

Audit of Political Engagement 13

The 2016 Report

Acknowledgements

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FOREWORD

Parliament knows it has a reputational problem with the public, which is why it is so important to understand the public's attitudes, to reach out, and through action to turn cynicism (whether legitimate or not) into healthy engagement. That's why the House of Commons has again sponsored the Hansard Society's Audit of Political Engagement – and with the release of the 13th in a series of studies back to 2004 we can understand how things are changing – or not.

So this year, we are delighted with some very positive shifts. For the first time ever, net knowledge of Parliament is positive: just over half (52%) now claim to know at least a 'fair amount'. We have the highest ever percentage (73%) agreeing that 'Parliament is essential to our democracy', and similarly, the highest figure recorded (58%) agreeing that Parliament 'debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me'. And while we may or may not see this translate to reality, a notable finding is that the percentage of 18-24 year olds saying they would be certain to vote in a general election is up from 16% to 39% in a year.

As a research professional, I am always mindful of the uncertainties in survey data, and we will wait to see whether these figures are confirmed in future years. Even so, this year, some important measures have moved in the right direction.

Equally, some stubborn social differences remain, particularly between the better off and the less well off, (as measured imperfectly by social grade), and between white and black and minority ethnic (BME) participants in the study, and between London and the areas further away from the UK's capital.

So how is Parliament responding to the findings? It is worth highlighting how Parliament is changing. The 2015 intake of MPs, while still not representative of the British public, is the most diverse ever. (For example, the percentage of women MPs rose from 22% to 29% from 2010 to

2015 and the percentage of BME MPs from 4% to 6%). The Petitions Committee is proving tremendously successful and 12.36 million people have already signed e-petitions at the time of writing. It has been described as the 'new public front door of Parliament'. The Commons has held its first digital debates. We launched a dedicated Education Centre in July 2015. And the two Houses' Libraries continue to act without fear or favour in publishing information that digs beneath the headlines in ways that can sometimes be uncomfortable for the government of the day.

In 2016 our outreach teams are focusing particularly hard on work on building links with BME communities and their advocates, emphasising that Parliament is 'your Parliament' – whoever you are. We also continue to work hard to bring to life the working life of an MP and peer: the tired meme of an empty chamber gives lie to the wide range of work that representatives do, whether in select committees, party work, campaigning work, or work on behalf of individual constituents facing difficulties.

2016 will be a distinctively fascinating year: we are one year into the new Parliament; a government with a slim majority in the Commons and no majority in the Lords; the EU referendum; elections in the devolved nations; the growth of the Scottish National Party and changes in leadership to Labour and the Liberal Democrats. A changing context for the way we support the engagement and mutual understanding between citizens and parliamentarians, and a reminder from this year's Audit that while things can change for the better, we must continue to have the public at the heart of everything we do in support of a thriving parliamentary democracy.

Penny Young
Director General, Information
Services, and Librarian, House of
Commons



KEY FINDINGS

THE ELECTION EFFECT



Interest in and knowledge of politics has risen by eight percentage points from last year. The number claiming to be a strong supporter of a political party has risen by 11 points to 41%, the highest level recorded in the Audit series. And 59% say they are now certain to vote (scoring 10 out of 10) in the event of an election, 10 points higher than last year. Certainty to vote and support for a political party have increased generally, especially amongst younger groups (18-34s). But the rise is particularly marked among the youngest 18-24 age group where 38% now say they are a strong supporter of a political party compared to 13% last year, and 39% say they would be certain to vote whereas just 16% said the same 12 months ago. Nonetheless, younger people generally remain much less engaged than older, more affluent groups. Previous post-election increases in engagement recorded in Audits 3 and 8 have quickly subsided in the non-election years that followed. It remains to be seen whether these improvements will therefore be sustained.

EU REFERENDUM



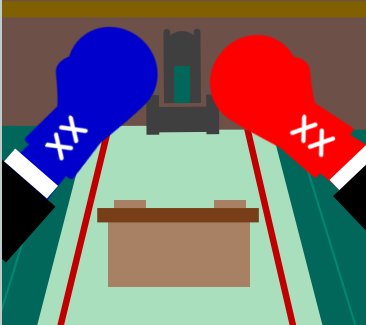
As the country faces one of the biggest political decisions in decades, 63% of the public say they are interested in issues to do with the European Union. But just 38% feel knowledgeable about the EU - although this is considerably higher than the 24% who said the same at the start of the Audit series 13 years ago. 69% think that the system of governing the EU needs 'a lot' or 'a great deal' of improvement. 75% agree that important questions should be determined by referendums more often than today. 59% say they are 'certain' to vote in the referendum (scoring 10 out of 10) and a further 19% are 'likely' to vote (scoring 6-9). Those who say they are 'certain' to vote are more likely to think that the way the EU is governed needs a great deal of improvement than those who are not certain to. In order to vote citizens have to be on the electoral register, but 10% of the public think they are not registered.

PERCEPTIONS OF PARLIAMENT



For the first time in the Audit series, a majority of people (52%) claim to be knowledgeable about the UK Parliament. And 73% agree that it is 'essential to our democracy' – up 12 points in a year. However, only 32% are satisfied with how Parliament works and just 29% are satisfied with how MPs generally do their job, although 35% are content with how their own local MP does their job. 58% think that Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to them, an increase of 10 points from last year, but only 42% think it holds the government to account, although this is a seven point increase on last year. And just 28% agree that Parliament encourages public involvement in politics. Contacting an MP or Peer and signing an e-petition are by some distance the most popular ways the public would engage with Parliament in the future if they felt strongly about an issue.

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS (PMQs)



Public perceptions remain overwhelmingly negative and when PMQs does appeal to citizens it does so at a rational rather than an emotional level. 38% agree that it is informative and 45% that it deals with important issues, but just 22% think it is exciting to watch and only 17% say it makes them proud of Parliament. 69% say there is too much party political point scoring, 50% consider it too noisy and aggressive, and just 18% believe MPs behave professionally. A third of people (32%) say it puts them off politics. However, those who have seen PMQs in full are less likely to say it puts them off politics (28%) than those who have seen it only in edited clip form (35%). More people now feel that important issues facing the country are being dealt with than two years ago. It is not possible to directly attribute this to Jeremy Corbyn's new 'People's Question Time' approach and in general people continue to be as negatively disposed to the culture and performance of PMQs as two years ago.

DISSATISFACTION & DISEMPOWERMENT



Only a third of the public think the system by which Britain is governed works well (33%) with those living furthest from Westminster most likely to be dissatisfied. Just 35% believe that when people like themselves get involved in politics they can change the way the country is run. Only 13% feel they have some influence over decision-making nationally although 41% would like to be involved in decision-making. More people (46%) would like to be involved in local decisions but just 25% currently feel they have some influence at the local level. With a few exceptions, the proportion of people that report having undertaken some form of political activity to influence decisions, laws or policies in the last 12 months has remained broadly stable. For those who would be willing to undertake an action in the future, the most popular activities are the most direct: vote in an election, contact an elected representative, and sign a petition.

INEQUALITIES IN ENGAGEMENT



Generally, the most politically engaged in the Audit series tend to be male, older, white, higher educated, affluent, home-owning citizens. The social class gap in electoral participation continues to rise: there is now a 37 percentage point difference between the certainty to vote levels of those in social classes AB and DE, an increase of six points in 12 months. However, the gap between the social classes tends to be much smaller in relation to questions about satisfaction with politics and institutions. Younger people (aged 18-24) are also more likely to be satisfied with the politics and institutions of our political system, and have a greater sense of their own potential to influence it than are other more generally engaged groups. This is also true of BME adults, although they are much less likely to say they have actually undertaken some form of political action than white adults in the last year.

2015: YEAR IN REVIEW



JANUARY

A series of terrorist attacks on the office of satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo, and a kosher supermarket in Paris, left 17 dead and 16 wounded.

Increases in energy bills at a time when wholesale energy prices were falling were widely condemned and commuters protested the 'daylight robbery' of the annual increase in rail fares.

Vowing to end the pain of austerity and the resulting humanitarian crisis, the radical left-wing Syriza party, led by Alex Tsipras, won the Greek general election.

Tributes in Parliament marked the 50th anniversary of the death of former Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and remembrance ceremonies were held to mark the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

FEBRUARY

Senior MPs, Sir Malcolm Rifkind and Jack Straw, became embroiled in a 'cash for access' scandal when they were filmed by Channel 4's Dispatches programme appearing to offer their services in exchange for money. They were later cleared by the House of Commons Standards Committee.

The government extended plans for 24-hour services on the London underground.

Denmark endured its first terrorist incident in decades when gunmen opened fire on a café and outside the Great Synagogue in Copenhagen, leaving one dead and six injured. Russian opposition leader, Boris Nemtsov, was shot dead in Moscow while in Nigeria the Electoral Commission postponed the general election for six weeks because the military could not guarantee security.

MARCH

David Cameron and Ed Miliband were questioned by a studio audience in the first set piece TV event of the election. 2.6 million people tuned in.

The pre-election budget introduced changes to take more people out of tax and a new 'Help to Buy' Individual Savings Account to help tackle the housing crisis.

The remains of King Richard III were interred in Leicester Cathedral three years after being found in a car park.

BBC Top Gear presenter, Jeremy Clarkson, was suspended following a 'fracas' with a producer.

A Germanwings plane crashed in the French Alps, killing all 150 passengers on board. In Tunis, a terrorist attack at the Bardo national museum left 20 people dead.

APRIL

The leaders of seven of Britain's political parties went head-to-head in a showpiece two-hour TV debate. The opposition parties subsequently held a further debate that ended with a 'group-hug' by the women leaders.

Thieves drilled through the walls of a Hatton Garden safe deposit facility and stole over £200 million in one of the biggest burglaries in British history.

Over 8,000 people were killed in an earthquake in Nepal. Former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi, was imprisoned, along with other members of the Muslim Brotherhood, for allegedly inciting the killing of protestors.

In the USA, former First Lady Hillary Clinton announced that she would run once again for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

MAY

The Conservative Party unexpectedly won the election with a small majority. The Liberal Democrats were reduced to a rump of just eight seats. The Scottish National Party wiped out Labour, winning 56 of 59 seats in Scotland. Many leading Labour figures – including shadow chancellor, Ed Balls and shadow foreign secretary, Douglas Alexander – lost their seats.

Ed Miliband, Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage all resigned as leader of their parties, although Farage was later reinstated.

An inquiry was announced into why the polling companies called the electoral 'horse race' as a dead heat.

Across the UK, commemorations marked the 70th anniversary of VE Day.

JUNE

The UK marked the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta at Runnymede, and the 750th anniversary of the de Montfort Parliament, the early forerunner of our modern parliamentary system.

Former Liberal Democrat leader, Charles Kennedy, died suddenly at his home aged 55.

Four people were seriously hurt when two carriages of the 'Smiler' ride at Alton Towers crashed into one another.

British tourists were among thirty-eight people killed when a gunman opened fire on a beach resort near the Tunisian town of Sousse.

Germany hosted the 41st G7 Summit – sanctions against Russia for its role in supporting Ukrainian rebels, Greece's on-going problems in the Eurozone, and the fight against terrorism dominated the agenda.

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|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| JULY | AUGUST | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER |
| <p>Lord Sewel resigned as deputy speaker of the House of Lords after being filmed taking drugs in his London flat with two prostitutes. He later retired from the House.</p> <p>The budget introduced a new national 'living wage' and froze working age benefits.</p> <p>Tim Farron was elected leader of the Liberal Democrats.</p> <p>The government withdrew proposals to amend the Hunting Act when the SNP made clear they would not support them.</p> <p>Greece missed a deadline to repay £1.1 billion, becoming the first developed economy to default on an IMF loan. The government subsequently announced a referendum on the bailout.</p> <p>Iran agreed to limits on its nuclear activity in return for the lifting of economic sanctions.</p> | <p>Critics accused the government of short-changing the taxpayer by selling off shares in Royal Bank of Scotland too cheaply.</p> <p>Leading charity, Kids Company, went into liquidation following months of allegations of financial mismanagement including misuse of government grants.</p> <p>Eleven people were killed when a Hawker Hunter jet crashed at the Shoreham Airshow.</p> <p>The Greek Prime Minister resigned to force a snap general election following his country's third bailout.</p> <p>A terror attack on a train bound for Paris was foiled by four passengers, including one Briton, who overpowered a man carrying a rifle and a knife.</p> <p>Around the world ceremonies marked the 70th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan.</p> | <p>Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour Party leader. In an early reform he crowdsourced ideas for Prime Minister's Questions.</p> <p>The new House of Commons Petitions Committee scheduled its first e-petition debates on the NHS and cannabis legalisation.</p> <p>Alan Kurdi, a three-year old Syrian refugee, drowned off the Greek coast, driving home the enormity of the refugee crisis engulfing Europe.</p> <p>Queen Elizabeth II became the longest reigning monarch in British history.</p> <p>The government confirmed targeted drone attacks to kill British citizens linked to ISIS in Syria as an act of self-defence to protect the country against terrorism.</p> | <p>The House of Lords took the rare step of rejecting a Statutory Instrument to delay the government's tax credit proposals. Peers were accused of exceeding their constitutional authority and the government responded by setting up an inquiry into their powers.</p> <p>MPs approved changes to House of Commons procedures to facilitate the introduction of 'English Votes for English Laws'.</p> <p>Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to the UK during which the Queen praised the 'global partnership' between the two countries.</p> <p>The Liberal Party returned to power in Canada under the youthful leadership of Justin Trudeau.</p> <p>A bomb brought down a Metrojet airliner over Egypt's Sinai desert killing all passengers on board.</p> | <p>Co-ordinated terrorist attacks in Paris, including at a concert hall and the Stade de France, left 130 dead and hundreds wounded. Brussels was subsequently shut down for several days as police hunted the perpetrators.</p> <p>David Cameron wrote to European Council President, Donald Tusk, setting out his four key areas for reform of the European Union.</p> <p>The government confirmed it was scrapping the planned cuts to tax credits in its joint Autumn Statement and Spending Review.</p> <p>Grant Shapps resigned following accusations that he failed to tackle bullying whilst co-chairman of the Conservative Party.</p> <p>Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy secured a landslide victory in Burma's general election.</p> | <p>MPs voted to authorise the extension of military action against ISIS to Syria. Labour MPs were given a free vote, with Shadow Foreign Secretary, Hilary Benn, opposing his own leader's stance.</p> <p>The EU Referendum Act paved the way for a future referendum on Britain's membership of the EU.</p> <p>Labour won the Oldham West and Royton by-election.</p> <p>Extensive flooding in the north of England saw hundreds of families evacuated over the Christmas period.</p> <p>An e-petition is launched calling for businessman and Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, to be blocked from entering the UK following his call for a 'total and complete shutdown' of US borders to bar Muslims from entering the country.</p> |

INTRODUCTION

The Audit of Political Engagement is a time-series study providing an annual benchmark to measure political engagement in Great Britain, gauging public opinion about politics and the political system, and more broadly the general health of our democracy.

Each Audit report presents the findings from a public opinion poll survey, providing detailed commentary on a range of measures that have been chosen as key measures of political engagement. Repeating questions in successive years enables us to chronicle the public's responses year on year and track the direction and magnitude of change since the Audit was first published in 2004, building trend data on public attitudes to key aspects of our democracy.

This 13th Audit report is based on an opinion poll conducted by Ipsos MORI between 11 and 29 December 2015 with a representative quota sample of adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. Booster samples were included to make comparisons between England, Scotland and Wales, and between the white and BME populations, more statistically reliable. The data was then weighted to match the national population profile.

The study provides not a prediction but a snapshot of public perceptions of, and engagement with, politics at a particular moment in time. Its findings go beyond the normal vicissitudes of the political and electoral cycle, offering greater depth and insight into public attitudes to politics than can be found in one-off polls and instant responses to events and news headlines.

Our democratic system requires public support and participation so it is important that any discussion about the state of politics and the institutions and culture of our political system reflects not just what our political leaders think but also the views of the wider public. Previous Audit reports have served to puncture widely held myths and sweeping

generalisations about politics and Parliament, but raised awkward questions about how to achieve democratic renewal and restore confidence in representative democracy. The study presents an often mixed, sometimes contradictory picture, reflecting the complexity and nuance inherent in public attitudes towards a subject whose importance citizens recognise but towards which they are often lukewarm and ambivalent. This year's report is no exception, presenting the usual rich but complicated mix of results.

Building blocks of engagement

In the Audit we look at core, inter-locking areas that we know are vital facets, or 'building blocks' of political engagement. Given its multi-dimensional nature, the indicators we have chosen are not exhaustive. But in capturing aspects of public behaviour, knowledge, opinions, attitudes and values towards politics they help us understand the drivers of political engagement and the relationships between them. Across the Audit series a number of 'core' indicator questions have been asked each year, as illustrated in Figure 1, supplemented by a range of thematic and topical



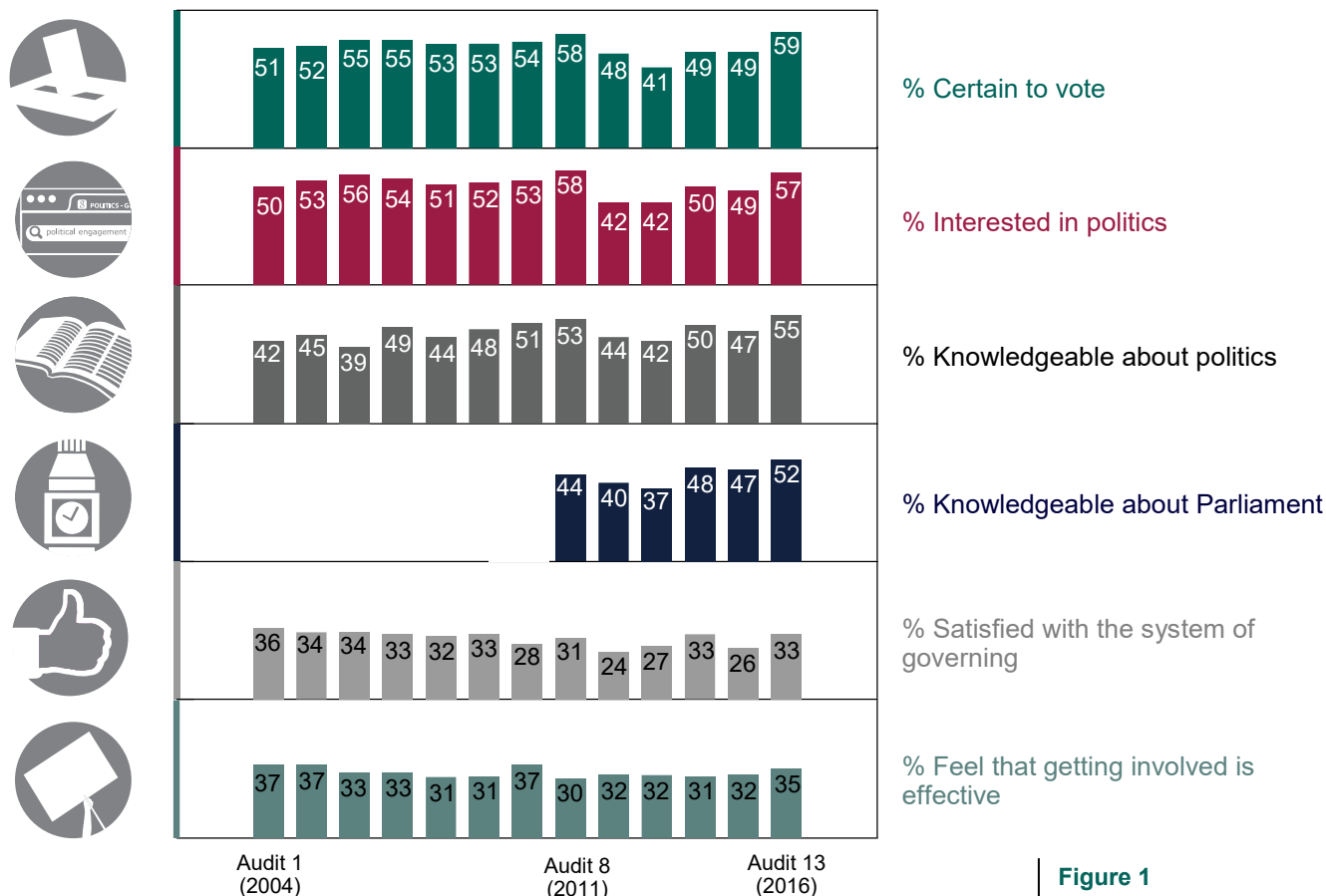


Figure 1
Core engagement indicators

questions, some of which are re-visited on two or three year cycles

Levels of public knowledge and interest are explored because they are known to be important factors in engagement given the strong correlation between familiarity and favourability. The more people know about an institution, service or process the more positive they tend to be towards it and the more willing they may be to participate and get involved.

Political engagement can be measured in terms of what people think, but also in terms of what they do. We therefore look at levels of public action and participation in the political process, capturing both formal and informal forms of engagement that require varying levels of time and commitment. The Audit study was initiated in response to the drop in turnout at the 2001 general election, so tracking the

public's propensity to vote has always been a key aspect of the study. But while public participation is the lifeblood of representative democracy, politics is about more than casting a vote once a year so the study also looks at a repertoire of other activities through which people can express their views between elections and without relying on political parties or MPs. And we look not just at what people claim to have done in the last year but what activities they say they would be willing to do in the future if they felt strongly enough about an issue, enabling us to chart the gap between actual and potential engagement.

Building on the familiarity indicators, we look at the public's favourability towards aspects of the political system through a series of questions in relation to their sense of efficacy and satisfaction. We explore public satisfaction with the way our system of governing Britain works and the extent to which

INTRODUCTION

people believe their involvement in politics would be worthwhile in bringing about change in the way the country is run.

Engagement operates at a number of different levels. We therefore track the public's appetite for both local and national involvement in decision-making, and, as a further facet of their sense of political efficacy and satisfaction, the extent to which they feel they have any influence over decision-making at each level.

We also focus on public perceptions of Parliament as the core institution of our democracy. We look at the public's knowledge of Parliament, their perception of its importance and relevance, its effectiveness in performing its accountability function, and in engaging with and addressing the issues that matter to them. And in this year's report we revisit attitudes to Parliament's shop window, Prime Minister's Questions.

The relationship between elected representatives and citizens is at the heart of our system of representative democracy. Power is vested in citizens who turn out on election day to choose who will represent them in Parliament as their MPs and they retain the right, next time round, to 'kick the rascals out' if they are dissatisfied with them. Periodically in the Audit series we therefore revisit questions about public attitudes to MPs, particularly focusing on public satisfaction with MPs in terms of how they do their job as one measure of how well the public think they fulfil their representative function.

In our democratic system, political parties are the link in the chain between citizens and representatives. There has long been concern that they are no longer representative of the wider public and therefore cannot mobilise mass participation in the political process, leading to a widening of the gap between citizens and the political elite. We therefore look regularly at the extent to which political parties command public

support and among which groups of the public in particular.

The Audit results generally dispel the notion that the public are apathetic about politics. However, citizens are generally disenchanted with the workings of the political system and have a low sense of satisfaction with it, as illustrated in Figure 1. But low levels of satisfaction with the culture and practice of politics don't seem to undermine the public's faith in democracy overall. Nonetheless, politics remains a minority interest and most people are bystanders rather than active participants in formal political processes. And yet there is a latent desire among a significant proportion of the public to be involved in decision-making that remains untapped, particularly at the local level.

One of the clearest findings across the Audit series is the extent to which political engagement is undermined by persistent inequality. There are important, often substantial differences between the engagement levels of those in the highest and lowest socio-economic groups, between the youngest and oldest, and white and BME citizens across many indicators, including knowledge and interest, action and participation, and desire for involvement in politics. But in two areas – satisfaction with the system of governing, and the perceived efficacy of their own involvement – the public tend to possess a common view, regardless of social, economic, educational or ethnic background. This remains true this year – as Figure 2 shows – reinforcing once again the extent to which the public feel disenchanted and disempowered, despite an otherwise more positive picture of engagement, particularly among the youngest and oldest citizens, across a range of indicators.

