it happening, though only 28% say they would know how to report it and 18% would know if it was taking place in their area. A third (39%) agree there are sufficient safeguards to protect against electoral fraud and 20% disagree. Over a third (41%) neither agree nor disagree.
- Around one in ten (12%) electors agree that electoral fraud is very common in their area, and the same proportion (12%) claim to have witnessed electoral fraud. A fifth (18%) say they have heard of electoral fraud occurring in their area, and 15% say there have been times when they were made to feel that they didn't have a choice about who to vote for because of people they knew. Only 2% of electors agree with all four statements.
- Around two fifths (38%) believe there could be enough electoral fraud to affect the results of the elections in some areas, while 26% say the results of elections in the country as a whole have been affected by electoral fraud in the past. Three in ten (30%) believe it would be easy to get away with electoral fraud in Great Britain/Northern Ireland.
- Asked which single measure would be most effective in preventing electoral fraud in Great Britain, 37% electors say they would support a requirement to show photographic ID at the polling station, though this marks a drop from 52% in 2016. The next most popular measure is stopping political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners from handling postal vote applications/postal ballot papers (19% in 2018, similar to 20% in 2016).

## Party finance

- Overall knowledge about how parties are funded in order to fight elections has dropped and is in line with levels seen in 2013: 40% of electors say they have at least some knowledge of party finance, compared with 47% in 2016 (a historic high). In contrast, over half say they know nothing or hardly anything (57% v 53% in 2016).
- A quarter of electors (24%) agree that election spending is open and transparent, in line with 2016 (26%). Over half of electors (57%) agree that authorities would take appropriate action if a party or campaigner was caught breaking the rules, stable since 2016 (58%). Opinions were divided on whether electors would easily be able to find how much parties, candidates and other organisations spent on campaigning and their funding: 32% agree it

---

<sup>5</sup> Because new statements were included in the same battery and an introduction was shown on screen explaining what is meant by electoral fraud, results are not compared with previous years (they are shown in the topline section for reference).



would be easy, while 38% disagree. This is in line with 2016 when 39% agreed and 44% disagreed (the number of people saying they don't know has increased in 2018 most likely due to the change in methodology).

- Electors' knowledge of party funding was investigated by asking them where information on party funding could be found. One in five (19%) think information is found on the Electoral Commission website (v 18% in 2016). The proportion of electors saying they did not know has increased from 22% in 2015, to 33% in 2016 and is now 43%.
- Electors in Northern Ireland were asked whether they think information about who donates money to political parties should be made public or kept confidential. The majority (72%) feel this information should be made public, and this proportion has remained stable year on year (73% in 2016). While, the proportion feeling that the information should be kept confidential has increased to 14% in 2018 from 3% in 2016, this is mainly because of a change in the proportion who did not mind (14% in 2018, down from 23% in 2016).





## Topline results

### Voting

Q1. In general, how confident, if at all, are you that elections are well run in [Great Britain/Northern Ireland]? Are you.....

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	29	18	25	20	22	29	27
Fairly confident	43	43	49	45	44	47	44
Not very confident	16	20	15	20	19	15	20
Not at all confident	8	14	9	13	13	7	7
Don't know	4	5	1	2	2	2	3
NET: Confident	72	61	75	65	66	76	71
NET: Not confident	24	34	24	33	32	22	26

Q2. Which of these statements best describes your attitude towards voting at General Elections?  
This applies to elections to the Westminster parliament.

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Nov 2006	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
I always vote at General Elections	65	63	59	70	61	55	61	64	68	75	74
I sometimes vote at General Elections	19	23	25	18	23	27	22	21	19	16	17
I never vote at General Elections	11	9	8	8	10	14	11	11	10	6	5
I've not been eligible in the past to vote at a General Election	4	4	8	4	4	4	5	5	3	3	3
Don't know	1	*	*	-	1	*	*	-	*	-	1



Q3. Which of these statements best describes your attitude towards voting at local government elections?

