

Project Blueprint

Phase 3

The quest for a Conservative majority

Lord Ashcroft, KCMG

Lord Ashcroft, KCMG, is an international businessman, author and philanthropist. He is founder and Chairman of the Board of Crimestoppers, a Trustee of the Imperial War Museum Foundation, Chairman of the Trustees of Ashcroft Technology Academy, Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University and Treasurer of the International Democrat Union. From 2005 to 2010 he was Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party.

His previous political books and research papers include *Smell The Coffee* (2005), *Minority Verdict* (2010), *What Future For Labour?* (2010), *What Future For The Liberal Democrats?* (2010), *Crime, Punishment & The People* (2011), *Project Blueprint* (2011), *The Leadership Factor* (2011), *Degrees of Separation* (2012) and *The Armed Forces & Society* (2012).

For more information please go to www.lordashcroftpolls.com

Contents

Introduction	5
Methodology	8
The Conservative Universe	9
Loyalists	11
Joiners	13
Considerers	15
Defectors	17
In their own words	21
Full poll results	27

Introduction

When I published the first phase of Project Blueprint in May 2011, David Cameron's first anniversary as Prime Minister, political comment was dominated by the relationship between Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs following the Alternative Vote referendum. At the end of this government's second full year, the same is happening again in the aftermath of another of the Lib Dems' doomed attempts to change the constitution, to the yawning indifference of the country at large. What was true a year ago is even truer now: what should matter most to Tories is not the coalition between the parties, but the coalition of voters who will decide whether to elect a Conservative government with an overall majority.

That Conservative voting coalition will be made up of the four kinds of people who currently comprise what I will call the Conservative Universe. These are Loyalists (people who voted Conservative in 2010 and will do so again), Joiners (those who did not vote Tory in 2010 but have been impressed enough by what they have seen to say they would do so in an election tomorrow), Defectors (those who voted Conservative in 2010 but currently say they would not do so in an election tomorrow), and Considerers (who did not vote Tory in 2010 and would not do so tomorrow, but would consider doing so in future).

If the Conservatives can keep the Loyalists and the Joiners, win back the Defectors and persuade the Considerers, an overall majority at the next election is possible. Put like that, David Cameron's task sounds daunting, particularly given the head start for Labour that follows from the collapse in Lib Dem support. It is not surprising that no sitting Prime Minister has increased his – or her – party's vote share in a general election since 1974.

The mission seems all the more formidable when we look at the apparent differences in political outlook between the four groups. The purpose of Project Blueprint, however, is to understand these different kinds of voters and to identify the things that will bring them together into an expanded Conservative voting coalition rather than divide them further.

Nearly all Loyalists say the Conservative Party shares their values. The few who do not think that nonetheless say the Tories have the best approach to the economy and that David Cameron would make the best Prime Minister. They are disproportionately aged 65 and above, and in higher social groups. They are the most likely of any voter group to say they are sure how they will vote. They would much prefer an overall Conservative majority to the current coalition. They give the Conservatives a strong lead on all policy issues.

The most important factor attracting Joiners has been the view that the Conservatives are the best party to manage the economy; 95% of them say they most trust Cameron and Osborne rather than Miliband and Balls. They are impressed that the government is sticking to its guns over difficult policies, and are more likely than most voters to give high marks for Cameron's performance. Two thirds of Joiners voted Liberal Democrat in 2010 and many will still consider the Lib Dems at the next election.

One third of those who voted Conservative in 2010 say they would not do so again tomorrow. Two fifths of these say they do not know how they would vote in an election tomorrow, and most of this group feel the Conservative Party is not on the side of people like them. Around three in ten say they would vote UKIP; this group was most characterised by an opinion that Cameron's performance had been worse than expected, and a dim view of the Liberal Democrats. The final three in ten Defectors said they would vote for Labour, the Lib Dems or another party. Most of these thought a party other than the Conservatives were best on the economy; if they did think the Tories were best on the economy, they tended to think another party was better at ensuring people were treated fairly.

The thing that Considerers most have in common is that they trust Cameron and Osborne to manage the economy over Miliband and Balls. They are disproportionately likely to say they would vote Liberal Democrat in an election tomorrow. Unlike Loyalists, Joiners and Defectors, they prefer the coalition to the prospect of a Conservative overall majority. They are no more likely than voters in general to think the Tories stand for fairness or equal opportunity.

People who think the Conservative Party shares their values, then, are already very likely to say they will vote Tory. For other potential supporters, the relationship is much more transactional: their votes will depend on the job being done. This is partly a truism, since successful parties are always the ones whose attraction extends beyond their natural supporters. And it is not to say that values don't matter: whether you think the government wants to control spending for the good of the country or because it dislikes poor people will be an important factor in your voting decision. But the nature of the Prime Minister's electoral challenge makes it all the more necessary to understand what the transaction will be based on.

The fact that economic management is the most important single factor in building the Conservative voting coalition is good news for the Tories. However, although most members of the Conservative universe say (with varying degrees of reluctance) that austerity is the right course, few think very much progress is being made. Most people greatly underestimate the proportion of the deficit that has been eliminated so far, and some even think it has grown. When told that the deficit has in fact been reduced by a quarter, they are pleasantly surprised. It tells them that the policy is working, and that there is an end in sight, even though it is some distance away. They cannot understand why the government does not make more of this achievement. The answer, I suspect, is that they fear it reminds people just how far there is to go and, by implication, how many cuts are still to come. In fact, I think the government can be bolder in talking about this. Those who are likely to vote Conservative or could be persuaded to do so accept intuitively the need to control spending, but they sometimes wonder whether it is doing any good or when it will all end. Knowing that it is working has a galvanising effect and adds weight to the argument that the government needs time to see its plan through.

The bad news is that the air of competence and leadership necessary to trust a party to run the economy is being eroded. Voters we spoke to had not failed to notice the number of U-turns the coalition had performed in recent months. For a government to change its mind was not a bad thing in principle, and could be a sign that it was listening. However, the number of reversals suggested to people that policies were not being thought through properly. Many recalled the 'pasty tax' debacle with some derision. Few had strong views about whether warm baked goods should or should not be subject to VAT at the standard rate – they just thought pasties were a ridiculous thing for the government to get itself into a long row about.

Despite his declining personal ratings, David Cameron himself remains by far the Tories' biggest asset. He outscores all other national politicians among Loyalists, Joiners and Considerers, and even Defectors see him as the best available Prime Minister by a substantial margin. He has been an essential attraction for those who have switched to the Tories since 2010, and is more attractive than the Conservative Party as a whole to those who do not yet vote Tory but may one day do so. For Loyalists, Joiners and many Considerers, Cameron is doing a decent job of trying to get things back on track despite having no majority and no money.

It is not too much of a generalisation to say that while Loyalists and Joiners think Cameron and the Tories are doing the right thing by the country despite the constraints they face, Considerers are not yet persuaded of this, usually because of concerns about the impact of the cuts or their view of the Conservative Party more generally. Defectors, more than other groups, think Cameron is unable or unwilling to do the right thing by them – either because they have been hit by austerity policies, or because they feel the coalition is preventing the kind of Conservative government they want to see.

It is understandable that a party should pay more attention to potential Defectors than to potential Joiners. Certainly the Tories do not want to lose any voters if they can help it. But it would be a mistake for the party to focus only or even mainly on the Defectors. They are more likely to say they don't know how they will vote than that they will vote for any other party, and most say they would rather see an overall Conservative majority than anything else. We should not take them for granted, but nor should we set the agenda according to what it is sometimes claimed they want. Even among Defectors we found very little enthusiasm for an early referendum on Britain's EU membership. Though several did have complaints about Europe, their biggest grievance was very often the constraints imposed by the European Court of Human Rights – something that can be addressed without an EU referendum, and indeed that an EU referendum would not address. Conservative-minded Defectors were often frustrated by the fact of the coalition rather than any specific policy failure.

The votes of people who did not support the Tories in 2010 but might be persuaded to are worth as much in the ballot box as those of previous Conservative voters who might defect. Intriguingly, our analysis found as many potential Conservatives who voted Lib Dem at the last election as 2010 Tories who now say they will vote UKIP. If we are to win a majority, these two groups are equally important. For these potential Joiners, as well as other Considerers and Loyalists, it is the economy that matters most. There are more votes to be lost by adopting a more overtly right-wing agenda than there are to be gained.

Is it possible, then, to square the circle – keep the Loyalists and Joiners, win back the (often UKIP-leaning) Defectors and persuade the (often Lib Dem-leaning) Considerers? Yes it is. But we cannot please all of the Conservative universe all of the time. Everything the Conservatives do between now and the next election must pass at least one of the following four tests, and it must not fail any of them.

First, does it show we are sticking to the right priorities for the country? Secondly, does it show strong leadership? Thirdly, does it show we are on the side of the right people (and, if necessary, make the right enemies?) Fourthly, does it offer some reassurance about the Conservative Party's character and motives?

Sticking to the deficit reduction programme passes all four tests. So does welfare reform, provided people can see it helps people towards a better life and protects those who still need help, as well as weeding out scroungers. Well thought-out immigration policy fits too. Even tough European policy, such as last December's veto, can qualify, though embarking on a time-consuming referendum campaign would so dominate the government's agenda that it would fail the first test.

The NHS reforms, meanwhile, arguably failed all four. Bringing forward proposals for Lords reform was unavoidable because of the coalition agreement, but there is no case for spending any more time on them in this parliament.

Many Conservatives, up to and probably including the Prime Minister, are frustrated with coalition politics at Westminster. To be free of it, though, we must recognise that outside parliament, all politics is coalition politics. The four kinds of people I have identified represent the only winning coalition open to the Conservative Party, and the four tests I have proposed will help make sure we meet as many of their shared aspirations as we can. It may be difficult to do, but it is not complicated to grasp.

