



*Cover image: Collected answers to the question  
“What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of Liberal  
Democrats?”*

**Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC** is an international businessman, author and philanthropist. He is founder and Chairman of the Board of Crimestoppers, a member of the Board of the Imperial War Museum and 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 & 2012), *The Leadership Factor* (2011), *Degrees of Separation* (2012), *The Armed Forces & Society* (2012), *Blue Collar Tories* (2012), *Project Red Alert* (2012), and *They're Thinking What We're Thinking: Understanding The UKIP Temptation* (2012)

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# What are the Liberal Democrats for?

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The mood at the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference this weekend will perhaps be more cheerful than at any such gathering since the start of the coalition. The Eastleigh by-election apparently vindicates Nick Clegg's approach to government, and his party's approach to campaigning.

His activists will be relieved to think that pavement politics is back; that despite the polls, strong local government and an invincible leaflet-dropping network will see many or even most of their incumbent MPs safely back to Westminster in two years' time. Certainly the Eastleigh victory was a considerable achievement for the Liberal Democrats, and there is no doubt, as my research has suggested for some time, that the party remains stronger as a local force than the national numbers suggest.

But that is not the whole story. A general election does not amount to hundreds of simultaneous by-elections, and the Liberal Democrats will not be able to treat it as though it does. Localness matters, but a general election decides who walks up Downing Street. Moreover, the party has ceased to be the automatic repository for protest votes, as it was in 2010 and before. Whatever the Lib Dems say in their scattered municipal bastions, they have to have a national story. Clegg must have something to say about the Liberal Democrats and government.

This is arguably the most difficult of the respective challenges before the three parties. The Conservatives need to expand their support at a time of austerity, appealing simultaneously to disaffected Tories and those who have never voted for the party before. Labour must set out an economic alternative that does not involve spending and borrowing more than the country can afford, and show that they have learned the right lessons from their time in government.

The Lib Dem dilemma, though, is more far-reaching. The title of this project is not intended to be facetious. Nick Clegg must define his party's purpose. The Liberal Democrats have always espoused the virtues of coalition government, but lost more than half their support the moment they joined one. The voters have punished them for achieving what they always aimed to do. Where does that leave the third party? Are they coalitionists first and foremost, helping to implement tough economic reforms in the national interest, aiming to moderate the instincts of their partners in government – of whichever party – while negotiating for some of their own policies to be adopted? Or should they distance themselves from the Conservatives, setting out a distinct, left-leaning policy programme in the hope of winning back the voters they have lost?

I wanted to look in detail at this question, the answer to which will play a significant part in determining the story of politics up to the next election and beyond. In order to do so I have conducted a poll of more than 20,000 people, allowing detailed analysis of Lib Dem voters, those who voted for the party in 2010 and have defected in one direction or another, and those who did not support the party last time but might consider doing so in 2015. Focus groups among each segment revealed more about their attitudes and motivations.

Remarkably, only one in twenty British adults both voted for the Liberal Democrats in 2010 and say they would do so in an election tomorrow. These are true Loyalists: they think the party shares their values, stands for fairness and has the best policies for getting the economy growing and creating jobs. They are far from uncritical of the party or Mr Clegg, however, often complaining that they seem invisible and powerless. They struggle to name any policy achievements – the higher Income Tax threshold is the best known (though most could not recall it or associate it with the Lib Dems unprompted), but the Pupil Premium seems barely to have registered. Nevertheless, these voters are glad the Lib Dems are in government, and have

some sympathy for Nick Clegg's position. They are the most likely to mention their local MP, of whom they nearly always think very highly, and though this would not often be a decisive factor, a strong local presence has the effect of winning the party a hearing on broader arguments about its role in government. They are very open to the Lib Dems' likely election pitch that they went into the coalition for the right reasons, achieved some good things in difficult circumstances, and that the more votes they get the more they will be able to do.

A smaller number of people who did not vote Lib Dem in 2010 – 4% of the electorate in total – say they would vote for the party in an election tomorrow or consider doing so in future. This diverse group has no strong uniting factors, and seemed to be less politically engaged (though in an open-minded, rather than a cynical way). In essence, they like the coalition government and the Lib Dems' presence in it, think that being in office has enhanced the party's credibility, and feel the Lib Dems represent the middle ground – and therefore, people like them.

The Defectors are rather more numerous. More than seven in ten of those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2010 now say they will vote for a different party, or do not know how they would vote. There are three main varieties of Liberal Democrat Defector.

Pollsters have usually found that people who vote in one election, but say they are not sure how they will vote in the next, are likely to return to their original party. This seems likely for many of the Lib Dem Defectors to Don't Know – half of them say they would vote for the party again when asked specifically about their own constituency. The remainder, however, seem equally open, or resistant, to all sides. Their strongest uniting factors are that they do not think Labour shares their values, or that the Lib Dems are competent and capable – but most of those who think this also do not know whom they most trust to manage the economy. The Lib Dems have lost their confidence, but nobody else has yet won it. Many of them were probably disaffected in 2010, and are now unsure where to take their disaffection next.

A fifth of those who have gone to another party, or 15% of all 2010 Lib Dem voters, say they would vote Conservative (8%) or UKIP (7%) in an election tomorrow. The things that these Defectors to the Right (to put it loosely) have most in common is the view that the Conservatives are the best party to manage the economy, and most of those who think this also think the Tories share their values and say a Conservative majority is their preferred election outcome. However, these Lib Dem-Conservative Defectors are less likely to say they are sure how they will vote than voters as a whole, or other Conservatives. Indeed, when asked about their own constituency, they are the most likely to revert to the Lib Dem column. They are more likely than other Defectors to think the Lib Dems have substantial influence within the coalition, and they rate the party much more positively than voters as a whole on factors like being on their side and standing for fairness. Though Conservative leaning in attitude, many of them think the Lib Dems have had a taming effect (though few can think of anything specific they have achieved).

While most Defectors to the Conservatives say the coalition has been about the same as they expected or better, two thirds of Defectors to UKIP say it has been worse. They also rate the Lib Dems lower on a range of positive attributes (especially "will do what they say") than voters as a whole. They could think of little or nothing the party had achieved in government and were inclined to dismiss successes like the higher tax threshold, saying it hardly makes up for other tax rises, spending cuts, and the higher cost of living.

Two fifths of Lib Dem voters from 2010 have switched to Labour or the Greens – loosely, Defectors to the Left. These voters put themselves further to the left on the political spectrum than voters as a whole, and they put the Lib Dems and Nick Clegg further to the right than others do. The thing they have most in common is the view that Labour is the best party to manage the economy. Eight in ten of those who think this would prefer a Labour government

after the election, and of this subgroup nine in ten say Labour shares their values – something they almost certainly thought when they cast their votes for Clegg three years ago.

Defectors to the Left think the Lib Dems have little or no influence within the coalition, and rank the party lower than average on keeping its promises (though higher than most on standing for fairness and equal opportunity, and having its heart in the right place).

Of all Defectors from the Lib Dems, those switching to Labour are the most likely to say they are sure how they will vote. They have been unhappy with the coalition from the beginning, and argue that the party should have joined forces with Labour, or stayed out and forced a second election, rather than formed a government with the Conservatives. Though they grudgingly say the coalition is less bad than an undiluted Tory government would be, or concede that one or two Lib Dem policies are now law, for most of them this is beside the point – as far as these voters are concerned, it is the Lib Dems' fault that the Conservatives are in office at all. For this the party cannot be forgiven – and to vote for them again would be to risk a re-run of 2010.

The decision to enter coalition with the Conservatives did not so much cause the Lib Dems' weakness as expose it. In this sense the party's problem is analogous to the financial crisis. Lib Dem support in the years before 2010 was a bubble; it was over-leveraged, with inflated commitments it never expected to be asked to meet. Worst of all, these expectations were contradictory. A few people voted Liberal Democrat because they agreed with what the party stood for. Some voted because they were not Labour, and some because they were not the Tories. Rather more supported them because they were neither.

In particular, and crucially, the Lib Dems attracted a group of voters who did not want to vote for Gordon Brown and thought they had the luxury of voting against Labour without helping to elect a Conservative government. These people are numerous, and furious. What the Lib Dems have achieved, or how different from the Conservatives they can claim to be, is for them neither here nor there. As far as these people were concerned, the Lib Dems' most important job – their only job – was to keep the Tories out, and now look what they've done.

Some of these voters say they would be prepared to listen to the Lib Dems again if they distanced themselves further from the Conservatives, set out a distinctively left-leaning agenda, and found themselves a new leader (not because a better candidate is on hand, but because a sacrifice is needed to show the party's contrition).

The Lib Dem dilemma, then, is to decide how far to go in trying to win back people who have largely made up their minds to support Ed Miliband, and indeed only voted Lib Dem in the first place as a left-wing alternative to Labour. The more they do so, the less success they will have with the smaller but much more biddable moderate voters, who are also open to the Conservatives, want the party to play a constructive part in government and would be unimpressed with the antics that the angry left require.

The party will no doubt make the most of its local credentials wherever it can. This will certainly weigh with some voters, but we found that when it came to a general election the main effect of popular MP was to win the party a hearing on wider arguments about the party's role in government; it would not often be a decisive factor for those reconsidering their vote, particularly for those whose sympathies lie with Labour.

Conservatives will hope that the Lib Dems choose to do most of their fishing in places like Hornsey & Wood Green, in the People's Republic of Haringey – ideally with a great deal of success, but if not, at least loudly enough for Tory leaners to notice and be put off. The recent evidence, such as loud demands for a "mansion tax" and apparent opposition to further welfare reform, suggests that despite Nick Clegg's centrist tendencies the party is indeed looking in this direction. If that is the case, long may it continue.

Meanwhile, the Conservatives must be careful not to solve Clegg's dilemma themselves. Despite everything, the Lib Dems' brand values – the sense that they stand for fairness and ordinary people – remain surprisingly strong. For the Conservatives to learn the wrong lessons from Eastleigh and exclusively pursue the UKIP leaners would be to leave the part of the field occupied by moderate centrist and even centre-right voters – who want responsible and economically conservative government without the strident tone that can all too easily go with it – wide open to the Lib Dems. The Tories must not make the Lib Dems' decision for them. While Nick Clegg's party have a choice, there is always the chance that they will make the wrong one.