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Jan-Feb 2018 %
I always vote at local government elections	60
I sometimes vote at local government elections	28
I never vote at local government elections	9
I've not been eligible in the past to vote at local government elections	3
Don't know	1
<b>Vote (Net)</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Do not vote (Net)</b>	<b>11</b>

Q4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the actual process of voting at elections in [Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Nov 2006 %	Dec 2008 %	Dec 2009 %	Dec 2010 %	Dec 2011 %	Dec 2012 %	Dec 2013 %	Dec 2014 %	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Very satisfied	21	32	31	28	20	25	31	31	28	36	30
Fairly satisfied	54	43	43	45	48	39	41	39	40	41	47
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	9	11	12	19	19	18	19	17	12	NA
Fairly dissatisfied	3	7	8	7	6	9	4	5	7	6	14
Very dissatisfied	1	5	4	6	5	7	4	4	6	4	5
Don't know/no opinion	7	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	5
<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Dissatisfied</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>



Q5. Which ONE of the following would be the most likely to increase your satisfaction with the process of voting at elections in [Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
More information on how the voting process works	5	6
More information on the parties and candidates standing and their policies	31	16
Increased security against electoral fraud	17	20
If it was possible to vote online	17	23
A proportional voting system	23	20
Other (Please specify)	2	1
Nothing would increase my satisfaction	3	14
Don't know	2	NA

Q6. How confident, if at all, are you that you know how to go about casting your vote at an election?

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2009 %	Dec 2010 %	Dec 2011 %	Dec 2012 %	Dec 2013 %	Dec 2014 %	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Very confident	66	69	67	69	68	70	70	81	67
Fairly confident	27	25	27	24	25	22	23	16	25
Not very confident	5	3	4	4	3	5	5	2	5
Not at all confident	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	1
Don't know	1	*	1	1	*	*	*	-	1
Confident (Net)	93	94	94	92	93	92	92	97	92
Not confident (Net)	6	6	6	7	6	8	7	3	7

Q7. Please could you tell me whether you think each of the following statements are true or false?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Jan-Feb 2018 %	True %	False %	Don't know %
You have to take ID with you to vote at a polling station	%	34	58	8
You have to take your polling card with you to the polling station in order to vote	%	49	46	5
You are at risk of getting a fine if you don't register to vote	%	27	61	12
You can register to vote online	%	72	14	14



Q31. People have many reasons for voting and not voting in elections and referendums. Did you personally vote at the UK parliamentary general election in June 2017?

2018 Base: All respondents (1300)		Jan-Feb 2018 %
Yes		82
No		16
Don't know		2

Q32. Which, if any, of the following elections do you know will definitely take place this year where you live? Select all that apply

Jan-Feb 2018	England	England local authorities holding local elections	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
	%		%	%	%
<i>Base: all</i>	930	501	110	60*	200
UK Parliamentary by-election	10	12	17	7	18
UK Parliamentary general election	13	14	15	16	17
Local Government/local/county council election	33	38	NA	30	NA
Scottish council elections	NA	NA	32	NA	NA
National Assembly for Wales election	NA	NA	NA	15	NA
Scottish Parliament election	NA	NA	27	NA	NA
Mayoral elections	9	11	NA	NA	NA
PCC/Police and Crime Commissioner elections	7	9	NA	5	NA
None of these	10	10	19	9	31
Don't know	45	38	36	48	39

\*Caution, small base size.

Q33. Local government elections will be taking place in this area on May 3 2018. How likely are you to vote at these elections?

