

# The Research Monitor

August 2009

[www.woodnewtonassociates.co.uk](http://www.woodnewtonassociates.co.uk)

## Welcome

The Research Monitor brings together the main polls and insights across economic, consumer, political and social research in the past month as well as comment on some key research issues.

This is a free service to our clients and friends. We also offer a more tailored service including in-depth analysis of what the latest research and the current state of opinion means for your organisation or campaign.

## We Love the NHS!

The Conservative MEP, Daniel Hannan's, criticism of the NHS seems to have unleashed a bout of patriotism in the UK, at least if we judge it by the media reporting of the massive "[twittering](#)" response. But relatively few people use twitter so is this really a good measure of public opinion, or is it more a reflection of how the media can hype up the impact of new technology?

Representative opinion polls, which capture the opinions of those offline and online, shows unequivocally the strong public support for the NHS. A poll by [Ipsos MORI for Unison](#), released this week, shows that more than three quarters of the British public (77%) believe that "the NHS is crucial to British society and we must do everything to maintain it" in comparison to thinking that "the NHS was a great project but we probably can't maintain it in its current form (22% of the public agree). Few institutions, in Britain at least, enjoy such widespread public support. Even support for the Monarchy trails that of the NHS, as this [trend data shows](#) (around seven in ten people wish Britain to remain as a Monarchy).

Indeed, [a survey conducted in 1999](#) found that the NHS was seen by far the most important achievement of the 20th century by the British public - more so than the establishment of the welfare state, winning the 2nd world war or even the introduction of universal suffrage. It would take a brave - or in David Cameron's words an "eccentric" British politician - to argue the NHS was a mistake and a relic of the past.

Yet despite the widespread support for the NHS now and the evident pride in its achievements over the past 60 years, almost half (47%) the [public do not think it will exist in 50 year's time](#). Two in five people (40%) also don't expect Britain to [have a Monarchy in 50 year's time](#)... if they are right the Britain of the 21st century could be very different from the last one....

## Latest Woodnewton News



Woodnewton Associates has been chosen by the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit to carry out stakeholder research. The NHPAU was set up in the wake of the Barker Review of housing supply and affordability in 2004 to provide independent advice on affordability matters to the Government, regional assemblies and other stakeholders with an interest in the housing market.

## We have a blog!

Follow us at our '[View from Staple Inn](#)'

## A Greek Tragedy Banning Pre Election Opinion Polls

As members of the World Association of Public Opinion Research ([WAPOR](#)) and as survey professionals who believe pre election opinion polls help keep politicians honest (...help...) and stops journalists just sticking their finger in the wind or relying on "a focus group of one person", we wholeheartedly agree with WAPOR's reaction to the Greek government's decision to ban the publication of election polls in the final 15 days of the election. Click [here](#) to read the press release.

## Politics

- 23/08/09 Conservatives gain ground on key policy areas**  
 The Guardian/ICM Research: The Guardian's monthly poll of voting intentions and other political issues shows that half the public (48%) think healthcare would be better under a Conservative government. Support for the Conservatives remains unchanged since last July's poll with support for the party at 41%. The Labour party are down two points (25%) and the Lib Dems finished on 19% (+1). Read more about the poll [here](#).
- 23/08/09 Abdelbaset Ali Mehmet al-Megrahi**  
 Angus Reid Global Monitor: Half the UK public (48%) agree that they would prefer keeping Megrahi in Greenock prison to serve out the remainder of his sentence. Three in ten (31%) believe he should have been transferred to a Libyan jail to serve the remainder of his sentence. Only 15% of the UK public believe he should have been released on compassionate grounds. Looking at Scotland specifically, though a higher proportion in Scotland than the rest of the UK agree that he should be released on compassionate grounds (22%), almost half (47%) of the Scottish public believe he should be still serving his sentence at Greenock prison. Read more [here](#).
- 20/08/09 Political opinion in August**  
 Independent on Sunday/ComRes: In a poll covering a range of issues, more people disagree (48%) than agree (37%) that the Conservatives have the right ideas about how to get Britain out of recession. Read more results [here](#).
- 14/08/09 Attitudes on the effectiveness and competence of Gordon Brown**  
 Sunday Times/YouGov: Twice as many people believe Gordon Brown is doing a bad job (70%) than say the same about David Cameron (35%). And with only one in five (20%) people expecting economic growth this year, more people trust Cameron / Osborne (33%) than Brown / Darling (22%) to raise their family's standard of living. Click [here](#) to view the full tables.
- 13/08/09 Public opinion on the Labour Party leadership**  
 The Sunday Mirror/ICM Research: David Miliband and Jack Straw are seen as the best possible alternatives to Gordon Brown as Labour leader, though really these questions are more a reflection of how well known the politicians are. Three times as many people would be "less likely" than "more likely" to vote Labour if Peter Mandelson was PM rather than Gordon Brown. Read more on this poll [here](#).
- 11/08/09 MPs' attitudes to healthcare in the UK**  
 BMI Healthcare/YouGov: Two thirds of Labour MPs (64%) think the NHS should receive guaranteed spending increases, in real terms, in the next Parliament. However, six in ten (62%) Conservative MPs believe it should not receive guaranteed spending increases. Eight in ten (82%) of Labour MPs believe that the current NHS model of care free at the point of delivery paid for by general taxation is sustainable for the next 60 years. Six in ten (62%) Conservative MPs believe it is not sustainable. Read more [here](#).
- 11/08/09 Public attitudes to the war in Afghanistan**  
 Sky News/YouGov: More than eight in ten people (82%) believes the British Government should be doing more to support British troops in Afghanistan, but almost three in five people (57%) say British troops should not be fighting there. Read more [here](#).

