

Lib Dems Gaining Most Traction Ahead Of TV Debates

Contributed by TNS
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* The very latest polls ahead of the TV debate tonight show a small surge for the LibDems at the expense of the Tories. If this continues up until polling day, it would suggest a hung parliament with no guarantee that the Conservatives would be the largest party.

* The LibDems are firming up their support. In TNS-BMRB's last poll, we found that only 39% of possible LibDem supporters are certain about their choice. This time it is 50%. The strength of support for the other two main parties remains fairly steady with Tory voters still the firmest in their convictions. 56% of likely Tory voters are certain about their choice. The equivalent figure for Labour is only 46%.

Some more highlights from our findings:

* More good news for the LibDems - they are increasingly more and more likely to be beneficiaries of any last minute switches. In TNS-BMRB's last poll, around one third of both Labour and Tory voters had the LibDems as second choice. This time it's well over 40% from both parties (Labour supporters: 43%; Tory supporters: 45%).

* Likely LibDem voters are more likely to select Labour (30%) than the Tories (19%) as a second choice.

* Overall turnout is estimated at 64%, three percent up from 2005. Labour voters are now more likely to come out and vote, 86% (up 4% from 2005) compared to 2005 Tory voters: 89% (no change) and 2005 LibDem voters: 88% (up 1%).

* We have developed a 2005 Retention Score to reflect the different parties' ability to hold on to their voters. Tory voters are likely to be the most 'loyal': 79% will vote for them again. Both Labour (67%) and the LibDems (61%) have lower 2005 Retention Scores than the Tories though they both have gained since the last poll at the end of March while the Tories have slipped slightly.

Michelle Harrison CEO of TNS-BMRB comments:

“The TV debates come at a time when there are still a lot of floating voters and non-voters. It will also be the first time a significant proportion of the population will have the chance to see the leaders debate the issues in a public forum. It will be interesting to see whether this helps to re-energise the public with politics and the election, and increase overall turnout.”

Methodology:

TNS-BMRB interviewed a representative sample of 1916 adults aged 18+ between 7/4/10 and 13/4/10. 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.

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