Base: All areas holding local government elections (501)	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Very likely	53
Somewhat likely	24
Somewhat unlikely	8
Very unlikely	7
Undecided/Don't know	6
Likely (Net)	78
Unlikely (Net)	16



Q35. Thinking now about how active you are in politics and community affairs, during the last 12 months, have you done any of the following? Select all that apply

Base: All respondents (1300)	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Contacted a politician, government or local government official	11
Signed a petition on the Internet	33
Signed a petition not on the internet	10
Done any work on behalf of a political party or action group	4
Given any money to a political party, organization or cause	5
Taken part in a public demonstration	5
Bought - or refused to buy - any products for political or ethical reasons	10
Gone on strike or taken industrial action	3
None of these	53

**Registration**

Q8. How confident, if at all, are you that you know how to go about registering to vote?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2009 %	Dec 2010 %	Dec 2011 %	Dec 2012 %	Dec 2013 %	Dec 2014 %	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Very confident	55	68	60	63	66	64	63	74	56
Fairly confident	34	24	29	28	23	26	28	20	34
Not very confident	7	4	6	5	6	6	6	3	6
Not at all confident	3	3	3	2	4	4	3	2	2
Don't know	1	*	2	2	*	1	*	1	2
Confident (Net)	89	92	89	91	89	89	90	94	90
Not confident (Net)	10	7	9	8	10	10	9	5	8

Q9. As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register, that is, the official list of people entitled to vote, either where you are living now or somewhere else?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2011 %	Dec 2012 %	Dec 2013 %	Dec 2014 %	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Yes - where living now	93	91	94	92	93	94	92
Yes - another address	3	4	2	3	4	2	4
No	2	4	2	3	2	2	2
Don't know	3	2	1	2	1	1	2



Q13. 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?

Base: All registered to vote (1249)	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, am registered for a postal vote	30	29	36	35	31	33	39
No, am not registered for a postal vote	64	65	58	58	67	63	56
Don't know	6	6	6	7	2	4	5

Q10. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the system of registering to vote in [Great Britain/Northern Ireland]?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very satisfied	43	43	46	38	39	43	38	35	47	44
Fairly satisfied	39	39	40	41	37	39	40	40	34	41
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9	10	8	13	15	14	14	17	13	NA
Fairly dissatisfied	4	3	3	2	3	1	4	4	4	5
Very dissatisfied	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	3	2	2
Don't know/no opinion	3	3	2	4	3	2	2	1	1	8
Satisfied (Net)	82	82	85	79	76	82	78	75	80	85
Dissatisfied (Net)	5	5	5	4	5	2	6	7	6	7

Q11. Which one of the following would be most likely to increase your satisfaction with the system of registering to vote in Great Britain / Northern Ireland?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%
If it was possible to register to vote online (NI only)	1	1
If it was possible to register to vote on polling day	4	5
If you didn't have to provide so much personal information	6	7
If you could check online if you were registered or not	24	21
If your details were automatically updated when you move house	20	17
If people were automatically registered when they turn 18 (16 in Scotland)	36	26
Other	NA	1%
None of these	7	23
Don't know	2	NA



Q12. Thinking about the system of registering to vote [in Great Britain / Northern Ireland], how confident are you that your own personal details are held securely?

<b>Base: All respondents (1300)</b>	<b>Dec 2010</b>	<b>Dec 2011</b>	<b>Dec 2012</b>	<b>Dec 2013</b>	<b>Dec 2014</b>	<b>Dec 2015</b>	<b>Dec 2016</b>	<b>Jan-Feb 2018</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Very confident	16	17	19	19	18	16	20	27
Fairly confident	54	50	48	49	51	52	53	49
Not very confident	19	21	20	21	19	21	17	14
Not at all confident	8	8	9	10	10	11	8	4
Don't know	3	4	3	3	3	1	2	6
<b>Confident (Net)</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Not confident (Net)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>18</b>



**Integrity of elections**

Q14. How much of a problem do you think that each of the following is in [Great Britain / Northern Ireland] at the moment?

