

Public Opinion Background Note 99  
(produced 4th August 1985)

1. Introduction

Gallup conducted the interviewing for our latest 'tracking' study from 24th to 29th July and confirmed the results of the previous unpublished study (conducted 17-22 July) that the so-called 'Alliance' is leading the other two parties. Gallup found 36.5% claiming they would vote for one of the 'Alliance' parties, 34% Labour and 28% Conservative. These findings can be compared with the results of a MORI study published in the Evening Standard on 30th July, conducted partly before and partly after the announcement on the top salary review. MORI found 34% claiming they would vote Labour, 33% Conservative, 31% 'Alliance' and 2% for 'other' parties.

Compared with the start of the year, 'Alliance' support is up from 28% to 35%, Conservative support down from 35% to 28% and Labour support almost stable - 35% in January and 34% in the latest study.

Full details of the trend of support for the main parties since January 1985 showing voting intentions when those respondents not giving details of voting intention are excluded and when they were included as a separate group are shown in the tables in section 2 below:

2. Voting Intention

(a) Voting Intention (excluding don't knows) - all figures are percentages

	Con	Lab	Lib	SDP	Others	Con lead Over Labour	SDP & Liberal	Con lead over Allian Liberal & S
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1985								
3-8 Jan	35.0	35.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
9-14 Jan	39.0	33.0	9.5	16.0	2.5	+6.0	25.5	+13.5*
16-21 Jan	39.0	34.0	10.0	16.0	1.0	+5.0	26.0	+13.0
23-28 Jan	36.0	32.0	11.0	20.0	1.0	+4.0	31.0	+5.0
30 Jan-4 Feb	34.0	37.0	10.0	17.5	1.5	-3.0	27.5	+6.5
6-11 Feb	35.0	32.0	10.5	21.0	1.5	+3.0	31.5	+3.5*
13-18 Feb	38.0	33.0	10.0	16.5	2.5	+5.0	26.5	+11.5
20-25 Feb	33.5	38.0	10.0	17.0	1.5	-4.5	27.0	+6.5
27 Feb-4 March	35.0	35.0	10.0	18.0	2.0	0.0	28.0	+7.0
6-11 March	37.0	34.0	10.5	17.0	1.5	+3.0	27.5	+10.5
13-18 March	35.0	34.0	12.0	16.0	3.0	+1.0	28.0	+7.0
21-25 March	33.0	39.5	10.0	16.0	1.5	-6.5	26.0	+6.0
27 March - 1 April	38.0	33.0	13.0	15.0	1.0	+5.0	28.0	+10.0
3 - 9 April	37.0	40.0	7.5	13.5	2.0	-3.0	21.0	+16.0
10 - 15 April	36.5	35.5	13.0	13.0	2.0	+1.0	26.0	+11.5
17-22 April	34.0	37.5	12.0	14.0	2.0	-3.5	26.5	+7.5*
24-29 April	33.5	38.0	10.0	16.5	2.0	-4.5	26.5	+7.0
1 - 6 May	31.5	36.0	11.5	18.5	2.5	-4.5	30.0	+1.5
6-13 May	30.5	34.0	11.5	22.0	2.0	-3.5	33.5	-3.0*
15-20 May	31.0	36.5	10.0	21.0	1.5	-5.5	31.0	0.0
23-28 May	29.0	35.0	12.0	21.0	3.0	-6.0	33.0	-4.0
29 May - 3 June	31.0	37.0	13.0	17.0	2.0	-6.0	30.0	+1.0
5-10 June	28.0	36.0	12.0	21.5	2.5	-8.0	33.5	-5.5
12-17 June	34.5	34.5	12.0	18.0	1.0	0.0	30.0	+4.5*
19-24 June	31.0	35.0	13.0	19.0	2.0	-4.0	32.0	-1.0
26 June-1 July	35.0	34.0	12.0	17.0	2.0	+1.0	29.0	+6.0
3-8 July	30.5	36.5	12.0	19.0	2.0	-6.0	31.0	+0.5
10-15 July	27.5	38.0	12.5	20.0	2.0	-10.5	32.5	-5.0
17-22 July	30.0	30.0	12.5	24.0	3.5	0.0	36.5	-6.5
24-29 July	28.0	34.0	14.5	22.0	1.5	-6.0	36.5	-8.5