Methodology

8,058 adults were interviewed online between 21 and 28 May 2012. Results were weighted to be representative of the population of Great Britain.

Twelve focus groups were conducted between 23 May and 18 June 2012 in Halifax, Bury, Loughborough, Warwick, Croydon and Taunton. Separate groups were held comprising the following types of voters:

- Those who voted Conservative in 2010 and say they would probably do so again in an election tomorrow (Loyalists)
- Those who voted Conservative in 2010 but say they would probably vote for a different party in an election tomorrow (Defectors)
- Those who did not vote Conservative in 2010 but say they would consider doing so in future (Joiners/Considerers)

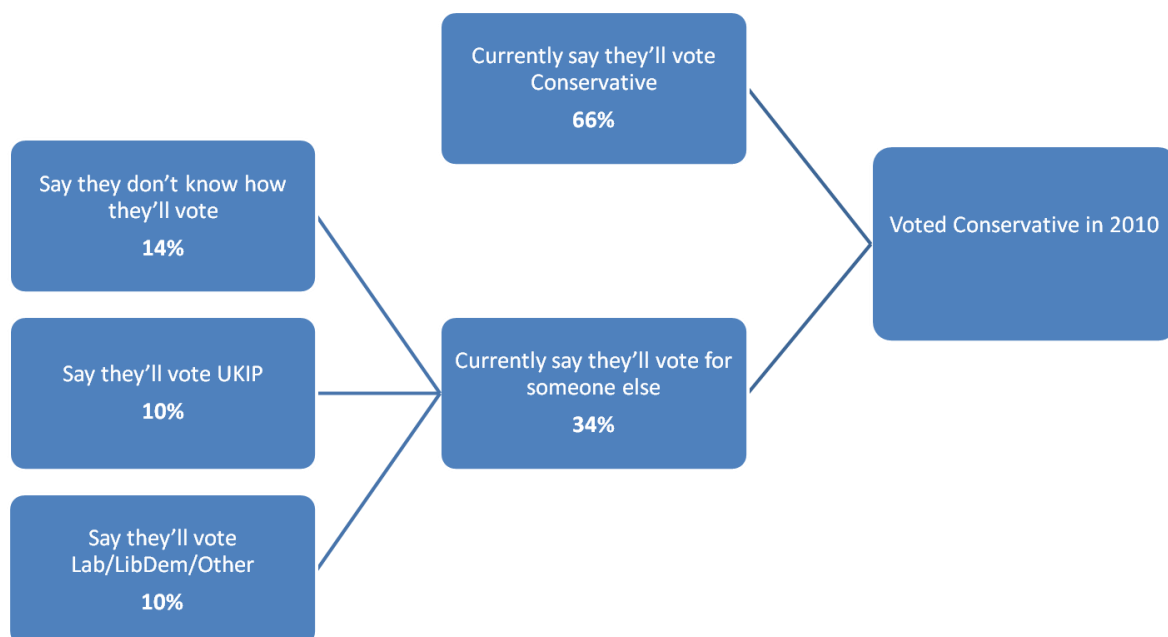
The Conservative Universe

Four types of people will decide whether or not the Conservative Party wins the next general election. These can be defined as Loyalists, Joiners, Defectors and Considerers.

Loyalists are those who voted Conservative in the 2010 election and would do so again. Joiners are those who did not vote Conservative in 2010, but would do so at the next election. Defectors are those who voted Tory at the last election but say they would not do so tomorrow. Considerers are those who did not vote Tory in 2010, would not vote Conservative in an election tomorrow, but would consider doing so at some time in the future.

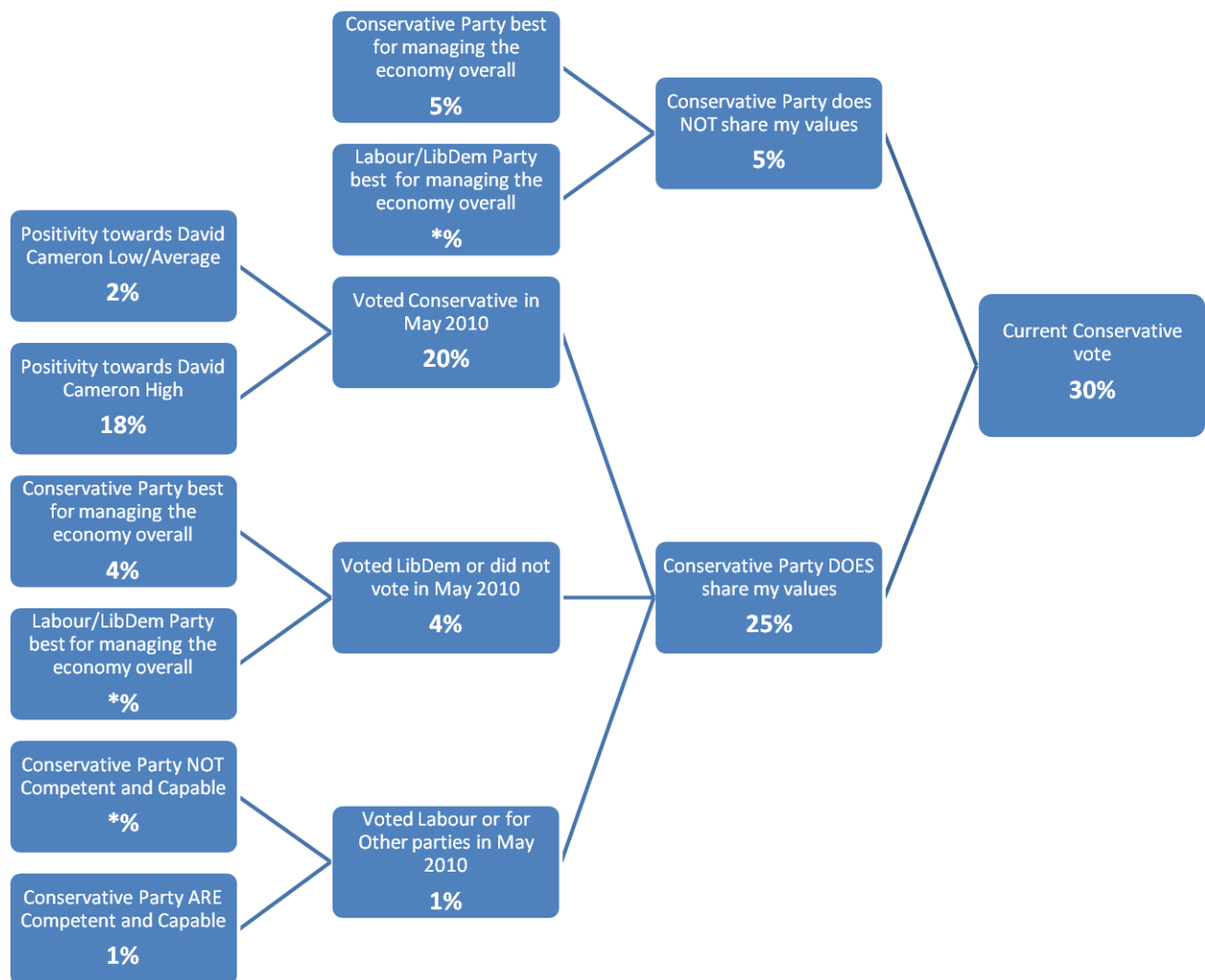
If the Tories can keep the Loyalists and Joiners, win back the Defectors and persuade the Considerers, an overall majority is possible. These four groups will be examined in more detail below. First, an overview of what has become of the 37% of the electorate who voted Conservative in 2010, and the voters who constitute the 30% who say they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow.

THE 2010 CONSERVATIVE VOTE



Two thirds of those who voted Conservative in 2010 say they would do so again in an election tomorrow. These Loyalists therefore account for around a quarter of the electorate. The third of the 2010 Conservative vote who would not vote Tory again tomorrow split three ways. The biggest section (14% of 2010 Conservative voters) say they do not know how they would vote. Of the remainder, half say they would vote for UKIP (10% of 2010 Tory voters, or 3.7% of the electorate), and half say they would vote Labour, Lib Dem or for another party.

THE CURRENT CONSERVATIVE VOTE



Our poll found 30% of voters saying they would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow. Overall, the thing that these current Conservative voters most had in common with each other was the view that the Conservative Party “shares my values”: five out of six current Tory supporters said this. Of this group, 8 out of 10 had voted Conservative in 2010, and 9 out of 10 of these people gave high marks for David Cameron’s performance as Prime Minister.

Those who thought the Conservatives shared their values but had not voted Tory in 2010 were much more likely to have voted Lib Dem or not at all than for Labour. Among this former Lib Dem-dominated group, the most important common factor was a view that the Conservatives were the best party to manage the economy overall.

