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The Research Monitor brings together published surveys and other research and insights on consumer affairs, the economy, the media, politics and society from the past month, plus our commentary on some key research issues.

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

Trouble for all the parties?

Since the turn of the year, Labour has managed to build up a solid lead in the voting intentions polls. The average of the [“poll of polls”](#) in January showed Labour on 42% and the Conservatives on 37% - a five point lead for the Opposition. February’s “poll of polls” shows a similar pattern with Labour on 43% and the Conservatives on 36%. However, it is the Liberal Democrats that have taken the brunt of the public’s displeasure - their 11% share of the vote on average in February 2011 represents less than half their support at the general election last year.

The start of 2011 also saw a significant shift in the public’s attitude towards the prospects of the economy. Ipsos MORI’s long established [Economic Optimism Index](#) in February 2011 stood at -37. The lowest score since February 2009 and much worse than a year before in February 2010 (-6). It is no wonder that [YouGov recently found](#) this month that 82% of the public say “the economy” is the most important issue facing the nation – higher than the 75% who said the same in January.

Yet despite Labour’s relatively strong performance in the voting intentions polls and the country’s increasing concern about the economy, Labour’s leader may well be worried by the finding that since October the proportion of the public dissatisfied with the way he is doing his job has doubled ([from 22% to 43%](#)) and those satisfied have decreased from 41% to 34%.

Business and the Economy

13/02/2011 Public more opposed to spending cuts now than in 2010

ComRes/Independent on Sunday/Sunday Mirror: More people now say the cuts are “too severe and too fast” (57%) than was the case in November last year (51%), and far fewer people now (25%, down from 32% in November) believe the Government’s plan for managing the cuts is fair. [More](#)

13/02/2011 Local councils and central government equally to blame for service cuts

YouGov/The Sunday Times: Although half the public (48%) think that, given the government’s deficit, cuts to council services are necessary, 43% believe that councils are exaggerating the impact of the reduction in funding and that cuts need not be so severe. Many people are sceptical of the reasons for the cuts, with 42% agreeing “local councils run by opposition parties are deliberately cutting frontline services for party political reasons”. [More](#)

11/02/2011 No improvement in financial situation over past 3 months

ComRes/ITV News: Nine in ten of those who work, are looking for work, or are in education (89%) say they have had no improvement in their personal financial situation in the last three months. Over four in ten men (43%) and more than half of women (53%) say they are now “more worried” about their personal financial situation than they were three months ago. [More](#)

Nine in ten (87%) think that within 40 years most people will have to work into their 70s before being able to retire. [More](#)



18/02/2011 Privatisation of parts of NHS supported by majority of MPs

ComRes/Westminster Advisors: Half of MPs (48%) agree that as long as services remain funded by taxpayers and are free at the point of use, the NHS should outsource more of its work to the private sector. Six in ten (58%) think GPs should be able to turn to the private sector for administrative help with their new responsibilities in commissioning. [More](#)

18/02/2011 Public attitudes towards HIV

Ipsos MORI/National Aids Trust: Eight in ten adults (80%) are aware that HIV can be transmitted through unprotected sex, but less than half (45%) know that sharing needles or syringes can put people at risk of contracting the virus. Three in ten (30%) "don't have much sympathy" for people with HIV if they were infected through unprotected sex, and almost half (46%) "don't have much sympathy" for those who were infected through injecting drugs. Only seven percent personally know someone who has HIV. [More](#)

18/02/2011 NHS care of the elderly

YouGov/The Sunday Times: Six in ten Britons (58%) think elderly people are cared for badly by the NHS, and about the same number (61%) say they have little or no confidence they will be treated well by the NHS when they themselves are elderly. Despite this, of those with an elderly family member who has received NHS treatment, more people are satisfied (51%) than not satisfied (42%) with the quality of their care. [More](#)

Just three in ten (29%) believe the Coalition government is in control of the UK economy. [More](#)

