

PoliticsHome Electoral Index 2

THE LARGEST AND MOST DEFINITIVE
UK MARGINALS POLL

September 2009



Contents

Introduction	4
About PoliticsHome	5
PoliticsHome marginal prediction	6
Tactical voting and the personal vote	8
The factors at play	
The deciding factors	9
The key issues	9
Sleaze	10
Campaigning	10
Changing opinions	11
The Battlegrounds	
Inner London	12
Outer London	13
London's commuter belt	14
Seaside towns	15
Labour's southern bastions	16
Urban West Midlands	17
West Midlands hinterland	18
East Midlands	19
West Yorkshire	20
North West	21
North East England	22
Cumbria	23
Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats in the South West	24
Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats elsewhere	26
Labour vs Liberal Democrat battlegrounds	27
Welsh marginals	28
Scottish marginals	29
Methodology	30

Analysis by
Anthony Wells
Head of Research
PoliticsHome

Edited by
Freddie Sayers
Editor
PoliticsHome

Founded by
Stephan Shakespeare
Chairman
PoliticsHome

Research Editor
Jonathan Knott

News Editor
Patrick Casey

Deputy News Editor
John Goodrich

Published by
PoliticsHome.com
5, The Sanctuary
Westminster
London SW1P 3JS

Tel: 020 7227 0420
Fax: 020 7222 2079
www.politicshome.com

Introduction

Taking polling to the next level

THE POLITICSHOME ELECTORAL INDEX, WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT in September 2008, was a political opinion poll on a scale no-one had seen before. It was the largest representative opinion poll of its type ever conducted and gave the best ever picture of what would actually happen were there to have been a general election at that time.

One year later – less than a year before the next election – PoliticsHome has now repeated the exercise. We are proud to present the largest, most detailed and accurate prediction of the results of the next general election available anywhere.

33,610 interviews across 238 marginal seats

Today's normal opinion polls can give us highly accurate figures for the national share of the vote, but to translate that into what it would mean at a general election we are forced to use crude swingometers and assumptions that exactly the same swing would prevail across the country and in different types of seats. This of course is not the case.

Previous polls of marginal seats have been limited and, particularly in Liberal Democrat contests, have a poor record of accuracy. Until now it has been impossible to make any truly informed projections about whether the Conservative swing really is weaker in the North, whether individual MPs will be saved by personal votes, whether the national changes in vote mask different changes in the Conservative vs Labour, Conservative vs Liberal Democrat or Labour vs Liberal Democrat battlegrounds or how tactical voting may be at play.

Using a sample of over 34,000 people over 238 marginal constituencies, with fieldwork carried out by Yougov PLC, the PoliticsHome electoral index allows us for the first time to look at small groups of key marginals, to compare how people are reacting in the London commuter belt, or South Western LD/Con marginals, seaside towns or the urban West Midlands. It also allows us to single out the specific demographics that will decide the election – people voting Conservative who might change their mind or people wavering between Labour and the Liberal Democrats in Lib Dem target seats. It is, quite simply, the most detailed snapshot to date of British political public opinion in the marginal seats that will decide the next general election.



About PoliticsHome

STEPHAN SHAKESPEARE AND FREDDIE SAYERS SET UP PoliticsHome in April 2008 and it quickly became established as a definitive source of political news and research. Its comprehensive, scientific, obsessively non-partisan coverage of the political day made the PH screen a vital tool for anyone who is serious about politics. From our newsroom in Westminster we monitor all television channels, radio, blogs, websites, newspapers, parliament, press conferences and statements, and bring to prominence what you need to know, live as it happens.

Just by keeping the screen open, you can rest assured that you are up to date, at any time.

Our users started off mainly within Westminster – lobby journalists, MPs and staffers, think tankers and public affairs people, but it has rapidly caught on and PoliticsHome is now one of the most visited political websites in the UK, with a broad following around the country.

PoliticsHome has also expanded to America, and its innovative polling and opinion research methods are being applied to commercial sectors.



Contact us

PoliticsHome is based at
5 The Sanctuary
London SW1P 3JS
Tel: 020 7227 0420
Email: contact@politicshome.com



News and monitoring

PoliticsHome treats the world of politics with the same seriousness financial news agencies treat the financial markets: minute by minute, hour by hour. There is an hourly tracker of the top political stories, graphs of which stories are receiving most prominence and comprehensive monitoring of developments in news and opinion live as they happen – on all media, at any time.

PoliticsHome is developing sector-specific screens to follow developments in particular industries and following particular issues.



Public Opinion Research

PoliticsHome does more regular political polling of real UK voters than any other organisation in the country. Results from our polls and unique opinion trackers have been published prominently in the Observer, Financial Times, Guardian, Telegraph, Bloomberg, Evening Standard and across the country.