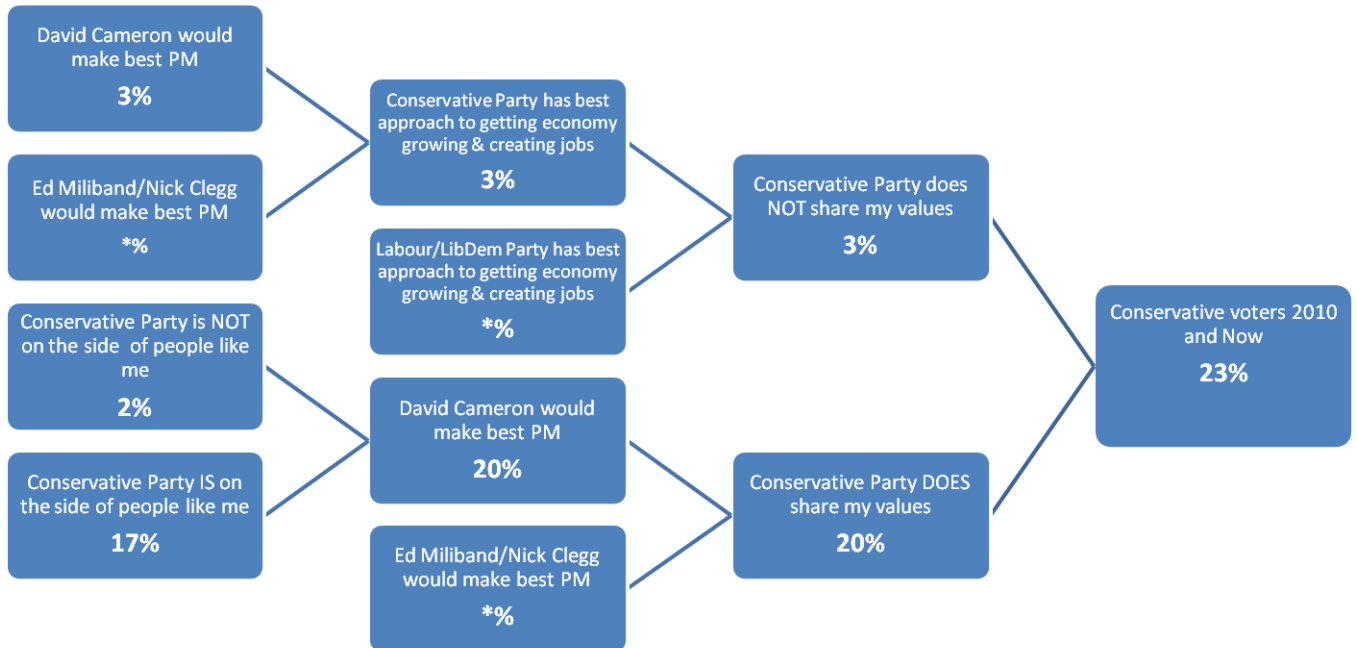
Among the one in six current Conservative voters who did not think the Tories shared their values, economic management was by far the most important factor in attracting them to the party.

Of the very few current Conservative supporters who voted Labour in 2010, the most important uniting factor was the view that the Conservative Party is “competent and capable”.

Of the 30% of voters who said they would vote Conservative tomorrow, 23% had voted Conservative in 2010 (Loyalists) and 7% had not (Joiners)

Loyalists

2010 CONSERVATIVE VOTERS WHO WOULD VOTE CONSERVATIVE TOMORROW



The feature that most unites Conservative voters from 2010 who would the same way in an election tomorrow is the view that the Conservative Party “shares my values”. Practically all of these people see David Cameron as the best Prime Minister of the three leaders, and nearly nine out of ten of those think the Tories are “on the side of people like me”.

Just under one in six Loyalists do not think the Conservative Party shares their values; for these voters, the most important factor is that they think the Tories have the best approach to getting the economy growing and creating jobs. They also overwhelmingly see David Cameron as the best Prime Minister.

Conservative Loyalists constitute 23% of all voters.

Other findings from our poll show that Loyalists are disproportionately older, especially aged 65 or more, and disproportionately to be found in social group AB. They are less likely than average to work in the public sector, but not by huge amount (23% of them do, compared to 27% of voters as a whole).

Loyalists are by far the most likely of any voter group to say they are sure how they will vote and won't change their mind (85%).

Although nearly a quarter of them say the performance of David Cameron or the coalition govt is worse than they expected, 94% of Loyalists (and 99% of Loyalists who don't say 'Don't know') say they will probably vote Conservative at the next general election in 2015.

Loyalists were three times as likely as voters as a whole to say the Conservative Party "shares my values", "wants to help ordinary people get on in life", stands for "fairness" or "equal opportunity for all", and "represents the whole country, not just some types of people".

Loyalists were much more likely than Joiners, Considerers and Defectors to say they would prefer an overall Conservative majority to the current coalition (86%) – though one in seven of them prefers the coalition. While just over half of Loyalists think the Lib Dems have too much influence in government, nearly two fifths think they have about the right amount.

Loyalists are unusual in that they are more likely to say that they are more favourable towards the Conservative Party than David Cameron than the other way round. Nevertheless, they give high marks to Cameron for his performance, and 97% of them say he would make the best Prime Minister of the three leaders.

Overwhelmingly, Loyalists think the right decisions are being made and that the state of the economy will improve significantly in the next two or three years; they are more than twice as likely as voters in general to think this. Loyalists are all but unanimous in thinking Cameron and Osborne are the best team to run the economy.

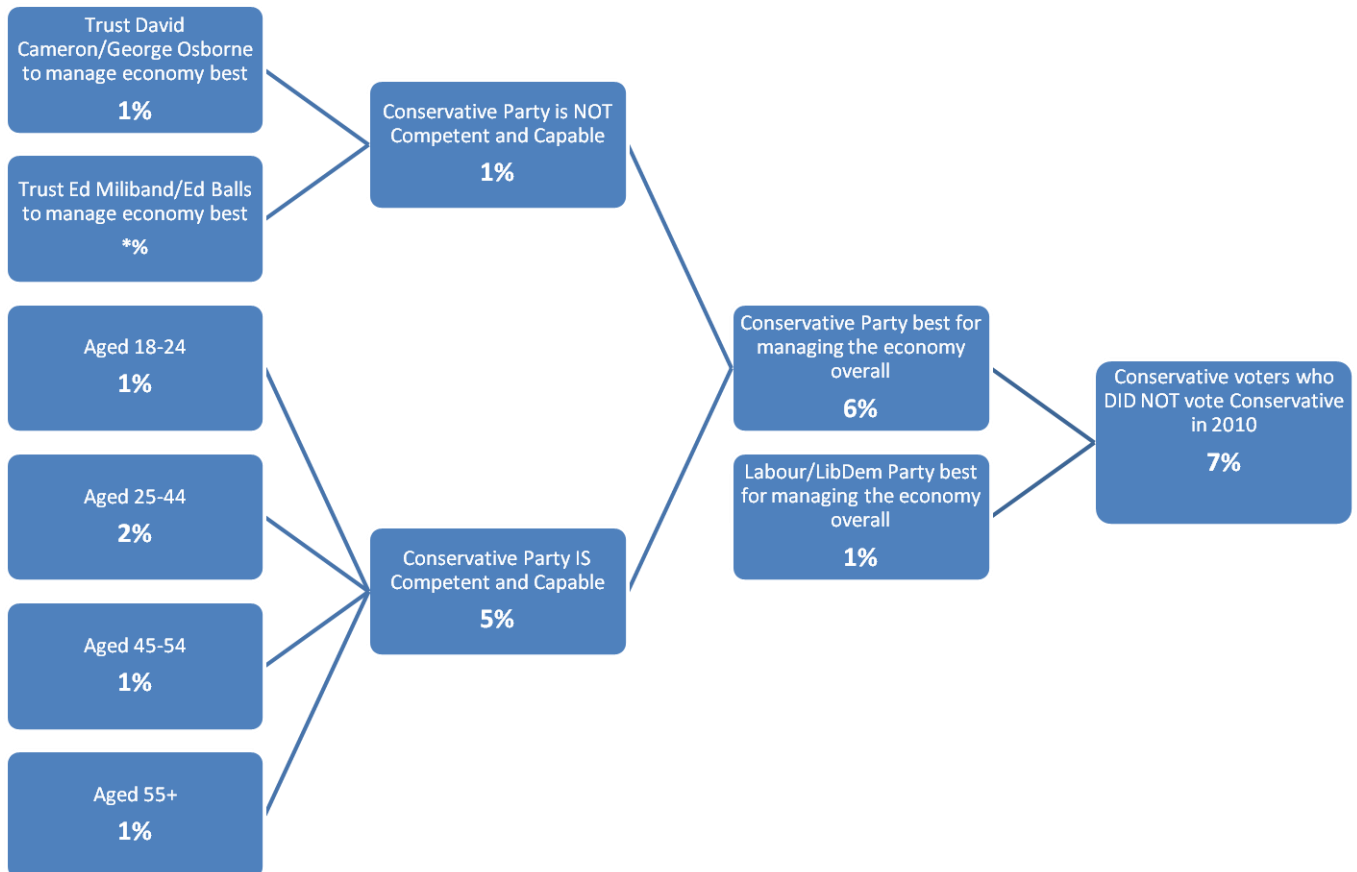
Among Loyalists the Conservatives have a strong lead on all policy issues; these voters are around two and a half times as likely as voters generally to say the Tories have the best approach to getting the economy growing and creating jobs, improving schools and the NHS, and ensuring people are treated fairly.

While just over a fifth (22%) say they could see themselves voting Labour at some time in the future, 37% could see themselves voting Lib Dem and 42% UKIP, only 5% say they are currently moving away from the Conservatives.

83% of Loyalists would like to see a Conservative government with an overall majority after the next election. Just over one in ten (11%) would prefer another Conservative-Lib Dem coalition.

Joiners

CURRENT CONSERVATIVE VOTERS WHO DID NOT VOTE CONSERVATIVE IN 2010



Joiners (those who would vote Conservative in an election tomorrow but did not do so in 2010) constitute 7% of all voters. For them, the economy is the most important factor. Six out of seven Joiners say the Tories have the best approach of the three parties to managing the economy overall. The great majority of these also see the Conservative Party as “competent and capable”. However, around one in six of the Joiners who think the Conservatives are best when it comes to managing the economy do not agree with this; the vast majority of these, however, have more trust in David Cameron and George Osborne than Ed Miliband and Ed Balls when it comes to managing the economy, even though they do not think the Tories are “competent and capable” overall.