Guide to the results

Readers should note a few things at the outset regarding how information is set out in this report. In a few instances, some graphs and tables may

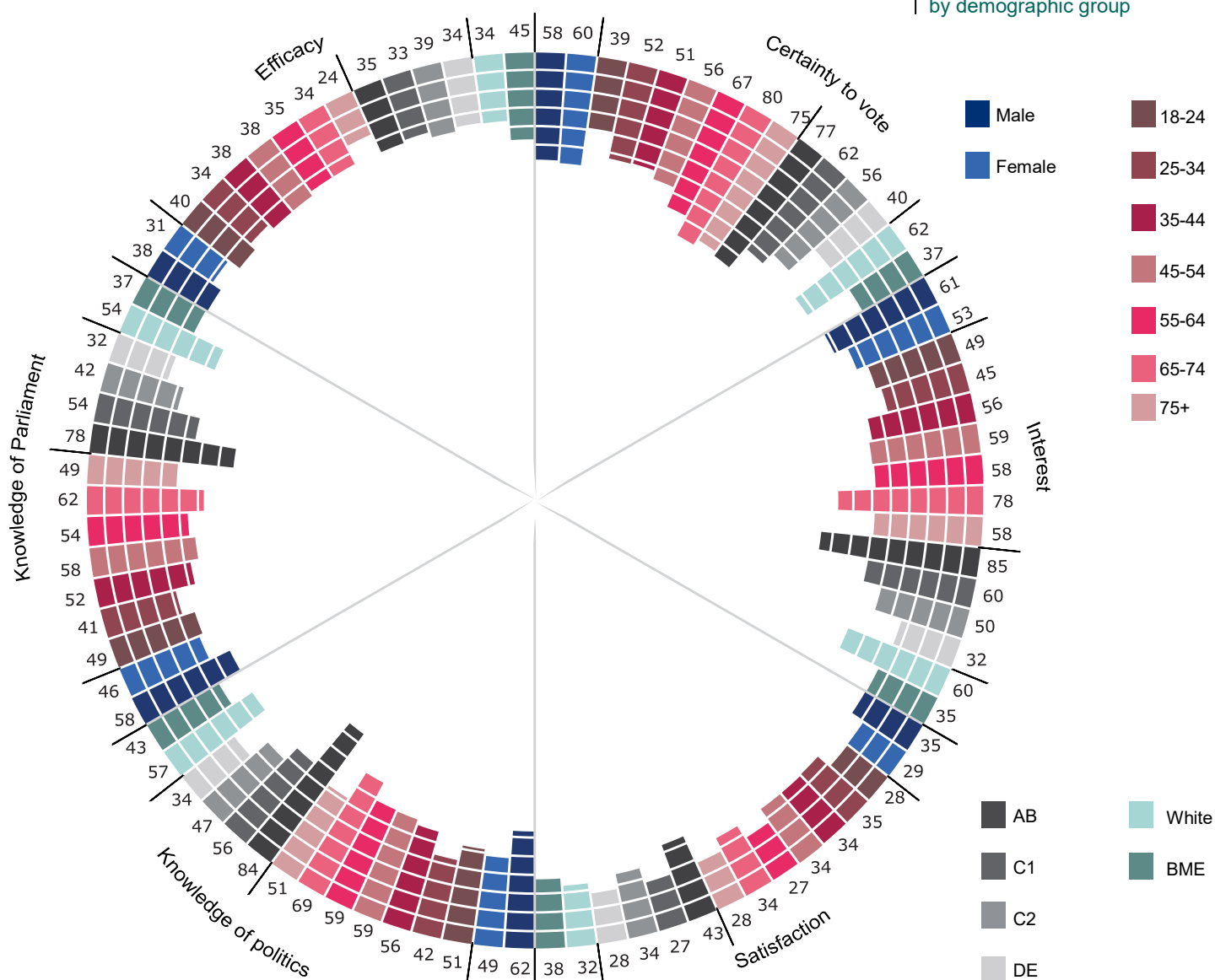
not add up to 100% as 'don't knows' or refused responses are not always included. And percentages may not always add up to exactly 100% because multiple answers were permitted for a question, or because of computer rounding. Throughout the report we refer to previous Audits, for example Audit 1 published in 2004, and Audits 3 and 8 at the same stage of the post-election cycle in 2006 and 2011. Each Audit is based on an opinion poll undertaken in November / December with the report published the following Spring. Throughout the report, unless otherwise specified, any date associated with an Audit refers to the date of publication. For example, Audit 3 (2006) was

published in Spring 2006, but the data was derived from a poll undertaken in early December 2005. Because of space constraints, particularly in the topline result tables, the Audit's are sometimes referenced by the acronym APE (Audit of Political Engagement) and the publication number – e.g. APE3.

A detailed methodology is set out at the end of this report, with information about how the data has been weighted.

Figure 2

% Core engagement indicators by demographic group



THE ELECTION EFFECT



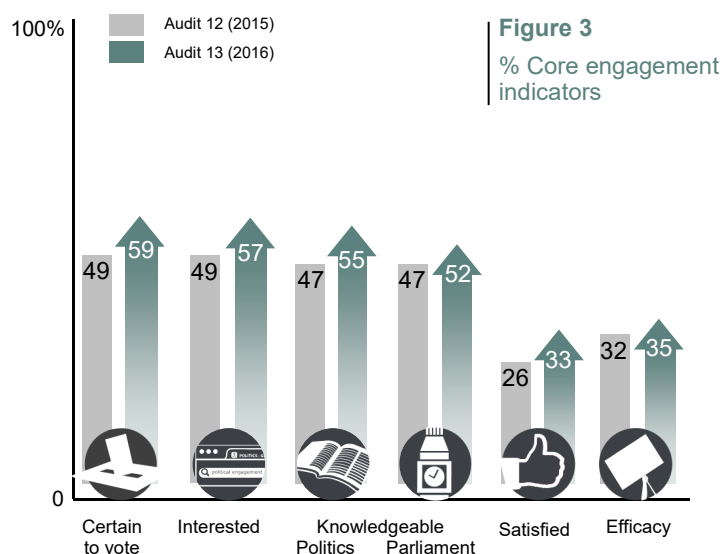
In a general election year the increased coverage and exposure of politics appears to have a discernible impact on public engagement. As we found after the 2005 (Audit 3) and 2010 (Audit 8) elections, so too this time there has been a post-election bounce in public attitudes. All of our six key indicators of engagement have increased compared to last year, some markedly so.

A post-election bounce?

The public report a higher level of interest in and knowledge of politics (up eight points on last year in both cases) and the number claiming to be at least a 'fairly strong supporter' of a political party has increased by 11 points and now stands five percentage points higher than nearly a decade ago (in Audit 4 in 2007).

Perceived knowledge of the UK Parliament is also at the highest level recorded, with a majority (52%) claiming to be knowledgeable for the first time in the Audit series. And seven in every 10 members of the public (73%) agree that Parliament 'is essential to our democracy', an increase of 12 points in a year and five percentage points higher than at any other stage in the last four years.

These results should, however, be treated with great caution. Any enthusiasm derived from these improvements must be strongly tempered by the knowledge that previous post-election increases in engagement recorded in Audits 3 (2006) and 8 (2011) have quickly subsided in the non-election years that followed.



And this year, one can see again that while an election clearly helps to drive up levels of interest in and knowledge of politics, the public's satisfaction with that process and their sense of disempowerment in terms of the efficacy of their own actual or potential involvement in it remains stubbornly ingrained.

Ingrained dissatisfaction and disempowerment

Following an election just 35% believe that when people like themselves get involved in politics they really can change the way the country is run. This figure has remained relatively stable across the Audit series.

Just one in four British adults (25%) believe they have at least some influence over decision-making in their local area, and this falls to just one in eight (13%) who feel they have similar influence over decision-making nationally. Conversely, just under half would actually like to be involved in decision-making locally (46%) and four in 10 would like to do so nationally (41%). The public's sense of influence over decision-making has risen by five percentage points at the local level since last year, bringing it into line with most of the results in previous Audit waves. But in contrast, their perceived influence on

decision-making nationally has decreased by four percentage points over a year.

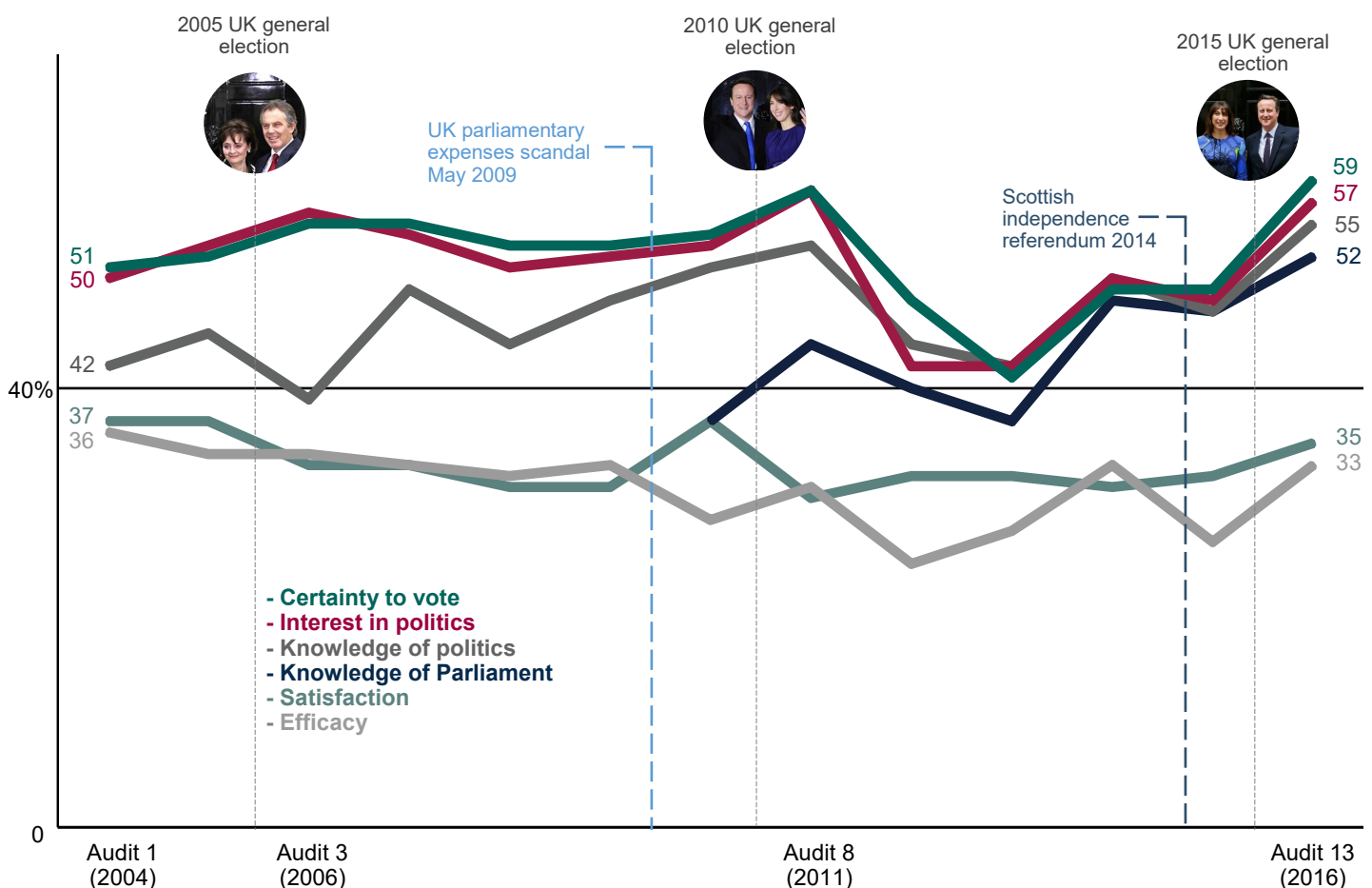
Any sense of influence at the national level has always been low – last year’s 17% was the high watermark over the course of the last five years – and has always been lower than perceived influence at the local level. That citizens should feel less influential in terms of decision-making in the country as a whole in the period immediately after a general election is somewhat counter intuitive but reflects the public’s wider sense of dissatisfaction with our system of governing and their inclination to be more positive about local rather than national

elements of the political process. They are closer to and often more knowledgeable about the local level and it could be argued that such familiarity helps drive favourability.

At the national level, only a third of the public (33%) agree that the system by which Britain is governed works well, up seven percentage points on the previous year but still comparable with previous Audit waves. A similar proportion (32%) are satisfied with the way Parliament works, higher than last year (up five points). And just 28% believe that Parliament encourages public involvement in politics, a greater number than said the same in the

Figure 4

% Core engagement indicators and the election cycle



THE ELECTION EFFECT

previous two years but marginally lower than agreed four years ago.

Attitudes to MPs

In similar vein, just three in 10 people (29%) say they are satisfied with the way MPs generally do their job, an increase of six percentage points compared to three years ago when we last asked this question, but three points below the high watermark (32%) recorded in Audit 1 in 2004.

In previous Audit waves citizens have always been more satisfied with the way their own MP is doing their job than they are of MPs as a collective group and this remains true this year. Thirty-five percent report being satisfied with their own representative. Previously, however, the satisfaction gap between individually named local constituency MPs and MPs as a collective group has always been between nine and 11 percentage points. But this year, that gap has narrowed to just six points.

Interestingly, in Scotland nearly half the public say they are dissatisfied with MPs generally but 51% of them have no particular view – they report being ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ – with their own MP, significantly higher than the 38% who say this across Britain overall. This may reflect the very high turnover of MPs in Scotland at the election when the Scottish National Party swept the board, winning 56 of the country’s 59 seats, many of the new incumbents being relatively new to politics and an unknown quantity to most of their electorate. It will be interesting to see if and how this position changes in the coming years. Scottish MPs are being given the benefit of the doubt, but the honeymoon period will not last forever and attitudes could swiftly deteriorate given Scots’ continued dissatisfaction with MPs generally.

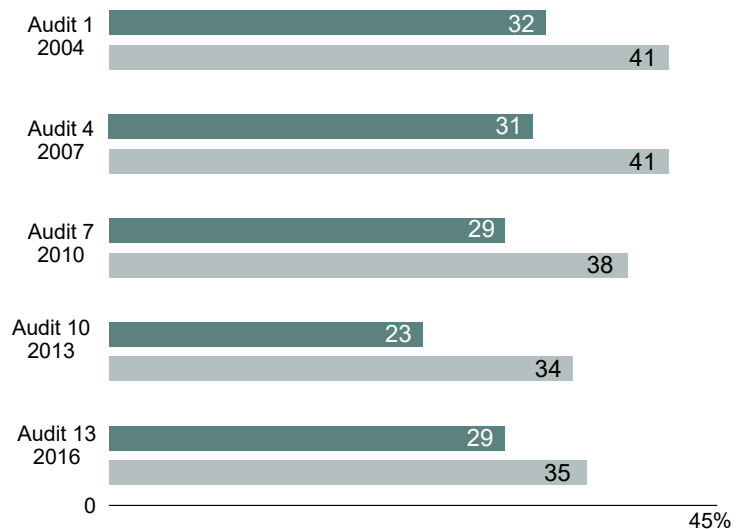


Figure 5
% MP satisfaction
(very / fairly satisfied)



Support for political parties

A notable feature of this year’s results is that 41% of the public now claim to be a strong supporter (fairly or very strong) of a political party, 11 points higher than last year’s Audit and five points higher than when we first asked this question in Audit 4 nine years ago. The number who claim to be a ‘very strong’ supporter remains broadly unchanged this year compared to last, and the number who say they are a ‘not very strong’ supporter has declined but only a little. The discernible shift can be found in the increase in those who claim to be a ‘fairly strong’ supporter (33% this year compared to 22% in Audit 12), and a concomitant decrease in

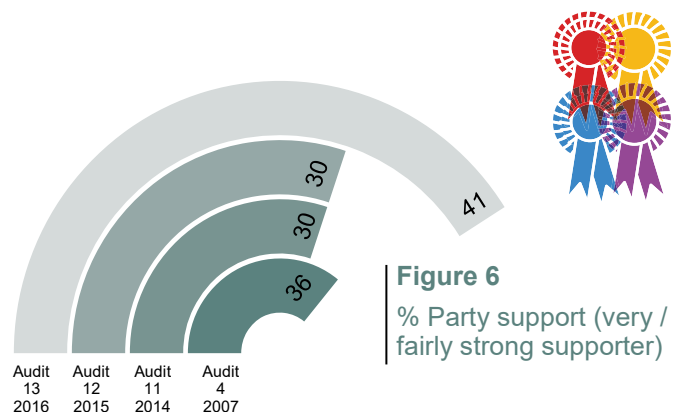


Figure 6
% Party support (very / fairly strong supporter)



the number who claim to not be a supporter of a party at all (25% versus 32% in last year's Audit).

Growth in support for political parties can be particularly found among the youngest and oldest citizens. Thirty-eight percent of those aged 18-24 now say they are a 'strong supporter' of a political party compared to just 13% who said the same last year. Support among those aged 65-74 has also risen (from 45% to 56%) as it has among those aged 75+ (38% to 51%). There has also been an increase in support for parties among those in social classes AB (57% compared to 40% last year) and C2 (34% versus 23%).

Certainty to vote

In last year's Audit we noted that the public's reported certainty to vote was just 49% and that actual turnout in the forthcoming general election would be considerably higher. In fact, turnout, at 66%, proved to be marginally more than in 2010 and the highest recorded since the 1997 general election. This turnout was just less than the 69% in our Audit who said they were either certain (10 out of 10) or likely (scoring six to nine out of 10) to vote in the election. But this year, were another general election to be held immediately, 59% now report being certain to vote and a further 20% would be likely to do so.

The three highest certainty to vote scores in the Audit series have all occurred immediately following a general election. In Audits 3 (2006) and 8 (2011) there was a modest increase in certainty to vote compared to the previous year, whereas this time there has been a much larger increase but from a lower base.

But interestingly, just 47% in this year's poll report having voted in an election in the last 12 months 'to influence decisions, laws or policies', suggesting,

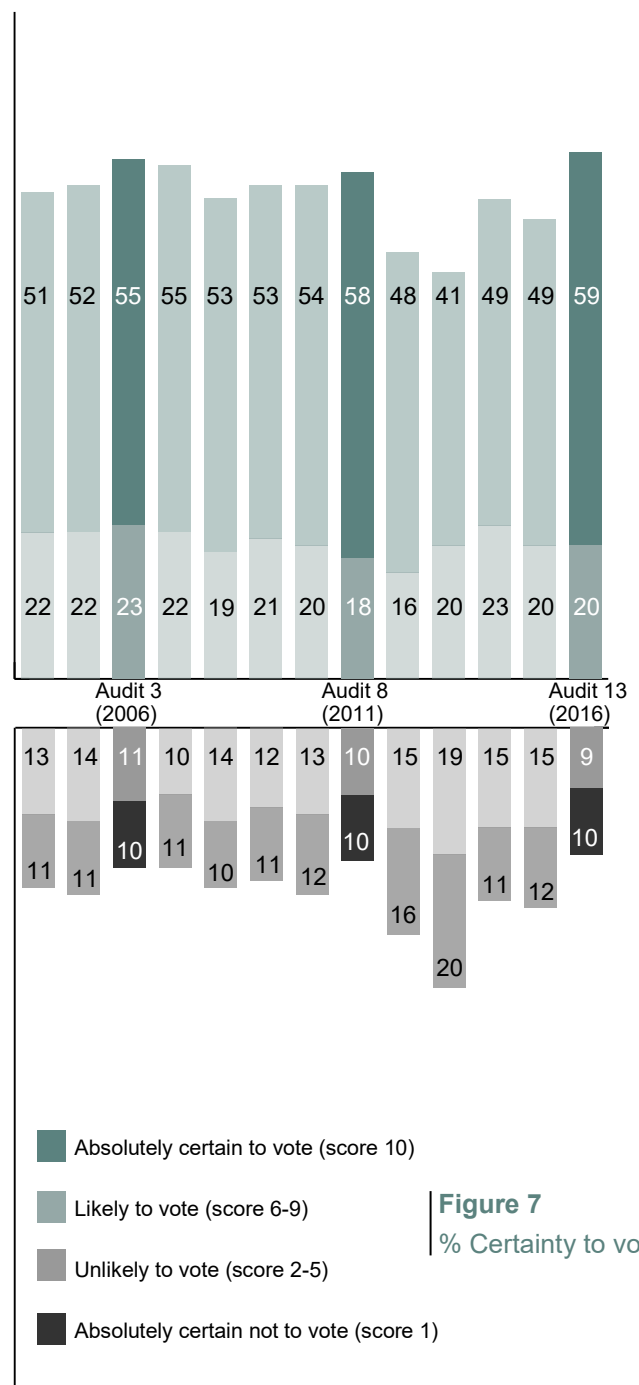


Figure 7
% Certainty to vote

once again, that a proportion of the public have either forgotten that they voted, and / or, more likely that they do not see voting as a way to exercise influence in this way. And in a future election, just 55% say they would be prepared to vote if they felt strongly about an issue. This points to a

THE ELECTION EFFECT

disconnection between the act of voting and perceptions of it as a means to exercise influence.

Voting: age gap

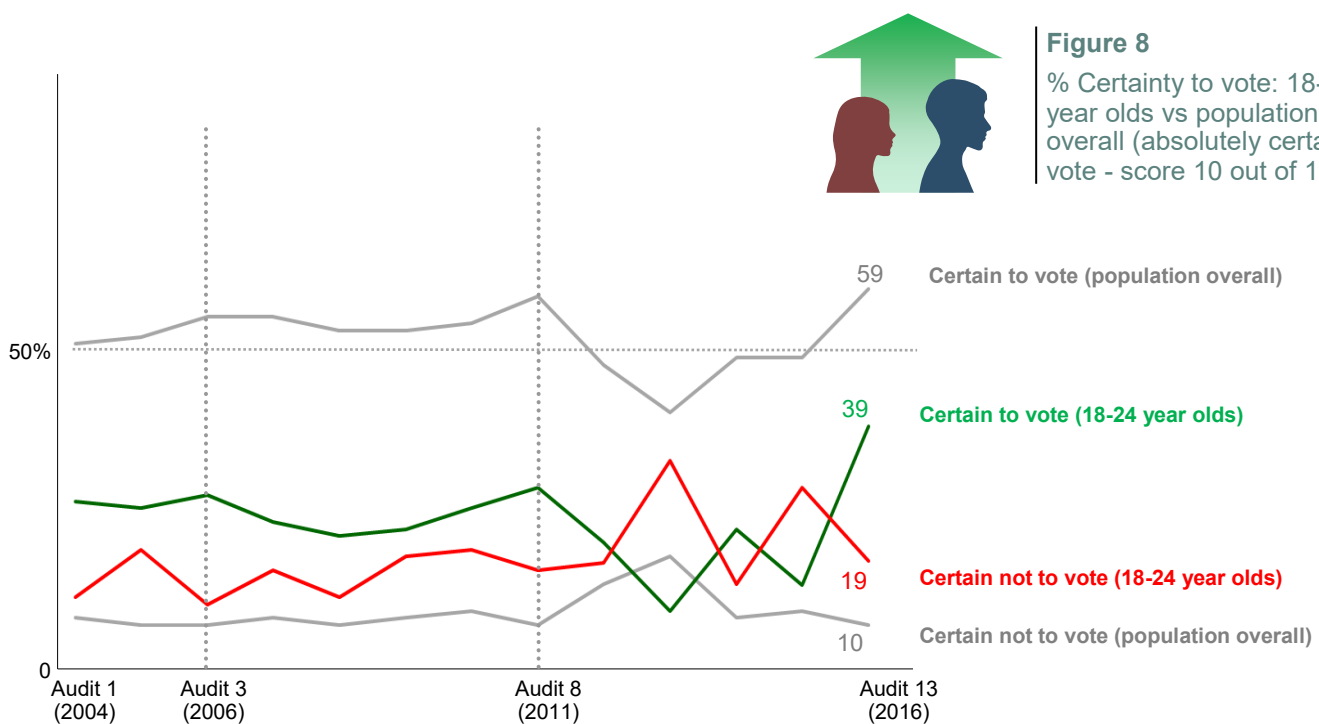
As previously, those who say they are certain to vote are more likely to be white, affluent, older citizens aged 55+. There has been an increase since last year in the number of people in the older age groups (aged 55+) who say they are certain to vote. So too, there has been an increase in the certainty to vote of those aged 18-34. Here, the most marked increase is found among 18-24s: 39% say they would be certain to vote in the event of an immediate general election, compared to just 16% who said the same in the last Audit.

In previous waves, the highest results on this indicator, among the population overall, have always been recorded immediately after a general election. The certainty to vote of young people (aged 18-24) over the course of the last Parliament fluctuated considerably from year to year, at

anything between 12% (Audit 10 in 2013) and 30% (Audit 8 in 2011). But to set this in wider context, 30% after the last general election was the highest level ever previously recorded in the Audit series, and even in the first half of the time-series, when certainty to vote levels were more stable, the result never rose above 29% (Audit 3 in 2006). An increase to 39% thus marks a step change in young people's attitudes. In the past, their certainty to vote has always dropped by the 18 month mark following an election (Audits 4 in 2007 and 9 in 2012) so it will be interesting to see whether, next year, the current improvement can be sustained or if it subsides, and if so, how far.

Voting: social class gap

While the age inequality gap may have narrowed this year, the social class gap in voting has not. In the last Audit there was a 31 percentage point difference between the certainty to vote (scoring 10 out of 10) of those in social classes AB and those in DE. In this latest Audit that gap, following an



election, has risen to 37 percentage points. This year, nearly twice as many AB adults are certain to vote (77%) compared to DEs (40%) who say the same. Across the time-series, the certainty to vote of AB voters has veered between a low of 54% recorded in Audit 10 (2013) and the 77% in this latest wave, a full five percentage points above the highest level previously recorded. In contrast, the certainty to vote of DE adults has been much narrower, from a low of 34% in Audit 5 (2008) to the highest recorded level of 45% in Audit 2 (2005), five percentage points above the score in this latest wave.