MAA  
March 2013



# Methodology

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## QUANTITATIVE

- 20,022 adults were interviewed online between 22 and 31 January 2013. Results have been weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain.
- Full data tables are available at [LordAshcroftPolls.com](http://LordAshcroftPolls.com)

## QUALITATIVE

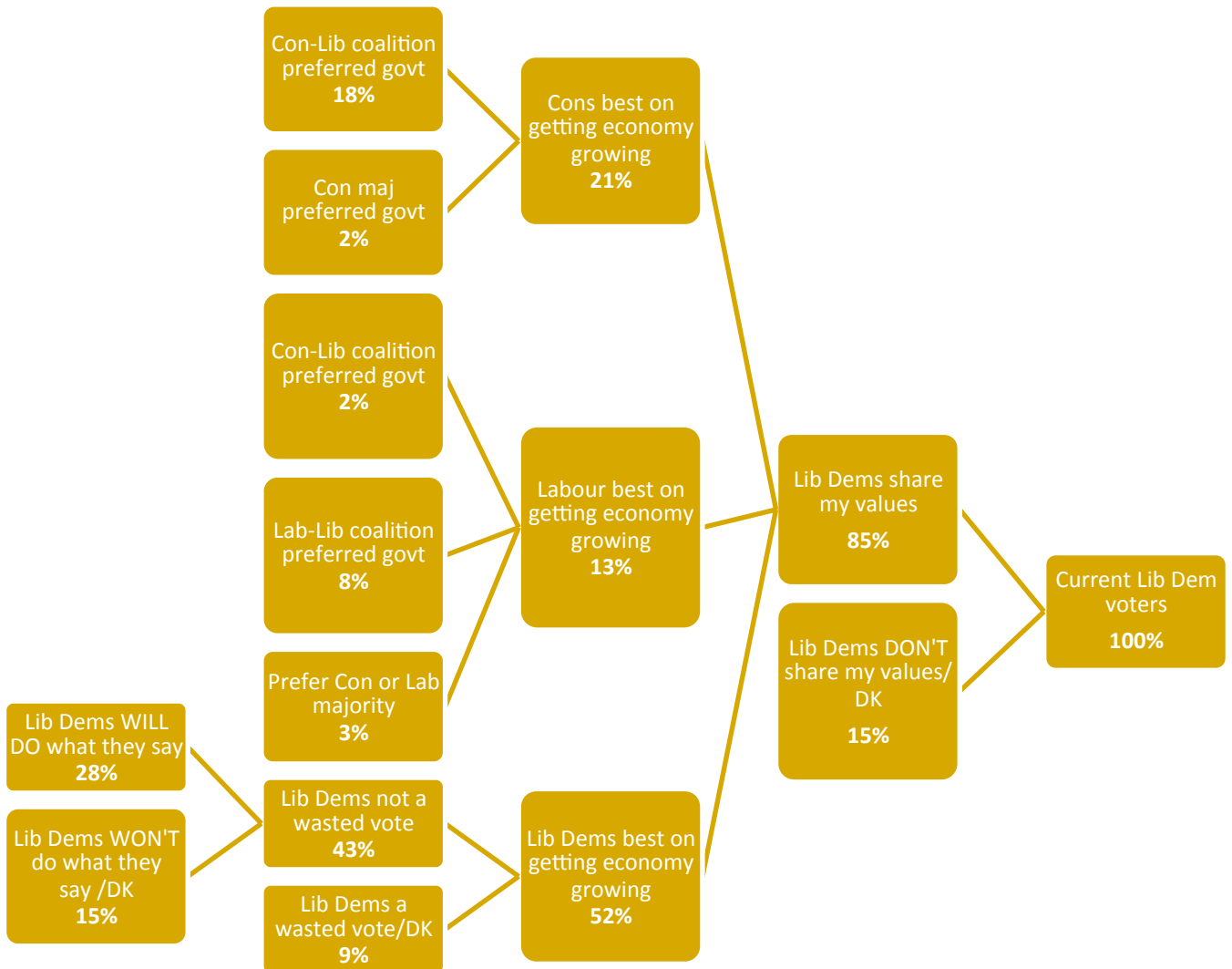
- 14 focus groups were held between 23 January and 21 February 2013 in Hornsey & Wood Green, Eastleigh, Sheffield, Solihull, Chippenham, Cheadle and Plymouth.
- Separate groups were held of Lib Dem loyalists, Defectors to Labour or Green, Defectors to Conservative or UKIP, and Joiners and Considerers.
- Separate groups were held of men and women.

## Key points

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- Just one in twenty adults in Britain both voted Liberal Democrat at the 2010 general election and say they would do so again in an election tomorrow.
- 29% of those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 say they would vote for the party again in an election tomorrow; 71% say they would vote for a different party, or do not know how they would vote. However, nearly a quarter of those who say they would vote Lib Dem in an election tomorrow did not vote for the party in 2010.
- As many 2010 Lib Dems now say they would vote Labour or Green (29%) as say they would vote for the Lib Dems again. Most of those Defectors to the Left who have switched to Labour think Labour shares their values and is the best party to manage the economy, and want to see a Labour government after the election. Of all defectors from the Lib Dems, these are the most sure how they will now vote. Many are angry that the party joined the coalition with the Conservatives as they had voted Lib Dem thinking the party a left-wing alternative to Labour. They are more inclined to blame the Lib Dems for a Tory-led government than give them credit for moderating Tory policies. Many say the party would need to be more vocal in opposing Conservative plans, or even leave the coalition and replace Nick Clegg, before they would listen to the party again.
- 15% of 2010 Lib Dem voters now say they would vote Conservative (8%) or UKIP (7%). These are less sure of how they would actually vote, and the Conservative leaners are much more likely than most to say the coalition has been better than they expected. They are more likely to say they would prefer a Conservative government than the current coalition, and they most trust the Conservatives on the economy by a wide margin, but they rate the Lib Dems much higher on a range of attributes than voters as a whole – especially standing for fairness and being for ordinary people. They are also more likely than other defectors to have a high opinion of their local Lib Dem MP. Rather than distance themselves from the Conservatives these voters want the Lib Dems to stick with the government's policy programme and make the coalition as successful as it can be.
- More than one fifth of those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 say they do not know how they would vote in an election tomorrow. These people are the most likely to return to the party when asked how they would vote specifically in their own constituency. However, most have lost confidence in the Lib Dems (thinking in particular that the party is not competent and capable), but are strongly resistant to Labour and do not know whom to trust on the economy.
- The Lib Dems score best on wanting to help ordinary people get on in life, having their heart in the right place, and standing for fairness and equal opportunity. They score least well on being competent and capable, being willing to take decisions for the long term, and (especially) doing what they say.
- 85% of voters support or strongly support raising the Income Tax threshold to £10,000, but 4 in 10 think this was a Conservative proposal. Though 63% identify the Pupil Premium as a Liberal Democrat policy, only just over half (53%) support it. The policy most recognisable as being from the Lib Dems is an amnesty for illegal immigrants, which only 25% of voters support (though this rises to 50% among those who have defected to the Greens).

## Current Liberal Democrat voters



The great majority of those who say they would vote Liberal Democrat tomorrow (9% of those who would vote, or just under 7% of the electorate) say the party shares their values.

The majority of this group also say the Lib Dems are the best party when it comes to getting the economy growing and creating jobs – though a fifth say the Conservatives are the best party on this measure. Those who name the Lib Dems as being best on economic growth also overwhelmingly reject the idea that the party represents a wasted vote.

Those who think the Lib Dems share their values but think Labour or the Conservatives have the best approach on economic growth would prefer a coalition government as the outcome of the next election rather than a majority for either of the bigger parties.

Two thirds (67%) of those who say they would vote Lib Dem in an election tomorrow say they are pretty sure how they will vote, with one third saying they may change their minds. This compares to 84% of Labour voters and 81% of Conservatives who say they are fairly sure how they will vote.

Asked what were their main reasons for supporting the party, current Lib Dem voters most often said they supported Lib Dem policies and what they stand for. They were more likely to say they would like to see the Lib Dems in government on their own, or that they like their local MP or candidate, than that they wanted to see the party continue as part of a coalition government. Only 12% said it was to stop the party they liked least from winning.

A quarter of Lib Dem voters say the coalition has been better than they expected when it was first formed, with more than half saying it was about the same. More than nine out of ten of them would prefer the current coalition to a Conservative government with an overall majority.

Just over half of Lib Dem voters (55%) say Nick Clegg would make the best Prime Minister. Just over a third (34%) name David Cameron and 11% Ed Miliband. They are more likely than voters as a whole to trust Cameron and Osborne to manage the economy (49%) over Miliband and Balls (18%), and are slightly less pessimistic than most about economic prospects over the next two or three years.