Our poll shows that two thirds of Joiners voted Liberal Democrat at the 2010 election; just over a quarter (27%) voted Labour. While more than two thirds (69%) of Joiners say they are pretty sure which party they will vote for at the next election, this is lower than for voters as a whole (77%); indeed only 81% of Joiners – defined as those who said they would vote Conservative tomorrow even though they did not do so in 2010 – said they would seriously consider the Tories at the next general election (perhaps a reflection that voters draw a distinction between this and the question

of how they would vote tomorrow, which can only be hypothetical). One third of Joiners said they would consider the Lib Dems at the next election, and one third Labour.

Only just over a fifth of Joiners say the coalition government has performed better than they expected when it was first formed, though more of them said this of David Cameron (36%).

The Tories scored strongly among Joiners on most positive attributes; the biggest differences between Joiners and voters as a whole were whether the Conservative Party is “on the side of people like me”, “shares my values”, and “competent and capable”, on each of which they were two and a half times as likely to agree as voters in general. Fewer than half (45%) thought the Tories stand for “equal opportunity for all” or “represents the whole country, not just some types of people”, though this was still more than twice the average among all voters.

Most Joiners would prefer a Conservative government with an overall majority (69%), but they are more than twice as likely as Loyalists to say they would prefer the current coalition with the Lib Dems (31%). They are as likely to think the Lib Dems have too much influence within the government as to think they do not have enough (28% each), but 44% say they have about the right amount – considerably more than among voters in general, and more than twice the level among Defectors.

More than nine out of ten Joiners say David Cameron is the best Prime Minister of the three leaders, and they are more than two and a half times as likely as voters as a whole to give him a high score for his performance. They are much more likely than Loyalists, and nearly twice as likely as voters as a whole, to say they are more favourable towards David Cameron than they are to the Conservative Party generally.

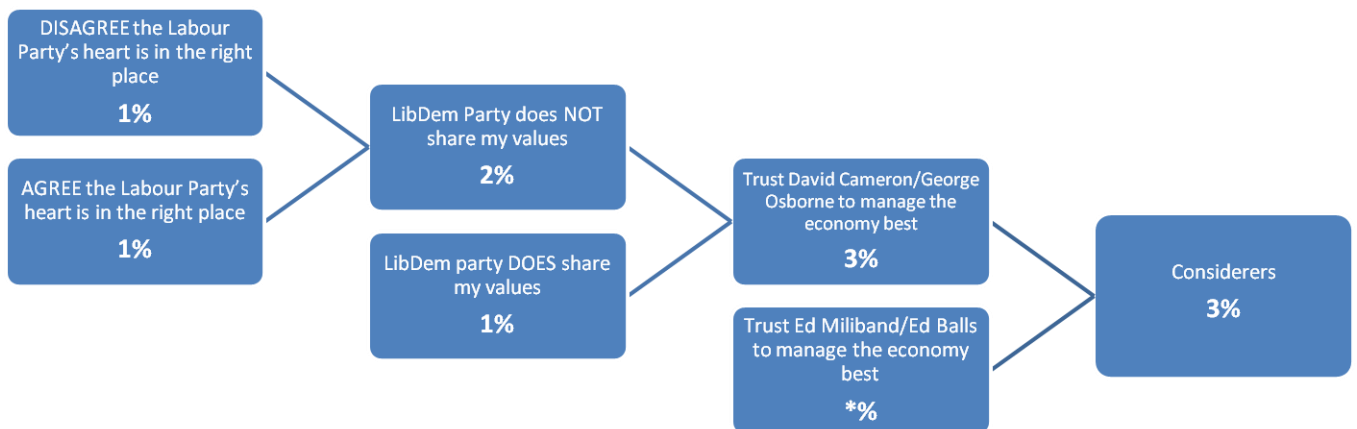
Joiners trust Cameron and Osborne on the economy over Miliband and Balls by 95% to 5%. More than three quarters (77%) say the right decisions are being taken and the economy will improve significantly in the next two or three years – twice the level among voters as a whole. Joiners are more likely than average to rate the Conservatives as the best party on any given issue, but the difference is most marked in “getting the economy growing and creating jobs” and “managing the economy overall”.

Though many Joiners have not decided how they will vote at the next election, nearly three quarters (72%) say they are moving towards the Conservatives – well over three times the proportion among voters as a whole – and 90% of those naming a party say they will probably end up voting Tory at the next election. More than two thirds want to see a Conservative government with an overall majority after 2015 (not as many as among Loyalists, 83% of whom say this) but nearly one in five (18%) would like another Conservative-Lib Dem coalition.

Joiners fall disproportionately into the 18-24 age range, partly reflecting that some will have been too young to vote at the last election, rather than having been attracted from another party.

Considerers

THOSE WHO DID NOT VOTE CONSERVATIVE IN 2010, AND WOULD NOT DO SO TOMORROW, BUT WOULD CONSIDER DOING SO IN THE FUTURE



Considerers constitute 3% of all voters. They did not vote Conservative in 2010 and would not do so in an election tomorrow, but say they would consider voting Tory in future. Overwhelmingly the most important factor that these voters have in common is that they trust Cameron and Osborne to manage the economy more than they trust Miliband and Balls.

Nearly half (44%) of Considerers say they would vote Lib Dem in an election tomorrow; 40% say they would vote Labour and 11% UKIP. In 2010, 60% of current Considerers voted Lib Dem, and just under a third voted Labour.

Considerers are more likely to say coalition has been worse than they expected when it was first formed than to say it has been better – but 70% say it has either been better or about the same as expected. They are more likely to say David Cameron has been a better Prime Minister than they expected (23%) than they are to say this of the coalition as a whole.

Considerers are slightly more positive than voters in their perceptions of the Conservative Party. The biggest differences from the average were on the proportions saying the Tories are competent and capable, will do what they say, and are willing to take tough decisions for the long term. However, Considerers were if anything fractionally less likely than voters as a whole to say party stands for fairness, and no more or less likely to say it shares their values or stands for equal opportunity.

Considerers were more likely than voters as a whole, and much more likely than Loyalists, Joiners and Defectors, to say they would prefer the current Conservative-Lib Dem coalition to a Conservative government with overall majority. The same is true of their view of Lib Dems' role in govt – they are much more likely to say the party does not have enough influence (43%) than to say it has too much (16%).

Considerers give David Cameron a much bigger lead as the best Prime Minister than voters as a whole (69% to 12%, compared to 47% to 38%). They also give Cameron higher than average scores for his performance (though lower than that given by Loyalists and Joiners), and higher than average scores for Nick Clegg. They give much higher than average scores for Vince Cable.

Considerers are even more likely than Joiners to say they are more favourable towards Cameron than they are towards the Conservative Party generally. They are significantly more likely to say this (39%) than to say they prefer the Conservative Party to Cameron (23%).

A clear but not overwhelming majority of Considerers (59%-41%) think the right decisions are being made and that the economy will improve significantly in the next two or three years (in contrast to voters as a whole, who think the opposite by a similar margin). However, their margin of trust for Cameron and Osborne over Miliband and Balls is ten times that among voters as a whole.

Considerers are only slightly more likely than average to say the Conservatives have the best approach to policy issues, and sometimes less likely (on improving the NHS, and ensuring that people are treated fairly, for example). The biggest differences from voters as a whole were on the economy, in particular in being more likely than voters as a whole to say the Tories were best on managing the economy overall, and on defending Britain's interests in Europe (!).

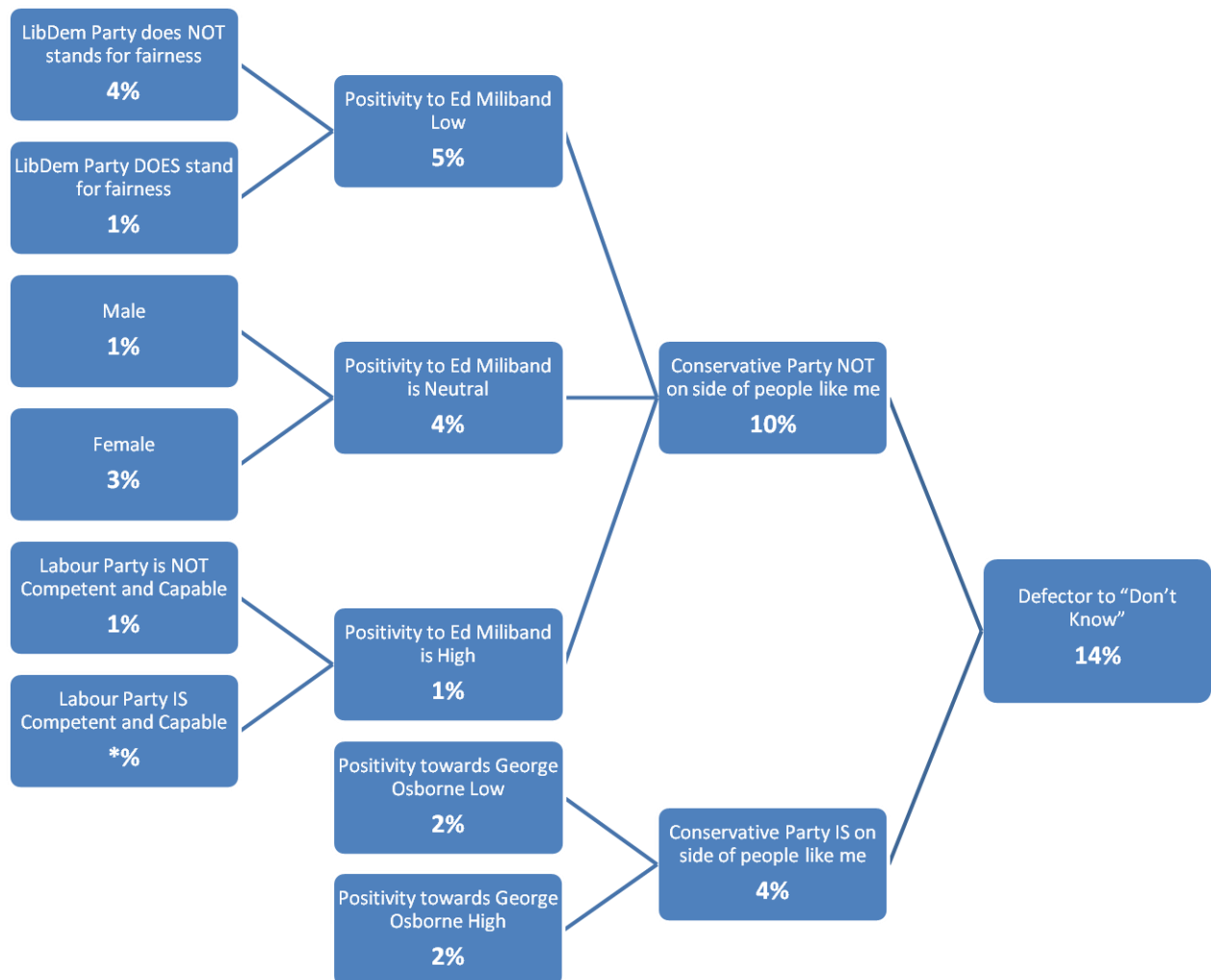
Only two fifths of Considerers say they are currently moving towards the Conservatives (though that is nearly twice the level for voters as a whole). Only a quarter currently say they will probably end up voting Conservative at the next election; 40% say they will probably end up voting Lib Dem.