Insider Research

Get the 'inside track' on the days news stories from our exclusive polling of MPs, advisors, leading political journalists, analysts and thinkers: you don't have to be walking the corridors of the Palace of Westminster any more to find out what people are thinking and talking about.



The Reputation Index

The PoliticsHome/PR Week Reputation Index is the quarterly measure of how organisations of all kinds are viewed by the political community. Purchase a subscription to find out what people think of your organisation.

PoliticsHome marginal prediction

Conservative majority of 70

IF A GENERAL ELECTION WERE HELD NOW THE CONSERVATIVES would win a solid majority of 70 seats. This is substantially down from our poll last year, taken during Labour's darkest days in summer 2008, which predicted a Conservative majority of 146.

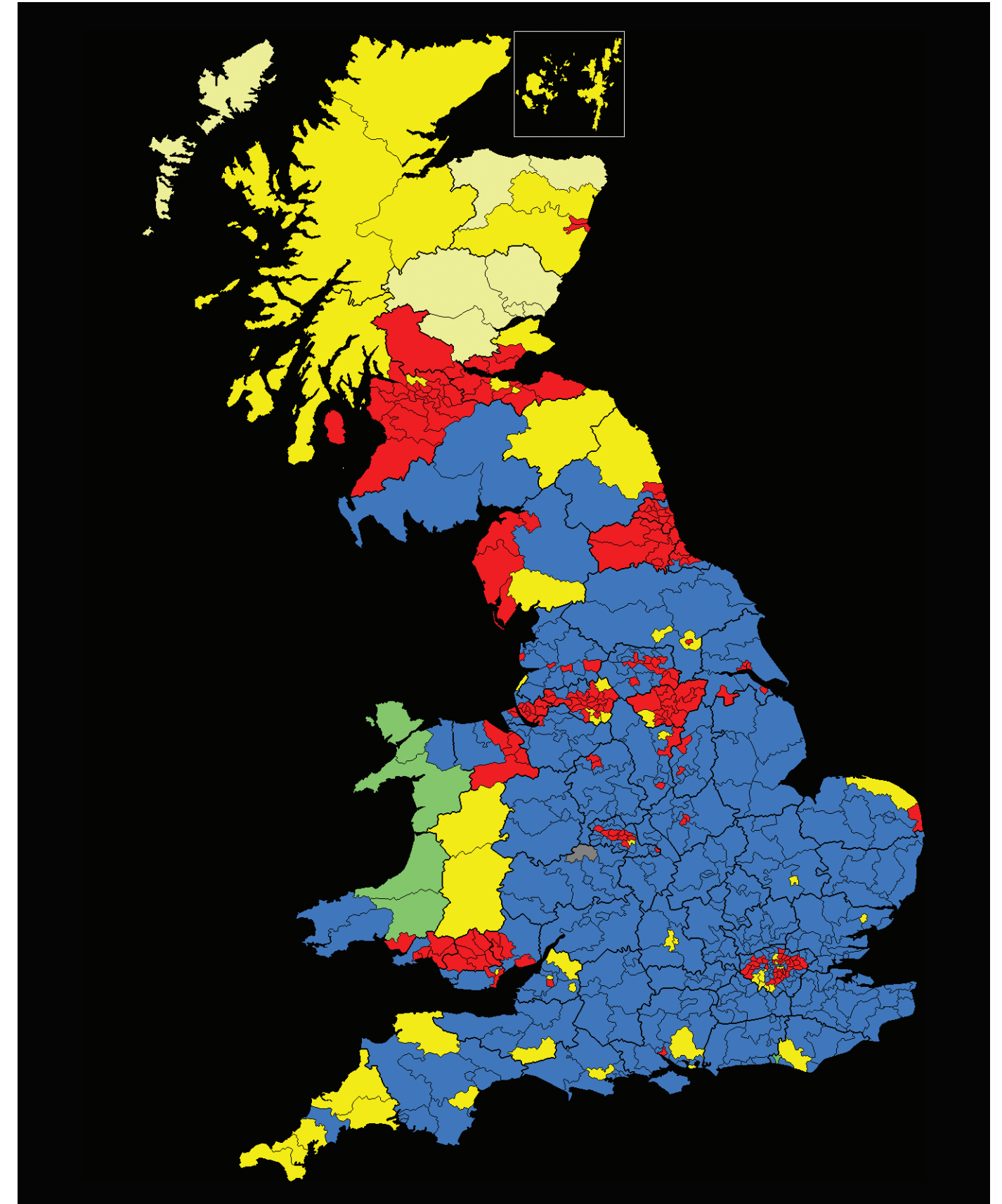
The Conservatives have fallen back particularly in seaside towns, London and in the North-West and North-East. They continue to put in their strongest performances in the Midlands and the South, where Labour still look set to suffer a crushing defeat.