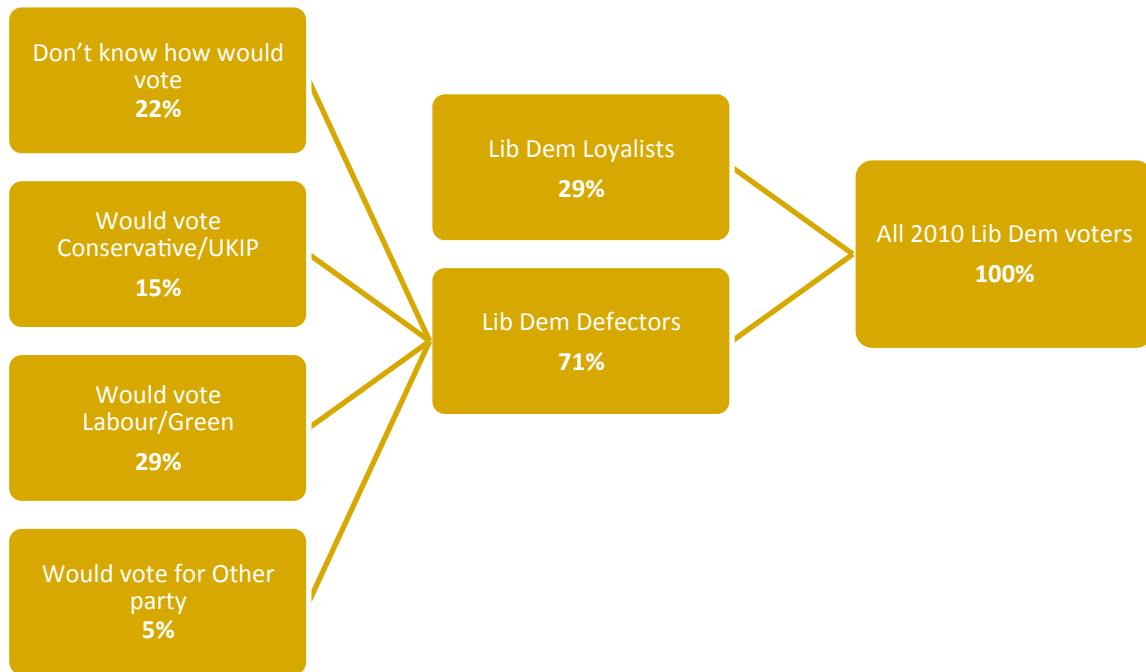
Offered various reasons for supporting the Lib Dems, current Lib Dem voters were most likely to agree that “by entering a coalition with the Conservatives the Lib Dems have shown that they are prepared to take real responsibility, not just oppose from the sidelines”. They also strongly agree that the party has sensible policies and decent principles, and are much more likely than Defectors and voters as a whole to think the Lib Dems have either achieved good things or prevented bad things by being part of the coalition government. Nearly two thirds of Lib Dem voters think the party has either quite a substantial influence within the coalition government (55%) or a great deal of influence (7%).

If Labour and the Conservatives were to win the same number of seats at the next election, current Lib Dem voters would be more likely to want another coalition with the Conservatives (38%) than with Labour (30%), and they also think this would be the preference of Nick Clegg – though more think Lib Dem members and Vince Cable would choose Labour rather than the Conservatives if they could.

The preferred election outcome for current Lib Dem voters is a Conservative-Lib Dem coalition (43%), closely followed by a Labour-Lib Dem coalition (38%). 12% would rather see a Labour government and 8% a Conservative government.

## 2010 Liberal Democrat voters

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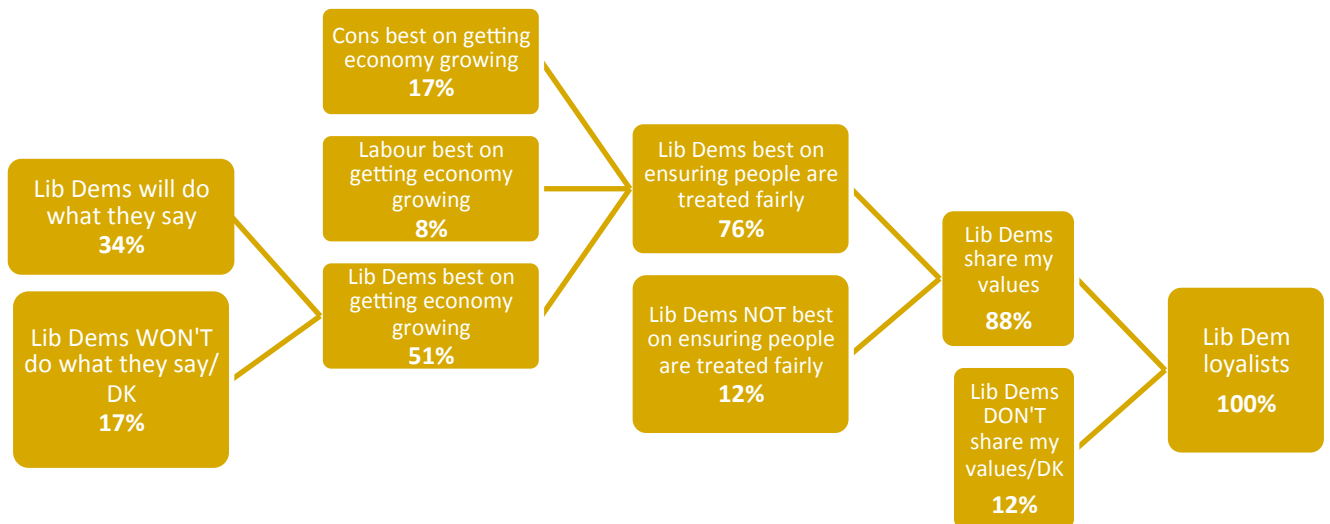
Only 29% of those who voted Liberal Democrat at the 2010 general election say they would vote for the party in an election tomorrow.

As many say they would vote Labour or Green in an election tomorrow, amounting to two fifths of all Lib Dem defectors.

Just over one fifth, or 15% of all 2010 Lib Dem voters, say they would vote Conservative or UKIP.

More than three in ten of the Defectors, or 22% of all those who voted Lib Dem in 2010, say they do not know how they would vote in an election tomorrow.

# Liberal Democrat Loyalists



Liberal Democrat Loyalists are those who voted Lib Dem at the 2010 election and say they would do so in an election tomorrow. They constitute 29% of 2010 Lib Dem voters (or 39% of those who name a party when asked how they would vote in an election tomorrow). Lib Dem Loyalists constitute 5% of the electorate as a whole.

The thing that most unites Lib Dem Loyalists is that they say the party shares their values; 88% of them agree with this statement. This group overwhelmingly see the Lib Dems as the best party when it comes to ensuring people are treated fairly, and two thirds of these think the Lib Dems have the best approach to getting the economy growing and creating jobs. The remainder are more than twice as likely to name the Conservatives as Labour on getting the economy growing.

In focus groups, those who had voted Lib Dem in 2010 and thought they would do so at the next election were by no means uncritical of the party or Nick Clegg. They often mentioned the broken promise on tuition fees, and felt Clegg and the Lib Dems generally were invisible. A few spontaneously mentioned the higher personal allowance for Income Tax, but otherwise they struggled to mention anything tangible the party had achieved or prevented within the coalition. Few had heard of the Pupil Premium, and even fewer (including participants who were teachers) knew that it had been a Lib Dem policy.

Few had voted Lib Dem in the hope of getting a coalition government, but most felt on balance that the party had been right to join, or had had no real choice. They were generally glad that they were in government, even if they could not say what the party had achieved specifically, and thought they had probably tempered the instincts of the Conservatives. Asked what they thought the Lib Dems stood for, they would usually mention “fairness”, “ordinary people” or “the middle ground”.

There was some sympathy with the Lib Dems' position, and that of Nick Clegg. Many were surprised how few Lib Dem MPs there were in relation to Conservatives, and this made them more inclined to give credit for what they had managed to achieve.

Loyalists were the most likely to mention their local Lib Dem MP, and to say they and the party did a good job in the local area. (Both groups in Sheffield Hallam spontaneously mentioned what Nick Clegg was doing to improve local roads). This would weigh in their voting decision, but would not be a decisive factor for most. However, a strong local presence tended to make these voters more open to broader arguments about the Lib Dems and their role in government.

*"Surely having them there has diluted what the Tories would have done anyway, so it's got to have been better than just Tories. Maybe that's better than nothing, so I think I'd still vote for Nick Clegg."*

*Loyalist, Eastleigh*

*"Instead of being on the sidelines, they've actually got some say-so."*

*Loyalist, Sheffield*

*"What have they got changed? One thing – the personal allowance tax. A massively good thing, but what else? Nothing else."*

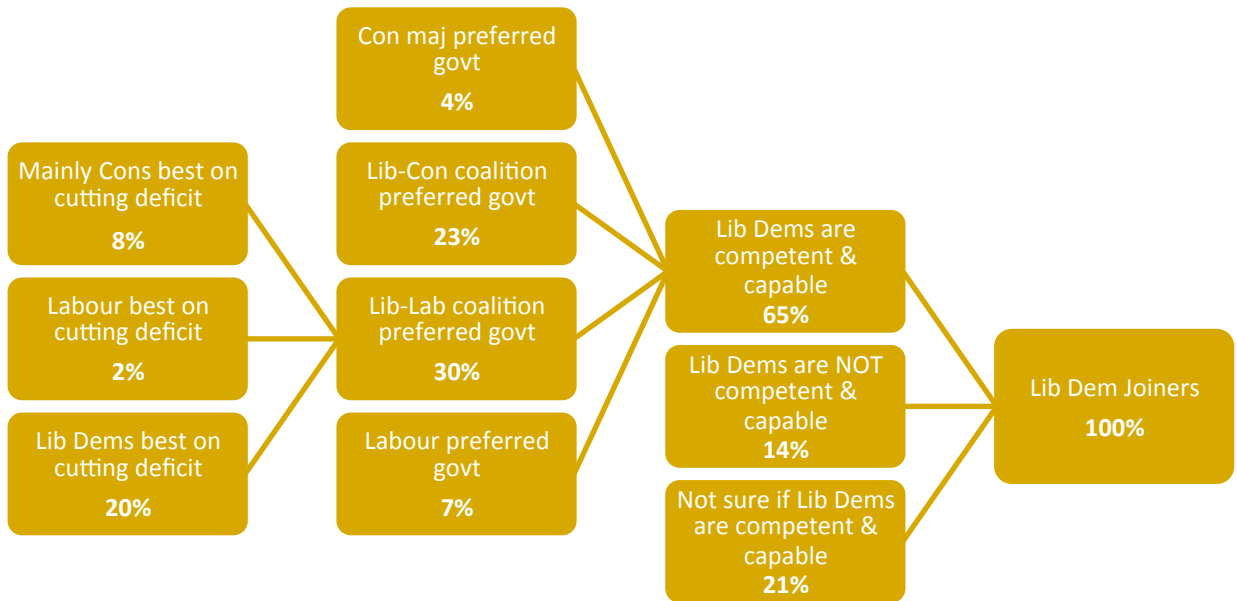
*Loyalist, Sheffield*

*"In hindsight, he did his best and I think that's the thing. I think sometimes people forget, they're still only human, aren't they, at the end of the day, and I think he did what he thought was best, and unfortunately it's not worked out that way."*