Considerers are less likely than Loyalists, Joiners or even Defectors (and indeed less likely than voters in general) to say a Conservative government with an overall majority was their preferred outcome of the next election (34%). They are the group most likely to want another Conservative-Lib Dem coalition (27%). A quarter would like to see a Labour government.

Considerers are slightly more likely to be in the 25-44 age range than older or younger. They are disproportionately in the AB social group and slightly less likely than average to work in the public sector.

Defectors

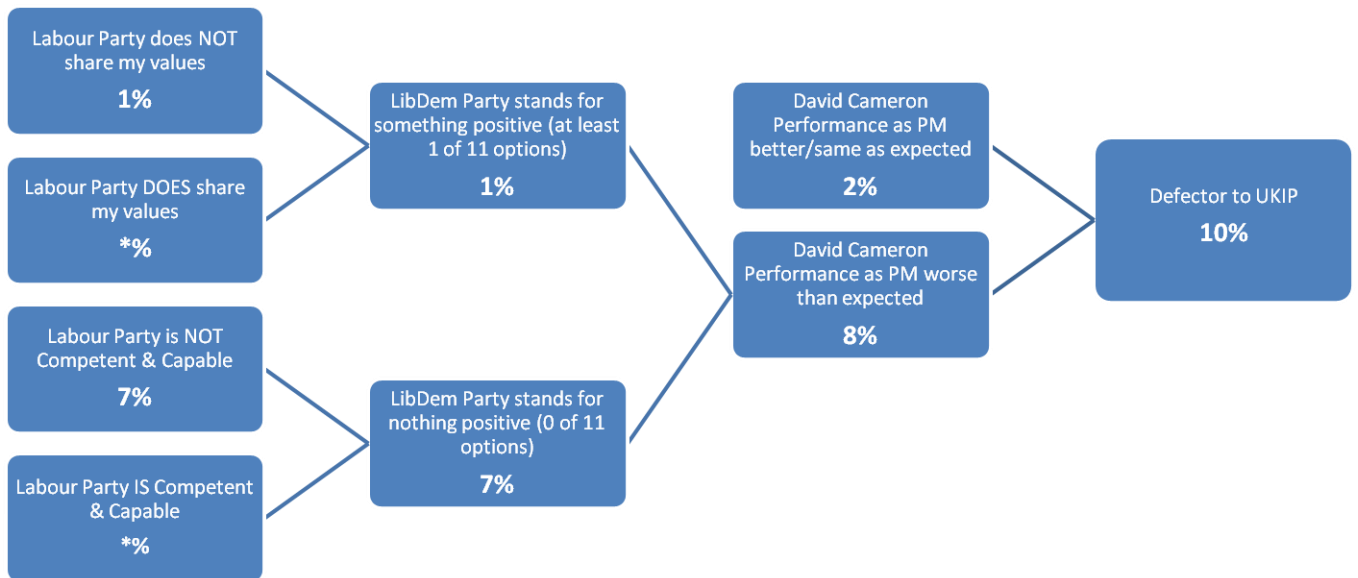
2010 CONSERVATIVE VOTERS WHO NOW SAY 'DON'T KNOW'



Just over one third (34%) of those who voted Conservative in 2010 say they would not do so in an election tomorrow. Of these Defectors, the biggest group, comprising 14% of 2010 Tories, say they do not know how they would vote. Just over two thirds of this group say the Conservative Party is not "on the side of people like me". The vast majority of these do not have a positive view of Ed Miliband, and most of those do not think the Liberal Democrats stand for fairness.

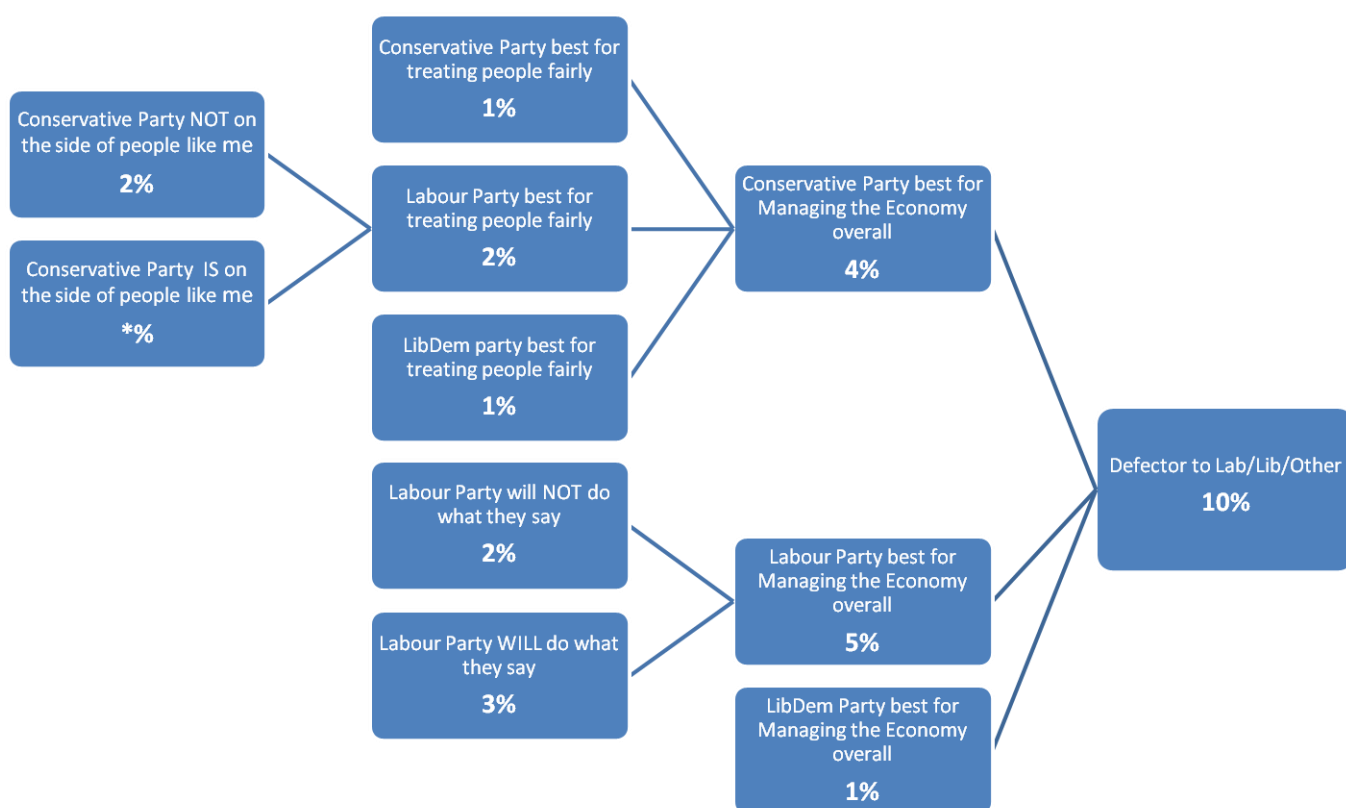
The third of Defectors to 'Don't Know' who do think Conservative Party is on the side of people like them have little else in common; they are evenly divided in their view of George Osborne, suggesting they are less certain of Conservative credentials on the economy than more positive voters.

2010 CONSERVATIVE VOTERS WHO NOW SAY THEY WOULD VOTE UKIP



One in ten 2010 Conservative voters said they would vote UKIP in an election tomorrow. For these Defectors to UKIP, the most important uniting factor was the view that David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister had been worse than they expected. They also overwhelmingly had no positive views about the Liberal Democrats and did not think Labour were competent and capable.

2010 CONSERVATIVE VOTERS WHO NOW SAY THEY WILL VOTE LABOUR, LIB DEM OR OTHERS



A further one in ten 2010 Conservatives say they would vote Labour, Liberal Democrat or for another party in an election tomorrow. Four in ten of this group of Defectors think the Conservatives have the best approach to managing the economy overall, but most of this group think Labour or the Lib Dems are better when it comes to making sure people are treated fairly. Those who think Labour are best when it comes to treating people fairly also overwhelmingly say the Conservatives are not on the side of people like them.