Media and Technology

16/02/2011 Majority want Simon Cowell to stay on X Factor

YouGov/The Sun: Approaching half the public (45%) watched the last series of the X Factor. It has been reported that Simon Cowell may resign from the judging panel to present the American version of the show, but three quarters of viewers (76%) believe the next series would be worse without Cowell as a judge. [More](#)

46% of Britons have slept less over the last 2 years because they have felt more stressed. [More](#)

Politics

25/02/2011 Ipsos MORI political monitor shows boost in support for Labour party

Ipsos MORI: The Labour party currently leads in voter intention polling, with four in ten (41%) saying they would support Labour in a General Election tomorrow compared with 34% for the Conservative party and 14% for the Liberal Democrats. [More](#)

16/02/2011 SNP and Labour neck and neck in lead up to Holyrood election

Ipsos MORI/The Times: Of those "certain to vote" if elections were held in the Scottish Parliament tomorrow, the Scottish National Party would lead with 37%. Almost the same number (36%) would vote for Labour. [More](#)

15/02/2011 Public even less clear now what "Big Society" means than a month ago

YouGov/The Sun: Although the idea behind the Conservative Party's "Big Society" plan is generally approved of by the public (49% say it is "a good idea"), seven in ten (71%) believe it "will probably not work" when put into practice. More people now say they do not understand what is meant by the "Big Society" plan than just a month ago, with 72% saying they understand "not very well" or "not at all", compared with 63% in January 2011. [More](#)

14/02/2011 Too close to call on London mayor election indicator

YouGov: This poll suggests that, if there were an election tomorrow for Mayor of London, Londoners' votes would be evenly split between the two main candidates, with 43% selecting Boris Johnson as their number one choice, and 45% opting for Ken Livingstone. If forced to choose between only these two candidates, however, Boris comes out with a slight advantage (45% vs 42%). [More](#)

10/02/2011 "Majority Labour government" favourite among Britons

YouGov/The Sun: Although David Cameron still leads on the question of which party leader would make the best Prime Minister (35%, compared with 24% for Ed Miliband and just six percent for Nick Clegg), the government the public would consider the best option for Britain is "a majority Labour government" (31%). "A majority Conservative government" receives the lower score of 28%, and "a coalition between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats" is favoured by only 12% of adults. [More](#)

36% say that Nick Clegg's support for the "Yes" campaign would make them less likely to vote in the AV referendum in May. [More](#)