Base: All respondents (1300)			Not a problem				Serious problem	Don't know
			1	2	3	4	5	
Electoral fraud	%	Dec 2016	13	23	30	14	15	5
	%	Jan-Feb 2018	10	19	25	20	16	11
Bias in the media	%	Dec 2016	12	4	7	19	25	2
	%	Jan-Feb 2018	5	5	18	31	35	6
Low voter turnout at elections	%	Dec 2016	6	8	26	27	31	2
	%	Jan-Feb 2018	3	7	19	36	30	5
Barriers to democratic participation for minority groups	%	Dec 2016	13	17	36	14	10	9
	%	Jan-Feb 2018	15	15	26	17	10	17
Foreign influence on UK election results (2018 only)	%	Jan-Feb 2018	9	15	25	22	16	13
Inadequate regulation of political activity on social media (2018 only)	%	Jan-Feb 2018	7	15	22	24	19	13
Intimidation of candidates that run for election (2018 only)	%	Jan-Feb 2018	14	18	25	17	13	13
Inadequate regulation of the money political parties spend on their election campaigns (2018 only)	%	Jan-Feb 2018	5	10	23	29	22	11





Q15. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say that voting in general is very safe, fairly safe, neither safe nor unsafe, fairly unsafe or very unsafe.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%
Very safe	18	28
Fairly safe	55	56
Neither safe nor unsafe	15	NA
Fairly unsafe	7	9
Very unsafe	3	2
Don't know	2	5
Safe (Net)	73	84
Unsafe (Net)	10	11

Q15. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say that voting at a polling station is very safe, fairly safe, neither safe nor unsafe, fairly unsafe or very unsafe.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe	30	33	38	40	43	41	30	28	31	32	35
Fairly safe	51	50	48	46	43	44	49	51	48	50	53
Neither safe nor unsafe	10	9	8	5	4	4	11	12	12	10	NA
Fairly unsafe	4	5	3	4	6	6	7	6	6	4	7
Very unsafe	1	*	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
Don't know	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	2	4
Safe (Net)	82	83	87	85	86	85	79	79	79	82	88
Unsafe (Net)	5	6	4	7	7	9	9	8	8	6	8



Q15. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say that voting by post is very safe, fairly safe, neither safe nor unsafe, fairly unsafe or very unsafe.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Nov 2006	Jan 2008	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe	5	8	8	10	10	10	13	16	15	17	14	28
Fairly safe	33	34	32	36	43	46	40	39	41	39	43	45
Neither safe nor unsafe	17	16	15	14	11	8	8	12	13	14	15	NA
Fairly unsafe	25	29	29	25	19	24	23	19	19	19	14	14
Very unsafe	9	9	11	11	9	8	9	8	9	9	8	5
Don't know	10	5	5	5	8	4	6	6	4	2	6	8
Safe (Net)	38	42	40	46	53	56	53	55	56	56	57	73
Unsafe (Net)	34	37	40	36	28	32	33	27	28	28	22	19

Q15. In general, when it comes to being safe from fraud or abuse, would you say registering to vote is very safe, fairly safe, neither safe nor unsafe, fairly unsafe or very unsafe.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very safe	22	23	23	25	25	27	28	39
Fairly safe	57	58	55	55	52	50	52	48
Neither safe nor unsafe	10	6	7	9	11	13	10	NA
Fairly unsafe	7	8	8	7	6	6	5	6
Very unsafe	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	1
Don't know	3	4	3	3	3	1	3	6
Safe (Net)	79	80	78	80	78	77	80	88
Unsafe (Net)	9	10	11	8	8	9	7	7



Q16. The following questions are about electoral fraud. By electoral fraud we mean offences such as members of the public or candidates or their campaigners:

- forcing others to vote in a particular way
- stopping others from voting
- casting votes pretending to be someone else, or candidates or their campaigners offering to reward voters for voting for them.<sup>6</sup>

For each of the following please tell me whether you agree or disagree.