Half of Defectors to Labour, the Lib Dems or Others say Labour are the best party for managing the economy overall; however, these voters are divided as to whether the Labour Party will do what it says.

Our poll found that overall, despite their current voting intention more than half of Defectors (52%) say a Conservative government with an overall majority would be their preferred outcome of the next election.

Though 52% of Defectors naming a party say they would vote UKIP in an election tomorrow, only just over half say they are pretty sure which party they will vote for – well below the 77% of all

voters who say this. Of those who have not finally decided, half say they would consider going back to the Conservatives.

Defectors are unhappy with the coalition. More than two thirds say it has been worse than they expected; only 4% say it has been better. More than three quarters (77%) say they would prefer a Conservative government with an overall majority – significantly more than among voters as a whole, and only slightly fewer than Loyalists (83%). Half say the Liberal Democrats have too much influence within the government.

Defectors are also dissatisfied with David Cameron: two thirds say he has performed less well as Prime Minister than they expected, and only 5% say he has done better. However, more than two thirds (69%) say he would make the best Prime Minister of the three leaders – not as high as for Loyalists or Joiners but significantly more than among voters as a whole.

Defectors' ratings of the Conservative Party on various attributes are similar to those awarded by voters in generally – though Defectors are more likely to say the Tories share their values. However, they are even less likely than average to say the Conservatives will do what they say, are on the side of people like them, and that they stand for fairness.

As with Joiners and Considerers, the Conservatives' biggest strength among Defectors is the economy. Defectors are significantly more likely than voters as a whole (and more likely than Considerers) to say the Tories have the best approach to getting the economy growing and creating jobs, cutting the deficit and the debt, and managing the economy overall. Defectors are also unusual in saying the Conservatives are best on improving schools and the NHS.

In fact, Defectors give the Conservatives a lead over Labour and the Liberal Democrats on every single policy issue tested.

Three quarters of Defectors say the Conservatives are best when it comes to defending Britain's interests in Europe, a similar proportion say the same for controlling immigration and four out of five rank the Party best on reforming welfare. (Though this question was only asked about the Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems, it does at least show that they were not pushed to UKIP by the view that there is nothing to choose between the three main parties on these issues).

Though most Defectors would like to see a Conservative government after the next election, more would prefer a Labour government (28%) or a Labour-Lib Dem coalition (11%) than another Conservative-Lib Dem coalition.

Defectors are disproportionately aged 65 or over, and are slightly more likely than average to be in social group AB.

In their own words

Focus groups were conducted involving three types of people: those who voted Conservative in 2010 and would do so again tomorrow (Loyalists), those who did not vote Conservative in 2010 but would consider doing so in an election tomorrow (Joiners/Considerers), and those who voted Conservative in 2010 but would not do so in an election tomorrow (Defectors).

Why vote Conservative?

The reasons most often cited by Loyalists for voting Conservative again were that the Tories were dealing with the deficit, reforming welfare, that they liked David Cameron as Prime Minister and that he was cleaning up the mess he inherited.

“Labour were in for such a long time, and they’re trying to get everything back on budget. I think they need a second term just to make sure everything is where it needs to be.” [L]

“I’d vote for them again because I think they’ve taken the leadership of the coalition and they’re sticking to their guns over the deficit correction measures, and I think the opposition just haven’t got any gravitas.” [L]

“I actually like David Cameron. When I look at him I feel he’s honest.” [L]

Asked why they were attracted to the Conservatives despite not having voted for them in 2010, Joiners/Considerers often spoke about the government cleaning up the mess, and particularly that David Cameron seemed willing to take tough decisions and stick to his guns. They felt the Conservatives were best placed to run the economy, and approved of the priority attached to cutting the deficit and reforming welfare. The lack of credible alternatives was also an important factor for many.

“I think they’re the strongest party to withstand the current situation.” [J/C]

“I think he’s started to put his stamp on the party. I think he’s the right guy for the job.” [J/C]

“They’re trying to get the country back on its feet and save money. There are a lot of cutbacks but they’ve got to make cutbacks to get us back on track, haven’t they?” [J/C]

“They seem to be tackling things. I know it’s unpopular but they seem to be grasping things.” [J/C]

“I think my opinion of the Conservatives has changed in the way that they’ve dealt with the situation they’re in. I think they’ve actually gone in there and said this is what we’re going to do and actually done something.” [J/C]

“The Conservatives have had a load of grief but at least they have some sort of plan and are sticking to it, rather than going back on it.” [J/C]

“I’m sure they’ve got a plan. I feel they should be given a bit more time to see where the plan is going.” [J/C]

When asked whether there were still reasons to vote Conservative again, even though they had moved away from the party since the 2010 election, Defectors often mentioned the need to deal with the deficit. Several also thought the government would need longer than one term to finish the job, and that there was no more credible alternative on offer.

And why not?

Many of the Loyalists could think of no good reasons not to vote Conservative again at a new election. For those who could, the risk of ending up with another coalition was high on the list, and several said the number of U-turns made them wonder whether policies were being thought through properly.

Joiners/Considerers named several reasons why they may well not end up voting Conservative at the next election. Many felt that cuts were being made in the wrong places or hitting the wrong people, some felt that the Conservatives' relationship with News International or party donors had reflected badly on the party or had noticed new allegations about expenses, and a few were put off by an impression that the Tories did not seem to be like ordinary people.

Defectors raised a number of complaints when asked for their reasons not to vote Conservative again. Many of these concerned broken promises and the coalition (and the prospect of getting another coalition if they did vote Tory again). There were also concerns about cuts in what they regarded as the wrong places – often police and the Armed Forces – and the economic situation.

The coalition

There were very mixed views about the value of a coalition government. Many of those who had not voted Conservative before were reassured by the presence of the Liberal Democrats in government, even though few could name any specific policy or proposal which the Lib Dems had influenced for the better.

“If it had been a single Tory Party in power it might have been a more difficult choice. But I think it's a slightly easier choice, because although they might be the junior party, the Lib Dems, there is an influence there.” [J/C]

“[Without the coalition] I think they would just have gone crazy. I think it would have been quite frightening really, the power. We would have been in the mire. They've had to barter a lot with their policies, I think it's kept a little bit of control over it.” [J/C]

Loyalists and Defectors, however, were more likely to find the coalition frustrating. They sometimes said the prospect of another coalition put them off the idea of voting Conservative again, even though they would prefer a Conservative government with an overall majority.

“I did use to like and trust Cameron. I still quite like him but I don't particularly trust either the coalition or them.” [D]

“I think if it had been Conservative it would have been a bit more focussed; it gets a bit woolly. I like David Cameron as a leader but not with Nick Clegg.” [D]

“We all voted Conservative, but we haven't got a Conservative government, have we?” [D]

“One reason [not to vote Conservative again] is the possibility of another coalition. I'm not impressed with that at all. I just don't feel like anybody's in charge”. [D]

Policy issues

The **deficit and debt** dominated the government's agenda in the view of most participants. They also tended to feel that this priority was unavoidable given the situation the government found itself in. Though a few mentioned efforts to promote apprenticeships and change planning laws to encourage construction, most did not feel that the government was doing very much to promote growth and jobs, or indeed that there was very much the government could do. Participants often thought the government was doing its best on the economy with very little room for manoeuvre, most did not have the impression that very much progress was being made, and there seemed no end to austerity

in sight. Most participants greatly underestimated, when asked to guess, what proportion of the deficit the government had managed to eliminate so far. Several thought it may not have shrunk at all, or may even have grown, and many thought the percentage would be negligible and in single figures.

"It's going to be a while before we see a benefit, isn't it?" [J/C]

"I don't think they will have done much, or the media would pick up on it and they would be saying that they had." [D]

"I don't think there's any light at the end of the tunnel at the moment". [D]

Participants were usually pleasantly surprised to be told that the deficit had in fact been reduced by a quarter. This encouraged them and strengthened their view that the government had taken the right course.

"If those figures are true they should shout about that. Then people will say, OK, we're all tightening our belts, but we can see a result." [J/C]

"I would imagine there's a few countries in Europe that would like to be able to say that." [L]

"Encouraging." [D]

"Sounds like they're going the right way. We're getting there." [D]

"It's good as long as it's sustainable." [D]

For some, this figure highlighted that most of the cuts were still to come and made them wonder where they would hit. However, since they tended to see the cuts as a regrettable necessity anyway, the overall effect of knowing that progress was being made was galvanising.

"It's a bit scary, isn't it? Where is it going to come from?" [L]

"It's got to be done though, hasn't it? It's got to be done, it's just a bit scary to think that's for the future." [L]

"When you see the state of other European countries, many of them, do we really want to go down that road? Most people would say no. so you either bite the bullet now and take on those cuts or you go back to the old Labour way, and spend and keep unemployment down by employing people in the public sector." [L]

When asked what would be different if Labour had won the last election, participants in all groups usually said things would be worse because debts would be greater. The best that could be said was that things might be easier in the short term, but that we would be storing up trouble for the future and risking the fate of Greece or Ireland.

"I think we'd possibly be in more debt than we are now." [J/C]

"We'd be feeling better because we'd have money in our pockets, but the underlying problems it would be causing for the future, for our children..." [J/C]

"I don't think we'd have seen all these cuts. Or we'd have seen some, but they would have cut different things". [J/C]

"They would have buried their head in the sand." [J/C]

"We'd be like Greece, or Ireland." [J/C]

"I think this mess would be prolonged." [D]

Participants often spontaneously mentioned **welfare reform**. People were aware that the issue was high on the government's agenda but several felt that more could be done to ensure that benefits only go to those who need and deserve them. A few were concerned that sweeping reforms, particularly to disability benefits, had hit the wrong people while allowing some scroungers to continue.