Even if one looks at the aggregation of those who are either 'certain' (scoring 10 out of 10) or 'likely to vote' (those who score six to nine out of 10), the social class gap is considerable. 91% of ABs report being likely to vote, compared to 82% of C1s, 73% of C2s and 68% of DE adults. And there are six times as many DEs who say they are 'certain not to vote' compared to ABs who say the same (17% compared to 3% respectively).

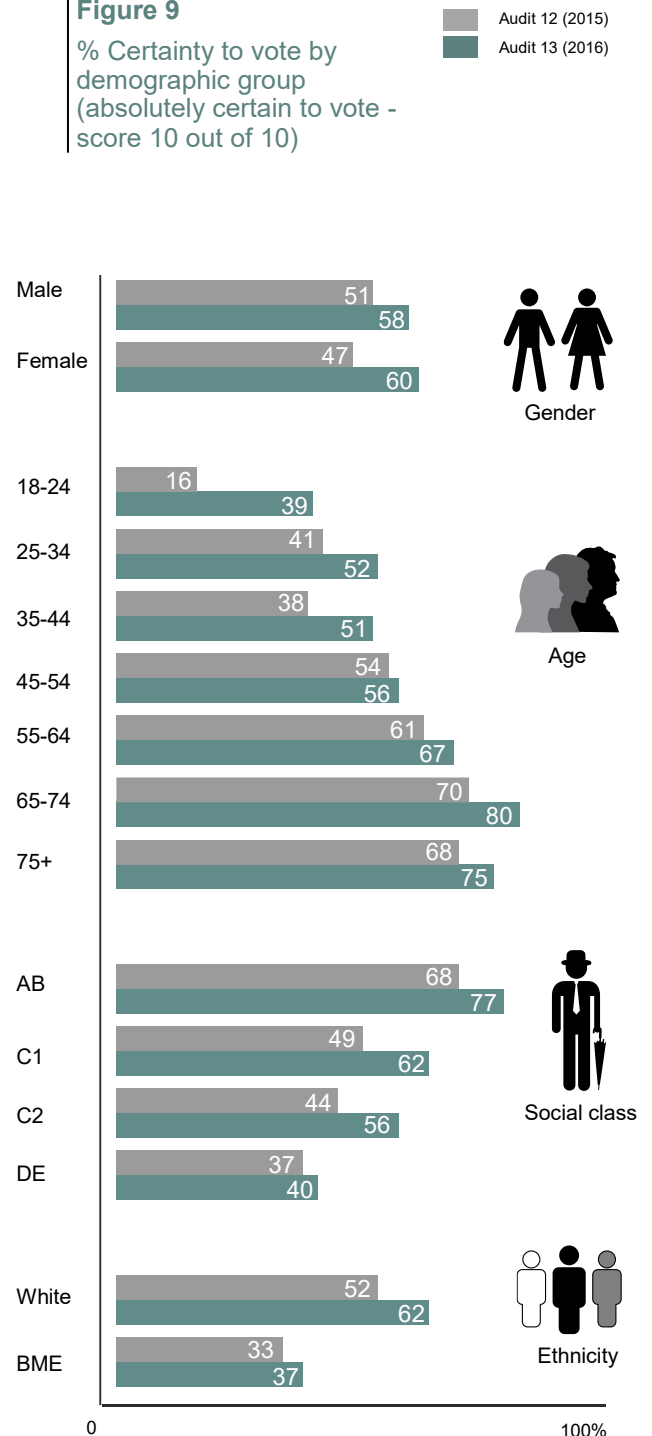
Similarly there is an important difference between white and BME adults. The latter are more likely to score six to nine out of 10 for their intention to vote, while white citizens are more likely to score 10 out of 10.

Electoral registration

In order to vote citizens have to be on the electoral register. As one might expect after an election, the number of people who think they are registered to vote has increased in the last year by eight points (from 82% to 90%). This means that one in 10 people believe they are not registered and therefore will not be able to exercise their democratic right to participate in the forthcoming EU referendum and future local and national elections. The Electoral Commission is due to publish its report on the completeness and

Figure 9

% Certainty to vote by demographic group (absolutely certain to vote - score 10 out of 10)



accuracy of the electoral register as at December 2015 in the summer. At which point we will know whether the survey result reflects actual registration levels.

THE EU REFERENDUM



As the country faces one of the biggest political decisions in decades, a clear majority of citizens are interested in the European issue and think referendums should be used to settle important questions such as whether to remain a member of the European Union. Indeed, likelihood to vote in the forthcoming referendum is on a par with that for a general election, but few people are going into the decision feeling knowledgeable about or satisfied with the EU.

Interest and knowledge

Sixty-three percent say they are interested in issues to do with the European Union, six percentage points higher than those claiming to be interested in politics generally, although only one in five claim to be 'very interested' (21%).

However, significantly fewer people (38%) feel knowledgeable about the EU, which is considerably below claimed knowledge levels for the UK Parliament (52%) and politics generally (55%). Indeed, nearly half the population (46%) claim to

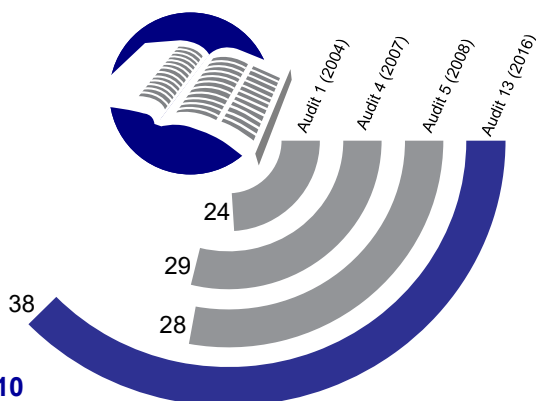
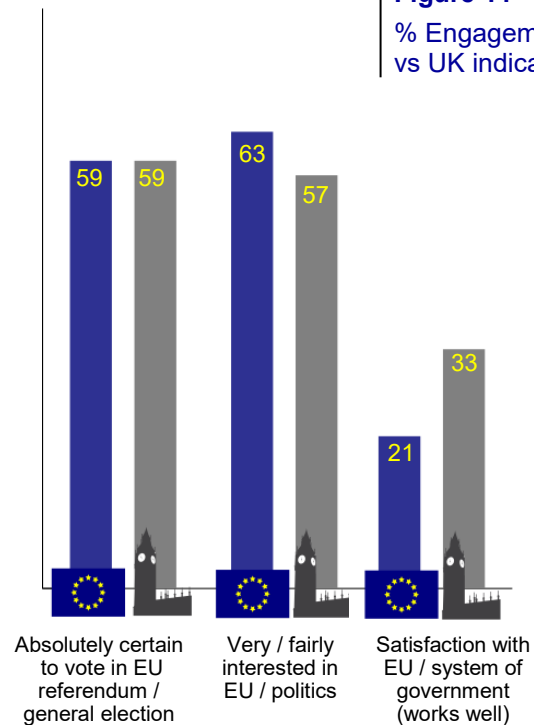


Figure 10
% Knowledge of EU
(a great deal / a fair amount)

Figure 11

% Engagement: EU vs UK indicators



know 'not very much' about the issue. Nonetheless, this indicator has improved compared to the start of the Audit series 13 years ago when just 24% said they felt knowledgeable about the European Union.

As ever, more affluent and better educated people are more likely to claim to be knowledgeable:

in contrast, over three-quarters of DE adults and those with no formal qualifications claim to lack knowledge of the EU. In terms of age, however, those approaching early middle age (45-54 years old) are, by some way, the most likely to feel knowledgeable.

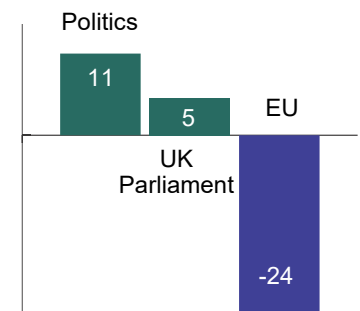


Figure 12

% Net knowledge of EU v politics v UK Parliament

Satisfaction with the system of governing the EU

Unsurprisingly, satisfaction with the present system of governing the EU is low. Just 21% think it works well; in contrast 40% think it 'could be improved quite a lot', and a further 29% think it 'needs a great deal of improvement'. Satisfaction is lower than that for Britain's system of governing (33%) but, as with perceptions of the national system, there are few demographic differences between groups of the kind we see in relation to other indicators.

Although there are big differences between age groups and social classes on both interest in and knowledge of the EU, there is a much smaller gap when it comes to satisfaction with the system. There is only a four point difference between those in the AB and DE social classes, and five percentage points between those aged 18-24 and those aged 65-74 compared to 14 and 17 percentage points respectively for the interest and knowledge levels of those same groups. However, as we have found in previous Audits in relation to satisfaction with the national system of governing, younger people are more likely to say they are satisfied with the system of governing the EU than are older people. Similarly, BME adults are also more likely to be satisfied (30%) than are white people (20%).

Of those who claim to support one of the two main political parties, 35% of Conservative supporters say that the EU system needs a great deal of improvement compared to 23% of Labour supporters who say the same. While almost no one (one percent) thinks the system works 'extremely well', Labour supporters are more positively disposed towards it, with 29% of them thinking the system 'could be improved in small ways but mainly works well'. Just 16% of Conservative supporters agree with them.

Figure 13

% Knowledge of EU by demographic group (a great deal / a fair amount)

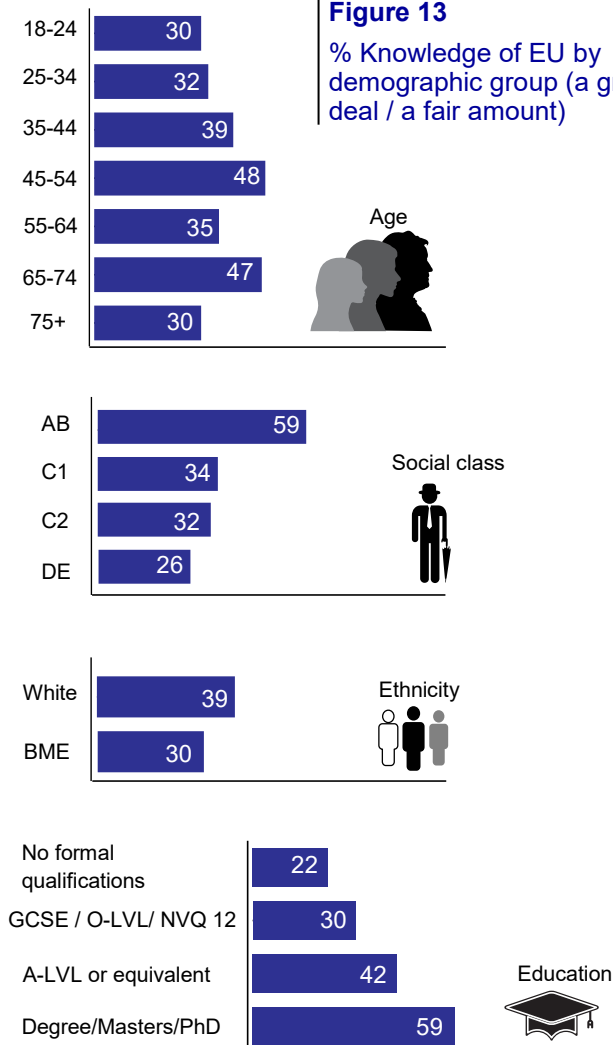
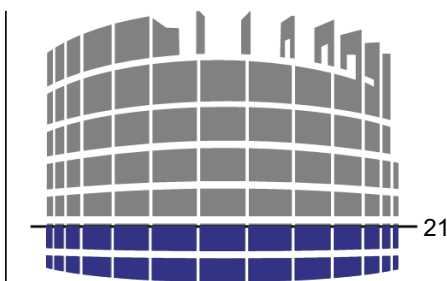


Figure 14

% Satisfaction with system governing the EU (works well)



Support for referendums

Public support for the principle of referendums is strong. Three-quarters (75%) of the British public agree that ‘important questions should be determined by referendums more often than today’, a modest (and not statistically significant) increase of three percentage points compared to when we last asked this question in Audit 9 (2012).

Older people are more likely to be sceptical: just one in 10 (10%) of the youngest citizens disagree compared to 23% of those aged 65-74. Net support for referendums (that is, the percentage of those who agree minus the percentage of those who disagree) thus stands at +68% among 18-24 year olds but just +49% among those aged 65-74.

Similarly, opposition to the use of referendums is strongest among the more affluent citizens: 26% of AB adults disagree with using referendums more often compared to 9% of those in social class DE. Net support for referendums among DEs stands at +68% but just +44% amongst AB’s.

Certainty to vote in the referendum

As far as the EU referendum is concerned, exactly the same proportion of people (59%) say they are ‘certain to vote’ (score 10 out of 10), as say the same in the event of an imminent general election. Similarly, a further 19% say they are ‘likely to vote’ (score six to nine out of 10).

As with general elections, those who are certain to vote are more likely to be in the higher social grades and to be older. Indeed, those in social class AB are more than twice as certain to vote in the referendum as DEs (81% compared to 39%) and 14% of DEs say they are absolutely certain they will not turn out to cast their vote at all (score one out of 10).

Likewise, those aged 65+ are also twice as certain

as 18-24 year olds to vote (76% versus 37%), despite being less satisfied with the EU than their younger counterparts. Fully a third of those aged below 35 say they are unlikely (scoring two to five out of 10) or certain not (scoring one out of 10) to take part in the referendum despite the fact that its consequences will have a more marked and lasting impact on their lives than will likely be the case for older voters.

Those who say they are certain to vote in the referendum are more likely to think that the way the EU is governed needs a great deal of improvement. In contrast, 34% of those who say they are certain not to vote in the referendum give a ‘don’t know’ answer on the question of satisfaction with the way the EU works.

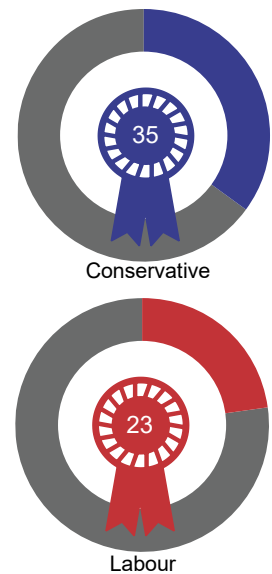


Figure 15
% Satisfaction with system of governing the EU by party (needs a great deal of improvement)

Figure 16
% Certainty to vote in EU referendum (absolutely certain - score 10)



PERCEPTIONS OF PARLIAMENT



As perceived knowledge of Parliament has risen to the highest recorded level, so too more people than ever agree that it 'is essential to our democracy' and 'debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me'. But, as with politics generally, such improvements are not reflected in enhanced satisfaction with the institution; that remains relatively low.

Knowledge of the UK Parliament

For the first time in the Audit series net knowledge of Parliament has entered positive territory. Just over half (52%) the public claim to know at least 'a fair amount' about the institution, an increase of five percentage points on last year, eight points above that recorded in Audit 8 (2011) at the same stage of the political cycle, and 19 points above the baseline recorded in Audit 1 (2004).

Nearly three times as many people claim to be very knowledgeable about the institution, but this is still

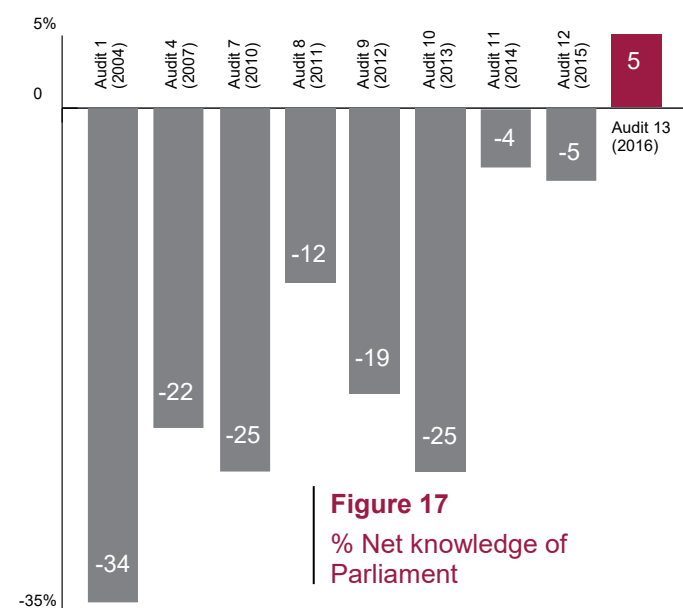
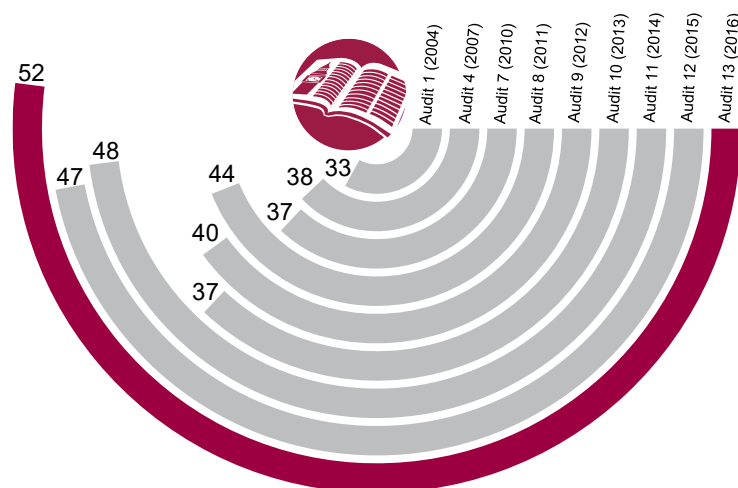


Figure 17
% Net knowledge of Parliament

Figure 18

% Knowledge of Parliament (a great deal / a fair amount)



only 8% of people (compared to 3% in Audit 1 in 2004); the number who claim to know nothing at all has also reduced but in similarly modest terms, from 17% to 13% today. Over the course of the Audit series, the biggest changes are to be found in the increase in the number of people who feel they know at least 'a fair amount' (from 30% in Audit 1 to 44% today) and a concomitant decrease in the number who claim to know 'not very much' (50% to 34% respectively).

Overall, the more affluent and better educated a person is, the more likely they are to claim to be knowledgeable about Parliament. Adults in social class AB are more than twice as likely as DEs to feel knowledgeable on this matter (78% versus 32%); so too are those with graduate level education compared to those with no formal qualifications (78% versus 31%). Less than half (43%) of adults earning up to £24,999 claim to be knowledgeable, compared to 69% of those earning above this salary bracket.

The most knowledgeable age group are those aged 65-74 (62%); in contrast the youngest (18-24) and

oldest citizens (75+) are a little below the average at 49% each. Women claim to be far less knowledgeable than men (46% versus 58% respectively), although, as previous Audits have shown, when this is tested men tend to overstate and women to underestimate their actual knowledge. An even greater gap in claimed knowledge can also be discerned between white and BME adults: 54% of the former claim to know at least a fair amount about Parliament but only 37% of the latter say the same, 15 percentage points below the national average.

Parliament...is essential to our democracy

In the aftermath of the election, more people than at any previous point in the last five years believe Parliament 'is essential to our democracy' and at 73% this stands 12 percentage points above the result recorded in the last Audit. Again, those in social classes AB are significantly more likely (89%) to believe this than are C2s (63%) and DEs (58%). Geographically there are few differences between the regional scores, although Scotland is more likely to disagree than Great Britain as a whole. For example, just four percent of Londoners disagree with the statement that Parliament is essential to democracy, whereas 14% in Scotland contest the assertion.

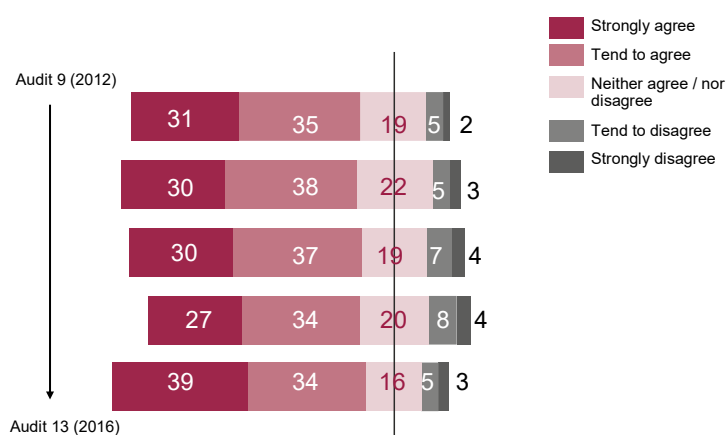


Figure 19

% Parliament is essential to our democracy

Parliament...debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me

There has also been a significant increase – up 10 percentage points to 58% – in the number of people who agree that Parliament 'debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me' and this too is the highest recorded result over the course of the last five years this question has been asked. It is not possible to link this change to any particular parliamentary activity, but it is worth noting that in the weeks before the fieldwork was conducted two very significant parliamentary debates took place and therefore may have lodged in people's minds. The House of Commons voted to extend airstrikes against ISIS to Syria, whilst the House of Lords voted against the government's proposed tax credit changes, both decisions attracting considerable media coverage at the time. A number of e-petitions also attracted attention on subjects such as term time leave from school for holiday, immigration, the legalisation of cannabis and contracts and conditions in the NHS.

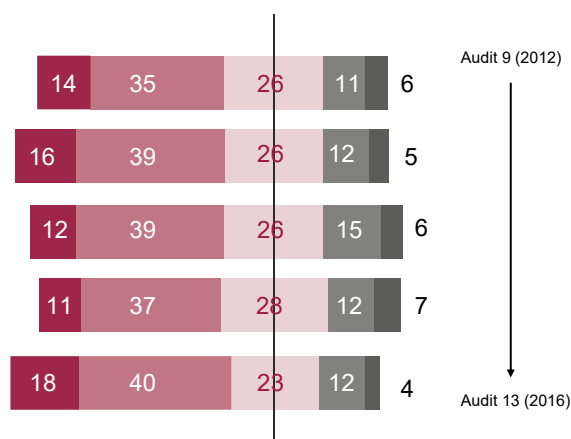


Figure 20

% Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me

Again, differences by age and affluence can be clearly discerned. Among older adults, those aged 55+, 65% agree that Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to them, but only 45% of 18-24 year olds say the same. So

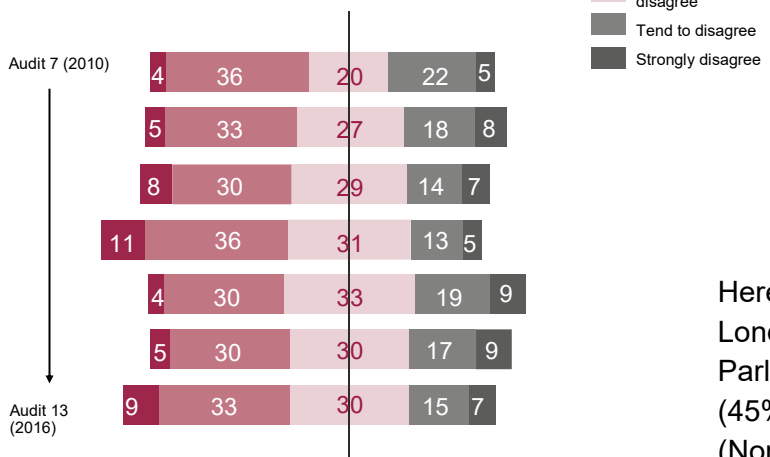
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too, whereas just under half (48%) of DEs agree, 72% of ABs say the same. Regional differences are not as stark as on some other questions, but the more distant people are from Westminster the less likely they are to agree that it debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to them: 58% of Londoners agree, as do 67% of those in the south of England, in contrast to just 50% of Scots who say the same.

Parliament...holds government to account

The public are less positive about Parliament in respect of one of its key roles: holding the government to account. Only 42% agree that it does so; an increase of seven percentage points on last year, and four percentage points higher than in Audit 8 (2011) at the same point in the political cycle, but not as high as the result in Audit 10 in 2013 (47%).

Figure 21
% Parliament holds government to account



Those with graduate education are more inclined to reflect favourably on this question than those with lower level qualifications or none at all. 50% of those with degrees or above agree that Parliament holds government to account while fewer than 41% of those with lower level qualifications agree. Older citizens are also more likely to agree than younger

ones. And the more interested a person is in politics, and the more knowledgeable they feel about politics and Parliament, then the more likely they are to express an opinion (positive or negative) about whether Parliament holds government to account.

Parliament...encourages public involvement in politics

Nor do many of the public think that the institution encourages public involvement in politics. Just 28% agree, an increase of three percentage points in a year, but a result marginally lower than four years ago.