Meanwhile the Liberal Democrats are increasingly holding their own. While there is still little sign of them being able to capitalise on Labour's unpopularity and take seats from them, they are more successfully defending their seats against the Conservative advance. Last year were predicted they would be reduced to 44 seats, this year our prediction is up to 55.

The worst news is for the SNP. Last year we predicted a stunning breakthrough with the SNP taking an extra 17 seats in Scotland. This year, our poll shows the swing to the SNP down to 9%, only enough for the SNP to take two extra seats.

	Con	Lab	Ldem	Other	Lab → Con Swing	
					2008	2009
Notional 2005 Result	214	343	63	30	%	%
Inner London	4	-4	0	0	9.5	6.1
Outer London	6	-6	0	0	10.5	7.9
London commuter belt	16	-16	0	0	14.5	12.1
Seaside towns	7	-8	0	1	13	6.3
Labour's southern bastions	15	-15	0	0	13	10.4
Urban West Midlands	14	-14	0	0	16	13.4
West Midlands hinterland	11	-11	0	0	16	12.8
East Midlands	20	-20	0	0	10.5	13.4
West Yorkshire	11	-11	0	0	13	9.6
North West	17	-17	0	0	14	9
North East	3	-3	0	0	14	10.9
Cumbria	0	0	0	0	6.5	3.5
Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats in the South West	8	0	-8	0	6	3.7
Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats elsewhere	0	0	0	0	3.5	1.1
Labour vs Liberal Democrats battlegrounds	5	-5	0	0	10.5	9.1
Welsh marginals	8	-10	-1	3	12.5	9
Scottish marginals	1	-4	1	2	7.5	4.4
2008 Prediction	398	160	44	48	-	-
2009 Prediction	360	199	55	36	-	-

The predicted political landscape of the UK



Tactical voting and the personal vote

Understanding people's real voting intentions

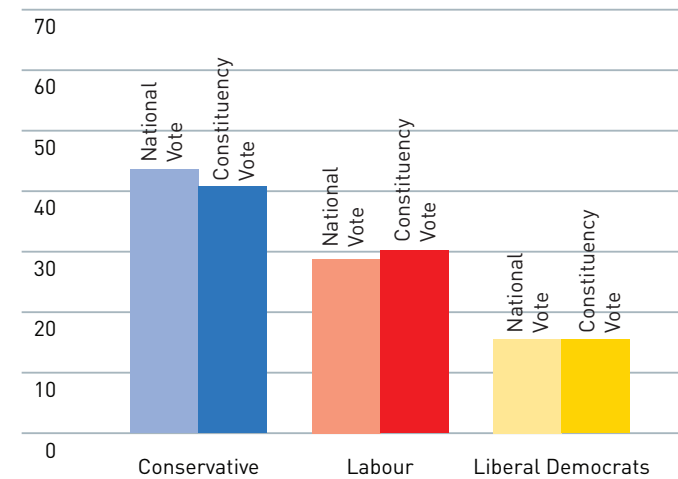
WHEN ANSWERING NORMAL VOTING INTENTIONS MANY PEOPLE give the party they support, even if this is not actually the party they would put a cross against when it came to voting. In reality people might, for example, support the Labour party, but vote Liberal Democrat in their own constituency as the only party that could beat the Conservatives; or they could support the Conservatives, but in their own constituency vote Labour because the local MP helped them with a problem they contacted him about.

As in 2008, the PoliticsHome Marginal survey uses a unique question formulation to try and find out which party people would actually vote for in their own constituency, rather than who they support on the national stage. We asked firstly a standard voting intention question, but then prompted people to think about tactical considerations, their own constituency and the candidates standing there, before asking them how they would vote in their own area. All the seat projections in this report are based on these "locally prompted" figures, and they made some significant differences to how people said they would vote.

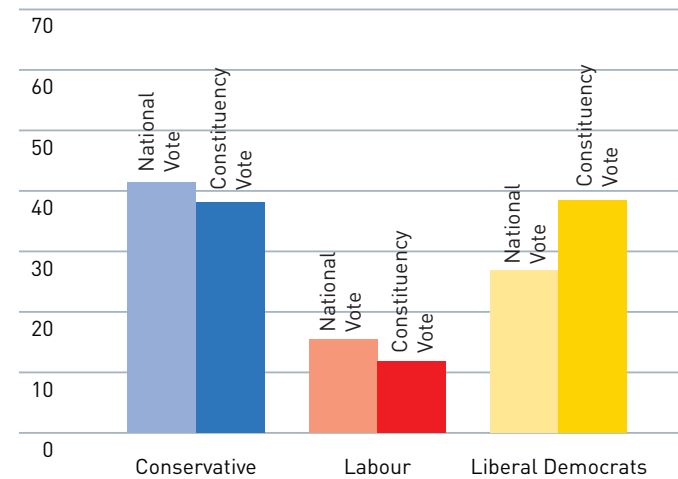
In seats where the battle is between the Conservative and Labour party, prompting people to think about their own seat shifted support from the Conservatives to Labour, suggesting that despite the expenses scandal most sitting MPs can still count on some degree of personal vote. As was the case last year, there is still no sign of Liberal Democrat supporters tactically voting Conservative to oust Labour (though neither is there any sign of them voting tactically against the Tories).