Base: All respondents (1300)		Agree strongly	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know	Agree (Net)	Disagree (Net)
There could be enough electoral fraud in some areas to affect the election result									
Dec 2013	%	18	24	19	18	12	9	42	30
Dec 2014	%	17	26	29	18	11	*	43	28
Dec 2015	%	14	31	26	16	11	2	45	27
Dec 2016	%	19	25	17	19	13	6	44	32
Jan-Feb 2018	%	10	28	35	18	9	NA	38	27
It would be easy to get away with electoral fraud in Great Britain/Northern Ireland									
Dec 2013	%	15	22	18	21	16	8	37	37
Dec 2014	%	15	21	27	21	17	*	35	38
Dec 2015	%	12	23	27	24	12	3	34	36
Dec 2016	%	14	19	16	28	16	8	32	44
Jan-Feb 2018	%	9	21	38	21	11	NA	30	32
The results of elections in this country have been affected by electoral fraud									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	7	19	38	23	12	NA	26	36
I would know electoral fraud was taking place if it was happening in my area									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	6	12	37	29	17	NA	18	45
I would know how to report electoral fraud									
Dec 2013	%	14	13	11	17	38	7	27	55
Dec 2014	%	18	15	15	20	32	*	33	52
Dec 2015	%	15	19	12	20	31	3	34	51
Dec 2016	%	17	14	7	22	33	7	31	55
Jan-Feb 2018	%	10	18	26	30	17	NA	28	46
I would report electoral fraud taking place if I saw it happening									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	41	30	20	6	3	NA	71	9
There are sufficient safeguards in place to prevent electoral fraud									
Dec 2013	%	17	31	20	15	8	8	48	24
Dec 2014	%	19	29	29	13	9	*	48	23
Dec 2015	%	12	28	30	17	10	4	40	27
Dec 2016	%	15	31	20	15	9	10	46	24
Jan-Feb 2018	%	9	30	41	15	5	NA	39	20

<sup>6</sup> Please note: the introduction text was only shown to respondents in 2018. Caution is needed when comparing results with previous years



Electoral fraud is very common where I live									
Dec 2013	%	3	4	21	22	34	16	7	56
Dec 2014	%	3	3	33	22	39	*	6	61
Dec 2015	%	2	5	32	26	30	6	7	55
Dec 2016	%	4	4	18	24	35	7	8	59
Jan-Feb 2018	%	4	9	31	25	31	NA	12	56
There have been times when I was made to feel that I had little or no choice about who to vote for because of pressure from people I know									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	5	10	16	19	50	NA	15	69
I have personally seen electoral fraud offences being committed in my local area									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	3	10	14	20	53	NA	12	73
I have heard about electoral fraud offences being committed in my local area									
Jan-Feb 2018	%	6	12	18	22	41	NA	18	64

Q17. Which one of the following do you think would be most effective in preventing electoral fraud from taking place in Great Britain?

Base: All respondents in Great Britain (1100)	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
People being required to show some form of photographic identification at their polling station	52	37
Having independent observers in all polling stations	8	14
Stopping people voting for others by proxy.	11	13
Stopping postal voting on demand.	4	6
Stopping political parties, candidates, canvassers and campaigners from handling postal vote applications and postal ballot papers	20	19
Other (specify)	1	1
None of these	1	10
Don't know	3	0



**Party finance**

Q23. Political parties need money to run themselves and fight elections. How much would you say you know about political party finance, that is the way in which parties raise money to pay their staff and fight elections?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2013 %	Dec 2014 %	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
A lot	8	10	11	10	8
A little	30	34	32	37	32
Hardly anything	25	27	26	28	34
Nothing at all	35	28	30	24	23
Don't know	1	*	1	1	3
A lot/a little	39	44	43	47	40
Hardly/nothing at all	60	55	57	53	57

Q24. Here are some statements relating to the rules on the money that political parties, organisations and other individuals use when campaigning. These rules do not include politicians' expenses.

The spending and funding of political parties and candidates and other campaigning organisations at elections is open and transparent.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Agree strongly	7	10	6
Tend to agree	18	17	18
Neither agree nor disagree	27	17	35
Tend to disagree	28	30	31
Disagree strongly	18	21	11
Don't know	2	4	NA
Agree (Net)	25	26	24
Disagree (Net)	46	52	42

If a political party or another campaigner is caught breaking the rules, the authorities will take appropriate action.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2015 %	Dec 2016 %	Jan-Feb 2018 %
Agree strongly	25	33	17
Tend to agree	26	25	40
Neither agree nor disagree	14	12	25
Tend to disagree	21	17	15
Disagree strongly	14	11	4
Don't know	1	3	NA
Agree (Net)	50	58	57
Disagree (Net)	34	28	19



If I wanted to, I could easily find out how much political parties, candidates and other organisations spent on campaigning and how they were funded.