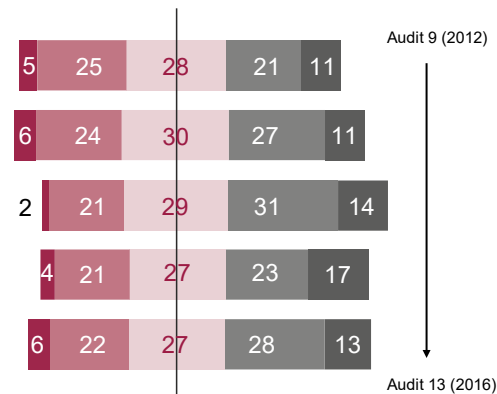


Figure 22
% Parliament encourages public involvement in politics

Here again geography also informs a disparity: Londoners are much more likely to agree Parliament encourages their involvement in politics (45%) whilst those furthest away are more sceptical (North – 21%; Scotland – 22%; Wales – 24%).

Interestingly, those who claim to be more knowledgeable about politics and Parliament are not much more inclined to think the institution encourages public involvement than those who claim to be less informed. Indeed, to the contrary, the more knowledgeable a person feels the more likely they are to say that Parliament does not

encourage public involvement.

That said, as the evidence below suggests, regardless of what Parliament might do, some citizens may simply never engage.

Public engagement with Parliament

We asked the public in what ways, if any, they had engaged with Parliament in the last 12 months, and provided a list of eight possible ways they could have done this to help prompt their thoughts, whilst also giving them the option to define their own response.

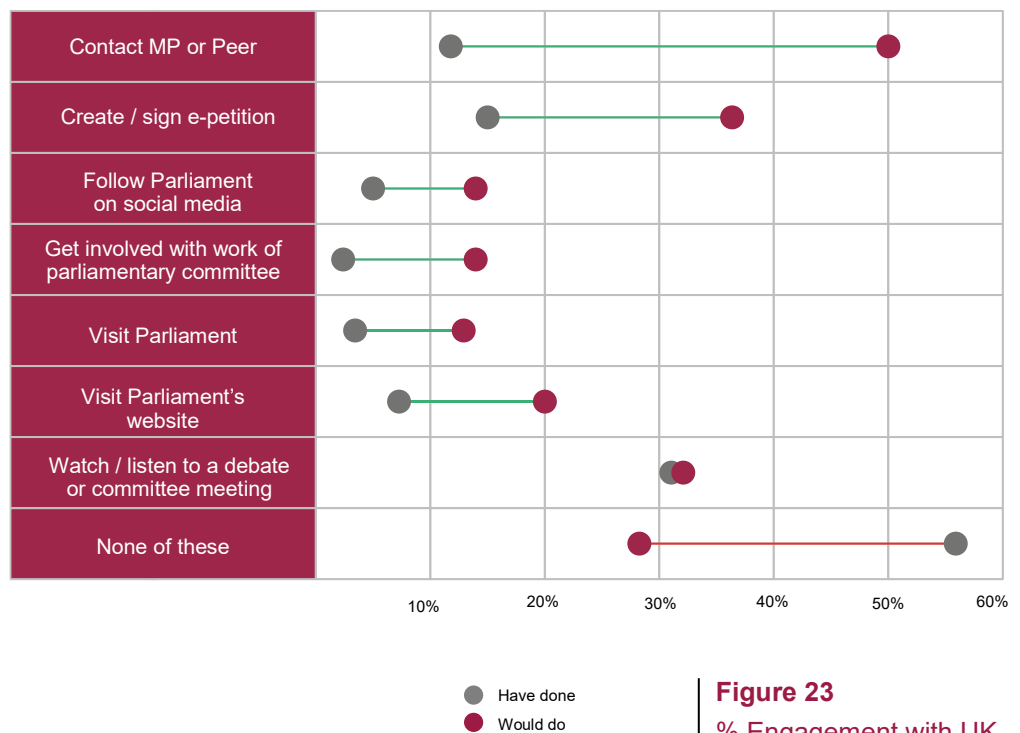


Figure 23
% Engagement with UK Parliament: have done in last 12 months vs would do in future

The list of options was varied and reflected different levels of engagement in terms of the time and commitment required. More active options included contacting an MP or Peer directly, getting involved in the work of a parliamentary committee by reading reports or submitting evidence, or actually visiting Parliament for a meeting or tour. The more sedentary options were creating or signing an e-petition, following Parliament's social media accounts, visiting the website, or listening or watching a debate or committee meeting on TV, radio or online.

Fifty-six percent of people say they had done none of these things in the past 12 months. When asked if they would be prepared to do any of them if they felt strongly about an issue, the number who said no declined to 28%. This implies that potentially one in four of the population are unlikely to ever engage with Parliament through the traditional channels provided.

As ever, the most affluent and more highly educated citizens are those most likely to engage. Those in the highest social grade are four times more likely to say they have engaged with Parliament in the last 12 months than the lowest.

Watching or listening to a parliamentary debate or committee meeting on TV, radio or online is by far the most popular means of engaging with Parliament over the course of the previous year. This is perhaps unsurprising given the ease of approach to such engagement: three in 10 people (31%) say they had done so.

E-petitions is the next most popular with 15% claiming to have created or signed one on Parliament's petition website, with 36% stating they would be prepared to do so in the future if they were motivated by a particular concern. We also asked about e-petitions in our standard Audit activity question – namely what, from a list of 14

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options, have adults done in the last 12 months to influence decisions, laws or policies? Here, 18% say they had signed an e-petition and 34% say they would be willing to sign one in the future if they felt strongly enough about an issue. The results of these two questions should not be compared directly: one asked specifically about Parliament's e-petitions system the other about e-petitions generally; and one offered fewer possible answers from which to choose. But the results of both sets of questions clearly demonstrate the popularity of e-petitioning.

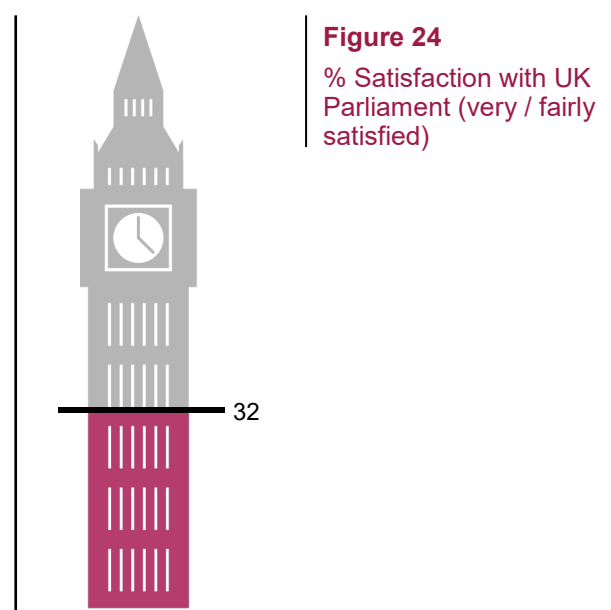
The House of Commons has completely revamped its approach to e-petitions since the general election, taking more direct control of the communication with petitioners and establishing a Petitions Committee to consider the issues raised. Indeed the new system closely models the reforms suggested by the Hansard Society in our report, [What Next for E-Petitions?](#) published in 2012. Voting aside, petitioning has always been one of the most popular forms of political action recorded over the course of the Audit series. The sheer number of petitioners using the online system and the high score it receives relative to other forms of possible engagement in this latest study suggest that e-petitions is the single most important route to engage the public that Parliament currently has at its disposal, apart from direct contact with a representative.

Contacting an MP or Peer with their views is the only form of potential engagement that a majority of adults (50%) would be prepared to undertake if sufficiently motivated by strength of feeling on an issue. This is 38 percentage points higher than those who report having actually contacted their representative in the last 12 months. This is some way ahead of the next largest increment – 21 percentage points – for potential signatories of e-petitions. Some way behind these – with a difference of just 12 percentage points – rank those who would be willing to get involved with the work

of a parliamentary committee, and visit Parliament's website and information materials.

There is no statistically significant difference in the number of people who would be willing to watch or listen to a parliamentary debate or committee meeting on TV, radio or online: 31% report having done so in the last 12 months; 32% say they would be willing to do so in the future. This could suggest that consumption of parliamentary activity through these mediums might be at saturation level.

The results also suggest that there is, at present, a low ceiling to other forms of digital engagement compared to activities like contacting a representative or petitioning. Only 14% would follow one of Parliament's official social media accounts if they felt strongly about an issue in the future, and just two in 10 (20%) would visit its website and information materials. This may reflect the more passive nature of the activities compared to the other choices available. However, the result in respect of social media is not far out of line with what we find for more active engagement via social media in our standard political activity question. Here, just 10% say they have contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media in



the last 12 months to influence decisions, laws or policies, and just 19% would be prepared to do so in the future if they felt strongly enough about an issue.

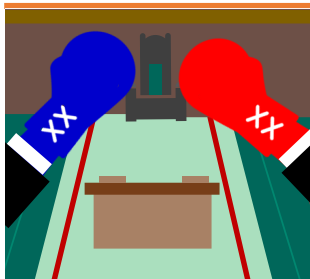
Satisfaction with the UK Parliament

Just one in three people (32%) report being satisfied with how Parliament works overall. This is an increase of five points compared to the result three years ago when we last asked this question in Audit 10 (2013) and prior to that in Audit 8 (2011) at the same stage of the political cycle. But it is four percentage points lower than was recorded at the start of the series in Audits 1 (2004) and 4 (2007).

So although claimed levels of knowledge of Parliament have increased, as has the number of people who believe the institution is essential to our democracy and that its work is more topical and relevant than in the past, nonetheless satisfaction with it remains stuck at around a third, not dissimilar to the number of people who are satisfied with our system of governing generally (33%).

The scale of difference between demographic groups is also narrower in relation to satisfaction with Parliament than many other questions. Twenty-six percent of those in social class DE report being satisfied with the way Parliament works and only 43% of ABs report the same. Similarly, the satisfaction gap among age groups is also less stark in comparison to other questions: from 22% satisfaction among the youngest citizens to 38% among the oldest. And there is no statistical difference between white and BME adult's satisfaction levels (32% and 33% respectively).

PRIME MINISTER'S QUESTIONS



There have been only two statistically significant changes in public attitudes to PMQs compared to two years ago: the public are a little more inclined to think that it deals with important issues facing the country, and to say it makes them proud of Parliament. Overall, however, public perceptions of Parliament's shop window remain overwhelmingly negative; and when it does appeal to citizens it does so at a rational rather than an emotional level.

Citizens see Parliament through the prism of the House of Commons chamber and commonly assume that Prime Minister's Questions is therefore how Parliament works all the time. Our focus group research a few years ago consistently found that the weekly leader's joust is a cue for citizens' perceptions of Parliament, providing the raw material that feeds many of their negative assumptions about politicians.¹ The increasingly yah-boo nature of the sessions, described by the Speaker as a form of 'scrutiny by screech', thus risks bringing the House of Commons into disrepute.

Building on this qualitative research we developed a battery of survey questions about PMQs that we first tested two years ago in Audit 11.² In this latest Audit we have repeated – and supplemented – these questions to see if anything has changed. It is important to note that in the intervening period, one of the protagonists, the opposition Labour leader, changed and the new man at the helm, Jeremy Corbyn MP, sought to bring a change in tone and approach to the occasion, adopting a 'People's Question Time' model by crowdsourcing questions from citizens via an online forum. At the

time our Audit survey went into the field this new approach had been underway for less than four months, but nonetheless it attracted considerable press attention that may have influenced public awareness, if not perception of PMQs.³

The audience

There is little evidence from the Audit data to suggest that PMQs now engages a greater proportion of the public than two years ago. Audience figures for relevant BBC programmes, for example, certainly increased for the early Corbyn-Cameron PMQs sessions in September 2015. However, several months on, the Audit data shows an increase of just three points (to 57%) in the number of people claiming to have seen or heard PMQs in the last 12 months compared to two years ago.



There may also be an element of over-claiming here given that 20% say they have watched or heard PMQs in full in the last year (compared to 16% in Audit 11). However, one cannot compare directly to audience figures – not least as these are difficult to compile accurately given the multiple programmes where PMQs is broadcast and because people only need to have seen / heard it once in full, not to have consumed it in full consistently over the period.

Beyond this, the proportion saying they have seen only clips, have not seen it in the last year but have seen it before, or claim never to have seen it at all has barely changed compared to Audit 11.

Men are more likely than women to claim they have watched / seen PMQs in the last year (64% versus 52%) as are white adults compared to BMEs (60% compared to 41%). And as we found in Audit 11, older citizens - those aged 55+ - are more likely to have seen or heard it, as are those in the higher social grades. Indeed twice as many AB citizens claim to have seen or heard PMQs compared to DEs who say the same (79% versus 39% respectively).

However, there has been an increase in the number of 18-24 year olds who claim to have watched or listened to it in the last year: in Audit 11 just 35% said they had done so, but this has now risen to 47%. What accounts for this change is unclear: it may simply be a reflection of the increase in young people's political engagement in an election year rather than any other factor such as, for example, the 'Corbyn effect'. Although the increase is welcome, it is nonetheless important to note that the proportion of people aged under 45 that have seen / heard PMQs in the last year remains well below the national average (57%).

The medium

The majority of those who say they have seen or heard PMQs did so overwhelmingly via television (85%). Radio is the next preferred medium at 25%, with different online sources and print news trailing significantly behind. Non-news websites and social media are a long way behind traditional broadcasting outlets as a PMQs source for citizens. Asked to identify sources where they can watch or listen to PMQs live, one in three of the public (34%) mention the BBC Parliament Channel. Arguably, the clue is in the name, but far fewer mention the

House of Commons itself (8%) or Parliament's own website (7%), suggesting that it is the television rather than the parliamentary link that drives this outcome. Indeed the BBC's website ranks higher as a source to watch PMQs live than does Parliament's own online site (11% versus 7% respectively).

Although more people actually report consuming PMQs via radio than an online source, when asked to identify possible sources where it can be viewed / listened to live, more people chose online rather than radio options (22% versus 18%). Those aged 55+ are more likely to mention a TV source when asked if they know where they can watch or listen, whilst those aged 35-54 are more likely to mention online sources compared to other age groups.

Rational v emotional appeal

PMQs appeals to the public at a rational rather than an emotional level. Nearly four in 10 people (38%) agree that it is informative and deals with important issues; but just one in five feel it is exciting to watch (22%) or makes them proud of their Parliament (17%). These latter two statements, plus the notion that MPs behave

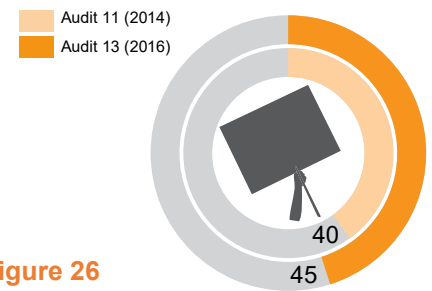


Figure 26
% PMQs: It deals with the important issues facing the country (agree)

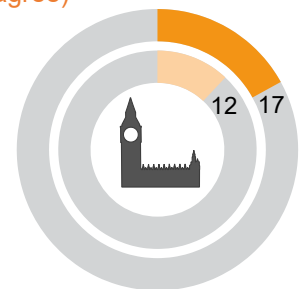


Figure 27
% PMQs: Makes me proud of our Parliament (agree)

professionally at PMQ's, also attract the strongest level of public opposition in terms of those expressing strong disagreement with them.

On only two questions has there been a statistically significant change in attitudes to PMQ's compared to two years ago in Audit 11. The number of people who think that PMQ's deals with important issues facing the country has increased by five percentage points, as has the number of people who say it makes them proud of Parliament. On all our other questions about PMQs the situation remains as it was two years ago.

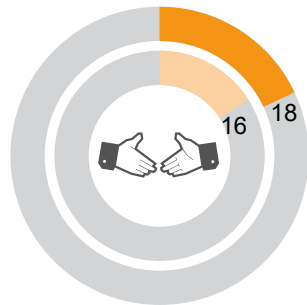


Figure 28
% PMQs: MPs behave professionally (agree)

Audit 11 (2014)
Audit 13 (2016)

This would suggest that the public might have noticed, and reacted positively to the change in question content and focus as a result of the Corbyn crowdsourcing experiment, but remain largely unmoved by the continuing culture and performance of PMQs.

Format: behaviour and style

Seven in 10 adults (69%) say that there is too much

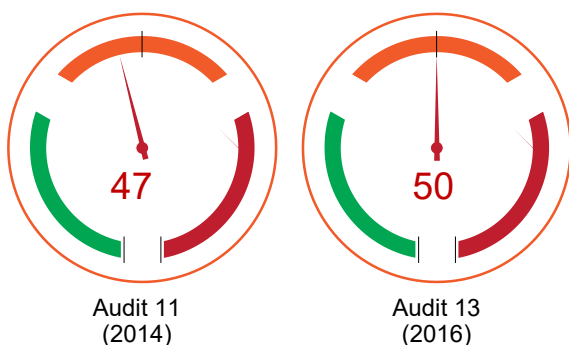


Figure 29
% PMQs: It's too noisy and aggressive (agree)

party political point scoring at PMQs whilst exactly half (50%) consider it too noisy and aggressive and less than two in 10 (18%) believe MPs behave professionally during the weekly session.

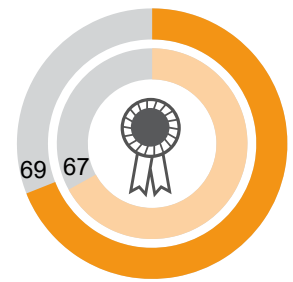


Figure 30
% PMQs: There is too much party political point scoring (agree)

Conversely, nearly half (48%) believe MPs do not behave professionally, only 16% think PMQs is not noisy and aggressive, and only five percent say that it is not a forum for excessive party political point scoring instead of answering the question.

Older people are more likely to dislike the party political point scoring than are younger age groups. Only 49% of 18-24 year olds agree, compared to 88% of those aged 65-74 and 77% of those aged 75 and above. So too younger people are more positive about the noisy nature of the encounter: just 40% of 18-24 year olds think PMQs is too noisy and aggressive compared to 69% of those aged 65-74 and 63% of those aged 75+.

Similar differences on these questions can also be discerned in relation to white and BME adults. BMEs are less likely to be disturbed by the party point scoring: 46% agree there is too much of it instead of answering the question compared to 72% of white citizens who say the same. The gap in relation to PMQs being noisy and aggressive is rather smaller: 42% of BMEs agree compared to 51% of white adults.

AB social classes are significantly more likely to think that PMQs has too much party point scoring (85%) than are DEs (54%) and that it is too noisy and aggressive (69% of ABs and just 39% of DEs). Looked at another way, those with higher educational attainment are more likely to consider

PMQs to be noisy and aggressive: 60% of those with graduate or higher education agree compared to 49% of those with no formal qualifications of any kind. And the higher the educational level, the more likely a person is to think that there is too much party political scoring: eight in 10 graduates (81%) say this compared to six in 10 of those with no higher than GCSE's or their equivalent (63%).

Content and issues: important and informative?

Given that the public feel so strongly that PMQs offers up too much party political point scoring rather than answering the question (69%), it is not a surprise that only a plurality but not a majority feel it deals with important issues facing the country (45%) and that it is informative (38%).

In contrast to questions about the conduct of PMQs, where some of the differences between groups are quite stark, there is a much greater degree of consensus across the population in relation to the content of it. However, there is a 10 percentage point gap between the youngest citizens (aged 18-24) and the oldest (aged 75+) and a 13 point difference between the highest and lowest social class groups.

The gender differences are broader in relation to whether PMQs deals with important issues facing the country. Men (50%) are more likely to say so than women (40%) but there are no differences in relation to white and BME adults.

Drama: excitement and pride?

Those who defend the status quo at PMQs often articulate their argument in the context of it being the height of political theatre, although our focus group research two years ago found that more often than not the public thought it was pantomime farce rather than grand democratic drama. While it excites many in the political and media class – particularly those within the Westminster bubble –

the same cannot be said of the public.

Just 22% think that PMQs is exciting to watch, and the differences between demographic groups on this issue are small in comparison to other questions.

Younger people (aged 18-24) are more likely to find it exciting (25%) compared to older citizens (16% of those aged 75+), as are men (25%) compared to women (19%) and BMEs (29%) compared to white adults (20%).

PMQs is also defended as a rare model of prime ministerial accountability admired and envied around the world. However, British citizens place limited pride in the spectacle. Although five points higher than in Audit 11, just 17% say it makes them proud of Parliament and again the gap between groups is relatively small indicating a broad consensus across the population as a whole on this question.

Men (20%) are more likely to express pride in it than women (14%) as are BME (27%) compared to white (16%) adults. The gap between social classes is just six percentage points between the highest and lowest scores, and just 10 percentage points between the highest and lowest age groups.

Figure 31
% PMQs: It's informative (agree)

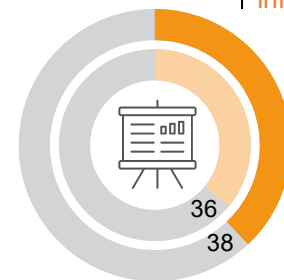
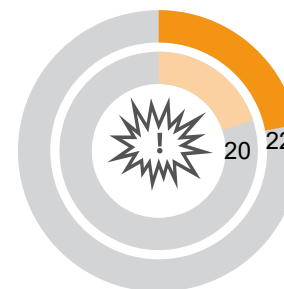


Figure 32
% PMQs: It's exciting to watch (agree)



Audit 11 (2014)
Audit 13 (2016)

Does it put people off politics?

Across the population as a whole almost a third of people (32%) say that PMQs puts them off politics; but the same proportion say that it does not (32%), and even more (37%) have no view on the issue.

The differences between gender, ethnicity and social class groups are modest as they are in relation to educational attainment. However, greater differences can be seen in relation to age: with 20% of 18-24s saying it puts them off politics, but more than double this number of 65-74s (47%) saying the same.

Differences arising from consumption levels

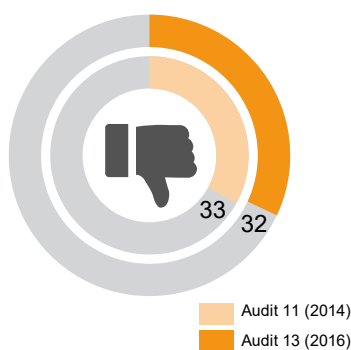


Figure 33

% PMQs: It puts me off politics (agree)

As we found in Audit 11, the extent of a citizen's exposure to PMQs is important to their perceptions. Those who have seen PMQs in full are less likely to disagree that it puts them off politics than are those who have seen it only in edited clip form. This

is not dissimilar to the results two years ago, although fewer in this latest poll are put off politics if they have seen PMQs only in clip form compared to Audit 11 (42%).

Looking at the net response by viewing mode, however, a more nuanced picture emerges. As Figure 34, shows, public attitudes in terms of 'it puts me off politics' in both full and edited form have improved compared to two years ago.

In contrast, if you watch PMQs in full, you are more likely to think that politics is exciting to watch than if you see it only in edited highlight form. And if you

have seen only clips in the last year you are more likely to think it deals with important issues facing the country than if you watch it in full, but you are no more likely to think it is informative.

It is possible that the opposition leader's approach of asking a question on a range of often under-reported issues as submitted by members of the public has some resonance here, as these shape the edited highlights shown on subsequent news bulletins. The public do appear to recognise that important issues facing the country are being dealt with to a greater extent than was the case two years ago. However, it is not possible to directly attribute this to Mr Corbyn's new approach and this aspect apart, public attitudes to the weekly sessions continue to be as negatively disposed to the culture and performance of PMQs as they were before.