(b) Voting Intention (including don't knows)

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>SDP</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Conservative lead over Labour</u>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>1985</u>							
3-8 Jan	33.0	32.0	10.0	16.0	2.0	7.0	+1.0
9-14 Jan	36.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	3.0	8.0	+6.0
16-21 Jan	35.0	31.0	9.0	14.0	1.0	9.0	+4.0
23-28 Jan	33.0	29.0	10.0	18.0	1.0	8.0	+4.0
30 Jan - 4 Feb	31.0	33.0	9.0	16.0	1.0	11.0	-2.0
6-11 Feb	32.0	29.0	9.0	19.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 Feb	35.0	30.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	+5.0
20-25 Feb	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	-4.0
27 Feb-4 March	32.0	32.0	9.0	16.0	2.0	9.0	0.0
6 - 11 March	34.0	31.0	10.0	15.0	1.0	9.0	+3.0
13-18 March	33.0	32.0	11.0	15.0	3.0	7.0	+1.0
21-25 March	30.0	36.0	9.0	14.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
27 March-1 April	35.0	30.0	13.0	12.0	1.0	8.0	+5.0
3 - 9 April	34.0	37.0	7.0	12.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
10 - 15 April	33.0	32.0	12.0	12.0	3.0	9.0	+1.0
17-22 April	31.0	34.0	12.0	13.0	2.0	9.0	-3.0
24-29 April	31.0	35.0	9.0	15.0	2.0	8.0	-4.0
1 - 6 May	29.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	2.0	9.0	-4.0
6-13 May	28.0	31.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-3.0
15-20 May	28.0	34.0	9.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-6.0
23-28 May	27.0	33.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	7.0	-6.0
29 May-3rd June	28.0	33.0	11.0	15.0	2.0	11.0	-5.0
5 - 10 June	26.0	33.0	11.0	20.0	2.0	8.0	-7.0
12 - 17 June	32.0	32.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	7.0	0.0
19-24 June	29.0	32.0	12.0	17.0	3.0	7.0	-3.0
26 June-1 July	32.0	31.0	11.0	16.0	1.0	8.0	+1.0
3-8 July	28.0	33.0	11.0	17.0	1.0	9.0	-5.0
10-15 July	26.0	35.0	12.0	19.0	2.0	6.0	-9.0
17-22 July	27.0	28.0	11.0	22.0	3.0	8.0	-1.0
24-29 July	25.0	31.0	13.0	20.0	2.0	9.0	-6.0

3. Government Record

Gallup found 26% claiming to approve of our record to date, 61% disapproved and 12% did not have a view. This compares with 32% claiming to approve of our record in Government at the start of the year. Details of the trend are shown in the table below:-

	<u>GOVERNMENT RECORD</u>		
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1985</u>			
3-8 Jan(%)	32	53	14
9-14Jan(%)	33	54	13
16-21 Jan(%)	35	48	16
23-28 Jan(%)	33	54	12
30 Jan-4 Feb(%)	29	59	12
6-11Feb (%)	31	55	13
13-18 Feb(%)	33	55	12
20-25 Feb(%)	29	58	13
27 Feb - 4 March(%)	34	53	13
6-11 March(%)	32	55	13
13-18 March(%)	31	56	13
21-25 March(%)	30	58	12
27 March - 1 April(%)	34	55	11
3 - 9 April (%)	32	57	11
10-15 April (%)	32	54	14
17-22 April (%)	32	57	11

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
24-29 April (%)	31	55	14
1 - 6 May(%)	31	56	13
6-13 May (%)	28	58	14
15-20 May(%)	27	60	13
23-28 May (%)	28	60	12
29 May-3 June (%)	27	59	14
5 - 10 June (%)	26	61	13
12-17 June (%)	31	59	9
19-24 June (%)	28	60	12
26 June-1 July (%)	30	57	12
3-8 July (%)	29	58	12
10-15 July (%)	28	59	13
17 - 22 July(%)	28	60	12
24-29 July (%)	26	61	13