*Loyalist, Sheffield*

# Liberal Democrat Joiners and Considerers

## LIBERAL DEMOCRAT JOINERS



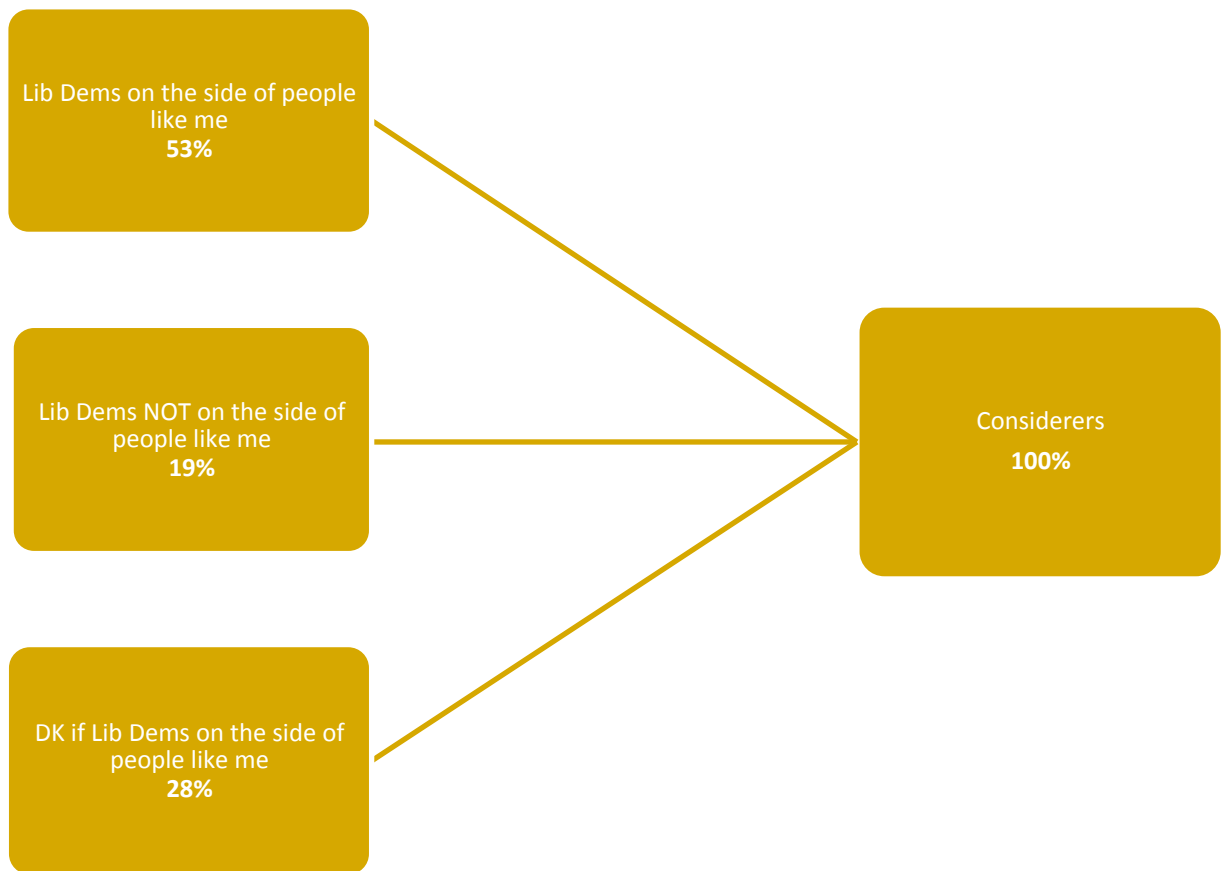
Nearly a quarter of those who say they would vote Lib Dem in an election tomorrow did not vote for the party in 2010. These Joiners constitute just under 2% of the electorate as a whole.

The factor that most unites Joiners is that they see the Lib Dems as competent and capable (though only just under two thirds of them say this – and most of the remainder are not sure whether this is true of the party or not, suggesting that they may not be particularly engaged in the debate).

More than 8 out of 10 of the Joiners who do see the party as competent and capable say another coalition government is their preferred outcome of the next election, though just over half of those would prefer that coalition to be with Labour rather than the Conservatives.



## LIBERAL DEMOCRAT CONSIDERERS



Just over 2% of the electorate are Liberal Democrat Considerers – they did not vote for the party in 2010 and would not do so tomorrow, but would consider doing so at an election in the future.

This group does not have any strong unifying factors. The thing they most have in common is the belief that the Lib Dems are “on the side of people like me”, but only just over half of them agree with the statement. This group has no further identifiable political factors in common.

This was borne out in focus groups of people who did not vote Lib Dem in 2010 but were open to doing so at the next election. These participants tended to be less political, and had no strong party loyalties, but were open-minded rather than cynical.

Like Loyalists, these voters struggled to think of Lib Dem achievements within the coalition, and doubted that Nick Clegg had much real influence, though most liked him personally. However, they were fairly happy with the government’s performance overall, and were glad the Lib Dems were part of it. They thought that having a role in government had enhanced the party’s credibility.

While Defectors (and some Loyalists) wanted the Lib Dems to distance themselves from the Conservatives and set out their own distinctive policies, there was little appetite for this approach among Considerers, who valued a more mature, collegiate approach to government. They were open to the party’s likely pitch in 2015, that they had done the right thing by going

into government, that although they had not got everything they wanted they had done more than they would on the sidelines, and that the more Lib Dem MPs there were after the next election the more they would be able to achieve.

Local Lib Dem MPs were much less of a factor for Considerers than for those who had voted for the party in 2010.

*"I don't personally think I know enough about it to be able to play with the votes like that [and vote tactically]. I don't really know much about it. I suppose I look at it as I actually want to vote for the person who I want to vote for."*

*Considerer, Chippenham*

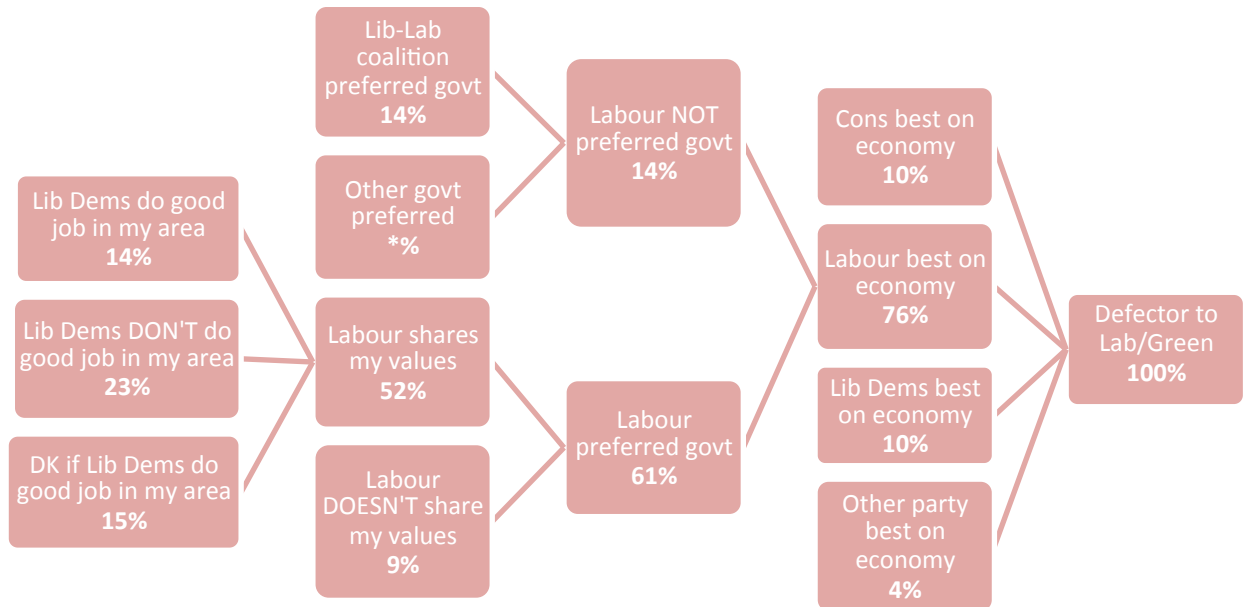
*"I think they're definitely more credible because they've been in power, and they haven't been in power for forever, so they're definitely a more credible party, you definitely see them as more of a big team player. But then, also, they have had to back down on some of their policies."*

*Considerer, Chippenham*

*"It seems like he's wearing his heart on his sleeve. When he's backed down on his policies he's come out and said yes, I have backed down; this is the reason why."*

*Considerer, Chippenham*

## Defectors to the Left



Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) of those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2010 say they would vote Labour or Green in an election tomorrow.

The factor this group most has in common is the belief that Labour is the best party when it comes to managing the economy overall. Eight out of ten of those who think this would also prefer a Labour government after the next election (the remainder would prefer a Labour-Lib Dem coalition).

Nearly 9 out of 10 in this group also say Labour shares their values – meaning more than half of Defectors to the left think Labour would be best on the economy, think the party shares their values, and prefer a Labour government. Only a quarter of this group also say the Lib Dems do a good job in their local area.

Of all Defectors from the Liberal Democrats, those who have moved to Labour are the most likely to say they are sure how they will vote (78%). This compares to just over a two thirds of those who say they would vote Conservative (69%), just under two thirds of those who say they would vote UKIP (62%) and less than half of those who would vote Green (42%).

More than two thirds of Defectors to Labour (68%) say the coalition government has been worse than they expected when it was first formed. Nevertheless, 82% of them (and 78% of those switching to Green) say they would rather have the current coalition than a Conservative government with an overall majority.

Only 12% of Defectors to Labour think the Lib Dems have either a great deal or quite a substantial influence over the policies and direction of the coalition government, compared to

26% of voters generally and 63% of current Lib Dem supporters. 86% of Defectors to Labour say the Lib Dems have not very much influence or no real influence at all.

Despite rating Labour as being most likely to have each one of a range of positive attributes, Defectors from Lib Dem to Labour also give the Lib Dems a higher score than voters as a whole on measures including wanting to help ordinary people get on in life, having its heart in the right place, and standing for fairness and equal opportunity for all. However, these Defectors rank the Lib Dems lower than voters as a whole on being competent and capable and doing what they say.