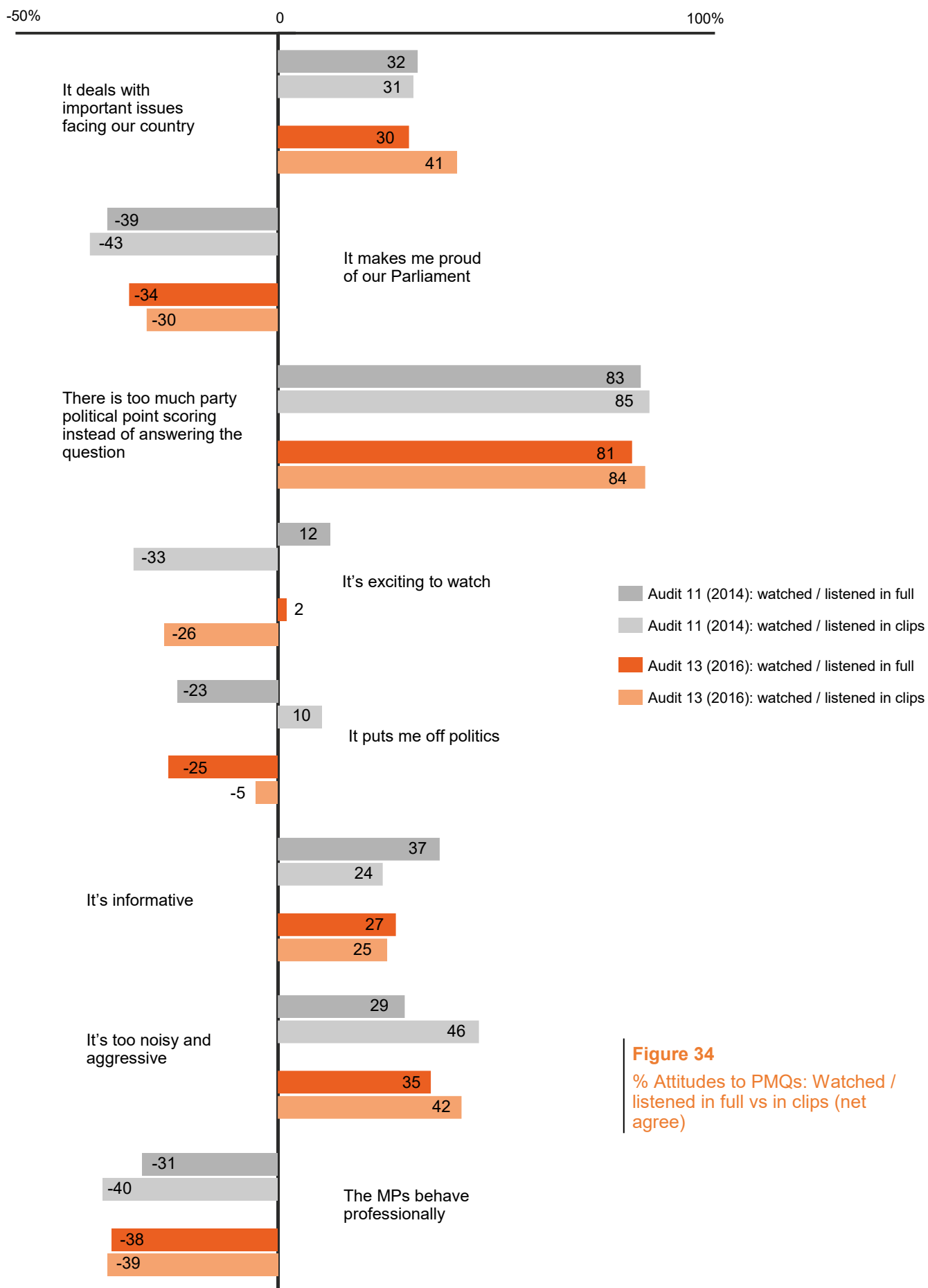


Figure 34
% Attitudes to PMQs: Watched / listened in full vs in clips (net agree)

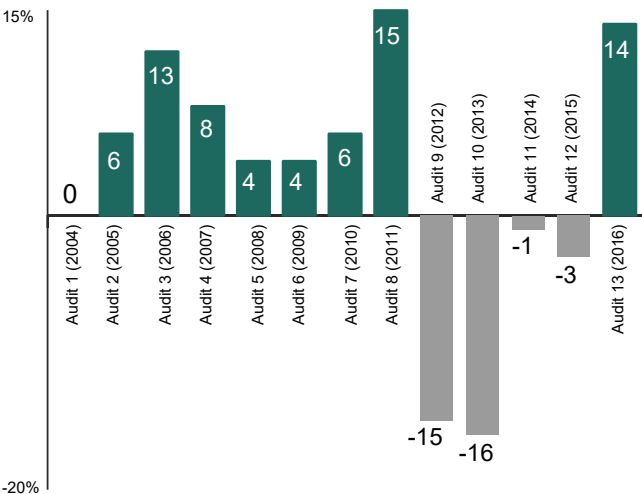
KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST

Among our most notable findings this year is that the public’s perceived levels of knowledge of and interest in politics have reached, respectively, the highest and second highest levels recorded in the history of the Audit tracker.

Britons claimed knowledge of politics has risen eight points to 55%, the highest result recorded in the 13-year Audit lifecycle. The last peak in knowledge followed the 2010 general election in Audit 8 (53%). The net score for perceived knowledge now stands at +11 points, and is only the third positive net score recorded in the Audit series.

Interest in politics has also risen by a corresponding eight points to 57%, putting it in second place in the ranking of interest results in the Audit series. The three highest scores for interest have all occurred in the Audits immediately following a general election (56% in Audit 3 following the 2005 election; and 58% in Audit 8 after the 2010 election) and all three are the only occasions when the net score for interest has risen above +10 points (at +13, +15 and +14 points chronologically).

Figure 35
% Net interest in politics



Interest in politics has fluctuated somewhat in the last few years but, with the exception of the rise in Audits 8 (2011) and 11 (2014), the trend-line has been a downward one since Audit 3 (2006).

However, once again, in this latest poll, we can see a reversal arising from an election. The question is

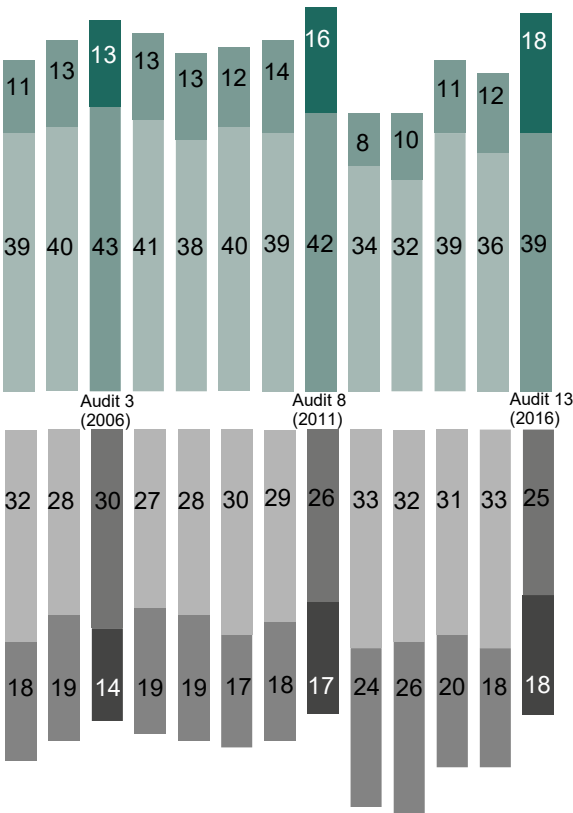


Figure 36
% Interest in politics

- Very interested
- Fairly interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested

whether this can be sustained or whether it will dissipate in the years that follow.

The groups most likely to say they are knowledgeable about and interested in politics are broadly similar, in line with other indicators of

engagement: namely male, older, white, higher educated, affluent, home-owning citizens.

Those with at least degree level education are just over twice as likely to be interested in politics than are those who have no formal qualifications. And there is a marked increase in levels of knowledge of politics between those with GCSE and equivalent education (41%) and those with at least A-Levels or the equivalent (65%). Similarly, those in social classes AB are more than twice as likely to claim to be knowledgeable about politics (83%) than are DEs (34%).

A significant gap in claimed knowledge can also be discerned in relation to housing tenure: those in some form of rented housing (private rented 40%; local authority rent 44%) are much less likely to be knowledgeable about politics compared to those who own property (62% of those who own outright or 65% of those buying with a mortgage).

There is also a marked 14-point difference in claimed knowledge between white (57%) and BME (43%) adults. And an even greater difference is found in respect of interest in politics where just over a third (35%) of BMEs claim to be at least 'fairly interested' compared to six in 10 white adults (60%) who say the same.

Similarly, there is an evident gender gap with men (62%) more likely than the national average to claim to be knowledgeable about politics and somewhat more likely than women (49%). However, when claimed knowledge is put to an actual test, we have found in previous Audit studies that men tend to over-claim and women to understate what they actually know. A corresponding picture can also be discerned in relation to interest in politics with men more

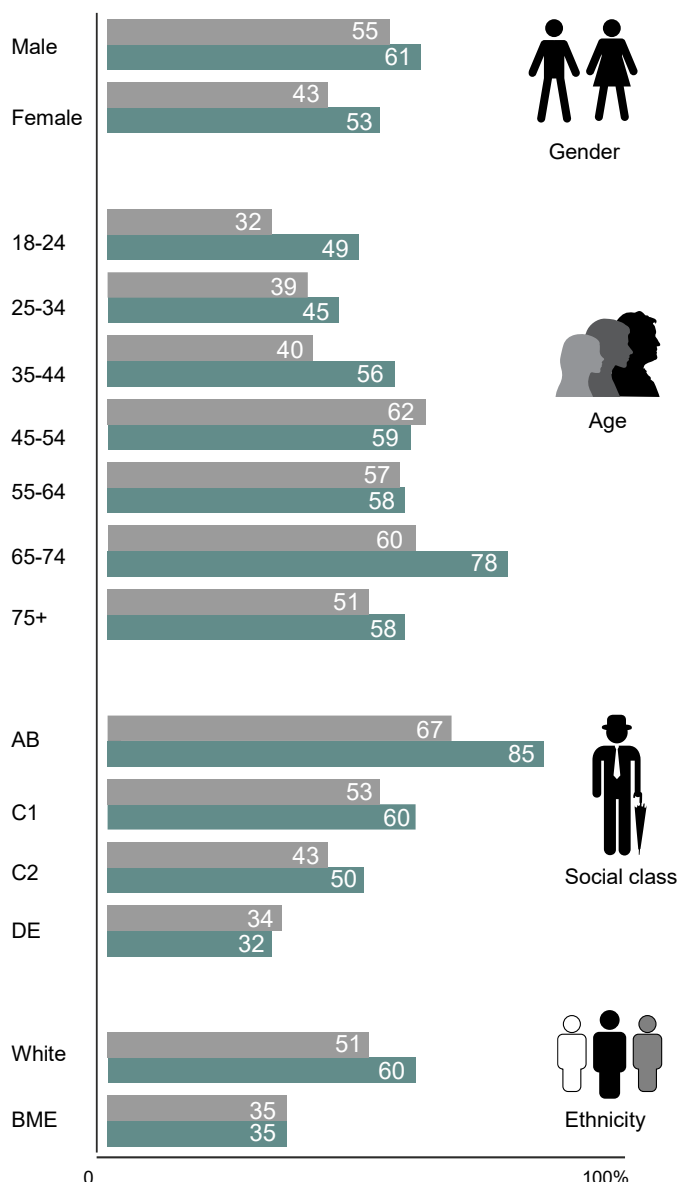


Figure 37
% Interest in politics by demographic group (very / fairly interested)

Audit 12 (2015)
Audit 13 (2016)

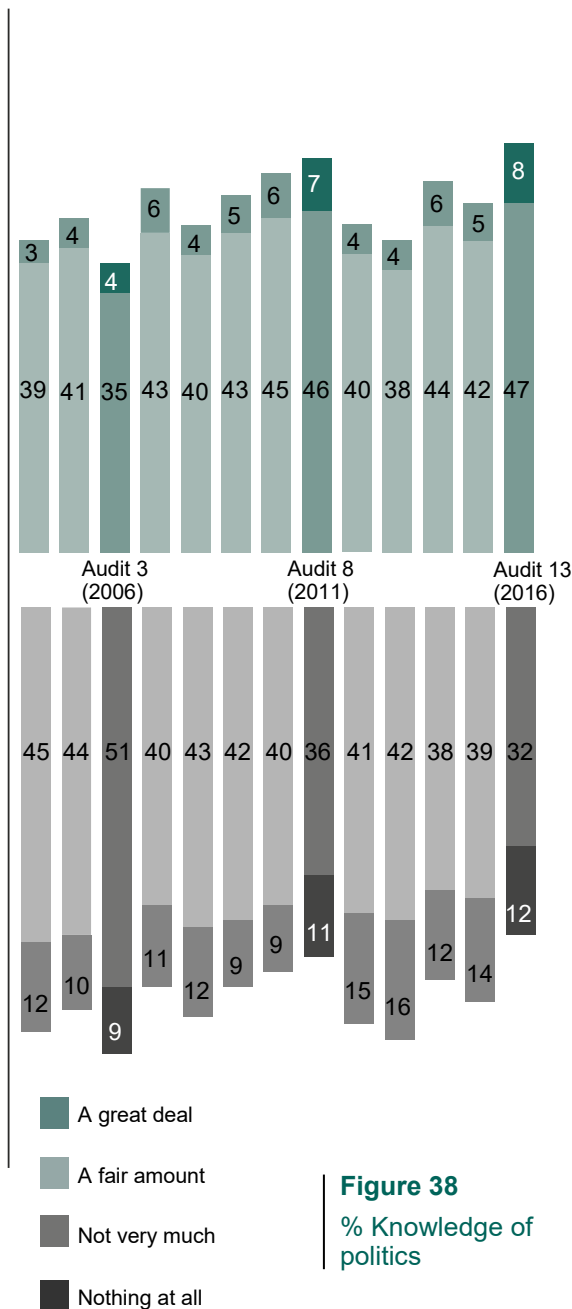


Figure 38
% Knowledge of politics

likely to claim interest (61%) than are women (53%).

Less than half of those earning up to £24,999 claim to be interested in politics whereas just under three-quarters of those earning above £25,000 say the same. As with knowledge, so too a significant gap in claimed interest can also be discerned in relation to housing tenure: those in some form of rented

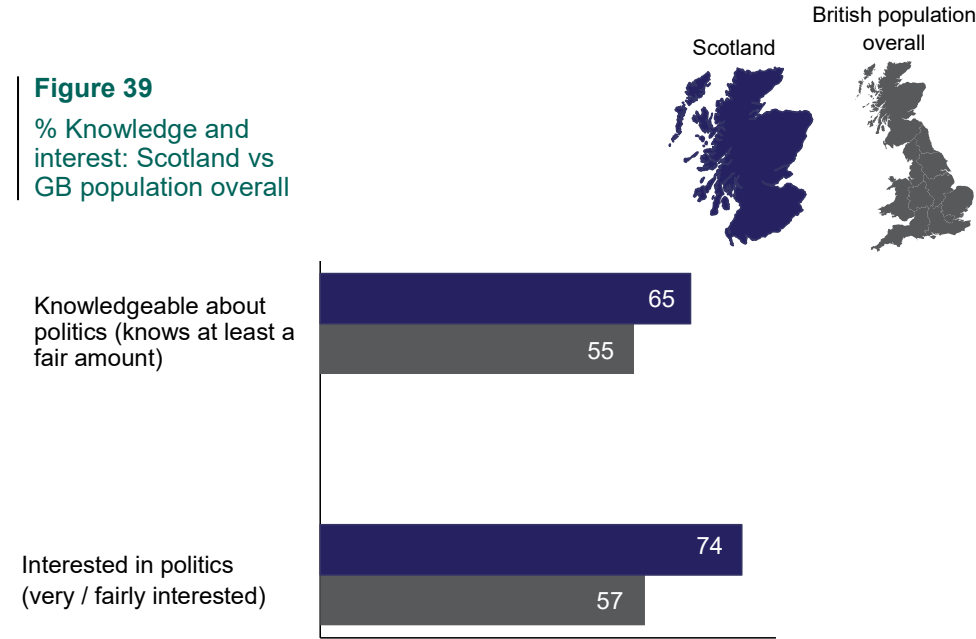
housing (private rented 44%; local authority rented 42%) are much less likely to be interested in politics compared to those who own property (65% of both those who own outright or are buying with a mortgage).

This year, while increases are evident among older age groups, there has been a particularly marked improvement in the engagement of the youngest citizens. A majority (51%) of 18-24 year olds now claim to know at least a fair amount about politics. This is significantly above the previous peak in knowledge for this age group at 38% in Audit 2 (in 2005). Similarly, half of 18-24 year olds (50%) claim to be interested in politics. This is the highest level of interest recorded in the Audit series for this age group and a 17-point increase on last year alone. A net positive score for interest in politics has never been recorded in the Audit for 18-24 year olds; this year's minus one percent score is the nearest that it has come. Again, with the singular exception of Audit 2, the highest net scores for interest among the youngest citizens occur in the years following a general election.

In last year's Audit we recorded that people in Scotland, in the aftermath of the independence referendum, were considerably more interested in and knowledgeable about politics than in previous years and significantly more engaged than the British population overall. This situation has not just been maintained but has improved still further this year: knowledge levels in Scotland have grown a further nine points, and interest levels have increased by 14 points. Citizens in Scotland thus have a higher degree of claimed knowledge of politics (65% versus 55%) and interest in politics (74% versus 57%) than the British population overall.

The referendum effect recorded in last year's Audit thus appears to have been augmented by the general election bounce in this Audit. It is therefore

likely, but not certain, that engagement levels in Scotland will be maintained at these relatively high levels in next year's Audit, given that in the intervening months there will be elections to the Scottish Parliament and the EU referendum.



ACTION AND PARTICIPATION

The proportion of people who report having undertaken some form of political activity to influence decisions, laws or policies has, over the last three years, remained broadly stable. This year, however, the election bounce – driving up participation through voting – means more people report having been politically active since we began tracking this in Audit 10.

Whereas a year ago in Audit 12 just over half the public (55%) said that they had not done any of the activities listed in the previous year, that has declined to two in five people (39%) in this latest poll.

Two actions in particular have seen a significant increase in the year. Firstly, the number claiming to have voted has increased from 27% to 47% (but as noted earlier this remains lower than actual turnout at the general election suggesting under-reporting linked to the wording of the question in relation to the exercise of influence). Secondly, those claiming to have donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaign organisation has increased by 11 percentage points to 24%.

When asked what activities they would be prepared to do if they felt strongly enough about an issue, one in five people (19%) say they would not be prepared to do any of the options listed. For those who are prepared to act, the most popular activities are those that might be described as the most 'direct' – vote in an election (55%), contact an elected representative (52%), and sign a petition (35% for paper and 34% for electronic).

Interestingly, the number prepared to donate money to charity or a campaign organisation in the future is marginally lower than those who claim to have done so in the last year, although the difference is not statistically significant.

By some way, donating or paying a membership fee to a political party is the least popular of all the proposed actions, with just 10% claiming they would be willing to do so in the future if they felt strongly enough about an issue. This has consistently been the least popular option in each of the last three Audits. Given that, in contrast, contacting an elected representative and petitioning rank so highly, it suggests that the public might not see political parties as vehicles by which they are likely to be able to exercise influence on policy issues. That said, the number of people prepared to donate or join a party in the future is double this year what it was in Audit 10 (2013) but this is from a very low base.

Those who say they have undertaken some form of political action, or would be prepared to do so in the future, can broadly be characterised as white, middle aged, highly educated and affluent citizens. In terms of the propensity to participate, there is no statistical difference in relation to gender.

White adults are twice as likely to report having undertaken one or more actions as are BME citizens: the former have a mean score of 1.7 for the number of mentions of actions they have undertaken, compared to just 0.76 for the latter. The mean number of actions taken by those with degree level education is four times higher than those citizens with no formal qualifications (2.75 versus 0.73), and for those earning above £25,000 it is three times higher (2.54 versus 0.9).

The most active are those in the middle age brackets of 45-54 (with 2.18 mean number of mentions) and those aged 55-64 (2.03 mean score). In contrast, the youngest citizens, 18-24 year olds, have a mean score of just 1.07.

Looking at their propensity for future action, those aged 45-54 express the greatest willingness to undertake one or more actions with a mean score

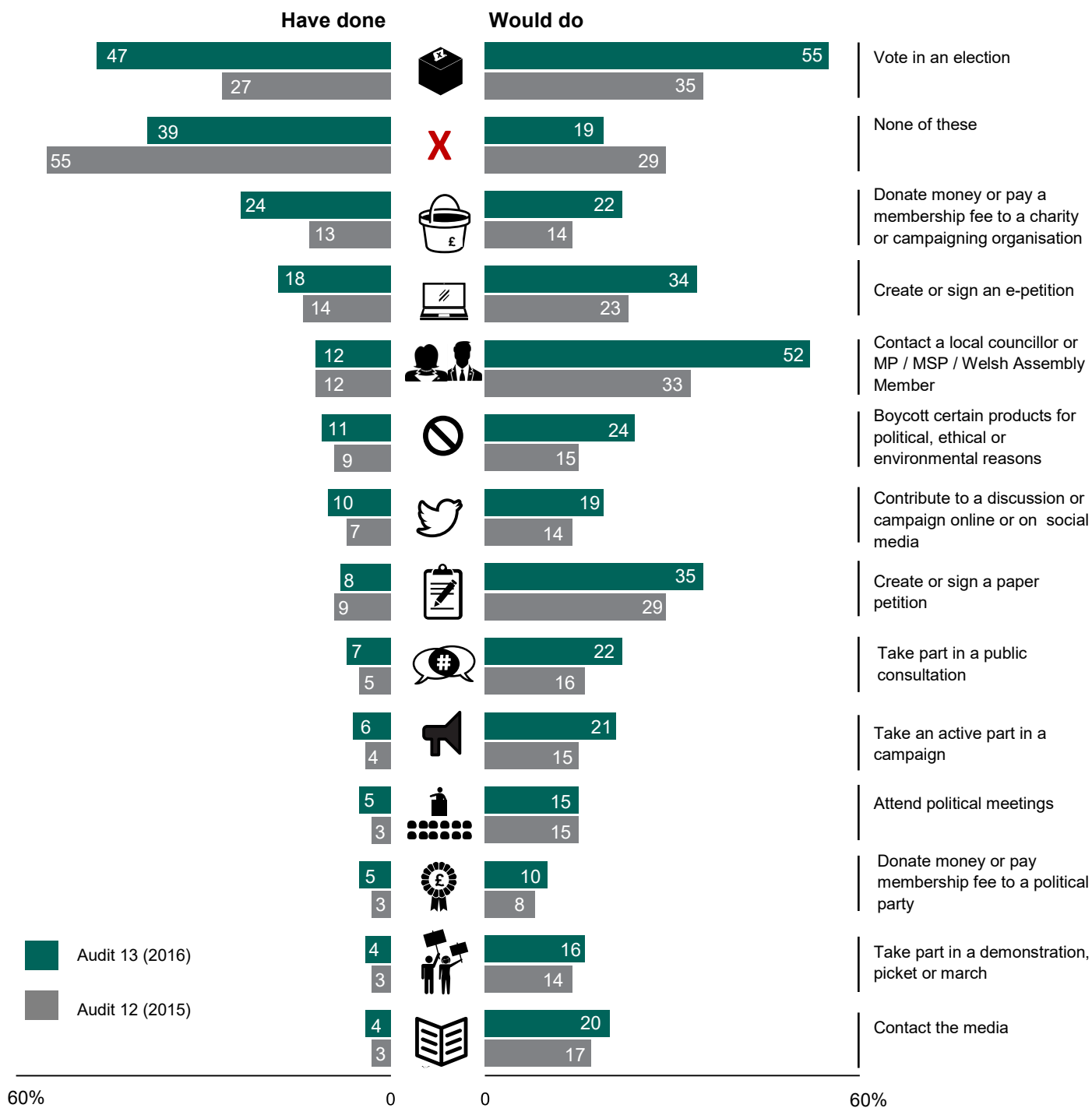
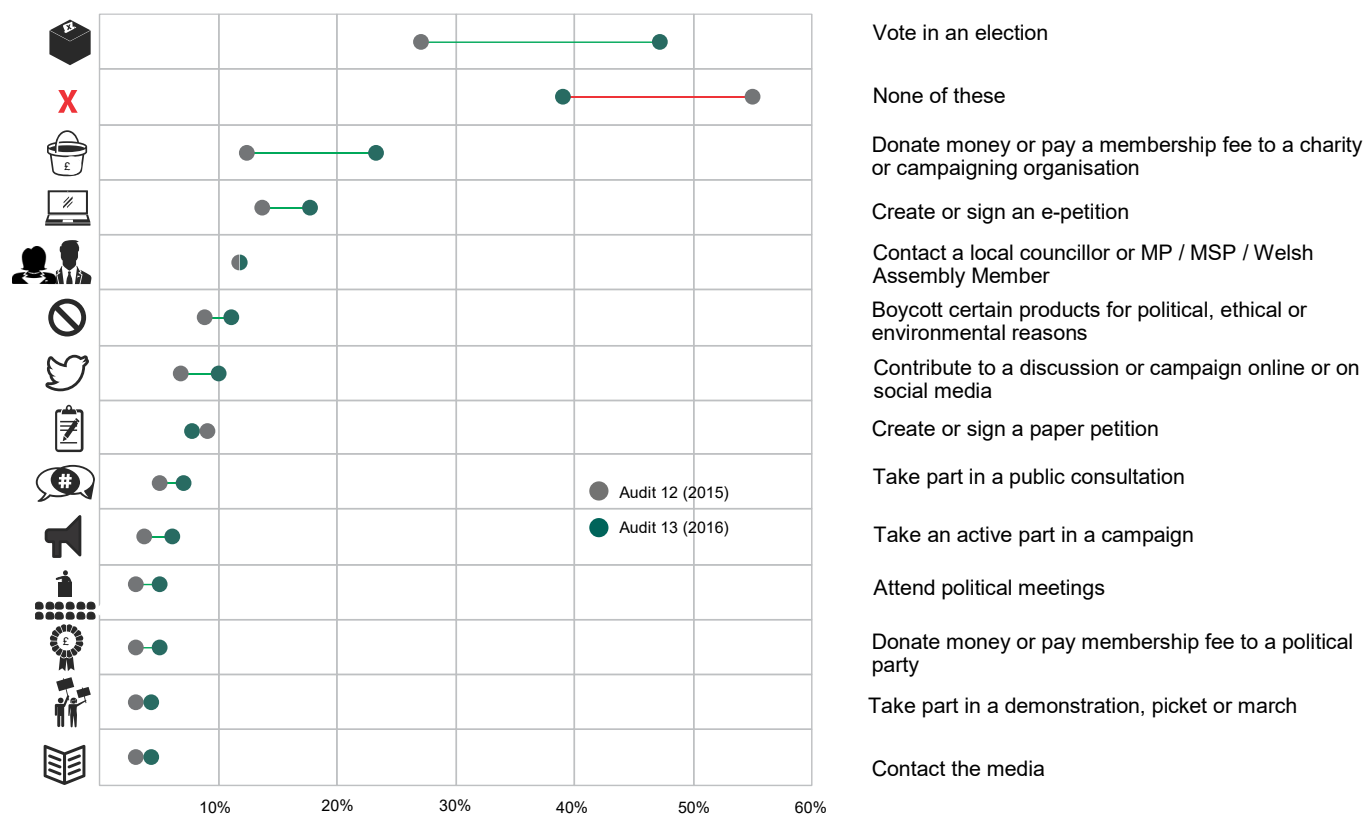


Figure 40

% Political activities: have done in the past 12 months vs would do if felt strongly enough about an issue in the future

Figure 41
% Political activities: have done in the past 12 months



of 4.44. There are also significant rises among white adults, those with A-Level education or above, and those earning £25,000 or more.