- 24/02/2011 High levels of satisfaction with local policing, concern about cuts**
 Ipsos MORI/Police Federation: Six in ten (59%) are pleased with the quality of service provided to them by police in their local area and 86% would be worried (including 44% who would be "very worried") if the police stopped providing their full range of services on account of budget cuts. [More](#)
- 22/02/2011 Big Society put into practice – charity work and community involvement**
 Populus/The Times: Seven in ten (68%) gave time last year to help others through charity work or community projects, and about the same number (67%) intend to do the same over the next 12 months. Although 78% believe that "Britons could and should do more to help out those less fortunate than themselves", two thirds (65%) think David Cameron's "Big Society" is just an attempt to put a positive spin on the damage caused to local services by government spending cuts. [More](#)
- 22/02/2011 Jamie Oliver and Britain's "lazy" youth**
 YouGov: Two thirds (65%) agree with Jamie Oliver's comments that he has "never experienced such a wet generation" as the 16-20 year olds he has just employed. Six in ten (62%) believe most young people in Britain are not willing to work hard, and the same number (60%) say most young people are not willing to show initiative and look for work. [More](#)
- 22/02/2011 Public wants to keep sex offenders registered**
 YouGov: Seven in ten of the public (69%) disagree with the Supreme Court's decision to remove those convicted of sexual offences from the sex offenders register if they can show they are no longer a danger to the public. Currently, those who have received prison sentences of more than 30 months are placed on the register for life. [More](#)
- 15/02/2011 Britons divided on tax cuts for married couples**
 YouGov: Although half the public (53%) believe that marriage is the best environment in which to bring up children and that it is right for the government to support married couples through the tax and benefit system, four in ten (38%) believe support of this kind constitutes discrimination against unmarried people or single parent families. [More](#)
- 14/02/2011 Adoption issues**
 YouGov: Assuming they are well qualified in all other ways, the groups fewest people think should be allowed to adopt children are "people over the age of 60" (16%) and "smokers" (44%). Couples from a different racial background to the child being adopted are considered suitable candidates by three quarters (77%) of the public, and those belonging to a different religion are also supported by a majority of Britons (65%). Only half the public (53%) believe gay and lesbian couples should be allowed to adopt a child. [More](#)
- 11/02/2011 Half the public would oppose same-sex marriage**
 YouGov: While four in ten (42%) say they would support a move to allow same-sex couples to marry, half (49%) would oppose the change, including 21% who also oppose civil partnerships for gay and lesbian couples. [More](#)
- 10/02/2011 More than half would have cosmetic surgery if they could**
 YouGov: If they had enough money and could be assured the procedure was safe, more than half the public (54%) say they would like to have cosmetic surgery. The most popular procedures are cosmetic dentistry (33%), liposuction (19%), tummy tuck (18%), face lift (10%) and eyelid lift surgery (9%). [More](#)
- 09/02/2011 Action for Children community poll**
 ComRes/Action for Children: More than three quarters of those who are concerned about children in their local community (77%) either don't know how to help or don't have the time. The group most likely to be interested in helping children in their local area are 18 to 24 year olds (70%). Seven in ten (68%) revealed they do not feel at all involved in their local community. [More](#)
- 01/02/2011 More people attracted by apprenticeships since tuition fees rise**
 ICM Research/Judge and Howard: Two thirds of the public (66%) say the recent debates about the rising cost of university-level education has made them change their views about work-based training opportunities such as apprenticeships. Of these, 54% say they now think more positively about apprenticeships as a solid career choice for young people and 46% are now more likely to consider doing an apprenticeship themselves or recommending it to their child. [More](#)

Six in ten (59%) think the government is doing a bad job of reforming Britain's political system. [More](#)

The team football fans think is most likely to win this season's Champion's League is Barcelona (41%). [More](#)

Half the public (51%) think local councils should protect library funding by "making cuts elsewhere". [More](#)



01/02/2011 Little support for giving prisoners the vote
ComRes/EU Referendum Campaign: Despite a ruling from the European Court of Human Rights in October 2005 which stated that a ban on allowing prisoners to vote was illegal, three quarters of the public (76%) still believe it is right to prevent prisoners from voting in parliamentary elections. [More](#)

International

28/02/2011 Little support for UK government's reaction to Libya crisis
YouGov: Just two in ten (20%) feel the government has responded well to the current situation in Libya. Six in ten (62%) think David Cameron's recent visit to the region to promote the sale of arms from British companies was wrong, saying we should not be promoting arms sales in an unstable region where regimes cannot be trusted not to use them against civilians. [More](#)

08/02/2011 PR for disaster relief
ComRes/Plan International: The medium through which most people have seen or heard coverage of humanitarian disasters overseas is television (92%), followed by newspapers (67%) and radio (48%). More than a third (36%) have donated money to charity as a result of media coverage and three in ten (29%) have discussed the issue with friends and family. The disaster most people recall seeing or hearing about in the last 12 months is the Haiti earthquake (90%). [More](#)

01/02/2011 Majority worry that Middle East protests will lead to rise in Islamic extremism
ComRes: Six in ten Britons are worried that recent events in the Middle East will result in wider support for radical Islam (59%) and the same number fear the protests will lead to higher oil prices (61%). Only 14% say these events make them more optimistic about the future for the Middle East. [More](#)

Feb 2011 European awareness of rare diseases
Special Eurobarometer: When asked about a number of rare diseases, 65% of EU citizens said they had heard of cystic fibrosis (90% of UK citizens), 60% had heard of haemophilia (81% UK) and 31% had heard of Huntington's disease (82% UK). [More](#)

Three in ten Britons (30%) Britons have had a romantic relationship with a work colleague.

[More](#)

87% want to see "national debate about the pros and cons of being in the EU so that the public are better informed". [More](#)