4. Popularity of Political Leaders

Gallup found the lowest level of satisfaction with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister in any Gallup study conducted this year - only 31% claimed to be satisfied with Mrs. Thatcher as Prime Minister, 63% dissatisfied and 6% did not have a view. Mr. Kinnock's popularity remains at about the same level as at the start of the year - 34% regarded him as a good leader, 49% that he is not a good leader and 16% did not have a view. Mr. Steel's popularity remained unchanged and that of Dr. Owen improved sharply.

	<u>Mrs Thatcher</u>			<u>Is Good Leader</u>	<u>Mr. Kinnock</u>	
	<u>Satisfied</u>	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>		<u>Is Not Good Leader</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
<u>1985</u>						
3-8 Jan (%)	39	57	5	33	48	19
9-14 Jan (%)	40	54	6	36	49	15
16-21 Jan (%)	43	51	6	31	51	18
23-28 Jan (%)	40	56	5	33	52	15
30 Jan to 4 Feb (%)	38	56	6	36	49	15
6-11 Feb (%)	37	57	6	31	54	15
13-18 Feb (%)	40	55	5	31	57	12
20-25 Feb (%)	38	58	4	34	52	14
27 Feb-4 March (%)	40	54	5	31	53	16
6 - 11 March (%)	41	55	4	34	51	15
13-18 March (%)	40	55	5	32	52	16
21-25 March (%)	37	58	5	37	47	6
27 March - 1 April(%)	39	56	5	33	50	16
3-9 April (%)	37	59	4	43	44	13
10-15 April (%)	38	57	6	35	47	18
17-22 April (%)	38	57	5	36	48	16
24-29 April (%)	37	57	6	35	48	16
1 - 6 May (%)	37	58	5	36	49	16
6 - 13 May(%)	36	59	5	38	45	17
15-20 May(%)	32	63	5	36	47	18
23-28 May (%)	35	60	5	35	49	16
29 May-3 June (%)	34	61	5	34	50	16
5 - 10 June (%)	34	61	6	33	49	17
12-17 June (%)	38	56	8	37	51	12
19-24 June (%)	36	59	5	34	51	15
26 June-1 July (%)	40	56	5	37	46	17
3-8 July (%)	36	58	6	37	48	16
10-15 July (%)	34	60	5	38	47	15
17 - 22 July (%)	34	61	6	32	52	15
24-29 July (%)	31	63	6	34	49	16

	<u>Mr Steel</u>			<u>Dr Owen</u>		
	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %	<u>Is Good Leader</u> %	<u>Is Not Good Leader</u> %	<u>Don't Know</u> %
<u>1985</u>						
3-8 Jan (%)	56	24	20	50	25	25
9-14 Jan (%)	57	26	17	52	27	21
16-21 Jan (%)	60	24	16	52	22	26
23-28 Jan (%)	57	25	18	55	21	24
30 Jan - 4 Feb(%)	55	28	18	51	25	23
6-11 Feb (%)	57	24	18	55	21	24
13-18 Feb (%)	59	24	17	57	24	20
20-25 Feb (%)	61	23	16	57	22	21
27 Feb-4 March (%)	57	25	19	52	23	25
6 - 11 March (%)	56	27	17	52	25	23
13-18 March (%)	57	27	17	53	23	24
21-25 March (%)	60	23	17	53	21	25
27 March-1 April(%)	64	21	15	54	24	22
3 - 9 April (%)	58	25	17	52	26	22
10-15 April (%)	58	24	18	49	26	25
17-22 April (%)	60	24	17	52	26	22
24-29 April (%)	60	22	18	51	24	25
1 - 6 May (%)	65	20	15	54	22	24
6 - 13 May (%)	64	19	16	56	21	23
15-20 May (%)	60	24	16	51	23	25
23-28 May (%)	65	20	15	52	26	21
29 May-3 June (%)	61	22	17	49	27	24
5 - 10 June (%)	62	22	16	53	25	22
12-17 June (%)	63	22	15	56	23	21
19-24 June (%)	63	21	16	51	25	23
26-June-1 July (%)	62	20	18	52	24	25
3-8 July (%)	64	20	16	50	25	25
10-15 July(%)	65	20	15	54	24	22
17-22 July (%)	64	21	15	51	26	23
24-29 July(%)	64	21	14	56	24	20