Although the potential participation rates of all groups are greater than their actual participation rates, the growth in propensity to participate continues to be greatest among the groups that are already the most active.

That said, 46% of 18-24 year olds report having done something, considerably below the national average of 61%. However, the gap is much closer when their potential participation is measured: 77% of 18-24 year olds say they would be prepared to undertake some form of action if they felt strongly about an issue in the future, just four points below the national average.

DEs are also well below the national average in terms of actual levels of political participation in the last 12 months. Just 41% report having undertaken some form of activity, which is virtually half of those at the top end of the social scale (81% of ABs). However, they remain well below average in terms of their willingness to do something in the future if motivated strongly enough by an issue they care about: just 63% say they would be prepared to do so compared to the national average of 81%.

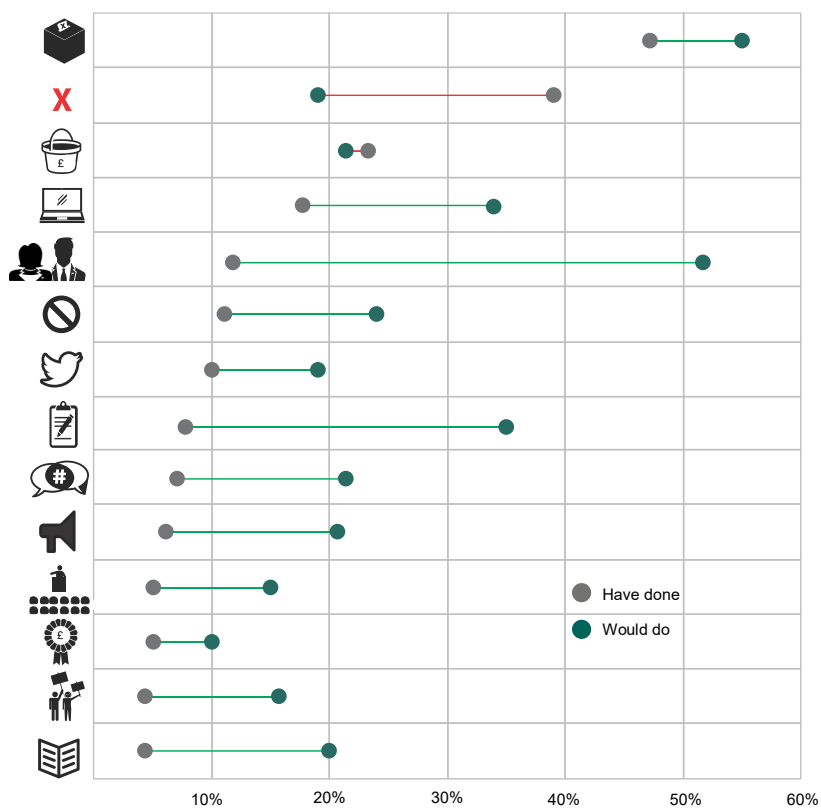


Figure 42

% Political activities: have done in the past 12 months vs would do if felt strongly enough about an issue in the future

EFFICACY AND SATISFACTION

One of the most striking features of the Audit series is that the public's sense of satisfaction with our system of governing and perception of their own potential influence within that system remains low and is broadly unaffected by changes each year in relation to other engagement indicators. Counter intuitively, however, some of the most traditionally disengaged groups in the Audit series – primarily young people and BME adults – are more likely to express greater satisfaction and sense potential influence than other more generally engaged groups. Against a backdrop of improved engagement in so many areas this year, that picture remains true in this Audit.

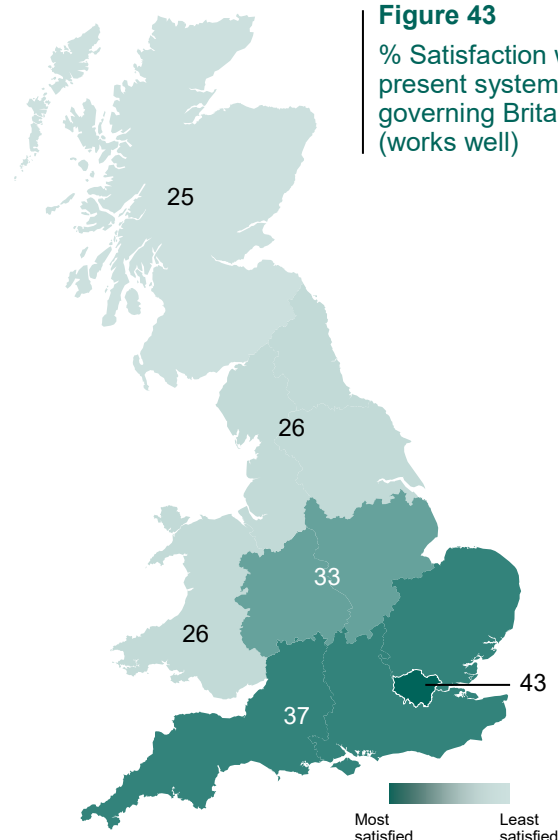
Once again, only a third of Britons (33%) express satisfaction with the way the country is governed, with three in five people (63%) saying that it needs improvement. Overall, fewer people this year think it 'needs a great deal of improvement' (23%) and a few more think it 'could be improved in small ways but mainly works well' (31%) compared to last year.

In four out of the last seven Audits satisfaction levels fell below 30%; so this latest result represents a return to the earlier trend-line. It is also consistent with the findings after the last two general elections in Audit 3 in 2006 (34%) and Audit 8 in 2011 (31%).

As with the findings about Parliament, those furthest from Westminster are more likely to express dissatisfaction with our system of governing. Just over a third of Scots (34%), for example, think that the system needs a great deal of improvement, as do 29% of those living in the north of England and 26% of those in Wales. Only 17% of Londoners say the same. Conversely, four in 10 Londoners (39%) think the system mainly works well and could be improved only in small ways, compared to roughly a quarter of Scots (25%), northerners (24%) and the Welsh (26%) who say the same.

Figure 43

% Satisfaction with present system of governing Britain (works well)

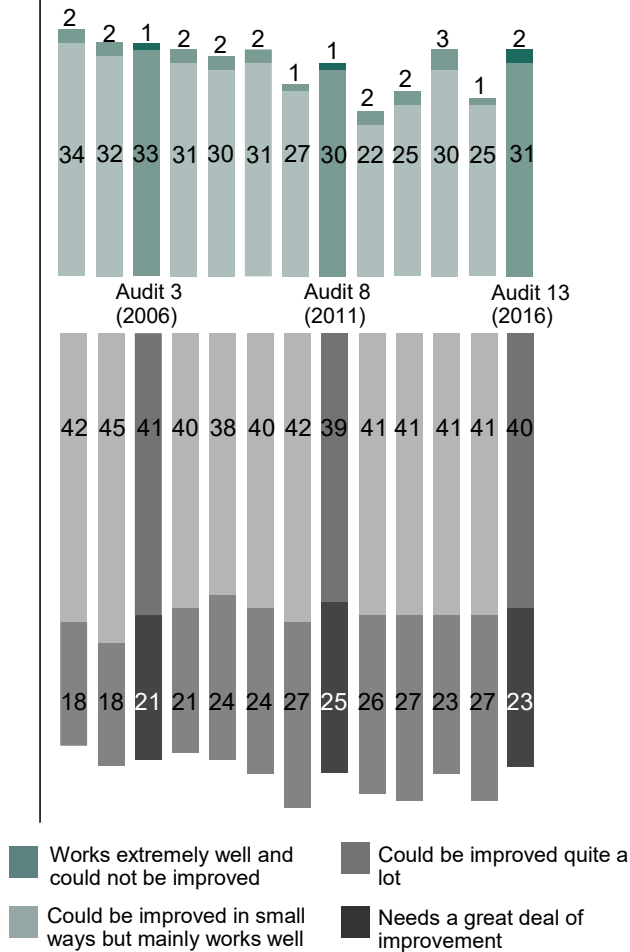


The net satisfaction rate among different groups reveals that women are less likely to be satisfied than men (-26% versus -36%), and white adults are considerably less likely to be satisfied than BMEs (-32% versus -18%). ABs remain more likely to be satisfied than other groups but the gap between C1s (net -42%) and DEs (-37%) is relatively narrow compared to other questions.

In terms of age, those most likely to be dissatisfied with our system of governing overall are older people: those aged 55-64, with a net satisfaction score of -44%, or aged 75+ with a net satisfaction score of -39%. The youngest people aged 18-24 are a little more inclined to be positive about the system, with a net satisfaction score of -35%, as are those aged 35-44 with a net score of -26%. The most positive group, however, are those in their mid

Figure 44

% Satisfaction with present system of governing Britain



The trend in public attitudes on this question remains remarkably stable running from a low of 30% to a peak of 37%; regardless of circumstances never more than one in three people feel that their involvement in politics can really make a difference.

Again, Londoners are more likely to feel empowered to change the way the country is run; 43% agree that the involvement of people like themselves could make a difference compared to just 26% of Welsh and 30% of Scottish people who say the same. Women are also less likely than men to feel empowered to make a difference; they have a net score of -9% on this question whereas men register a net score four points above the national average of -4%.

As with satisfaction with our system of governing, BME adults are also more positive about the efficacy of their own potential involvement in politics than are white citizens. There is a significant 26-

20s-30s who register a net satisfaction score of -22%.

Despite the improvement in other engagement indicators, the public's continuing sense of dissatisfaction is matched by the extent to which they continue to feel relatively disempowered in terms of their own capacity to influence the political system. Just over a third (35%) agree that if people like themselves get involved in politics they really can change the way the UK is run. This is the highest recorded result since Audit 7 in 2010 (37%) and marks a three point increase on last year but it is not a statistically significant increase, and is still marginally lower than was recorded at the start of the Audit series in 2004 (37%).

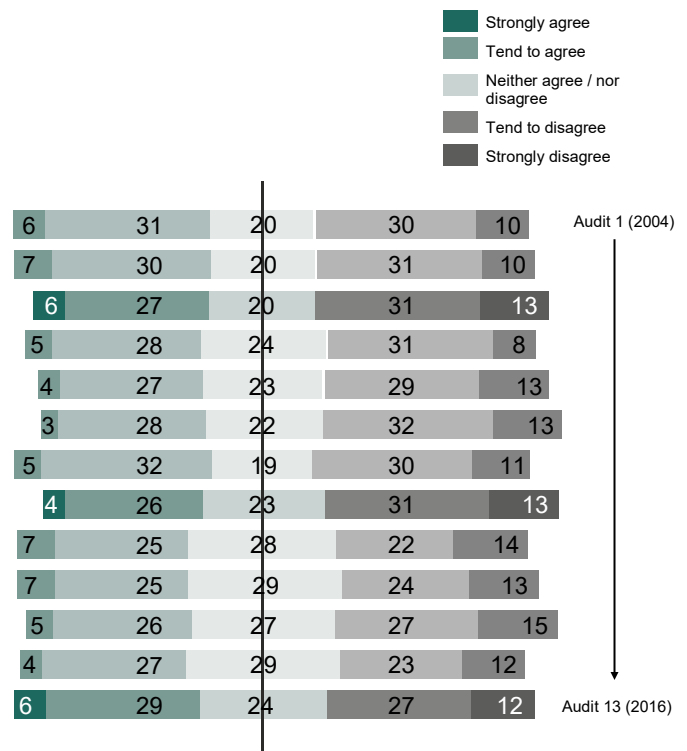


Figure 45

% When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the UK is run

EFFICACY AND SATISFACTION

point gap between their net agreement scores on this question (+19% versus -7% respectively).

The usual level of engagement is also inverted when it comes to different age groups. Generally speaking, across the range of Audit questions, older adults tend to be more positive and engaged. However, the older you are the less likely you are to agree that if people like you get involved in politics it can make a difference to the way the country is run. Only 29% of those aged 65+ agree, compared to 40% of 18-24 year olds. In terms of net agreement, of all the age groups it is 18-24 year olds that register the most positive response on this question with a net score of +6% compared to -14% of those aged 65-74 and -18% of those aged 75 and above.

INFLUENCE AND INVOLVEMENT

The public's perceived influence over and desire for involvement in decision-making at the local level appears to have rebounded following a decline below the trend-line in last year's Audit. In contrast, however, citizens' sense of influence over decision-making nationally, following the general election, has declined a little (four points), although their desire for involvement in national decision-making has increased by a similar amount.

Just one in four (25%) British adults feel influential in local decision-making, and this falls to just one in eight (13%) where decision-making in the country as a whole is concerned.

Conversely, eight in 10 people (85%) feel they have not much or no influence at all nationwide, and just over seven in 10 (73%) say the same about local decision-making.

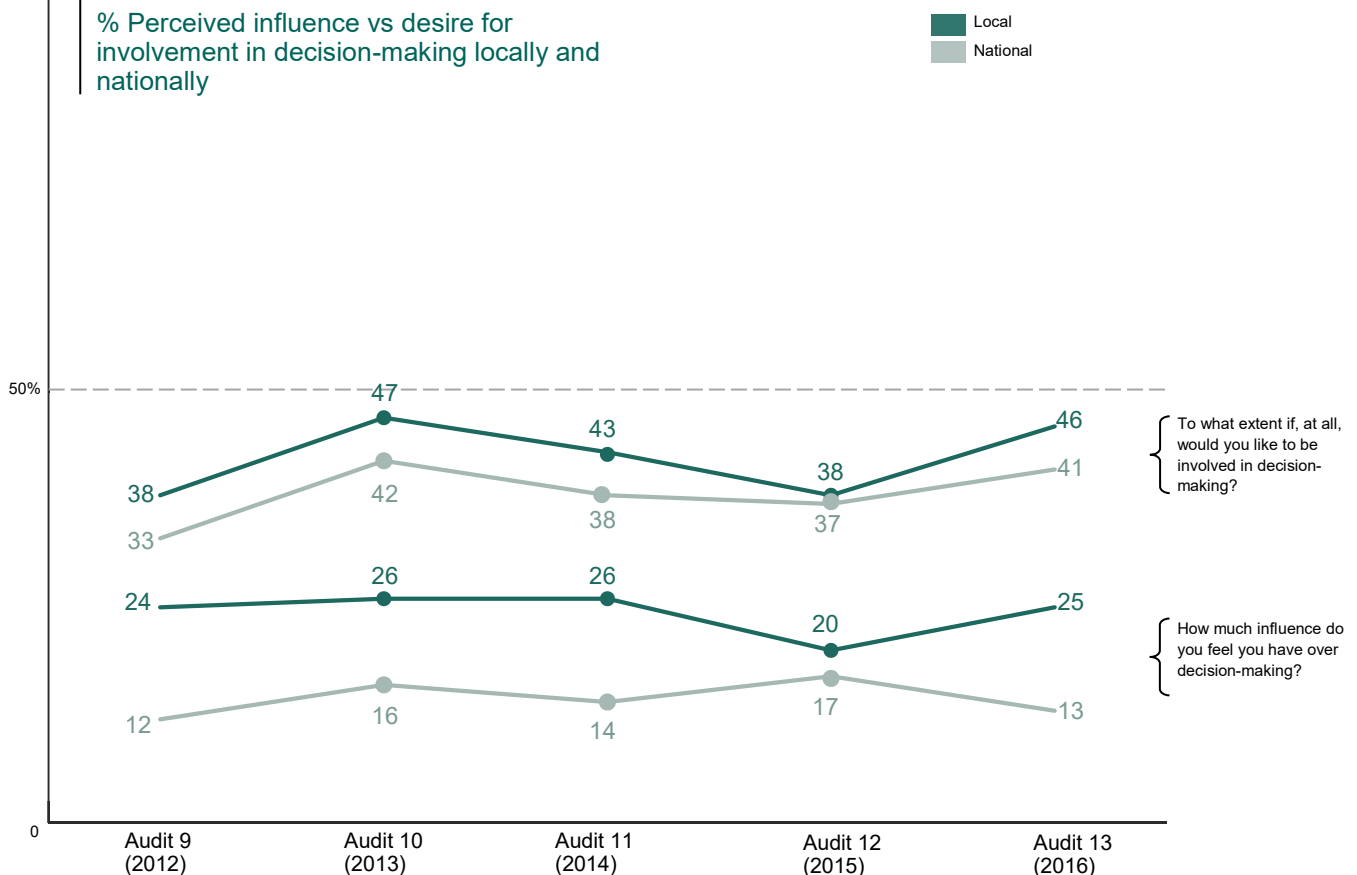
However, just under half the public (46%) would like to be involved in local decision-making and two in five (41%) would like to be involved in decision-making in the country as a whole.

Both of the desire for involvement indicators have improved this year (by eight and four percentage points respectively compared to Audit 12), are back in line with the trend since we began tracking these questions in Audit 6 (2009), and are not dissimilar to the results we saw in Audit 8 (2011) following the last general election.

Once again, it is the more affluent and better educated who are most likely to already feel influential and to desire involvement in local decision-making. Those in social class AB and with A-Level qualifications or above are more likely to feel influential locally than other groups.

Figure 46

% Perceived influence vs desire for involvement in decision-making locally and nationally



In contrast, eight in 10 people with GCSEs (79%) and no qualifications at all (80%) feel they have little or no influence on decisions at the local level. The latter are also much less likely to desire involvement locally in future: those with A-Level or university education are more than twice as likely to want to be involved in local decisions than those with no formal qualifications.

In terms of national decision-making, social class and education levels are similarly important determinants of a citizen's desire to be involved in the future. Nearly six in 10 people with graduate education (59%) and A-Levels (56%) claim to want such involvement compared to just two in 10 of those with no formal qualifications (22%) who say the same.

But for both local and national decision-making an important difference in relation to age can be discerned. Younger people are more likely to want to be involved in decision-making than are older citizens. Nearly half (48%) of those aged 18-34 report a desire for involvement nationally compared to just 34% of those aged 55+ who say the same. Similarly, at the local level, those aged 18-34 are more likely to desire local involvement, with those aged 18-24 being the age group with the highest net score (+10%).

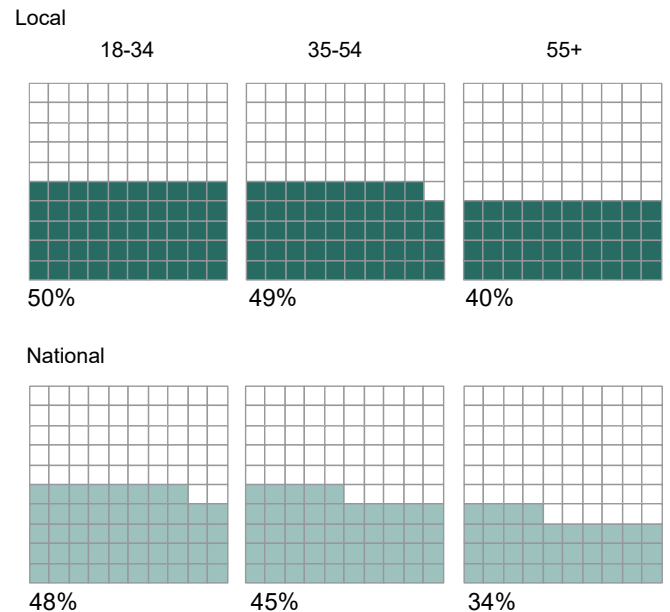


Figure 47

% Desire for involvement in decision-making locally vs nationally by age group

METHODOLOGY

This 13th Audit report is based on an opinion poll conducted by Ipsos MORI with a representative quota sample of 1,231 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. The research was carried out face-to-face in people's homes as part of Ipsos MORI's omnibus survey between 11 and 29 December 2015.

Booster samples were included to make comparisons between England, Scotland and Wales, and between the white and BME populations, more statistically reliable. A total of 269 BME, 181 Scottish and 72 Welsh interviews were held.

As in previous Audit waves the data was then weighted to match the population profile by Ipsos MORI, using their Political Monitor weights. These are regularly updated to incorporate the most recent national data.

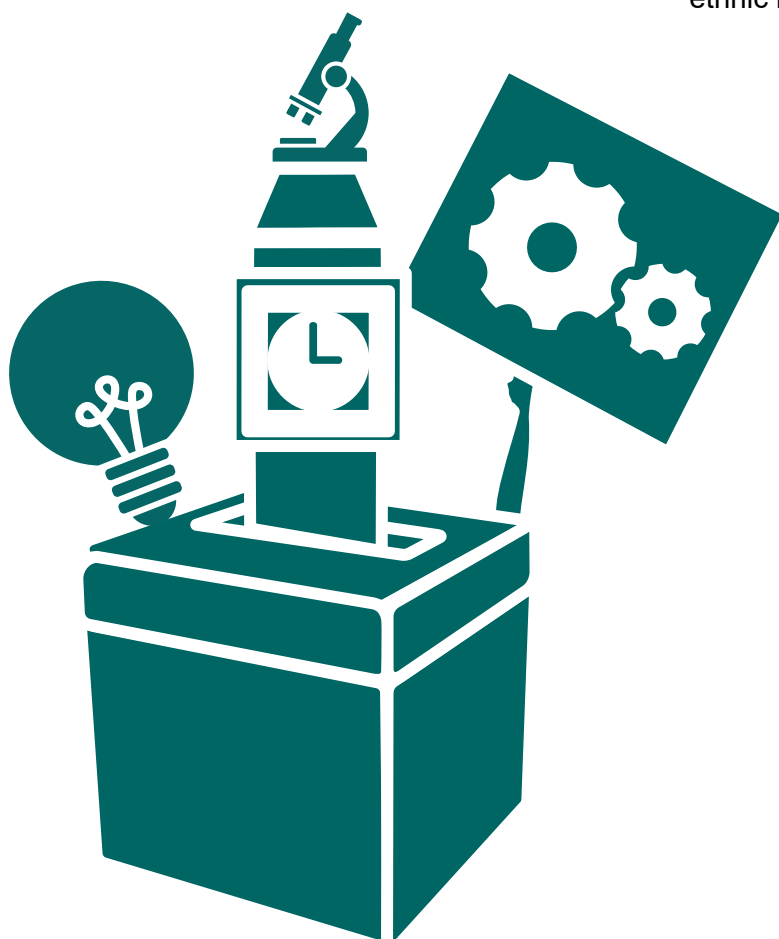
Weighting

As the Audit is a tracking study, targets are updated to reflect population change where necessary but the changes in the weighting scheme are kept to a minimum to allow for longitudinal comparability. However, elements of the sample design (the inclusion of boosters) and other factors sometimes necessitate adding extra controls to prevent biases arising in the figures. This year Ipsos MORI retained all the weighting factors used in previous Audit waves but refined two of them to prevent sub-national distortions within the national totals, and added a new weight to maximise the accuracy of the sample.

Tenure: in previous Audit waves, tenure overall was used. This year, tenure has been applied by region. This reflects that fact that there were two boosters (Scotland and Wales) as well as a BME booster which, because of the distribution of the ethnic minority population, is particularly

concentrated in London. Both London and Scotland have distinctive tenure patterns, and weighting by tenure within regions ensures these cannot distort the overall profile.