Defectors from the Lib Dems to Labour put themselves further to the left of the political spectrum than voters as a whole put themselves. Defectors to Labour also put the Lib Dems as a party, and Nick Clegg in particular, further to the right than voters in general put them. While the voters on average place themselves slightly to the right of Clegg and his party, Defectors to Labour place themselves some way to the left.

Defectors to Labour trust Miliband and Balls rather than Cameron and Osborne to manage the economy by a 73-point margin (79% to 6%), while voters as a whole prefer Cameron and Osborne by 40% to 31%. These Defectors are also pessimistic rather than optimistic about economic prospects over the next two or three years by 83% to 7% – well over three times the margin for voters as a whole, who are pessimistic by 55% to 32%.

This group of Defectors is nearly twice as likely as voters in general – and more than twice as likely as current Lib Dem supporters – to favour an argument for ‘Plan B’ (cut spending less fast even if it means borrowing more for longer) over ‘Plan A’.

The argument for not supporting the Lib Dems with which Defectors to Labour were most likely to agree was that they “used to be a principled party even if they were powerless, but they’ve deliberately compromised those principles for a share of power”. 78% of Defectors to Labour agreed with this, well above the average for voters generally (53%) and higher even than Labour voters as a whole (68%). Next was that “although they are in government they don’t have any real power, so a vote for the Lib Dems is really a wasted vote” (65%).

This group of Defectors seems however to be unsure whether the Lib Dems can claim any achievements in government. More than half (54%) agreed “there is no point in the Lib Dems being in government as they have not been able to persuade the Conservatives to do anything they didn’t want to do, or stop them doing anything they did want to do”. However, in a different question 56% agreed that the Lib Dems “have stopped some bad things from happening that the Conservatives would have done if they were governing alone.” More agreed with this statement than that “the Lib Dems have achieved some good things that would not have happened if the Conservatives were governing alone” (47%).

These Defectors were also more likely than voters generally to agree that “the Lib Dems have decent principles and spend less time attacking their opponents”, and that the party has “sensible policies on the most important issues” (44%).

Nine out of ten Defectors to Labour support raising the Income Tax threshold to £10,000, and nearly three quarters of them recognise it as a Lib Dem policy. Similarly, 88% support a Mansion Tax on homes worth over £2 million, and 80% believe it was first proposed by the Lib Dems. Just over half (58%) support the Pupil Premium, and just over two thirds (68%) consider it a Lib Dem policy – though Defectors to the Greens are more likely both to support it (72%) and to credit the Lib Dems (76%).

While a majority of Defectors to Green support the Lib Dems proposals of more investment in renewable energy, more community sentences, increasing taxes on airline flights, and an amnesty for illegal immigrants, only a minority of Defectors to Labour do so.

Asked whether various ideas would make them more or less likely to support the Lib Dems at the next election, Defectors to Labour and the Greens were most likely to agree that the party should be “more vocal in opposing some of the plans put forward by the Conservatives in the coalition”, “put forward policies that set them apart from the Conservative Party” and “vote against some of the cuts proposed by the coalition”. More than half (51%) said the party should “leave the coalition government well before the next election and set out their own agenda”.

“Sticking with the coalition government’s policy programme until the end of the parliament” and “arguing vigorously for their point of view behind closed doors, but being united with their coalition partners in public” would make both groups less inclined to vote Lib Dem not more.

Asked what the Lib Dems would do if Labour and the Conservatives won the same number of seats at the next election, more than three quarters (78%) of Defectors to Labour said that if it was up to them, the party would form a coalition with Labour. More than half (54%) thought this would happen if it were up to Lib Dem party members, but only a quarter thought it would be the outcome if it were up to Nick Clegg.

More than three quarters of Defectors to Labour (76%) expect a Labour government after the next election – nearly twice the proportion of voters as a whole (39%).

These findings, together with those from focus groups, suggest that these Defectors had largely been Labour sympathisers, or previous Labour voters, who had supported the Lib Dems in 2010 as a way of voting for change without backing the Conservatives. They were unhappy with the coalition from the beginning, arguing that the Lib Dems should have joined forces with Labour, or stayed out and waited for a second general election.

Defectors to the left argue that the Lib Dems have achieved little or nothing in government, that they have broken promises on issues including tuition fees, and that Nick Clegg has been sidelined. Though some think they may have had a general restraining influence, and that the Lib Dems have made the government less bad than it would have been if the Conservatives were governing alone, they get little credit for this since, as the Defectors see it, the Lib Dems have made it possible for the Conservatives to continue in government at all.

Some thought highly of their local Lib Dem MP, or felt the Lib Dems stood at heart for fairness and ordinary people. However, these Defectors usually said that the party would have to set out a distinctive agenda, and be more hostile to the Conservatives, before they would be prepared to listen again. Some also argued that the party would need to get a new leader, though few could suggest a candidate.

*“Without the Lib Dems it would have been back to 1979 with Margaret Thatcher.”*

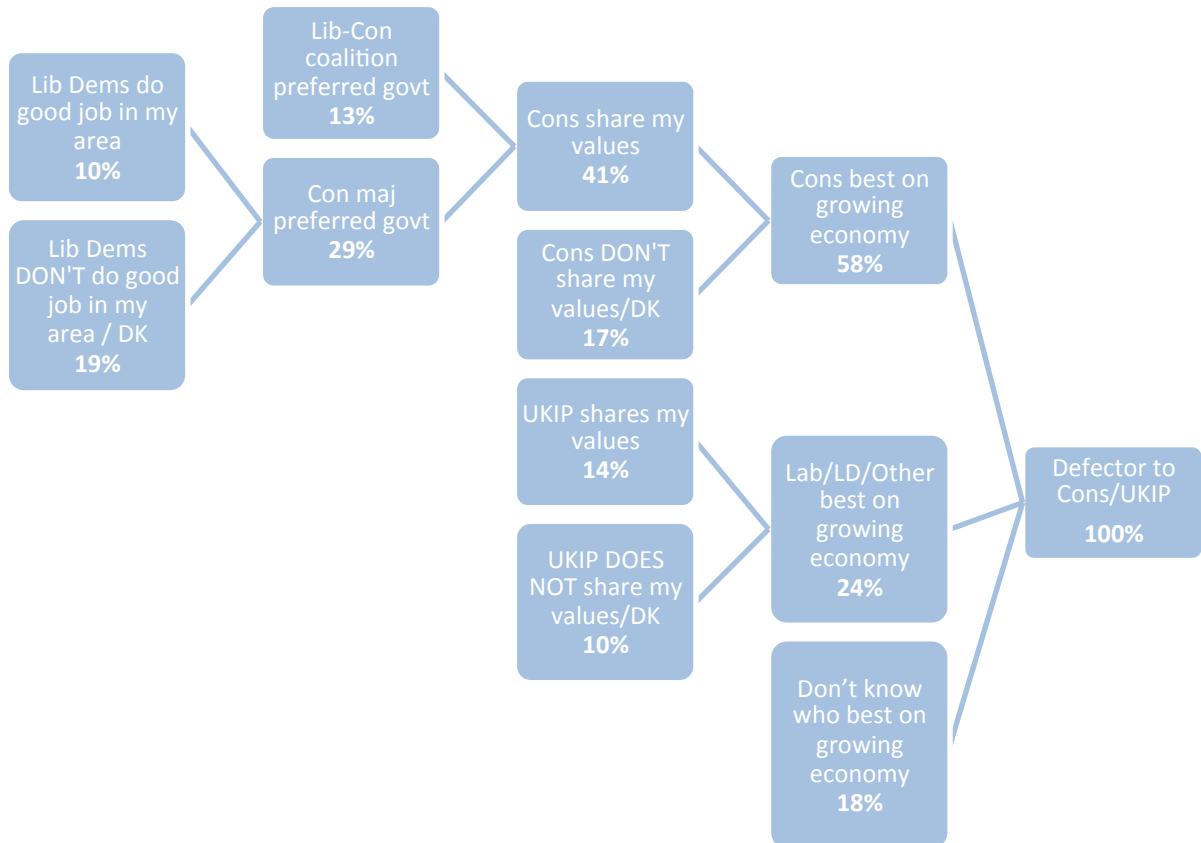
*“That could be true but what’s happening is bad enough. If they hadn’t stood by them the Tories wouldn’t be in power”.*

*Defector, Hornsey & Wood Green*

*“The only thing I’ve seen Clegg do is the Royal baby, that if it’s female it can be next in line. The Tories are like, here, this will keep you busy while we run the country.”*

*Defector, Hornsey & Wood Green*

## Defectors to the Right



Around 15% of 2010 Liberal Democrat voters say that in an election tomorrow they would vote Conservative (8%) or UKIP (7%) – half the number who would now vote Labour or Green. However, Defectors from the Lib Dems to the Conservatives are less likely to say they are sure how they will vote (69%) than voters as a whole (78%) or Conservative voters generally (81%).

Nearly a third of Lib Dem-Conservative Defectors (30%) say the coalition government has been better than they expected – nearly eight times the proportion of Defectors to Labour who say this. 83% of Defectors to the Conservatives say the coalition has been better or about the same as they expected, compared to 58% of voters as a whole and 76% of current Lib Dem voters. 44% of Defectors to the Conservatives say the Lib Dems have a great deal of influence or quite a substantial influence within the coalition – more than three times the proportion of Defectors to Labour who say this.

Defectors to UKIP are much less satisfied with the coalition – two thirds of them say it has been worse than they expected.

However, nearly two thirds (65%) of Defectors from Lib Dem to the Conservatives say they would rather have a Conservative government with an overall majority than the current coalition, while 56% of Defectors to UKIP say they would prefer the current coalition.

Defectors to the Conservatives place the Lib Dems as a party almost precisely in the centre of the political spectrum, though they place themselves somewhat to the right. Even so, they rate the party much higher on a range of attributes than voters as a whole – particularly being “on the side of people like me”, “wants to help ordinary people get on in life”, “its heart is in the right place” and “stands for fairness”. Defectors to UKIP, by contrast, rate the Lib Dems rather lower than most voters on most measures (especially “will do what they say”).

Defectors to the Conservatives overwhelmingly trust Cameron and Osborne over Miliband and Balls to manage the economy, and are more than twice as likely as voters generally to be optimistic about the economy. Defectors from Lib Dem to UKIP, meanwhile, are less likely to trust Cameron and Osborne, and more pessimistic about the economy, than voters as a whole.

