

Current Polls Predict Hung Parliament As Majority Of UK Remains Undecided And Disengaged

Contributed by TNS

Monday, 19 April 2010

Last Updated Monday, 19 April 2010

* The Tory lead over Labour has decreased, suggesting a hung parliament however if the swing from Labour to the Tories in marginal seats is greater than the national swing, this might lead to a narrow Conservative overall majority

* Overall turnout is estimated at 61%, one percent down from 2005. Labour voters from 2005 are expected to turn out at a slightly lower rate than Tory or LibDem voters from 2005 (82% compared to 89% and 87% respectively)

TNS-BMRB UK Voting Intention Poll results - 24/03/10 to 30/03/10:

Some more highlights from our findings:

* Many voters may yet change their mind. We find that less than half of all voters (49%) are "certain" about which party they will vote for. The remainder are "soft" voters, qualitatively different from the hardcore support but vital for any election win. The proportion of voters "certain" about their choice has not increased since last month despite an increase in "share" campaign activity.

* Tory voters are firmer in their convictions than likely Labour voters who are in turn firmer in their convictions than likely LibDem voters. 57% of likely Tory voters are certain about their choice. The equivalent figure for Labour is 48% and for the LibDems it is only 39%.

* However, the LibDems are the most likely beneficiaries of any last minute switches. Around a third of both Labour and Tory voters have the LibDems as second choice (36% and 33% respectively).

* Likely LibDem voters are more likely to select Labour (29%) than Tory (22%) as a second choice.

* One possible reflection of the burgeoning campaign is the declining proportion who report any second choice. More than four in ten Labour supporters (43%) and Tory supporters (45%) claim to have no second choice. This figure is slightly lower for the LibDems (31%) but is also climbing. We would expect this to filter through into a hardening of convictions over the next month, leading to an increase in the proportions "certain" of their choice.

* Using TNS-BMRB's - 2005 Retention Score to reflect the different parties' ability to hold on to their voters. Tory voters are likely to be the most "loyal": 84% will vote for them again. Both Labour (60%) and the LibDems (60%) have lower 2005 Retention Scores than the Tories.

* We can do the same with 1997 voters. Here the Labour loss is more pronounced. The Labour 1997 Retention Score is only 47%, well short of the Tories (79%) and the LibDems (67%). This Retention Score will be a key metric to follow for the Labour party. How much of the Tony Blair coalition can they keep together?

Michelle Harrison CEO of TNS-BMRB comments:

"Election campaigning is about to hit its peak and there is a large proportion of people still not sure how to vote. A key issue is the lack of differentiation between parties in the public's eyes. This, together with general political disengagement, is driving the high proportion of "soft" voters. In addition, our research shows that 81% of the public are further disengaged by personal attacks in political discourse, and this is even higher for women (85%). So, political engagement will not necessarily increase as we get closer to polling day."

Methodology:

TNS-BMRB interviewed a representative sample of 1,819 GB adults aged 18+ between 24/3/10 and 30/3/10. All interviews were conducted in respondents' homes, although the voting intention data was collected using self-completion methods.

The data is weighted twice, firstly to match population totals for age, sex, social grade, working status, presence of children, 2005 voting patterns and region, and secondly, for voting intention questions only, an additional 'likelihood-to-vote' weight has been applied.

About TNS-BMRB:

TNS-BMRB is a leading provider of specialist social research, offering insight into public policy to government and not-for-profit clients.

Delivering a range of approaches including bespoke proprietary research and consultancy, random probability survey capabilities, as well as social marketing and polling, TNS-BMRB is the largest commercial provider of social research and insight to Whitehall. TNS-BMRB is part of the TNS group.

About Kantar

For further information, please visit us at www.kantar.com

United Kingdom - 1st April 2010