Social grade: in previous Audit waves, social grade overall was used. This year social grade has been applied by age. Those in the more affluent social classes are more likely to be politically engaged, but the difference is bigger among the young than among older people. This means that findings could be distorted if the social class profile of each age group was wrong, even if the overall class profile of the sample was correct. Weighting by social grade within age prevents any such distortion taking place. (It should be noted that the BME booster will also have had the knock-on effect of raising the proportion of young people in the



| Weight | Source |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Age by sex | Office of National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates 2013 |
| 2. Work status by sex | Labour Market Statistics March 2014; Regional Labour Market Statistics March 2014; Labour Force Survey Quarterly Supplement Oct-Dec 2013 |
| 3. Social grade by age | National Readership Survey October 2014-September 2015 |
| 4. Car in household | National Readership Survey October 2014-September 2015 for region |
| 5. Ethnic group | Office for National Statistics Census 2011 |
| 6. Tenure by region | National Readership Survey October 2014-September 2015 for region |
| 7. Education attainments by age | Office for National Statistics Census 2011 |

we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody in Britain had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, the variation between the sample results and the true values can be predicted from the knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which this prediction can be made is usually 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The Audit sample size has a margin of up to +/-3.6% at the 95% confidence level. (This allows for the "design effect": because the data is weighted, the effective sample size is smaller than the real sample size.) So if 50% of people give a particular response we can be sure (19 times out of 20) that the actual figure would be between 46.4% and 53.6%.

Change in polling contractor

Ipsos MORI conducted the first eight Audit surveys (2004-11), followed by Audit 11 (2014) and now this latest study. TNS BMRB conducted the surveys for Audits 9 and 10 (2012-13) while GfK NOP were responsible for Audit 12 (2015).

Since the 2010 general election there has been more fluctuation in the engagement results than in earlier Audits. This period has been one of considerable political change – for example the advent of a period of coalition government, economic austerity, the Scottish independence referendum and now the unexpected outcome of the 2015 general election – and this may account for such fluctuations. But it also raises the question of whether there has been a 'contractor effect' on the results, although the pattern of change across Audits 9-13 (2012-16) has been neither uniform nor unidirectional.

The requirements we set out for the polling contractor are the same for each Audit survey: ~1,000 face-to-face in-home interviews with a representative quota sample of GB adults aged 18+

unweighted sample, increasing the risk that such distortions may occur if steps are not taken to prevent them.)

Education by age: education has not been used as a weight in previous Audit waves. As with social grade, education levels are linked to political engagement. By breaking down this variable by age this may help to correct for any potential oversampling of engaged young people.

Sampling tolerances

All results are subject to sampling tolerances. This means that not all differences are statistically significant. The people in the survey are only samples of the 'total' population of Great Britain, so

METHODOLOGY

weighted to the national population profile. However, minor differences in the approach to sampling and weighting adopted by each contractor could have an impact on the findings.

percentage point between findings reported here and those in previous Audit studies.

Marginal differences could arise because each contractor uses different geographical locations as their sampling points across the country, which might mean that their samples differ slightly. It is also possible that minor differences could occur as a result of a variable approach to interviewing people on the ground arising from different interviewer-training practices adopted by each contractor. Different polling companies also adopt weighting targets for social class based on different sources of information: for example, Ipsos MORI weight to social class targets based on the National Readership Survey, while TNS BMRB used the Broadcasters Audience Research Board. Findings on some questions may reflect this difference.

While striving to minimise variation in the future we will continue to monitor the impact any differences in contractor methodology may have on subsequent Audits, and will continue to highlight these issues in future reports so that readers and other researchers may reflect on them in the context of political engagement trends across the Audit life-cycle.

Percentages

Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this may be due to computer rounding or because multiple answers were permitted for a question.

Some graphs and tables may also not add up to 100% if 'don't knows' or refused responses have not been included.

Data has been analysed by rounding weighted counts of responses to the nearest whole number before calculating percentages. As a result there may, in some cases, be a difference of 1

ENDNOTES

¹ Between November 2011 and March 2012 we conducted 14 focus groups across the country to help us explore public attitudes to politics, particularly focusing on their perceptions of the political system and what they would most like to change in order to improve it. In half of these groups, unprompted, participants raised their concerns about Prime Minister's Question time. Frequently they used the analogy of the school child or theatre: MPs were condemned for behaving immaturely and childishly as if they were in a classroom or comedy show rather than Parliament. To explore this issue in more depth we subsequently conducted four online focus groups with those people highlighted in the Audit series as most likely to be disengaged: those aged 18-34, female C2DE voters aged 35+, and non-voters at the previous general election. The focus groups across the country were conducted jointly with Professors Colin Hay (University of Sheffield/ Sciences Po, Paris) and Gerry Stoker (University of Southampton). The work was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (RES-00-22-441, 'Anti-politics: characterising and accounting for political disaffection'). The offline focus groups were undertaken with support from the House of Commons Group for Information on the Public.

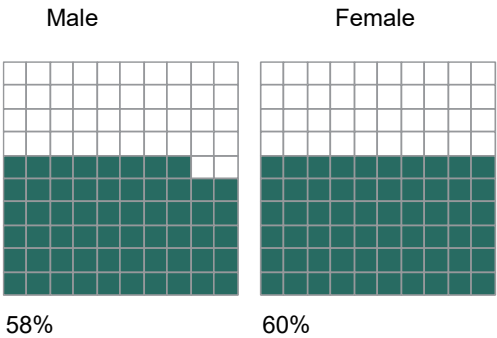
² See Hansard Society (2014), [Tuned In or Turned Off? Public attitudes to Prime Minister's Questions](#), (Hansard Society: London); and Hansard Society (2014), [Audit of Political Engagement 11: The 2014 Report](#), (Hansard Society: London).

³ Following the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, we repeated the Audit 11 survey questions in September 2015 after his first appearance at PMQs. The results on this occasion suggested that the public were more positive about the new style PMQs. However, as we made clear at the time, the results were to be treated cautiously due to important methodological differences. The YouGov survey was an online panel poll rather than the face-to-face random quota sample survey conducted in peoples' homes that we use for the

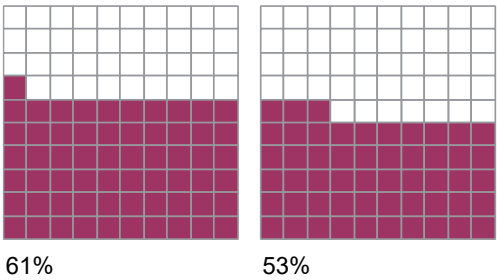
Audit. The September 2015 results were therefore indicative but not directly comparable with those in Audit 11 or with the latest data presented in this report. See ['Still Turned Off? Public Attitudes to People's PMQ's'](#), (London: Hansard Society, October 2015).



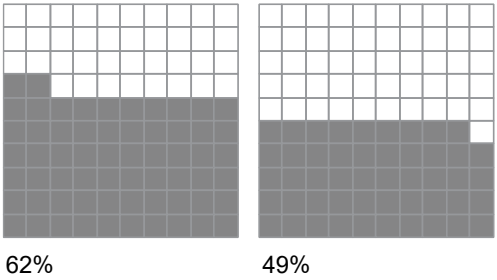
Certainty to vote
(absolutely certain - score 10
out of 10)



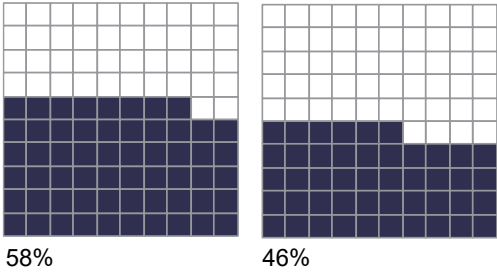
Interest in politics
(very / fairly interested)



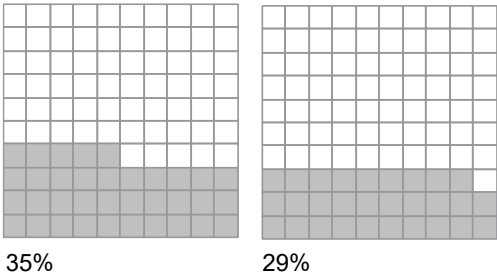
Knowledge of politics
(knows at least a fair amount)



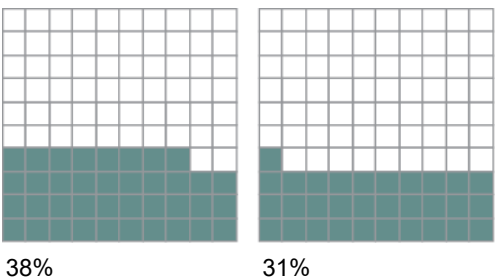
Knowledge of Parliament
(knows at least a fair amount)



Satisfaction with present
system of governing
(satisfied it works well)



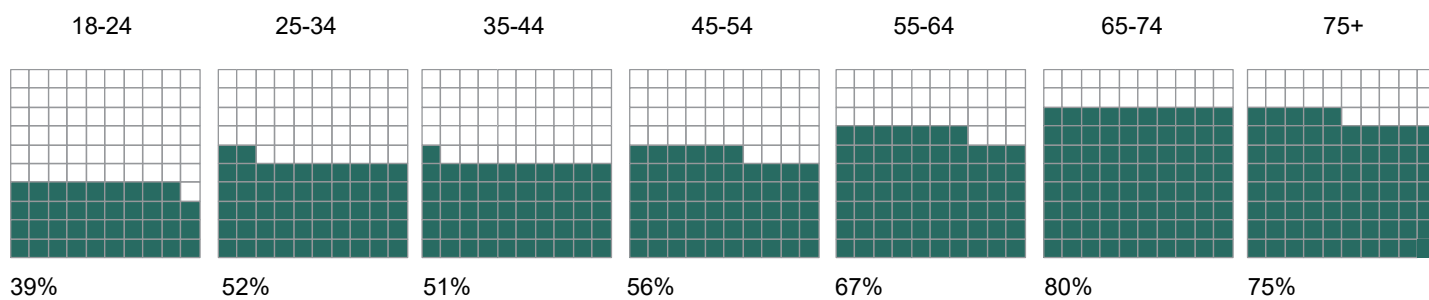
Feel getting involved is
effective (agree)



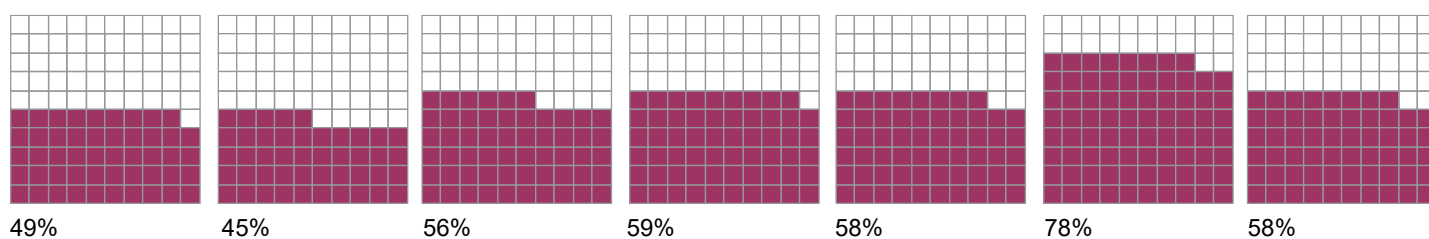
AGE



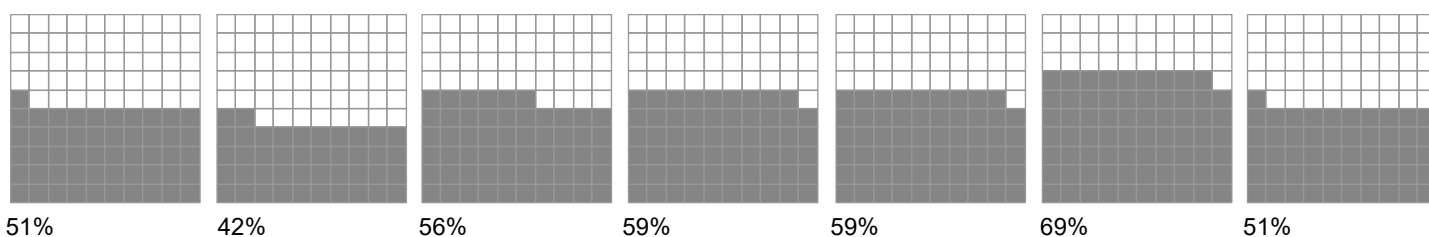
Certainty to vote
(absolutely certain - score 10 out of 10)



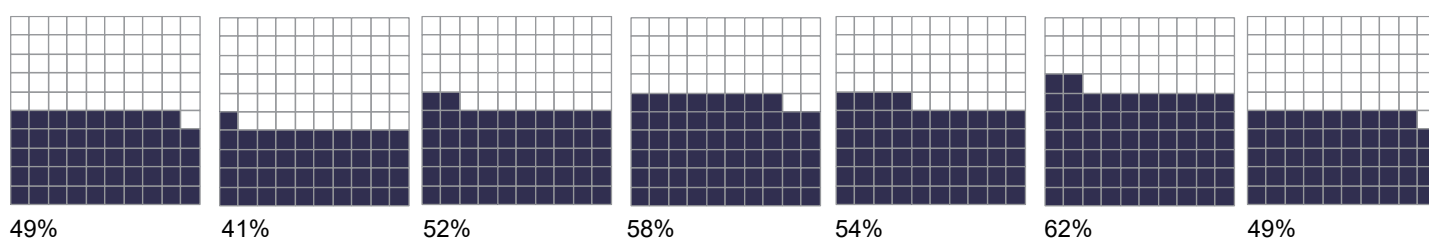
Interest in politics (very / fairly interested)



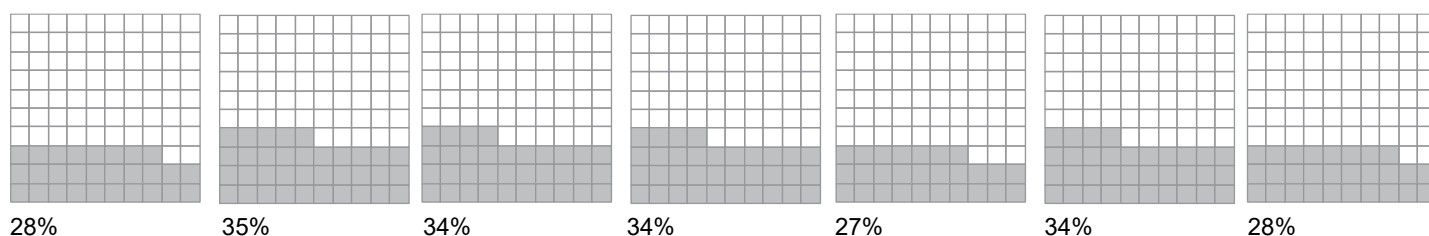
Knowledge of politics (knows at least a fair amount)



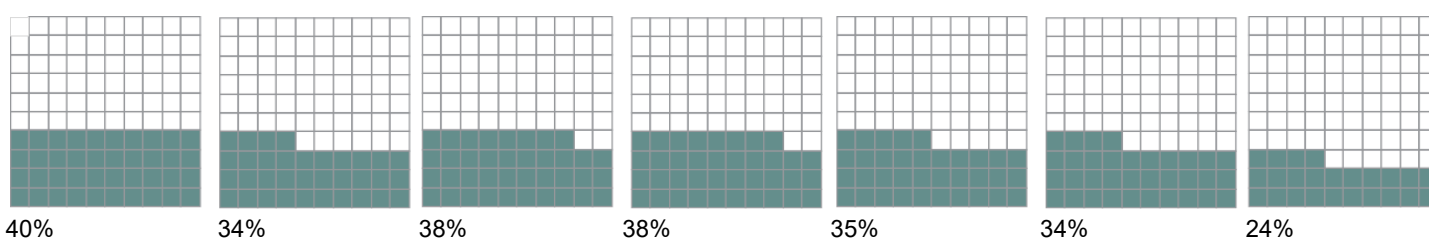
Knowledge of Parliament (knows at least a fair amount)



Satisfaction with present system of governing (satisfied it works well)



Feel getting involved is effective (agree)

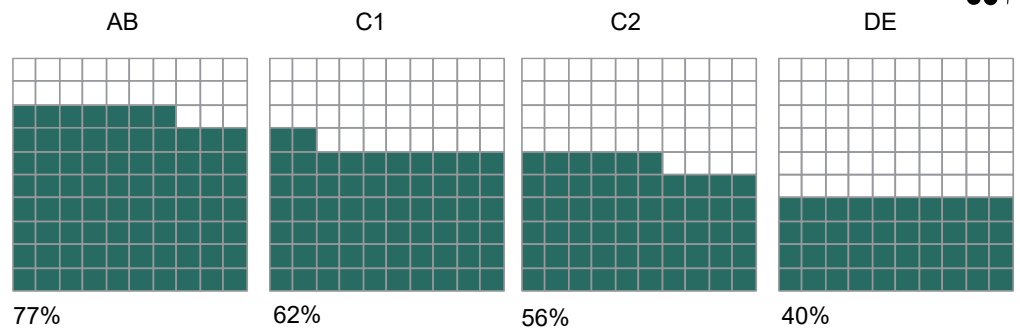


DEMOGRAPHICS

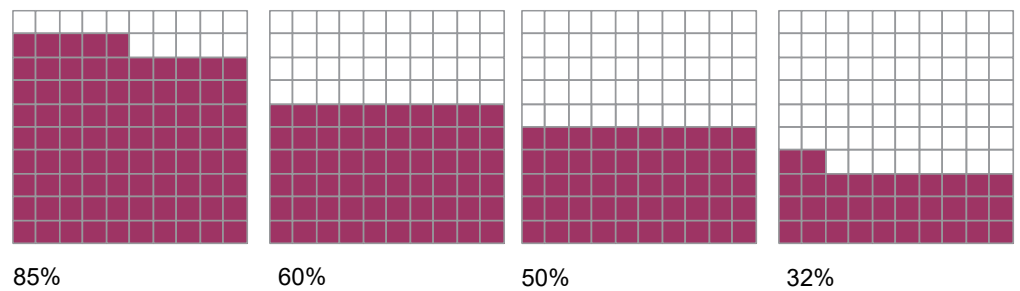
SOCIAL CLASS



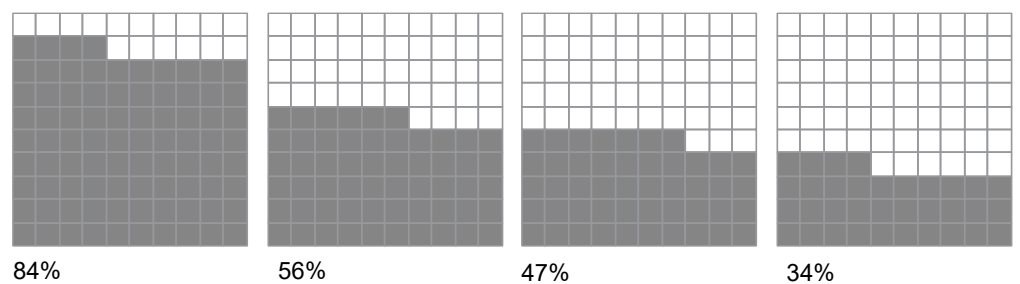
Certainty to vote
(absolutely certain - score 10
out of 10)



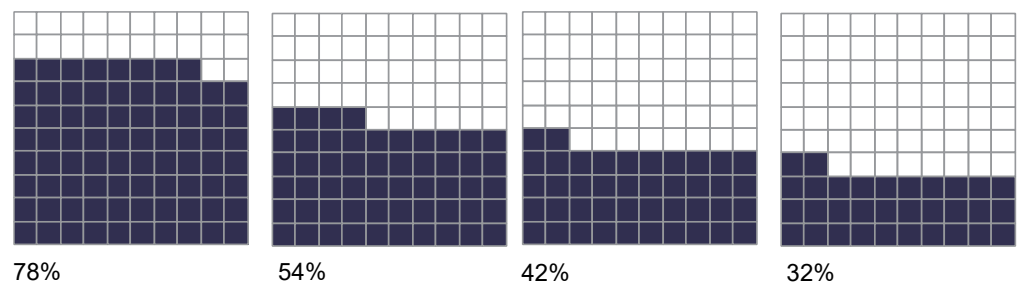
Interest in politics
(very / fairly interested)



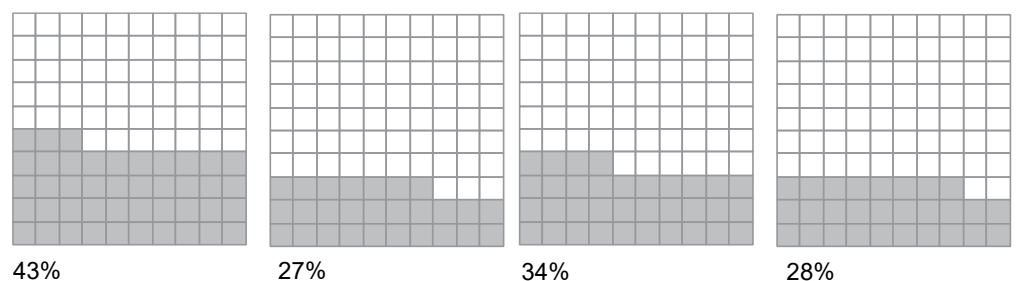
Knowledge of politics
(knows at least a fair amount)



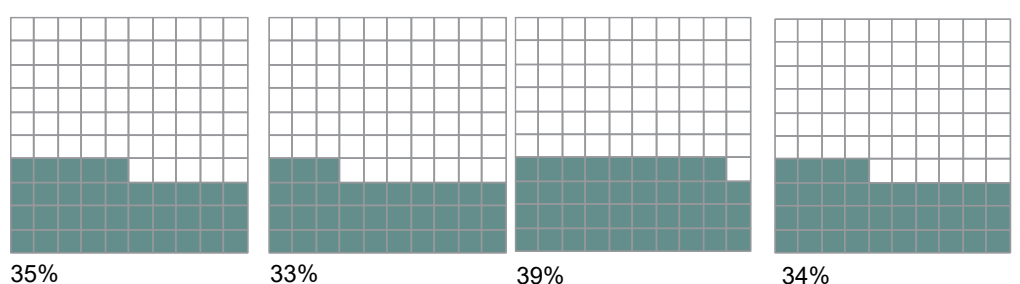
Knowledge of Parliament
(knows at least a fair amount)



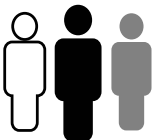
Satisfaction with present
system of governing
(satisfied it works well)



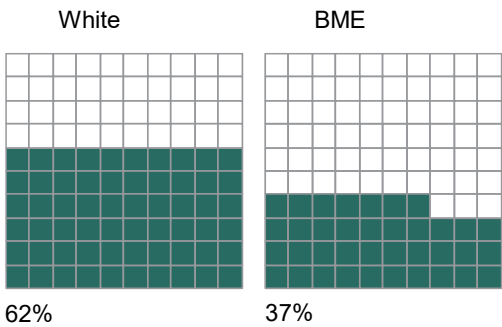
Feel getting involved is
effective (agree)



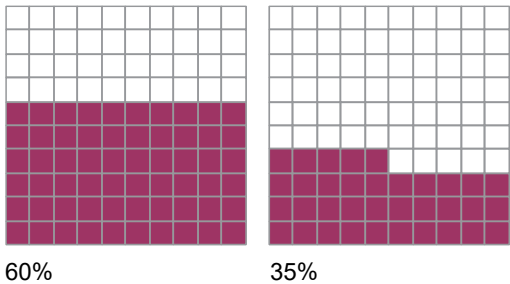
ETHNICITY



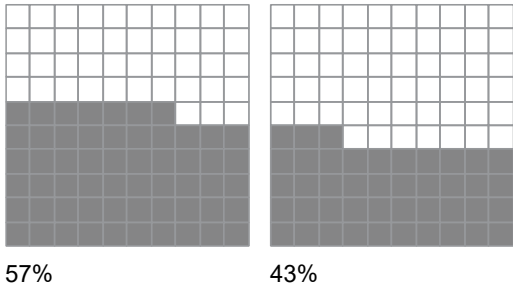
Certainty to vote
(absolutely certain - score 10
out of 10)



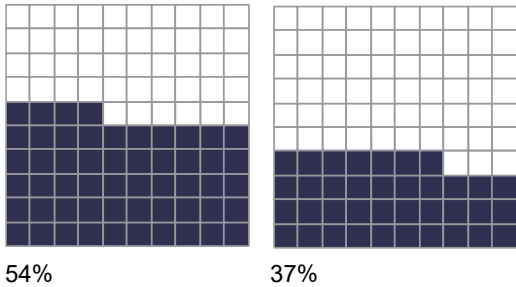
Interest in politics
(very / fairly interested)



