

Audit of Political Engagement 3 (December 2005)
The Electoral Commission (J26166)
FINAL Topline – 12 December 2005

- APE3 topline results are based on 1,209 adults aged 18+ in UK. Interviewed face-to-face in home between 1-5 December 2005
- Where applicable trend data from the Audit of Political Engagement 1 and 2 are included.
- APE 1 results are based on interviews conducted face-to-face with 1,976 adults aged 18+ in Great Britain between 11-17 December 2003 and in Northern Ireland between 6-15 December 2003.
- APE 2 results are based on interviews conducted face-to-face with 2,065 adults aged 18+ in Great Britain between 2-6 December 2004 and in Northern Ireland between 14-21 December 2004.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated
- Data are weighted to the profile of the population
- An asterisk (*) indicates a finding of less than 0.5% but greater than zero
- Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t knows” or to multiple answers

Q POL 10. How likely would you be to vote in a 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?

| | APE3 % | APE2 % | APE1 % |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 10 (Absolutely certain to vote) | 55 | 52 | 51 |
| 9 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| 8 | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 1 (Absolutely certain not to vote) | 10 | 11 | 11 |
| Don't know | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Refused | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Q Which, if any, of the things on this list have you done in the last two or three years.
 ACT1. Just read out the letters that apply.

| | APE3 | APE2 | APE1 |
|---|------|------|------|
| | % | % | % |
| Voted in the last general election | 70 | 61 | 64 |
| Helped on fund raising drives | 22 | 30 | 21 |
| Urged someone outside my family to vote | 17 | 17 | 14 |
| Presented my views to a local councillor or MP | 15 | 17 | 13 |
| Urged someone to get in touch with a local councillor or MP | 14 | 16 | 14 |
| Made a speech before an organised group | 13 | 17 | 11 |
| Been an officer of an organisation or club | 9 | 13 | 8 |
| Written a letter to an editor | 8 | 7 | 6 |
| Flown on business overseas | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Flown on a business trip within the UK | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| Taken an active part in a political campaign | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Stood for public office | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| None of these | 20 | 23 | 25 |

Q4. And which of these, if any, have you done in the last two or three years? Just read out the letters that apply.

| | APE3 % | APE2 % | APE1 % |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Voted in the last local council election | 55 | 50 | 51 |
| Signed a petition | 45 | 44 | 39 |
| Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation | 44 | 44 | 41 |
| Discussed politics or political news with someone else | 39 | 38 | 38 |
| Contacted my local council | 28 | 28 | 26 |
| Done voluntary work | 22 | 28 | 23 |
| Helped organise a charity event | 20 | 21 | 16 |
| Taken part in a sponsored event | 19 | 22 | 15 |
| Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons | 18 | 20 | 18 |
| Been to any political meeting | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| Taken part in a demonstration, picket or march | 5 | 6 | 5 |
| Taken an active part in a party's campaign at a general election | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Taken an active part in a party's campaign at a local election | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Taken part in a strike | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Served as a school or hospital governor ¹ | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Served as a local magistrate | 1 | * | 1 |
| None | 17 | 16 | 17 |
| Don't know | * | * | 0 |

Q7.- How interested would you say you are in the following...?

Q10.

| | | Very interested | Fairly interested | Not very interested | Not at all interested | Don't know | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|---|
| Q7. | Politics | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % | 13 | 43 | 30 | 14 | * |
| | APE2 | % | 13 | 40 | 28 | 19 | * |
| | APE1 | % | 11 | 39 | 32 | 18 | 0 |
| Q8. | Local issues | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % | 30 | 51 | 13 | 5 | * |
| | APE2 | % | 32 | 49 | 14 | 5 | * |
| Q9. | National issues | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % | 23 | 52 | 18 | 7 | * |
| | APE2 | % | 25 | 52 | 17 | 6 | * |
| Q10 | International Issues | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % | 18 | 47 | 26 | 9 | * |
| | APE2 | % | 21 | 44 | 26 | 8 | * |

¹ Hospital governor not asked in Northern Ireland

Q11. What do you understand by “politics”?