For Defectors to the Conservatives, the best reasons for supporting the Lib Dems are that “by entering a coalition with the Conservatives the Lib Dems have shown they are prepared to take real responsibility, not just oppose from the sidelines”, and that the Lib Dems have “decent principles and spend less time attacking their opponents”. Fewer than half agreed with any of the suggested reasons not to support the party: 46% agreed that the Lib Dems used to be principled but have “compromised those principles for a share of power”, 38% agreed that they have no real power so are a wasted vote, and only 31% agreed they had failed to persuade the Conservatives to do anything they didn’t want to do or stop them doing anything they did want to do.

While 92% of Defectors to the Conservatives support raising the Income Tax threshold to £10,000, only just over half (54%) recognise this as having been a Lib Dem proposal.

Asked what would make them more likely to support the Lib Dems, two thirds of Defectors agreed the party should “show that coalitions can be effective by making this coalition as successful as it can be”, and 50% said it should “stick with the coalition government’s policy programme until the end of the parliament” – both of which had made Defectors to Labour say they would be less likely to say support the Lib Dems rather than more. Being more vocal in opposing Conservative policies – the most popular option among Defectors to Labour – would be more likely to make no difference to Defectors to the Conservatives, or make them less likely to support the party.

Two thirds of Defectors to the Conservatives would prefer to see the Lib Dems form another coalition with the Tories in the event of a hung parliament, and most think this would also be Nick Clegg’s preference – though they think Lib Dem party members would prefer to go with Labour. Two thirds of Defectors to the Conservatives say their preferred election outcome would be a Conservative government with an overall majority, while a quarter would rather see another Con-Lib Dem coalition.

The focus groups underlined that these Defectors are essentially Conservative-leaning voters who broadly support the government’s agenda. However, though they can think of little or nothing specific that the Lib Dems have achieved and do not think much of Nick Clegg, even these voters often say the party has calmed the worst excesses of the Tories. They also often think highly of their local Lib Dem MP. These two factors suggest they are more likely to be persuaded to return to the party at the next election than those who had defected to Labour (though this may be less true of those who say they may vote UKIP, who had probably voted Lib Dem as a protest or “none of the above” party in the first place).

Though they struggle to think what the Lib Dems have done in government, these Defectors would be largely unimpressed by attempts by the party to distance itself from the Conservatives, let alone bring the coalition to an early end.

*"I only know one thing that the Liberals have made a difference of and that is the tax allowance and that's been given to them as their sweetener."*

*Defector, Solihull*

*"What do people think of Nick Clegg overall?"  
"I forgot he was in power until you just mentioned it."*

*Defector, Solihull*

*"I think they've got more MPs from the normal person's background, rather than being all pals from the same year at university."*

*Defector, Solihull*

*"I'm a bit confused by it all really. I thought they were going to be doing things jointly all the time, but it would appear not. David Cameron or the Conservative Party just seems to do everything, and the Lib Dems are like a silent partner."*

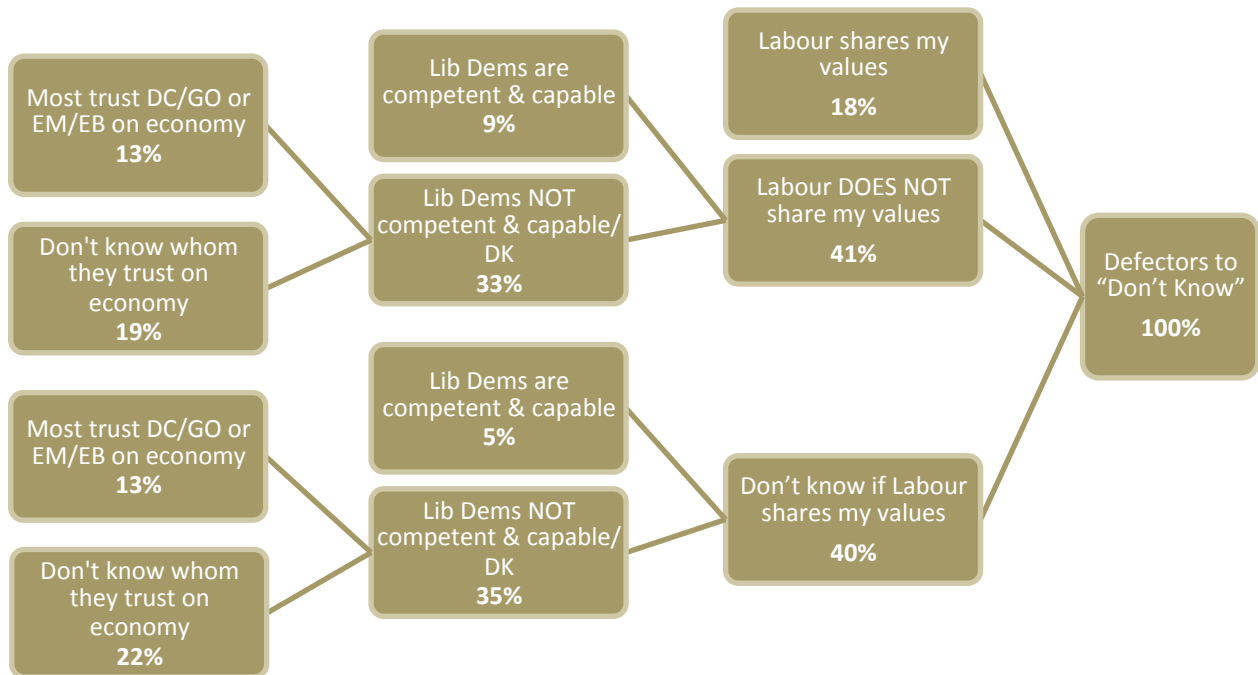
*Defector, Solihull*

*"It's the Liberals who seem to get trees pruned, and lines in the right place, put 20 mile an hour next to schools, and stop traffic wardens from being little Hitlers, so at a local elections, they do a lot of good, but at the general election it's is a wasted vote. But, it can be a protest vote, a vote for change, but because a lot of people did vote for a change, and didn't get the change, I think people won't do it again."*

*Defector, Cheadle*



## Defectors to 'Don't Know'



Just over one fifth (22%) of those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 say they do not know how they would vote in an election tomorrow.

More than 8 out of 10 of this group do not think the Labour Party shares their values, or don't know whether it does. Of these voters, 84% do not think the Liberal Democrats are competent and capable – and most of those do not know which party they trust more to manage the economy.

Though these voters have lost their confidence in the Liberal Democrats, they are resistant to Labour but do not currently feel any attraction towards the Conservatives.

# Full poll results

Full data tables are available at [LordAshcroftPolls.com](http://LordAshcroftPolls.com)

20,022 adults were interviewed online between 22 and 31 January 2013.  
Results have been weighted to be representative of all adults in Great Britain.

**DLab** = Defectors to Labour – voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say would vote Labour

**DGrn** = Defectors to Green – voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say would vote Green

**DCon** = Defectors to Conservative – voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say would vote Conservative

**DUK** = Defectors to UKIP – voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say would vote UKIP

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

	ALL	2010 Con	2010 Lab	2010 LD
Conservative	32%	77%	3%	11%
Labour	40%	6%	90%	35%
Lib Dem	9%	1%	1%	38%
UKIP	12%	16%	3%	9%
Others	9%	-	2%	8%

## 2. 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	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Pretty sure how I will vote	78%	81%	84%	67%	78%	42%	69%	62%
May change my mind	22%	19%	16%	33%	22%	58%	31%	38%

## 3. Thinking specifically about your own constituency and the candidates who are likely to stand there, which party's candidate do you think you will vote for in your own constituency at the next general election?

	ALL
Conservative	32%
Labour	40%
Lib Dem	10%
UKIP	10%
Others	8%

- 10% of those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2010 but named another party in the initial voting intention question switched back to the Lib Dems when asked about their own constituency. The proportion was highest among 'don't knows' (50%). Those switching to the Conservatives and Greens were more likely to switch back (10%) than those switching to Labour or UKIP (4%).

4. You said you would vote for the Liberal Democrats if there were an election tomorrow. Which of the following would you say are the two main reasons why you would vote Liberal Democrat? [Those saying they would vote Lib Dem at Q1 or Q3]

I support Liberal Democrat policies and what they stand for	43%
I would like the Liberal Democrats to be in government on their own	30%
I like the local Liberal Democrat MP or candidate	25%
I want the Liberal Democrats to continue to be part of a coalition government	24%
I dislike both Labour and the Conservatives more	20%
To stop the party I like least from winning	12%

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	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Better than I expected	12%	26%	6%	25%	4%	7%	30%	7%
About the same as I expected	46%	58%	34%	51%	28%	33%	53%	26%
Worse than I expected	42%	16%	61%	23%	68%	59%	17%	66%

6. 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	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Con-LD coalition	51%	15%	72%	91%	82%	78%	35%	56%
Con govt with overall majority	49%	85%	28%	9%	18%	22%	65%	44%

- Of those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say they don't know how they would vote, 79% would prefer the current coalition to a Conservative government with an overall majority.

7. Here are some things that people have said about the main political parties. Please can you say in each case whether, on balance, you think the statement is true of the Conservatives / Labour / the Liberal Democrats?]