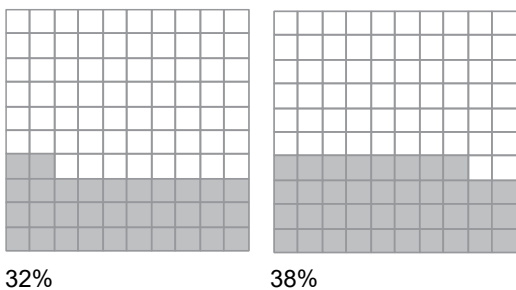
Knowledge of politics
(knows at least a fair amount)



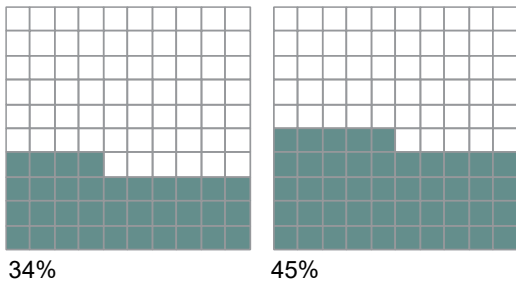
Knowledge of Parliament
(knows at least a fair amount)



Satisfaction with present
system of governing
(satisfied it works well)



Feel getting involved is
effective (agree)



POLL TOPLINE FINDINGS

| Q1 | How likely would you be to vote in an immediate general election, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote, and 1 means that you would be absolutely certain not to vote? | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | APE1 (2004) % | APE2 (2005) % | APE3 (2006) % | APE4 (2007) % | APE5 (2008) % | APE6 (2009) % | APE7 (2010) % | APE8 (2011) % | APE9 (2012) % | APE10 (2013) % | APE11 (2014) % | APE12 (2015) % | APE13 (2016) % |
| 10 | 51 | 52 | 55 | 55 | 53 | 53 | 54 | 58 | 48 | 41 | 49 | 49 | 59 |
| 9 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| 7 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| 5 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 5 |
| 4 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 20 | 11 | 12 | 10 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | * | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Refused | - | - | - | 1 | * | * | * | * | 2 | 1 | - | 1 | 0 |

| Q2 | In the last 12 months have you done any of the following to influence decisions, laws or policies? | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|------------|
| | APE10 % | APE11 % | APE12 % | APE13 % |
| Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation | 20 | 20 | 13 | 24 |
| Voted in an election | 27 | 18 | 27 | 47 |
| Created or signed a paper petition | 8 | 16 | 9 | 8 |
| Created or signed an e-petition | 9 | 14 | 14 | 18 |
| Contacted a local councillor or MP / MSP / Welsh Assembly Member | 8 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons | 6 | 10 | 9 | 11 |
| Taken an active part in a campaign | 2 | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media | 3 | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| Taken part in a public consultation | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Contacted the media | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Attended political meetings | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Taken part in a demonstration, picket, or march | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| None of these | 50 | 52 | 55 | 39 |
| Don't know | - | * | 1 | 1 |

| Q3 | Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue? | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|------------|
| | APE10 % | APE11 % | APE12 % | APE13 % |
| Donate money or pay a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation | 17 | 21 | 14 | 22 |
| Vote in an election | 42 | 46 | 35 | 55 |
| Create or signed a paper petition | 35 | 43 | 29 | 35 |
| Create or signed an e-petition | 25 | 31 | 23 | 34 |
| Contact a local councillor or MP / MSP / Welsh Assembly Member | 41 | 51 | 33 | 52 |
| Boycott certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons | 14 | 25 | 15 | 24 |
| Take an active part in a campaign | 14 | 22 | 15 | 21 |
| Contribute to a discussion or campaign online or on social media | 8 | 14 | 14 | 19 |
| Take part in a public consultation | 14 | 21 | 16 | 22 |
| Contact the media | 16 | 22 | 17 | 20 |
| Attend political meetings | 10 | 15 | 15 | 15 |
| Donate money or paid a membership fee to a political party | 5 | 7 | 8 | 10 |
| Take part in a demonstration, picket, or march | 10 | 16 | 14 | 16 |
| None of these | 22 | 20 | 29 | 19 |
| Don't know | - | 1 | 3 | 1 |

| Q4 | How interested would you say you are in politics? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| | Very interested % | Fairly interested % | Not very interested % | Not at all interested % | Don't know % | Very / fairly interested % |
| APE 1 | 11 | 39 | 32 | 18 | * | 50 |
| APE 2 | 13 | 40 | 28 | 19 | * | 53 |
| APE 3 | 13 | 43 | 30 | 14 | * | 56 |
| APE 4 | 13 | 41 | 27 | 19 | * | 54 |
| APE 5 | 13 | 38 | 28 | 19 | 1 | 51 |
| APE 6 | 12 | 40 | 30 | 17 | * | 52 |
| APE 7 | 14 | 39 | 29 | 18 | 1 | 53 |
| APE 8 | 16 | 42 | 26 | 17 | * | 58 |
| APE 9 | 8 | 34 | 33 | 24 | 1 | 42 |
| APE 10 | 10 | 32 | 32 | 26 | * | 42 |
| APE 11 | 11 | 39 | 31 | 20 | * | 50 |
| APE 12 | 12 | 36 | 33 | 18 | 1 | 49 |
| APE 13 | 18 | 39 | 25 | 18 | * | 57 |

| Q5a | How much, if anything, do you feel you know about...politics? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| | A great deal % | A fair amount % | Not very much % | Nothing at all % | Don't know % | A great deal / a fair amount % |
| APE 1 | 3 | 39 | 45 | 12 | 1 | 42 |
| APE 2 | 4 | 41 | 44 | 10 | * | 45 |
| APE 3 | 4 | 35 | 51 | 9 | * | 39 |
| APE 4 | 6 | 43 | 40 | 11 | * | 49 |
| APE 5 | 4 | 40 | 43 | 12 | * | 44 |
| APE 6 | 5 | 43 | 42 | 9 | 1 | 48 |
| APE 7 | 6 | 45 | 40 | 9 | * | 51 |
| APE 8 | 7 | 46 | 36 | 11 | * | 53 |
| APE 9 | 4 | 40 | 41 | 15 | 1 | 44 |
| APE 10 | 4 | 38 | 42 | 16 | * | 42 |
| APE 11 | 6 | 44 | 38 | 12 | * | 50 |
| APE 12 | 5 | 42 | 39 | 14 | 1 | 47 |
| APE 13 | 8 | 47 | 32 | 12 | * | 55 |

| Q5b | How much, if anything, do you feel you know about...the UK Parliament? | | | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| | A great deal % | A fair amount % | Not very much % | Nothing at all % | Don't know % | A great deal / a fair amount % |
| APE 1* | 3 | 30 | 50 | 17 | 1 | 33 |
| APE 4* | 4 | 34 | 46 | 14 | 1 | 38 |
| APE 7* | 4 | 33 | 47 | 15 | 1 | 37 |
| APE 8 | 5 | 39 | 43 | 13 | * | 44 |
| APE 9 | 4 | 36 | 43 | 16 | 1 | 40 |
| APE 10 | 4 | 33 | 45 | 17 | * | 37 |
| APE 11 | 5 | 43 | 39 | 13 | * | 48 |
| APE 12 | 6 | 41 | 39 | 13 | 1 | 47 |
| APE 13 | 8 | 44 | 34 | 13 | * | 52 |

*Asked as 'The Westminster Parliament', comparisons with later waves should therefore be seen as indicative.

| Q5c | How much, if anything, do you feel you know about...the European Union? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| | A great deal % | A fair amount % | Not very much % | Nothing at all % | Don't know % | A great deal / a fair amount % |
| APE 1 | 2 | 22 | 55 | 20 | 1 | 24 |
| APE 4 | 3 | 26 | 52 | 17 | 2 | 29 |
| APE 5 | 4 | 24 | 41 | 28 | 1 | 28 |
| APE 13 | 6 | 32 | 46 | 16 | * | 38 |

| Q6 | Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Works extremely well and could not be improved % | Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well % | Could be improved quite a lot % | Needs a great deal of improvement % | Don't know % | Works well % |
| APE 1 | 2 | 34 | 42 | 18 | 4 | 36 |
| APE 2 | 2 | 32 | 45 | 18 | 3 | 34 |
| APE 3 | 1 | 33 | 41 | 21 | 4 | 34 |
| APE 4 | 2 | 31 | 40 | 21 | 6 | 33 |
| APE 5 | 2 | 30 | 38 | 24 | 6 | 32 |
| APE 6 | 2 | 31 | 40 | 24 | 3 | 33 |
| APE 7 | 1 | 27 | 42 | 27 | 4 | 28 |
| APE 8 | 1 | 30 | 39 | 25 | 5 | 31 |
| APE 9 | 2 | 22 | 41 | 26 | 10 | 24 |
| APE 10 | 2 | 25 | 41 | 27 | 6 | 27 |
| APE 11 | 3 | 30 | 41 | 23 | 3 | 33 |
| APE 12 | 1 | 25 | 41 | 27 | 6 | 26 |
| APE 13 | 2 | 31 | 40 | 23 | 4 | 33 |

| Q7 | How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way that Parliament works? | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | Very satisfied % | Fairly satisfied % | Neither /nor % | Fairly dissatisfied % | Very dissatisfied % | Don't know % | <i>Satisfied</i> % |
| APE 1 | 1 | 35 | 27 | 23 | 9 | 5 | 36 |
| APE 4 | 2 | 34 | 24 | 24 | 9 | 7 | 36 |
| APE 7 | 1 | 32 | 24 | 25 | 13 | 4 | 33 |
| APE 8 | 1 | 26 | 33 | 24 | 11 | 4 | 27 |
| APE 10 | 2 | 25 | 38 | 20 | 14 | 3 | 27 |
| APE 13 | 2 | 30 | 30 | 23 | 11 | 3 | 32 |

| Q8 | Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way MPs in general are doing their job? | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | Very satisfied % | Fairly satisfied % | Neither /nor % | Fairly dissatisfied % | Very dissatisfied % | Don't know % | <i>Satisfied</i> % |
| APE 1 | 1 | 31 | 26 | 26 | 10 | 5 | 32 |
| APE 4 | 2 | 29 | 27 | 26 | 10 | 6 | 31 |
| APE 7 | 1 | 28 | 24 | 30 | 14 | 3 | 29 |
| APE 10 | 1 | 22 | 37 | 23 | 15 | 3 | 23 |
| APE 13 | 2 | 27 | 31 | 24 | 12 | 3 | 29 |

| Q9 | Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way your MP (INSERT NAME) is doing his/her job? | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | Very satisfied % | Fairly satisfied % | Neither /nor % | Fairly dissatisfied % | Very dissatisfied % | Don't know % | <i>Satisfied</i> % |
| APE 1 | 8 | 33 | 26 | 9 | 4 | 21 | 41 |
| APE 4 | 11 | 30 | 30 | 9 | 3 | 17 | 41 |
| APE 7 | 8 | 30 | 27 | 9 | 7 | 18 | 38 |
| APE 10 | 6 | 28 | 42 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 34 |
| APE 13 | 8 | 27 | 38 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 35 |

| Q10 | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the UK is run. | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 1 | 6 | 31 | 20 | 30 | 10 | 4 | 37 |
| APE 2 | 7 | 30 | 20 | 31 | 10 | 2 | 37 |
| APE 3 | 6 | 27 | 20 | 31 | 13 | 3 | 33 |
| APE 4 | 5 | 28 | 24 | 31 | 8 | 4 | 33 |
| APE 5 | 4 | 27 | 23 | 29 | 13 | 3 | 31 |
| APE 6 | 3 | 28 | 22 | 32 | 13 | 2 | 31 |
| APE 7 | 5 | 32 | 19 | 30 | 11 | 4 | 37 |
| APE 8 | 4 | 26 | 23 | 31 | 13 | 3 | 30 |
| APE 9 | 7 | 25 | 28 | 22 | 14 | 5 | 32 |
| APE 10 | 7 | 25 | 29 | 24 | 13 | 2 | 32 |
| APE 11 | 5 | 26 | 27 | 27 | 15 | 2 | 31 |
| APE 12 | 4 | 27 | 29 | 23 | 12 | 5 | 32 |
| APE 13 | 6 | 29 | 24 | 27 | 12 | 2 | 35 |

| Q11 | To what extent do you agree or disagree that: Important questions should be determined by referendums more often than today? | |
|--|--|------------|
| | APE9 % | APE13 % |
| Strongly agree | 33 | 33 |
| Partly agree | 39 | 42 |
| Partly disagree | 7 | 11 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 6 |
| Not sure what a referendum is (spontaneous response) | 7 | 2 |
| Don't know | 10 | 6 |
| <i>Strongly / partly agree</i> | 72 | 75 |

| Q12a | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The UK Parliament...holds government to account. | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 7* | 4 | 36 | 20 | 22 | 5 | 14 | 40 |
| APE 8 | 5 | 33 | 27 | 18 | 8 | 10 | 38 |
| APE 9 | 8 | 30 | 29 | 14 | 7 | 13 | 38 |
| APE 10 | 11 | 36 | 31 | 13 | 5 | 5 | 47 |
| APE 11 | 4 | 30 | 33 | 19 | 9 | 4 | 34 |
| APE 12 | 5 | 30 | 30 | 17 | 9 | 9 | 35 |
| APE 13 | 9 | 33 | 30 | 15 | 7 | 6 | 42 |

* Audit 7 wording: 'The Westminster Parliament'

| Q12b | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The UK Parliament...encourages public involvement in politics. | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 9 | 5 | 25 | 28 | 21 | 11 | 10 | 30 |
| APE 10 | 6 | 24 | 30 | 27 | 11 | 3 | 30 |
| APE 11 | 2 | 21 | 29 | 31 | 14 | 3 | 23 |
| APE 12 | 4 | 21 | 27 | 23 | 17 | 8 | 25 |
| APE 13 | 6 | 22 | 27 | 28 | 13 | 5 | 28 |

| Q12c | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The UK Parliament...is essential to our democracy. | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 9 | 31 | 35 | 19 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 66 |
| APE 10 | 30 | 38 | 22 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 68 |
| APE 11 | 30 | 37 | 19 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 67 |
| APE 12 | 27 | 34 | 20 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 61 |
| APE 13 | 39 | 34 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 73 |

| Q12d | To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The UK Parliament...debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me. | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 9 | 14 | 35 | 26 | 11 | 6 | 8 | 49 |
| APE 10 | 16 | 39 | 26 | 12 | 5 | 3 | 55 |
| APE 11 | 12 | 39 | 26 | 15 | 6 | 2 | 51 |
| APE 12 | 11 | 37 | 28 | 12 | 7 | 5 | 48 |
| APE 13 | 18 | 40 | 23 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 58 |

| Q13 | Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong, not very strong, or not a supporter at all of any political party? | | | | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------------|
| | Very strong % | Fairly strong % | Not very strong % | Not a supporter % | Don't know % | Refused % | Strong supporter % |
| APE 4 | 6 | 30 | 38 | 24 | 1 | * | 36 |
| APE 11 | 7 | 23 | 36 | 33 | * | * | 30 |
| APE 12 | 8 | 22 | 35 | 32 | 2 | 1 | 30 |
| APE 13 | 8 | 33 | 33 | 25 | 1 | - | 41 |

| Q14a | How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision-making in... ...your local area? | | | | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| | A great deal % | A fair amount % | Not very much % | Nothing at all % | Don't know % | A great deal / a fair amount % |
| APE 6 | 1 | 24 | 41 | 32 | 2 | 25 |
| APE 9 | 2 | 22 | 39 | 32 | 5 | 24 |
| APE 10 | 2 | 24 | 40 | 33 | 2 | 26 |
| APE 11 | 2 | 24 | 44 | 29 | 1 | 26 |
| APE 12 | 1 | 19 | 44 | 33 | 4 | 20 |
| APE 13 | 2 | 23 | 39 | 34 | 2 | 25 |

| Q14b | How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision-making in... ...the country as a whole? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|--|
| | A great deal % | A fair amount % | Not very much % | Nothing at all % | Don't know % | <i>A great deal / a fair amount</i> % |
| APE 6 | * | 14 | 44 | 41 | 1 | 14 |
| APE 9 | * | 12 | 40 | 43 | 5 | 12 |
| APE 10 | 1 | 15 | 43 | 40 | 2 | 16 |
| APE 11 | 1 | 13 | 46 | 40 | 1 | 14 |
| APE 12 | 1 | 16 | 38 | 41 | 4 | 17 |
| APE 13 | 1 | 12 | 42 | 43 | 1 | 13 |

| Q15a | To what extent, if at all, would you like to be involved in decision-making inyour local area? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| | Very involved % | Fairly involved % | Not very involved % | Not at all involved % | Don't know % | <i>Very / fairly involved</i> % |
| APE 6 | 5 | 43 | 32 | 18 | 2 | 48 |
| APE 8 | 5 | 38 | 38 | 17 | 2 | 43 |
| APE 9 | 5 | 33 | 33 | 25 | 4 | 38 |
| APE 10 | 8 | 39 | 29 | 22 | 1 | 47 |
| APE 11 | 6 | 37 | 35 | 21 | 1 | 43 |
| APE 12 | 7 | 31 | 36 | 22 | 4 | 38 |
| APE 13 | 11 | 35 | 29 | 23 | 1 | 46 |

| Q15b | To what extent, if at all, would you like to be involved in decision-making inthe country as a whole? | | | | | |
|---------------|--|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| | Very involved % | Fairly involved % | Not very involved % | Not at all involved % | Don't know % | <i>Very / fairly involved</i> % |
| APE 6 | 5 | 38 | 33 | 22 | 2 | 43 |
| APE 8 | 8 | 34 | 38 | 19 | 2 | 42 |
| APE 9 | 6 | 27 | 34 | 30 | 3 | 33 |
| APE 10 | 7 | 35 | 32 | 25 | 2 | 42 |
| APE 11 | 6 | 32 | 37 | 25 | 1 | 38 |
| APE 12 | 8 | 28 | 34 | 26 | 4 | 37 |
| APE 13 | 9 | 32 | 30 | 27 | 1 | 41 |

| Q16 | As far as you know, is your name on the electoral register, that is, the official list of people entitled to vote, either where you are living now or somewhere else? | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| | Yes - where living now % | Yes - at another address % | No % | Don't know % |
| APE 10 | 83 | 5 | 10 | 1 |
| APE 11 | 86 | 4 | 8 | 1 |
| APE 12 | 79 | 3 | 15 | 3 |
| APE 13 | 85 | 5 | 10 | 1 |

| Q17a | There are a number of ways the public can engage with Parliament. Which of the following, if any, have you done in the past 12 months? | |
|---|--|--|
| | APE13 % | |
| Contacted an MP or Peer with your views | 12 | |
| Created or signed an e-petition on Parliament's petition website (petition.parliament.uk) | 15 | |
| Followed Parliament's official social media accounts (e.g. Twitter / Facebook) | 5 | |
| Got involved with the work of a parliamentary committee (e.g. read reports, submitted evidence) | 2 | |
| Visited Parliament (for a meeting, event or a tour) | 3 | |
| Visited Parliament's website and information materials | 8 | |
| Watched or listened to a parliamentary debate or committee meeting (on TV, radio, or online) | 31 | |
| Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 1 | |
| Don't know | 2 | |
| None of these | 56 | |

| Q17b | And which of the following, if any, would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly about an issue? | |
|---|--|--|
| | APE13 % | |
| Contacted an MP or Peer with your views | 50 | |
| Created or signed an e-petition on Parliament's petition website (petition.parliament.uk) | 36 | |
| Followed Parliament's official social media accounts (e.g. Twitter / Facebook) | 14 | |
| Got involved with the work of a parliamentary committee (e.g. read reports, submitted evidence) | 14 | |
| Visited Parliament (for a meeting, event or a tour) | 13 | |
| Visited Parliament's website and information materials | 20 | |
| Watched or listened to a parliamentary debate or committee meeting (on TV, radio, or online) | 32 | |
| Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) | 1 | |
| Don't know | 2 | |
| Attend a demonstration/rally/protest/march | 1 | |
| None of these | 28 | |

| Q18 | In the past twelve months, have you ever watched or seen/heard any of Prime Minister's Question Time? | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------|
| | APE11 % | APE13 % |
| Yes – in full | 16 | 20 |
| Yes – but only seen clips | 38 | 37 |
| No – but have seen it before then | 10 | 9 |
| No – have never seen it | 36 | 34 |
| Don't know | * | * |
| <i>Seen some PMQs last 12 months</i> | 54 | 57 |

| Q19 | In which of these ways have you seen / heard any of Prime Minister's Question Time? |
|--|---|
| | APE13 % |
| On television | 85 |
| On the radio | 25 |
| Newspapers | 14 |
| On a news website | 15 |
| On Parliament's website | 3 |
| Other websites | 6 |
| Social media (e.g. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook) | 10 |
| Other | * |
| Don't know | * |

Base: All ever seen / heard PMQs (800)

| Q20a | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It deals with the important issues facing the country. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 7 | 33 | 32 | 13 | 7 | 7 | 40 |
| APE 13 | 9 | 36 | 28 | 14 | 5 | 8 | 45 |

| Q20b | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It makes me proud of our Parliament. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 2 | 10 | 36 | 24 | 21 | 7 | 12 |
| APE 13 | 4 | 13 | 31 | 23 | 21 | 8 | 17 |

| Q20c | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? There is too much party political point scoring instead of answering the question. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 41 | 26 | 21 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 67 |
| APE 13 | 38 | 31 | 17 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 69 |

| Q20d | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It's exciting to watch. | | | | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 4 | 16 | 30 | 24 | 20 | 7 | 20 |
| APE 13 | 3 | 19 | 29 | 23 | 17 | 9 | 22 |

| Q20e | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It puts me off politics. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 12 | 21 | 33 | 20 | 7 | 7 | 33 |
| APE 13 | 11 | 21 | 29 | 21 | 11 | 8 | 32 |

| Q20f | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It's informative. | | | | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 4 | 32 | 33 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 36 |
| APE 13 | 6 | 32 | 29 | 17 | 6 | 9 | 38 |

| Q20g | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? It's too noisy and aggressive. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 19 | 28 | 30 | 11 | 4 | 8 | 47 |
| APE 13 | 21 | 29 | 24 | 12 | 4 | 10 | 50 |

| Q20h | Thinking about what you see and hear of Prime Minister's Questions, to what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The MPs behave professionally. | | | | | | |
|--------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|
| | Strongly agree % | Tend to agree % | Neither agree nor disagree % | Tend to disagree % | Strongly disagree % | Don't know % | Agree % |
| APE 11 | 2 | 14 | 30 | 26 | 22 | 7 | 16 |
| APE 13 | 3 | 15 | 26 | 29 | 19 | 9 | 18 |

| Q21 | Do you know where you can watch or listen to Prime Minister's Question Time live? If you are not sure please say so. | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | APE13 % | | | | | |
| TV | 70 | | | | | |
| BBC Parliament Channel | 34 | | | | | |
| BBC other channels (e.g. channel 1, 2) | 21 | | | | | |
| Other TV news | 10 | | | | | |
| TV (not specified) | 18 | | | | | |
| Radio | 18 | | | | | |
| BBC Radio 5 Live | 5 | | | | | |
| Other BBC radio | 6 | | | | | |
| Other radio news | 2 | | | | | |
| Radio (not specified) | 6 | | | | | |
| Online | 22 | | | | | |
| BBC website | 11 | | | | | |
| Parliament's website | 7 | | | | | |
| Other website | 1 | | | | | |
| Social media (e.g. YouTube) | 3 | | | | | |
| Online (not specified) | 5 | | | | | |
| Other | 10 | | | | | |
| At the House of Commons itself | 8 | | | | | |
| Other | 2 | | | | | |
| Don't know | 17 | | | | | |
| None | 3 | | | | | |

| Q22 | How interested would you say you are in issues to do with the European Union? | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| | Very interested % | Fairly interested % | Not very interested % | Not at all interested % | Don't know % | Very / fairly interested % |
| APE 13 | 21 | 42 | 22 | 15 | 1 | 63 |

| Q23 | As you may be aware the Government has committed to holding an in / out referendum on European Union membership by the end of 2017. How likely would you be to vote in this referendum on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote, and 1 means that you would be absolutely certain not to vote? | |
|------------|---|---|
| | APE13 | % |
| 10 | 59 | |
| 9 | 5 | |
| 8 | 6 | |
| 7 | 4 | |
| 6 | 4 | |
| 5 | 8 | |
| 4 | 1 | |
| 3 | 2 | |
| 2 | 2 | |
| 1 | 9 | |
| Don't know | 1 | |
| Refused | - | |

| Q24 | Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing the European Union? | | | | | |
|--------|--|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| | Works extremely well and could not be improved | Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well | Could be improved quite a lot | Needs a great deal of improvement | Don't know | <i>Works well</i> |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| APE 13 | 1 | 20 | 40 | 29 | 9 | 21 |

- An asterisk (*) indicates a finding of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.
- A dash (-) indicates that nobody chose a response.

IMAGES AND ICONS

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Audit of Political Engagement 13

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