More than twice as many women in 2009 (30%) have tried real ale than in 2008 according to research by the Campaign for Real Ale.

[More](#)

Just 9% of the public would rate the weather as an excellent or good aspect of a British holiday.

[More](#)

## Consumer

- 18/08/09 Waitrose market growth in tough economic climate**  
 TNS Worldpanel: Waitrose sees a big increase in its grocery market share, up 10.2%, giving it a total market share of 3.9%, though Tesco still dominates in Britain with 31% share. Read more [here](#).
- 18/08/09 TV adverts likely to have the most impact on consumers**  
 Deloitte/YouGov: Almost two thirds (64%) of people say TV advertising has most impact on them - more than twice as many that say this about adverts in newspapers. Read the article [here](#).

Two thirds of the public (65%) agree that a 'High Pay Commission' should be set up to curb excessive pay and bonuses.

[More](#)

## Health: Swine Flu

- 11/08/09 Some positive side effects of Swine Flu**  
 TNS: Half the public (49%) are eating more fruit and vegetables in an effort to ward off Swine Flu. Read about how the public are trying to become healthier to fight off the virus [here](#).

## Health: Swine Flu

### 27/07/09 Public attitudes to Tamiflu

BBC News/ComRes: Half the public (49%) wrongly thinks that Tamiflu can protect them against infection from swine flu. By the end of last month, more than two in five people (43%) knew someone personally who had caught swine flu. Find out more about this [poll](#).

People in East Anglia are twice as likely as the average person to trust their instincts on what tomorrow's weather will be like - and more trust their own instincts than national news sources.

[More](#)

## Society

### 18/08/09 Economy is the most important issue facing Britain

Ipsos MORI: This monthly poll asks the public what is the most important issue facing Britain and what are the other important issues. The combination between the most/other important issues shows that the economy (54%) is top of the public's concerns. Crime (32%) and unemployment (30%) are second and third on the list. Ipsos MORI have produced an analysis on the correlation between the levels of unemployment and public concern on the issue of unemployment. To find out more, please click [here](#).

### 17/08/09 London top of the UK city list

YouGov: London is the most desirable city in the UK to live and work in, but York and Edinburgh follow closely behind. This is based on a new "Place Survey" conducted by YouGov, which has asked its panel to rate British cities based on 11 factors, including the cultural experience, safety and whether people would recommend others to live there. Read more [here](#).

### 03/08/09 Attitudes towards the rights of disabled people

Department for Work and Pension/NatCen: High quality research depends not only on interviewing a properly representative sample, but also on asking the right questions. Questionnaire design can be one of the most difficult aspects for survey researchers. Poor questions can bias responses. One of the techniques used, especially when examining relatively new topics or complex issues, is cognitive interviewing. New research for DWP on attitudes to the rights of disabled people shows how this technique can be used to inform major research programmes. Read the report [here](#).

Men spend almost a year of their lives looking at women.

[More](#)

### 03/08/09 A nation of gardeners

Ipsos MORI: This research looked at the public's attitude to gardens. More than half the public (53%) believe Britain is a nation of gardeners, and seven in ten (71%) that spending time in the garden is important for their quality of life. Read the report [here](#).

## International

### 20/08/09 OECD member attitudes to healthcare in their country

Gallup: Healthcare reforms in the United States have been one of the most talked about issues of the month. Gallup has analysed surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007 on satisfaction with healthcare systems within OECD member countries. It shows that adults in OECD countries with universal health coverage are more satisfied with the availability of healthcare locally than those in countries which don't have universal care (79% vs. 66%). Adults in countries with universal health coverage are also more confident in their national healthcare system than those without universal coverage (73% vs. 60%). A high proportion of adults in the UK (85%) are satisfied with the availability of quality healthcare in their local area with three quarters (73%) saying they have confidence in the national healthcare system. Click [here](#) to read the article.

Half the UK public thinks newspapers are too negative in their coverage of the EU.

[More](#)

### August European attitudes to the rights of the child

Eurobarometer: The Rights of the Child and how they are protected are covered in this study of attitudes of 15 - 18 year olds across Europe. The survey was designed to provide both country by country analysis and changes in attitudes over time. In the UK, 71% of these young people say they are aware that people under the age of 18 have specific rights that adults do not. This is higher than the EU27 average (65%). Read the report [here](#).

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