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%
Agree strongly	16	6
Tend to agree	24	26
Neither agree nor disagree	12	31
Tend to disagree	25	25
Disagree strongly	18	12
Don't know	5	NA
Agree (Net)	39	32
Disagree (Net)	44	38

Q25. Which ONE of the following statements about party finance in [Great Britain / Northern Ireland] do you think is true?

Base: All respondents (1300)	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%
Information on the funding of political parties is available on individual political party websites	20	23	20	13
There is no information on the funding of political parties available to the public	18	22	19	17
Information on the funding of political parties is available on the Electoral Commission's website	14	21	18	19
Information on the funding of political parties is available on your local council's website	12	12	10	9
Don't know	36	22	33	43

Q26. In your opinion, should information about who donates money to political parties in Northern Ireland be made available to the public or kept confidential, or do you not mind either way?

Base: All respondents in NI (200)	Dec 2008	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2014	Dec 2015	Dec 2016	Jan-Feb 2018
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Made available	59	62	62	64	67	68	73	72
Kept confidential	8	4	7	6	8	6	3	14
Do you not mind either way	32	33	31	29	24	25	23	14
Don't know	*	1	*	*	2	1	1	NA

## Appendix: Local authorities holding local government elections on 3rd May 2018

Adur	Great Yarmouth	Rochdale
Amber Valley	Greenwich	Rochford
Barking and Dagenham	Hackney	Rossendale
Barnet	Halton	Rugby
Barnsley	Hammersmith and Fulham	Runnymede
Basildon	Haringey	Rushmoor
Basingstoke and Deane	Harlow	Salford
Bexley	Harrogate	Sandwell
Birmingham	Harrow	Sefton
Blackburn with Darwen	Hart	Sheffield
Bolton	Hartlepool	Slough
Bradford	Hastings	Solihull
Brent	Havant	South Cambridgeshire
Brentwood	Havering	South Lakeland
Bromley	Hillingdon	South Tyneside
Broxbourne	Hounslow	Southend-on-Sea
Burnley	Huntingdonshire	Southwark
Bury	Hyndburn	St. Albans
Calderdale	Ipswich	St. Helens
Cambridge	Islington	Stevenage
Camden	Kensington and Chelsea	Stockport
Cannock Chase	Kingston upon Thames	Sunderland
Carlisle	Kirklees	Sutton
Castle Point	Knowsley	Swindon
Cheltenham	Lambeth	Tameside
Cherwell	Leeds	Tamworth
Chorley	Lewisham	Tandridge
City of Derby	Lincoln	Three Rivers
City of Kingston upon Hull	Liverpool	Thurrock
City of Peterborough	Maidstone	Tower Hamlets
City of Plymouth	Manchester	Trafford
City of Portsmouth	Merton	Tunbridge Wells
City of Southampton	Milton Keynes	Wakefield
City of Westminster	Mole Valley	Walsall
City of Wolverhampton	Newcastle upon Tyne	Waltham Forest
Colchester	Newcastle-under-Lyme	Wandsworth
Coventry	Newham	Watford
Craven	North East Lincolnshire	Welwyn Hatfield
Crawley	North Hertfordshire	West Lancashire
Croydon	North Tyneside	West Oxfordshire
Daventry	Norwich	Weymouth and Portland
Dudley	Nuneaton and Bedworth	Wigan
Ealing	Oldham	Winchester
Eastleigh	Oxford	Wirral
Elmbridge	Pendle	Woking
Enfield	Preston	Wokingham



Epping Forest  
Exeter  
Fareham  
Gateshead  
Gosport

Reading  
Redbridge  
Redditch  
Reigate and Banstead  
Richmond upon Thames

Worcester  
Worthing  
Wyre Forest