

# Conservative Research Department

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## Government's Pay and Prices Policy ORC Report

I attach a copy of a report from ORC about public attitudes to the government's pay and prices policy.

This is based on a few questions we tacked on to one of ORC's regular "omnibus" surveys to provide benchmarks prior to a fuller study we are planning for October. When the fuller study is completed I would suggest that it should be circulated to and discussed by the Steering Committee.

The general impression one gets from the research is that the present policy is largely seen as a continuation or return to the analogous policy of the previous Conservative government and the heir to the doubts and scepticism which that policy engendered in its later stages. This should be distinguished from beliefs about the need for such a policy. We know from other research (notably the ORC research for ITN) that the vast majority of the electorate (about 70 per cent) believe the government should have legal control over the size of pay increases; their doubt is whether the actual policies will be either effective or fair.

The low level of expectations about the policy shown by this research works both ways. The government cannot hope to acquire popularity by introducing the policy but conversely they are less likely to lose it if the policy does not work very well and if by any chance the policy should work well and the effects exceed the expectations they could score.



JAMES DOUGLAS