"They're being tougher, which they needed to." [J/C]

"In some ways they're tackling the wrong people. I've got MS and a lot of people I know have had their benefits stopped completely even though it's absolutely impossible for them. They've got a new set of guidelines which are utterly ridiculous." [J/C]

"They're reassessing everyone, changing the benefit, cutting support allowance, so it's like a universal benefit now. It's more transparent to see what people are up to. So I think that's a good thing." [L]

"The country has allowed [welfare dependency] to happen for too long, and I think the Conservatives face up to it more. It's not about people saying 'what about him and what he's got', really you should be looking at yourself and contributing." [L]

For most participants, the only thing that came to mind in the realm of **crime and policing** was cuts in police numbers – though several commented that they had been impressed by David Cameron's response to the riots of August 2011. A handful mentioned specific initiatives such as changes to the ASBO, but there was no overall feeling that this government had been tougher on crime than its predecessor.

"They're not helping, with reducing the police." [J/C]

"At the Police Federation Conference the police themselves said they've got no confidence in our Home Secretary." [J/C]

"When the riots happened David Cameron did that speech and said whoever gets caught will be punished harder, and then he did punish them harder, which I thought was good." [J/C]

"They're trying to do more about rehabilitation for drug users." [J/C]

"They're more lenient. There are fewer people going into custody than two years ago." [J/C]

"There's a new law now that if you commit a crime and you're not British you get be deported back to your own country." [L]

Participants with children were generally happy with their **schools**. There was no awareness of across-the-board policies to improve standards or discipline, but several noted improvements in their local schools that had resulted from academy status.

"It allows our head teacher to make decisions on where the finances go. For example, with school buses, we're not tied to paying the county council 20% of the cost of having the bus service. So you're paying the same for the service but you're not paying the council 20% for the privilege." [J/C]

"I think academy status is quite a good idea. My brother goes to an academy now and he's better behaved, better morals. I'd like my children to go to an academy." [D]

The tone of discussion about the **NHS** was familiar: a mix of personal experiences, and a general view that front line services were being eroded. Some talked about the reorganisation of local services, such as maternity or A&E units, which they regarded as cuts. A few said they had been surprised to be offered a choice of hospitals at which to be treated.

"They have been losing front line staff, nurses have been chucked left, right and centre, at a time when the population is getting bigger." [J/C]

"I had an operation on the NHS but I was given a choice of three private hospitals and it was done within two weeks". [L]

Several participants grumbled about **Europe and the EU**, but very few raised the subject spontaneously. People were confused about whether we were contributing to bailouts for Eurozone countries (and if so, why). Some felt, however, that this government seemed more willing than previous governments to stand up to the EU when necessary, though David Cameron's veto was only rarely mentioned. For many of those who complained about Europe, the biggest grievance was the European Court of Human Rights constraining Britain's right to deport terrorist suspects. Despite blaming Europe for the problem, they sometimes noted that other EU countries managed to carry out such deportations with no trouble.

"I think he has been really strong in dealing with Angela Merkel and the French and the Greeks." [L]

"The thing is, we've bailed out Greece twice and we've bailed out Ireland in the euro. I don't know, I don't understand it." [J/C]

"They haven't been so go-with-the-flow. They have voiced their opinions a bit more." [J/C]

"I think it's more from the bureaucratic point of view that annoys me, the European Court of Human Rights and so on. You've got one of these terrorists in jail in London, and you can't ship him out." [J/C]

"If we weren't involved in Europe, we wouldn't have the problem about having all these terrorists we can't get rid of. How come other countries don't bother with that? Italy don't bother with it. They get fined a couple of million quid, so what?" [D]

Though there was no enthusiasm for the EU, very few participants wanted an early referendum on Britain's membership, even among Defectors. With the EU in turmoil and with so much at stake at an uncertain time, many felt that this would be a particularly bad time to be asked to make such a choice. Many did not feel they knew enough to be able to decide.

"I quite like the fact that I don't have a decision on whether we're in or out of Europe." [J/C]

"Everything needs to calm down. We need more information." [J/C]

"It would cost us too much to get out now. I think at the moment we're so tied into it, with a lot of banks, stuff we don't even know about, it would actually bankrupt us." [J/C]

"Wait until we actually need it." [L]

"I don't think we can have one now. We don't really know what's going to happen, it's in turmoil from one week to the next." [L]

"I think it can be very dangerous because if people don't understand something fully they can make a rash decision. Do you give the people what they want or do we trust the people that we've elected?" [L]

"I think they need to put everything in plain English rather than make it so political, because I'm fairly intelligent and I struggle with some of the terms and some of the things they say and whether to believe it. So they need to make sure it's clearer for everyone to follow." [L]

"I don't think we're in a position to go it alone, are we?" [D]

Some participants said they were considering UKIP. However, while they often agreed with what the party had to say and were impressed with its leader (whose name very few could remember correctly), they usually saw them as a vehicle for protest votes and said the impossibility of them achieving power put them off voting UKIP at a general election.

"There are occasionally things that get reported and I think 'I agree with that'. But they take it all a bit too far." [J/C]

"They are a bit racist." [J/C]

"Lafarge is a very clever bloke. I like him." [J/C]

"Lafarge is always impressive in the European Parliament." [L]

“They’re not really a big party are they? It would be alright for a local election where you could get them onto a council, fair enough, but a general election, no.” [L]

“Some of the policies they were pushing were very close to what I felt, but they couldn’t have implemented those at a national level.” [L]

“Brian something. Brian Fromage.” [L]

Some were aware of measures the government had taken to tighten **immigration controls**. Most, though, tended to think this was something on which the Conservatives had talked about more than it had delivered. Even so, being more likely than other parties to limit immigration remained an important attraction to the Conservatives for some people.

“They’re trying to stop them coming through the tunnel, aren’t they? That’s where the problem is, and they’ve got all these CO2 monitors. And they’ve put more staff on the ferries and things like that.” [J/C]

“I think there are still a lot of loopholes being exploited by people.” [L]

“They’re trying, but they still aren’t doing enough.” [L]

“They’ve got their controls tightened up obviously. I know a Filipino lady who wanted to bring her daughter to visit and she asked me to help her do the forms, and I couldn’t believe how rigorous it was. They can’t just walk in.” [L]

“They do seem to do a lot of talking, but they’ve had long enough to talk now and they really need to put it into practice.” [L]

“I can’t remember hearing anything about it.” [D]

Most people had heard nothing about plans to **reform the House of Lords** (though the groups were conducted before the Commons votes in July). Many felt there may be a good case for reforming the upper house, but it did not feel to them like a pressing priority, and certainly not one that should dominate the government’s agenda for any length of time.

“I think everything needs to be looked at to ensure it’s still up to date and in line with what purpose we want it to serve. Because at the end of the day, who knows what goes on there? We don’t hear much about it.” [J/C]

“I think it’s a reasonable thing. I don’t think they’re out of touch [to look at it]. We don’t live in the same world that we did forty or fifty years ago.” [J/C]

“We should care, but I don’t think we do.” [D]

“They’ve been messing about with that for ages, haven’t they?” [D]

“A bit irrelevant.” [D]

Several participants complained about the number of U-turns. Most of these did not feel important in themselves, but taken together they made some people wonder whether policies were being thought through properly. Those who recalled the “pasty tax” did not feel strongly about whether VAT should or should not apply to pasties, they just thought it was a ridiculous thing for a government to get itself into a row about.

“They shouldn’t be wasting time on stupid little policies like that. They should be running the country, not worrying about pasties.” [D]

“I think my disappointment lies in where they seem to be doing so many U-turns. They say they will do this, and then all of a sudden they’ve totally backtracked on it. I just don’t think that fills you with confidence.” [L]

Full poll results

8,058 adults were interviewed online between 21 and 28 May 2012.
Results have been weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain.

LOYALISTS = voted Conservative in 2010 and would do so again in an election tomorrow (1,444)

JOINERS = did not vote Conservative in 2010, but would do so in an election tomorrow (415)

CONSIDERERS = did not vote Conservative in 2010 and would not tomorrow, but would consider doing so in future (262)

DEFECTORS = voted Conservative in 2010, but would not do so in an election tomorrow (741)

1. If there were to be a general election tomorrow, which party do you think you would vote for?

	ALL	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Conservative	31%	-	-
Labour	40%	40%	29%
Liberal Democrat	10%	44%	8%
UKIP	9%	11%	52%
Others	10%	5%	11%

2. Which party did you vote for in the general election in May 2010?

	ALL	CONSIDERERS	JOINERS
Conservative	37%	-	-
Labour	30%	32%	27%
Liberal Democrat	24%	60%	66%
UKIP	3%	3%	3%
Others	6%	5%	4%

3. Have you definitely decided which party you will vote for at the next general election, or do you think you may well change your mind?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	DEFECTORS
I am pretty sure which party I will vote for	77%	85%	69%	57%
I have not finally decided and may well change my mind	23%	15%	31%	43%

4. Which of the following parties would you seriously consider voting for at the next general election?
[All those who have not finally decided which party to vote for]

	ALL	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Conservative	30%	81%	100%	47%
Labour	34%	34%	48%	18%
Liberal Democrats	26%	36%	50%	12%
Another party	24%	13%	15%	37%
Don't know/won't say	32%	10%	-	30%

5. Overall, has the coalition government so far been doing better than you expected when it was first formed, or worse than you expected, or about the same as you expected?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Better than I expected	9%	19%	22%	14%	4%
About the same as I expected	44%	58%	58%	57%	28%
Worse than I expected	47%	23%	19%	30%	68%

6. Thinking about David Cameron's performance as Prime Minister, has that been better than you expected when he took office, or worse, or about the same?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Better than I expected	13%	27%	36%	23%	5%
About the same as I expected	41%	51%	47%	51%	31%
Worse than I expected	46%	22%	17%	26%	64%