5. Published Polls

(a) MORI (Evening Standard, 30th July 1985)

The Evening Standard on 30th July 1985 included details of a MORI poll conducted from 16th to 21st July. The survey was conducted partly before and partly after the announcement on the top salary review. Details are shown below:-

	<u>Before</u> <u>Announcement</u> <u>Of Review</u>	<u>After</u> <u>Announcement</u> <u>Of Review</u>	<u>Whole</u> <u>Survey</u>
	%	%	%
Labour	33	37	34
Conservative	34	29	33
'Alliance'	31	32	31
Others	2	2	2

MORI asked the standard questions with regard to what the electorate regard as the most important problems facing the country - they found:-

Most Important Problems Facing The Country

	<u>May</u> %	<u>June</u> %	<u>July</u> %
Unemployment	85	82	80
Trade Unions/Strikes	5	6	5
Disarmament	17	15	15
Prices/Inflation	17	20	16
Law and Order	15	20	17
National Health Service	16	16	16
Schools/Education	12	11	12

(b) NOP (Daily Mail 29th-31st July)

The Daily Mail from 29th to 31st July included details of an NOP poll conducted on 15th July. They interviewed almost 1,000 electors who voted Conservative in June 1983.

NOP found that out of the 982 Conservative voters, 166 are planning to vote for one of the so-called 'Alliance' parties; 21 for Labour and 3 for 'other' parties.

In terms of the image of the leaders, NOP found:-

Attitudes to Political Leaders  
(among Conservative voters)

	<u>Thatcher</u>	<u>Kinnock</u>	<u>Owen</u>	<u>Steel</u>
Keeps promises	21	2	10	12
Strong personality	91	15	40	31
Intelligent	78	28	62	56
Gets on with ordinary people	15	45	35	44
Good with unions	39	14	8	6
Courage	81	8	21	18
Sense of humour	20	36	25	33
Wins confidence of industry	26	3	9	8
Good at reacting to change	31	8	26	20
Compassionate	19	18	20	22

NOP asked how they regarded the success or failure of the Government on a range of issues:-

Attitudes to Issues

(NOP asked whether the Government had done as well as they realistically hoped in a number of policy areas)

	<u>As Well</u>	<u>Disappointed</u>
Unemployment	21	76
Education Standards	24	68
Giving Incentives	41	50
Personal Taxes	44	49
Welfare State	49	45
Government Spending	51	37
Common Market	53	38
Law and Order	56	40
Pensions and Benefits	55	37
Britain's reputation	61	34
Trade Unions	72	18
Inflation	76	20

NOP asked the 982 last-time Tories if the Government should concentrate on keeping inflation down even if that meant continued high unemployment, or whether it should aim to reduce unemployment, even if that meant higher inflation.

The response was: Keep inflation down, 41%. Reduce unemployment, 51%.

NOP asked the Conservative supporters what their order of priorities would be. 30% said that they wanted spending cut significantly to make room for tax cuts. But they were outnumbered by the 44% who preferred the idea of minor cuts to keep taxes at their present level. And another 18% said they would like to keep spending at the presently proposed level even if that meant raising taxes a little.

NOP found that people are concerned with keeping up the standards of public services especially in health and education, even if that means saying goodbye to the prospect of tax cuts.

Interviewees who thought that voters could be attracted back to the Tory Party by lower inflation were outnumbered nearly 3-1 by those who believed that the vital factor would be a turn-around in the unemployment figures. And those who said that unemployment was the key issue outnumbered those looking for tax cuts by seven to one.