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>On the side of people like me</b>								
Con	27%	79%	5%	22%	2%	2%	73%	10%
Lab	38%	10%	86%	27%	85%	32%	12%	26%
Lib Dem	24%	25%	22%	83%	32%	33%	54%	22%
<b>Wants to help ordinary people get on in life</b>								
Con	31%	80%	9%	29%	5%	5%	71%	17%
Lab	56%	40%	90%	57%	91%	58%	50%	50%
Lib Dem	42%	55%	38%	87%	50%	50%	71%	38%

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>Willing to take tough decisions for the long term</b>								
Con	55%	91%	39%	64%	42%	41%	93%	47%
Lab	29%	9%	61%	24%	52%	20%	11%	16%
Lib Dem	22%	23%	18%	65%	19%	23%	32%	19%
<b>Shares my values</b>								
Con	29%	84%	6%	20%	2%	3%	77%	13%
Lab	36%	8%	84%	24%	83%	34%	12%	24%
Lib Dem	24%	22%	22%	85%	37%	44%	53%	24%
<b>Competent and capable</b>								
Con	34%	79%	14%	39%	13%	18%	76%	16%
Lab	28%	8%	66%	20%	55%	20%	8%	14%
Lib Dem	17%	19%	12%	67%	12%	15%	27%	14%
<b>Will do what they say</b>								
Con	26%	62%	15%	29%	14%	18%	61%	13%
Lab	23%	8%	55%	17%	46%	10%	8%	11%
Lib Dem	14%	16%	10%	54%	8%	7%	23%	8%
<b>Represents the whole country, not just some</b>								
Con	21%	57%	6%	16%	3%	5%	45%	7%
Lab	35%	12%	75%	25%	72%	35%	15%	22%
Lib Dem	24%	25%	22%	71%	31%	34%	41%	22%
<b>It's heart is in the right place</b>								
Con	35%	84%	11%	34%	9%	11%	76%	24%
Lab	49%	31%	86%	49%	87%	55%	41%	41%
Lib Dem	47%	60%	42%	90%	55%	59%	77%	47%
<b>Stands for fairness</b>								
Con	30%	78%	9%	28%	6%	6%	73%	15%
Lab	46%	23%	87%	45%	88%	52%	32%	37%
Lib Dem	41%	51%	37%	87%	49%	54%	74%	41%
<b>Stands for equal opportunity for all</b>								
Con	28%	73%	8%	25%	5%	7%	64%	17%
Lab	48%	28%	86%	46%	86%	57%	42%	36%
Lib Dem	39%	48%	36%	85%	48%	54%	67%	41%

- In most cases, those who voted Lib Dem in 2010 but now say they don't know how they will vote give much higher scores to the Lib Dems than voters generally or other defectors.

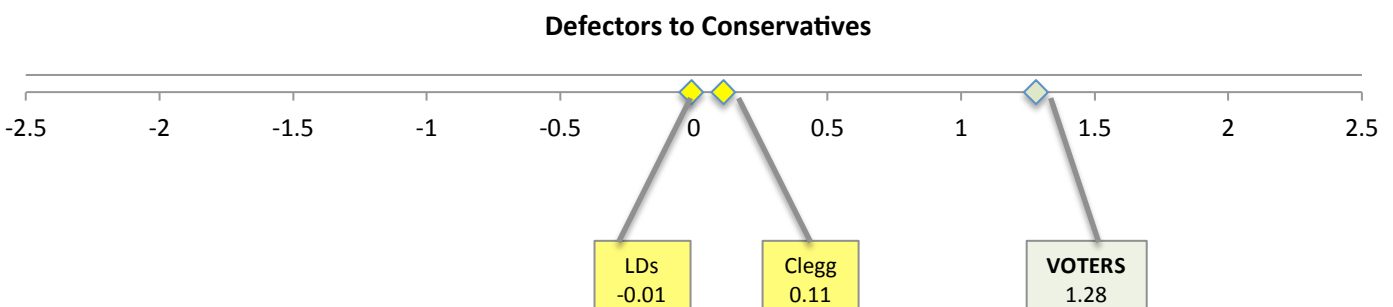
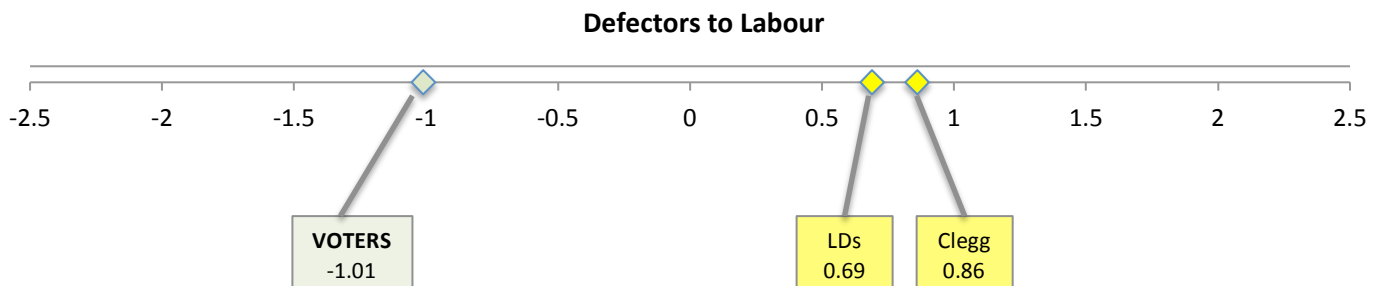
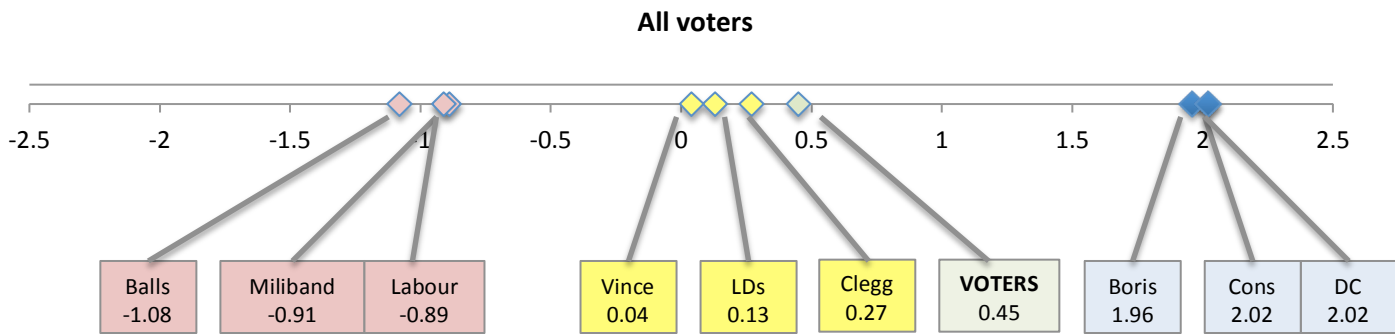
8. Which of the following do you think would make the best Prime Minister?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
David Cameron	50%	97%	13%	34%	10%	22%	95%	46%
Ed Miliband	36%	1%	79%	11%	80%	45%	1%	37%
Nick Clegg	14%	2%	8%	55%	10%	33%	4%	17%

9. Journalists often discuss politics on the basis of a left-right political spectrum and talk about politicians being on the left or the right, or being left-wing or right-wing. Thinking about your own political views, roughly where do you think you are on the left-right political spectrum?

10-point scale: -5 = very left wing, +5 = very right wing

- 22% of all voters, including 30% of women and 31% of DEs, said they did not know where they were on the left-right political spectrum.



10. 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	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Cameron & Osborne	40%	92%	9%	49%	6%	14%	90%	37%
Miliband & Balls	31%	2%	73%	18%	79%	43%	3%	27%
Don't know	29%	6%	19%	33%	15%	43%	7%	36%

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

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Although things are difficult now, the right decisions are being made and things will improve significantly over the next two or three years	32%	76%	11%	43%	7%	13%	74%	17%
In two or three years' time, the economy will be no better, or even worse, than it is now	55%	17%	79%	47%	83%	76%	17%	76%
Don't know	13%	8%	10%	10%	10%	12%	8%	7%

12. Here are two arguments that have been made about the amount the UK government borrows and how quickly this should be reduced through spending cuts and tax rises. Please say which of them is closer to your own view.

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
The government's spending cuts are hurting the economy. It should cut taxes, and/or cut spending less fast, even if that means we go on borrowing more for longer, because given how much we already owe, borrowing an extra few billion pounds cannot do much more harm	36%	14%	61%	32%	68%	52%	15%	40%
Borrowing more at a time when we already owe so much will simply make matters worse, as the country will have to pay even more back in the longer term. We have to bring the debt and the deficit under control even if it has some painful effects for the economy in the short term	49%	80%	26%	58%	21%	33%	77%	50%
Don't know	15%	7%	13%	10%	10%	15%	8%	9%

13. Here are some reasons people have given us for supporting the Liberal Democrats. Please say in each case whether you think the statement is true, or not true.

<i>% saying 'true'</i>	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>By entering a coalition with the Conservatives, the Lib Dems have shown they are prepared to take real responsibility, not just oppose from the sidelines</b>	42%	59%	31%	85%	36%	42%	71%	40%
<b>The Lib Dems have sensible policies on the most important issues</b>	30%	30%	29%	84%	44%	48%	56%	35%
<b>Nick Clegg is doing a good job as Lib Dem leader</b>	30%	46%	20%	69%	20%	20%	55%	26%
<b>The Lib Dems have decent principles and spend less time attacking their opponents</b>	39%	45%	36%	83%	49%	51%	68%	44%
<b>The Lib Dems do a good job locally in my area</b>	20%	21%	17%	64%	29%	36%	38%	32%
<b>Voting Lib Dem is the best way to stop my least preferred party from winning in my constituency</b>	19%	15%	18%	52%	25%	28%	21%	32%
<b>In government, the Lib Dems have achieved some good things that would not have happened if the Conservatives were governing alone</b>	38%	37%	37%	82%	47%	57%	56%	46%
<b>In government, the Lib Dems have stopped some bad things from happening that the Conservatives would have done if they were governing alone</b>	37%	26%	46%	78%	56%	54%	45%	46%

14. Here are some reasons people have given us for not supporting the Liberal Democrats. Please say in each case whether you think the statement is true, or not true.

<i>% saying 'true'</i>	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>Some of their policies are wrong and would be damaging to Britain</b>	47%	60%	49%	22%	43%	34%	44%	56%
<b>Although they are in government they don't have any real power, so a vote for the Lib Dems is really a wasted vote</b>	49%	48%	64%	13%	65%	48%	38%	59%
<b>Their policies in general probably don't really add up</b>	44%	53%	48%	12%	40%	34%	36%	50%
<b>The Lib Dems have shown that coalition governments don't really work, because one party is always trying to obstruct what the other is trying to do</b>	47%	43%	58%	24%	55%	45%	38%	57%
<b>There is no point in the Lib Dems being in government as they have not been able to persuade the Conservatives to do anything they didn't want to do, or stop them doing anything they did want to do</b>	40%	33%	55%	15%	54%	41%	31%	52%
<b>The Lib Dems used to be a principled party even if they were powerless, but they've deliberately compromised those principles for a share of power</b>	53%	47%	68%	31%	78%	76%	46%	75%

15. Below are some policies that have been put forward by the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats, some of which are being implemented by the coalition government. [Split sample A] Please say whether you support or oppose each one. [Split sample B] Please say whether you think it was more likely to have been proposed by the Conservatives or the Liberal Democrats.