7. Here are some things that people have said about the main political parties. Please can you say whether, on balance, you think each statement is true of the Conservative Party?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Willing to take tough decisions for the long term	50%	93%	86%	72%	52%
Competent and capable	31%	81%	75%	51%	32%
Shares my values	28%	86%	68%	29%	34%
Will do what they say	26%	70%	60%	36%	21%
Its heart is in the right place	25%	71%	56%	33%	28%
On the side of people like me	24%	78%	62%	30%	23%
Wants to help ordinary people get on in life	24%	71%	53%	29%	23%
Stands for fairness	23%	69%	52%	21%	21%
Stands for equal opportunity for all	21%	65%	45%	22%	21%
Represents the whole country, not just some types of people	21%	63%	45%	25%	20%

8. If you had to choose, which would you prefer to have at the moment: the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition, or a Conservative government with an overall majority?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Conservative-Lib Dem coalition	51%	14%	31%	54%	23%
Con govt with overall majority	49%	86%	69%	46%	77%

9. Thinking about the current coalition government, do you think the Liberal Democrats seem to have too much influence over the decisions of the government, or not enough influence, or about the right amount of influence?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
LDs have too much influence	23%	52%	28%	16%	50%
Right amount of influence	26%	38%	44%	41%	20%
LDs don't have enough influence	51%	9%	28%	43%	30%

10. Which of the following do you think would make the best Prime Minister?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
David Cameron	47%	97%	91%	69%	69%
Ed Miliband	38%	1%	4%	12%	21%
Nick Clegg	15%	2%	5%	19%	10%

11. Please indicate how positively or negatively you feel about the following individuals, using a scale from -100 (very negative) to +100 (very positive), where zero means neither positive nor negative.

<i>Mean score</i>	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
David Cameron, Prime Minister	-1.72	64.28	54.88	33.40	6.71
Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister	-11.69	11.48	15.28	14.11	-20.94
Ed Miliband, Labour leader	-2.44	-49.32	-28.82	-9.71	-32.54
George Osborne, Chancellor	-15.81	31.31	18.66	-2.09	-11.42
Ed Balls, Shadow Chancellor	-10.61	-46.27	-25.54	-11.39	-36.22
Vince Cable, Business Secretary	-0.80	7.42	15.54	20.85	-12.93
William Hague, Foreign Secretary	7.04	50.60	32.47	32.56	22.75
Ken Clarke, Justice Secretary	-4.52	23.37	16.57	18.65	-11.64
Theresa May, Home Secretary	-17.23	17.85	4.70	3.80	-13.96
Boris Johnson, Mayor of London	22.74	58.44	50.61	42.60	39.65

12. Would you say you were more favourable towards David Cameron or the Conservative Party generally / Ed Miliband or the Labour Party generally / Nick Clegg or the Lib Dems generally?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
More favourable to DC than to Cons	19%	20%	35%	39%	15%
No more or less favourable	60%	45%	38%	37%	39%
More favourable to Cons than to DC	21%	35%	28%	23%	47%
More favourable to EM than to Labour	9%	5%	9%	5%	8%
No more or less favourable	50%	67%	53%	47%	62%
More favourable to Labour than to EM	41%	28%	38%	47%	29%
More favourable to NC than to Lib Dems	12%	21%	19%	16%	13%
No more or less favourable	59%	58%	49%	52%	66%
More favourable to Lib Dems than to NC	29%	21%	32%	33%	21%

13. With our economy facing challenges in the months ahead, whom do you most trust to manage the economy in the best interests of Britain – David Cameron and the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, or Ed Miliband and the Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Cameron & Osborne	53%	99%	95%	81%	76%
Miliband & Balls	47%	1%	5%	19%	24%

14. Thinking about Britain's economy, which of the following is closest to your own view?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Although things are difficult now, the right decisions are being made and things will improve significantly in the next two or three years	38%	85%	77%	59%	42%
In two or three years' time, the economy will be no better, or even worse, than it is now	62%	15%	23%	41%	58%

15. Which party do you think would have the best approach to each of the following issues – the Conservatives, Labour or the Liberal Democrats?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Getting the economy growing and creating jobs					
Conservatives	39%	92%	82%	53%	60%
Labour	49%	5%	13%	28%	31%
Lib Dems	12%	3%	5%	19%	9%
Cutting the deficit and the debt					
Conservatives	55%	97%	92%	77%	78%
Labour	35%	2%	6%	12%	17%
Lib Dems	10%	1%	1%	10%	6%

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Improving the NHS					
Conservatives	29%	75%	51%	27%	45%
Labour	54%	15%	29%	42%	41%
Lib Dems	17%	11%	20%	31%	14%
Improving schools					
Conservatives	33%	81%	58%	34%	51%
Labour	48%	9%	21%	37%	32%
Lib Dems	18%	10%	21%	29%	16%
Protecting the environment					
Conservatives	25%	55%	43%	26%	38%
Labour	35%	5%	12%	18%	21%
Lib Dems	41%	40%	45%	56%	41%
Dealing with crime					
Conservatives	49%	93%	81%	70%	71%
Labour	39%	4%	13%	19%	22%
Lib Dems	11%	2%	6%	12%	7%
Defending Britain's interests in Europe					
Conservatives	52%	94%	85%	76%	75%
Labour	35%	3%	8%	16%	17%
Lib Dems	13%	3%	7%	8%	8%
Reforming welfare to stop scroungers and cut benefit dependency					
Conservatives	60%	96%	87%	78%	81%
Labour	28%	2%	7%	10%	12%
Lib Dems	12%	2%	6%	12%	7%
Controlling immigration					
Conservatives	54%	91%	81%	69%	73%
Labour	32%	4%	9%	18%	19%
Lib Dems	14%	5%	10%	13%	9%
Cutting taxes					
Conservatives	35%	70%	53%	33%	50%
Labour	48%	18%	26%	40%	35%
Lib Dems	17%	11%	21%	27%	14%
Scrapping unnecessary regulations					
Conservatives	43%	87%	70%	49%	64%
Labour	36%	4%	10%	20%	21%
Lib Dems	21%	9%	20%	30%	14%
Ensuring people are treated fairly					
Conservatives	27%	70%	49%	21%	42%
Labour	48%	8%	19%	37%	33%
Lib Dems	25%	22%	32%	42%	25%
Managing the economy overall					
Conservatives	46%	97%	92%	72%	72%
Labour	42%	1%	4%	15%	21%
Lib Dems	12%	1%	3%	13%	7%

16. Some people say they could never see themselves voting Labour / Lib Dem / UKIP under any circumstances, while others say they could see themselves doing so some time in the future. Which of these is closest to your own view? [All those who voted Conservative in 2010]

	LOYALISTS	DEFECTORS
I could never see myself voting Labour	78%	52%
I could see myself voting Labour some time in the future	22%	48%
I could never see myself voting Lib Dem	63%	64%
I could see myself voting Lib Dem some time in the future	37%	36%
I could never see myself voting UKIP	58%	34%
I could see myself voting UKIP in the future	42%	66%

17. Thinking about the performance of David Cameron and the Conservative Party in government, do you think you will be more likely to consider voting Conservative at the next election, or less likely, or has it made no difference? [Those who did not vote Conservative in 2010 but would do so tomorrow or consider doing so in future]

	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS
I will be more likely to consider voting Conservative than I was before	55%	34%
No more or less likely	38%	50%
I will be less likely to vote Conservative than I was before	7%	16%

18. Would you say you are moving towards or away from the Conservatives/Labour/the Liberal Democrats?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Towards the Conservatives	21%	57%	72%	39%	14%
Neither	36%	38%	22%	38%	31%
Away from the Conservatives	42%	5%	6%	23%	55%
Towards Labour	35%	4%	6%	20%	23%
Neither	32%	32%	30%	33%	32%
Away from Labour	33%	64%	64%	46%	45%
Towards the Liberal Democrats	13%	11%	16%	25%	11%
Neither	43%	53%	43%	43%	40%
Away from the Liberal Democrats	43%	36%	41%	32%	49%

19. Given what you know about the coalition government's performance so far, and what you expect it to do in the future, and what the other parties are saying or doing, which of the following would you most like to see as the outcome of the next election?

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
A Conservative government	39%	83%	69%	34%	52%
A Conservative-Lib Dem coalition	12%	11%	18%	27%	9%
A Labour-Lib Dem coalition	18%	3%	5%	14%	11%
A Labour government	39%	3%	8%	25%	28%

20. Taking everything into account, including the performance of the coalition, the other parties, your MP and the candidates in your local area, which party do you think you are most likely to end up voting for at the next general election?

<i>Figures in brackets exclude Don't Know/Won't Vote</i>	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
Conservative	24% (30%)	94% (99%)	82% (90%)	16% (24%)	18% (24%)
Labour	34% (46%)	1% (1%)	4% (4%)	19% (28%)	18% (24%)
Liberal Democrat	9% (11%)	0% (1%)	4% (4%)	27% (40%)	5% (7%)
Another party	13% (16%)	1% (1%)	1% (1%)	6% (8%)	33% (45%)
Won't vote	6%	0%	1%	2%	2%
Don't know	13%	5%	8%	30%	24%

Age

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
18-24	12%	4%	22%	11%	5%
25-34	16%	10%	16%	20%	9%
35-44	19%	15%	20%	23%	18%
45-54	17%	16%	15%	17%	16%
55-64	15%	17%	10%	14%	16%
65+	21%	37%	17%	15%	35%

Social grade

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
AB	27%	36%	30%	38%	30%
C1	29%	31%	34%	29%	30%
C2	21%	17%	21%	12%	21%
DE	23%	16%	15%	21%	19%

Public sector

	ALL	LOYALISTS	JOINERS	CONSIDERERS	DEFECTORS
% working in public sector	27%	23%	18%	23%	29%