| | % |
|--|----|
| The way the country is governed/running the country/what the government does | 37 |
| Arguments between parties/politicians | 14 |
| Choices for society/how the country should be run | 14 |
| People with power/people who run things | 13 |
| Parliament | 11 |
| Local government/councils | 11 |
| Talking/people discussing issues/reaching agreement | 10 |
| Elections/voting | 10 |
| Way of making decisions | 9 |
| Important issues of the day - unspecified | 6 |
| Public link with/control over government/representation | 6 |
| Sleaze/corruption/they are all crooks | 5 |
| Spin/lies | 5 |
| Not listening/ignoring public opinion | 5 |
| Important issue of the day - specified | 3 |
| Disagreement/confrontation/argument | 3 |
| Posturing/playing games | 3 |
| Cronyism/jobs for the boys/nepotism | 3 |
| Campaigning | 3 |
| Popularity contest | 1 |
| Old fashioned/out of date | 1 |
| Irrelevant/doesn't involve me/something for other people | 1 |
| Party system/alignment of groups | 1 |
| Boring | 0 |
| Religion | 0 |
| Other | 9 |
| None of these | 3 |
| Don't know | 8 |

Q12. How much, if anything, do you feel you know about politics?

| | APE3 % | APE2 % | APE1 % |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| A great deal | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| A fair amount | 35 | 41 | 39 |
| Not very much | 51 | 44 | 45 |
| Nothing at all | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| Don't know | * | * | 1 |

Q13. What is the name of your local Member of Parliament for this constituency since May 2005?

| | APE3 % |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Gave correct answer | 44 |
| Named MP before general election | 2 |
| Gave wrong answer | 7 |
| Don't know/no answer | 46 |

Q14.- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q16.

| | | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|------|---|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Q14. | When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the country is run | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % 6 | 27 | 20 | 31 | 13 | 3 |
| | APE2 | % 7 | 29 | 20 | 31 | 10 | 2 |
| | APE1 | % 5 | 31 | 20 | 30 | 10 | 4 |
| Q15. | I want to have a say in how the country is run | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % 23 | 45 | 14 | 12 | 5 | 1 |
| | APE2 | % 22 | 45 | 15 | 12 | 5 | 1 |
| | APE1 | % 31 | 44 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Q16. | I have a say in how the country is run at the moment | | | | | | |
| | APE3 | % 2 | 21 | 14 | 33 | 30 | 1 |
| | APE2 | % 3 | 24 | 16 | 36 | 19 | 1 |

Q17. Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain²?

| | APE3 % | APE2 % | APE1 % |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Works extremely well and could not be improved | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well | 33 | 32 | 34 |
| Could be improved quite a lot | 41 | 45 | 42 |
| Needs a great deal of improvement | 21 | 18 | 18 |
| Don't know | 4 | 3 | 4 |

² UK in Northern Ireland

Q18. Which of these, if any, do you think you might be willing to do to influence or protest against a decision by a local or national government body?

Q19. And which, if any, of these have you ever done for that reason?

| | Q18 % | Q19 % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Sign a petition | 72 | 50 |
| Contact your MP or local councillor | 46 | 24 |
| Vote against the party you would normally support | 32 | 15 |
| Write to a newspaper | 31 | 13 |
| Attend a demonstration | 26 | 13 |
| Contribute money to an organisation campaigning on your side of the issue | 16 | 10 |
| Present your case at a public inquiry | 15 | 4 |
| Take part in a governmental or parliamentary consultation | 13 | 4 |
| Start a court case against the government or your local council | 4 | 0 |
| Stand for election to Parliament or your local council | 3 | 1 |
| Other | * | * |
| None | 12 | 36 |
| Don't know | 2 | 1 |

Q20. Now thinking of MPs, which of the following qualities shown on this card would you say are important for an MP to have? You may choose more than one, none, or suggest others.

| | APE 3 % | 1996 BSA ³ % | 1994 BSA % | 1983 BSA % |
|--|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| To be independent minded | 58 | 51 | 48 | 37 |
| To have been brought up in the area he or she represents | 54 | 61 | 60 | 48 |
| To be well-educated | 50 | 60 | 55 | 50 |
| To know what being poor means | 43 | 45 | 41 | 27 |
| To be loyal to the party he or she represents | 39 | 45 | 41 | 42 |
| To have business experience | 27 | 34 | 30 | 22 |
| To have trade union experience | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 |
| Other | 6 | | | |
| None | 2 | | | |
| Don't know | 2 | | | |

³ Source: National Centre for Social Research *British Social Attitudes - the 18th report Public policy, social ties* (2001/2002)