<i>% saying 'support' or 'strongly support'</i> <i>% thinking Con policy/% thinking LD policy</i>	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>Raising the income tax threshold so people don't pay tax on the first £10k they earn</b>	<b>85%</b> <b>40/60</b>	90% 56/44	84% 31/69	88% 25/75	90% 23/77	92% 21/79	92% 46/54	95% 29/71
<b>Giving teachers more powers to ensure discipline in schools</b>	<b>85%</b> <b>68/32</b>	93% 82/18	81% 63/37	86% 59/41	86% 69/31	79% 70/30	95% 74/26	95% 65/35
<b>Introducing a limit on the number of immigrants from outside the EU and a new Border Police force</b>	<b>80%</b> <b>75/25</b>	93% 88/12	72% 72/28	75% 69/31	71% 79/21	60% 82/18	92% 82/18	98% 61/39
<b>Increasing NHS funding every year of this parliament</b>	<b>80%</b> <b>41/59</b>	76% 62/38	86% 30/70	80% 29/71	90% 25/75	89% 29/71	78% 51/49	82% 37/63
<b>Freezing Council Tax</b>	<b>79%</b> <b>46/54</b>	85% 65/35	75% 37/63	75% 37/63	74% 37/63	69% 36/64	83% 48/52	85% 41/59
<b>Introducing a welfare cap so people can't earn more on benefits than the average worker is paid</b>	<b>78%</b> <b>82/18</b>	93% 91/9	67% 81/19	82% 74/26	67% 85/15	66% 90/10	95% 88/12	82% 82/18
<b>A new Mansion Tax on the value of homes worth over £2 million</b>	<b>75%</b> <b>33/67</b>	67% 35/65	82% 32/68	82% 27/73	88% 20/80	89% 19/81	77% 30/70	85% 25/75
<b>A Pupil Premium – extra funding for schools according to the number of disadvantaged children they have</b>	<b>53%</b> <b>37/63</b>	51% 38/62	58% 35/65	63% 33/67	58% 32/68	72% 24/76	55% 34/66	41% 29/71
<b>Negotiating a better deal for Britain in the EU and holding a referendum on whether we should remain a member</b>	<b>66%</b> <b>84/16</b>	86% 94/6	52% 83/17	58% 78/22	49% 89/11	45% 94/6	86% 94/6	89% 84/16
<b>Cutting government spending overall in order to reduce the amount the government borrows</b>	<b>64%</b> <b>75/25</b>	88% 88/12	45% 74/26	73% 67/33	40% 80/20	50% 79/21	89% 87/13	69% 75/25
<b>Increasing the threshold for Inheritance Tax to £1 million</b>	<b>53%</b> <b>66/34</b>	70% 73/27	44% 64/36	57% 64/36	47% 65/35	47% 67/33	69% 70/30	59% 67/33
<b>More investment in renewable energy, like wind farms, paid for by higher energy bills</b>	<b>43%</b> <b>38/62</b>	41% 35/65	47% 40/60	61% 30/70	49% 32/68	73% 23/77	49% 36/64	34% 36/64
<b>Scrapping the Human Rights Act</b>	<b>36%</b> <b>74/26</b>	55% 74/26	22% 78/22	27% 80/20	18% 87/13	7% 90/10	48% 77/23	64% 68/32
<b>Replacing most prison sentences of six months or less with community sentences</b>	<b>32%</b> <b>40/60</b>	30% 32/68	35% 46/54	47% 39/61	38% 43/57	53% 23/77	36% 32/68	26% 38/62
<b>Increasing taxes on airline flights</b>	<b>26%</b> <b>56/44</b>	25% 43/57	29% 64/36	38% 58/42	34% 59/41	54% 54/46	31% 51/49	31% 61/39
<b>Telling immigrants who have been in the UK illegally for 10 years but who have behaved well during that time that they can become British citizens</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>34/66</b>	23% 25/75	32% 37/63	39% 34/66	36% 32/68	50% 18/82	24% 25/75	12% 42/58
<b>Increasing spending on overseas aid</b>	<b>16%</b> <b>46/54</b>	13% 37/63	22% 49/51	27% 46/54	24% 44/56	37% 30/70	11% 41/59	5% 63/37



16. Here are some things that people have suggested the Liberal Democrats should do to try and increase their support at the next election. Please say if each one would make you more likely to support the Liberal Democrats, or less likely, or if it would make no difference either way.

	ALL		D Lab		D Grn		D Con		D UK	
	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
Make clear they would prefer a coalition with Labour rather than the Conservatives after the next election	25%	29%	63%	7%	51%	12%	6%	74%	25%	32%
Be more vocal in opposing some of the plans put forward by the Conservatives in the coalition	39%	14%	73%	5%	79%	2%	36%	28%	49%	10%
Leave the coalition government well before the next election and set out their own agenda	26%	20%	51%	10%	51%	12%	16%	43%	33%	16%
Vote against some of the cuts proposed by the coalition	34%	18%	70%	4%	69%	4%	18%	38%	41%	18%
Put forward policies that set them apart from the Conservative Party	42%	9%	71%	3%	79%	2%	48%	13%	56%	4%
Change their leader	20%	13%	37%	10%	45%	8%	20%	32%	28%	7%
Stick with the coalition government's policy programme until the end of the parliament	22%	20%	11%	46%	14%	37%	50%	10%	23%	27%
Argue vigorously for their point of view behind closed doors, but be united with their coalition partners in public	24%	19%	19%	37%	18%	38%	47%	14%	29%	20%
Show that coalitions can be effective by making this coalition government as successful as it can be	38%	9%	37%	14%	45%	11%	66%	6%	43%	6%

17. Which party do you think would have the best approach to each of the following issues?

	ALL			D Lab			D Grn			D Con			D UK		
	C	L	LD	C	L	LD	C	L	LD	C	L	LD	C	L	LD
Getting the economy growing and creating jobs	36	39	11	4	87	7	13	50	14	86	5	6	25	23	9
Cutting the deficit and debt	49	28	9	26	62	8	36	22	21	93	1	4	39	12	5
Improving the NHS	28	43	17	3	85	10	7	50	21	54	18	26	16	31	17
Improving schools	32	37	18	5	78	15	15	33	29	66	8	26	25	23	20
Protecting the environment	18	22	33	3	37	39	3	5	36	29	3	52	9	7	27
Dealing with crime	45	30	9	22	65	8	25	28	23	87	5	7	37	15	5
Defending Britain's interests in Europe	45	27	10	21	59	13	33	20	27	83	4	7	32	8	6
Reforming welfare to cut dependency	55	22	9	41	44	10	40	21	20	89	4	6	49	6	8
Controlling immigration	43	22	11	34	40	12	29	19	22	75	3	10	19	6	6

18. Some people say they could never see themselves voting for the Liberal Democrats under any circumstances, while others say they could see themselves doing so some time in the future. Which of these statements is closest to your own view?

	ALL	2010 Con	2010 Lab	2010 UKIP
I could never see myself voting Lib Dem at a general election	70%	70%	71%	80%
I could see myself voting Lib Dem at a general election in the future	31%	30%	30%	20%

19. Thinking about the coalition government between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, from what you have seen or heard, how much influence do you think Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats have when it comes to deciding the policies or direction of the coalition government?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	D Lab	D Grn	D Con	D UK
A great deal of influence	2%	3%	2%	7%	1%	-	2%	1%
Quite a substantial influence	24%	41%	11%	55%	11%	17%	42%	19%
Not very much influence	47%	46%	51%	31%	56%	55%	48%	57%
No real influence at all	19%	7%	31%	3%	30%	26%	8%	22%

20. Since the last election, would you say your view of the Liberal Democrats overall has changed for the better, or the worse, or has it not really changed at all?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Better	16%	28%	10%	35%	5%	4%	20%	7%
Not changed	41%	47%	28%	50%	12%	17%	29%	17%
Worse	43%	25%	62%	15%	83%	81%	51%	76%

21. Imagine Labour and the Conservatives won the same number of seats at the next election. Who would the Liberal Democrats be most likely to form a coalition with if the decision was...

...up to you?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Labour	32%	4%	70%	30%	78%	57%	8%	27%
Conservatives	27%	70%	4%	38%	2%	2%	64%	18%
Neither	20%	14%	14%	17%	12%	26%	17%	43%
Don't know	21%	13%	13%	16%	8%	15%	11%	12%

...up to Liberal Democrat party members?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Labour	35%	36%	44%	34%	54%	47%	30%	39%
Conservatives	13%	19%	11%	19%	10%	6%	22%	11%
Neither	18%	18%	17%	22%	15%	17%	22%	22%
Don't know	33%	27%	27%	25%	21%	29%	26%	28%

...up to Nick Clegg?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Labour	22%	22%	26%	21%	25%	25%	14%	23%
Conservatives	33%	44%	35%	41%	42%	36%	51%	38%
Neither	10%	8%	11%	13%	8%	9%	8%	12%
Don't know	34%	26%	29%	26%	25%	30%	27%	26%

...up to Vince Cable?

	ALL	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
Labour	33%	36%	40%	31%	48%	40%	24%	42%
Conservatives	15%	20%	14%	21%	11%	10%	25%	14%
Neither	10%	9%	10%	13%	8%	9%	10%	12%
Don't know	43%	35%	37%	36%	32%	41%	41%	32%

22. The next election is expected to be in May 2015. 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	Con	Lab	LD	DLab	DGrn	DCon	DUK
<b>Conservative government</b>	<b>30%</b>	74%	3%	8%	2%	12%	64%	24%
<b>Con-Lib Dem coalition</b>	<b>13%</b>	16%	2%	43%	2%	6%	25%	17%
<b>Labour-Lib Dem coalition</b>	<b>18%</b>	5%	14%	38%	20%	38%	5%	26%
<b>Labour government</b>	<b>39%</b>	6%	80%	12%	76%	44%	6%	33%