The locally prompted question made the biggest difference in seats where the battle is between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, the level of Liberal Democrat support increased by 10 points when people were prompted to consider their own constituency, taking support from both Labour and the Conservatives, suggesting that sitting Liberal Democrat MPs continue to benefit from both anti-Conservative tactical voting and a personal vote. National polls show the level of Liberal Democrat support far below what they achieved in 2005, but our poll shows they are holding their own in the seats that matter.

Conservative -vs- Labour seats



Conservative -vs- Liberal Democrat seats



The deciding factors

Factors remain unchanged – Tory lead narrows

THE FACTORS THAT PEOPLE SAY ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN DECIDING how they vote in the key marginals remain the same as last year. 45% said it was the values and priorities of the main parties, 21% their specific policies, 12% the party leaders, 8% the local candidates and 7% local issues. In all these areas the Conservative lead has narrowed since last year.

Shares values and priorities

	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Lib Dem Voters
2008	34	24	18
2009	32	26	20
change	-2	+2	+2

Best policies

	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Lib Dem Voters
2008	35	19	15
2009	31	20	17
change	-4	+1	+2

Leader would make best PM

	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Lib Dem Voters
2008	42	19	8
2009	40	20	11
change	-2	+1	+3

Best local candidates

	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Lib Dem Voters
2008	18	14	10
2009	17	14	10
change	-1	nc	nc

Best on local issues

	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Lib Dem Voters
2008	31	20	20
2009	28	21	21
change	-3	+1	+

The Key issues

Unemployment, not corruption, is the new worry

THE ECONOMY WAS ALREADY THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IN THE marginal seats last year, but the effect of the recession is evident in the other issues people say are facing the country. Unemployment barely figured as an issue in 2008, but it is now the fourth most important issue concerning voters. Also increasing in importance are defence and the health service. In the wake of the expenses scandal the proportion of people mentioning political corruption and sleaze as an important issue doubled... but only to 8%. It is still seen as a comparatively unimportant issue when placed alongside things like the economy and public services.

Moving in the other direction, far fewer respondents said they were concerned about law and order, although it was still the third most mentioned issue. Inflation has unsurprisingly plummeted in importance, less expected is that taxation has also dropped down the public's agenda.

There was a similar pattern when voters were asked about issues in their local area – unemployment is now the second most important issue after crime and anti-social behaviour, when it hardly registered last year.

	2008	2009	Change
The state of the economy in general	46	49	3
Health provision	29	35	5
Law and order	45	28	-17
Unemployment	4	26	22
Education	24	24	1
Immigration and race-relations	20	23	2
Defence and the armed services	7	13	6
Climate change and the environment	13	13	0
International terrorism & national security	11	11	-1
The level of taxation	18	11	-7
Pension provision	7	9	2
Political corruption and sleaze	4	8	4
Poverty	6	6	0
Our relationship with Europe	5	6	1
Civil liberties	7	6	-1
Inflation	16	4	-12
Energy provision	7	4	-3
Housing	5	4	-2
Devolution and the future of the UK	4	3	0
Transport	4	2	-2
Don't know	3	2	0
Drugs	3	2	-1
Animal welfare	1	1	0
Agriculture and farming	1	1	0
Other	1	1	0

Sleaze

Impact of expenses scandal less than expected

AS WAS THE CASE LAST YEAR, LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MPS ENJOYED much higher ratings than Conservative or Labour MPs in the marginal seats we surveyed. However, in the wake of the expenses scandal this year we also asked about the MP expenses scandal.

Thinking about the recent expenses scandal which of the following applies to your own MP?

He or she seems to have behaved well, and was not implicated in the scandal	38
He or she made some dubious claims, but they seem to have been one of the better behaved ones	16
He or she made some frankly unacceptable expenses claims, but they seem to have been within the rules	8
He or she has broken the rules and made totally unacceptable claims on expenses	4
Don't know	33

Few people in marginal seats seem to be particularly concerned about their own MP's conduct. 38% said their own MP had behaved well and was not implicated, 16% their MP's behaviour was dubious but better than most. Only 12% thought their own MP's behaviour was unacceptable but within the rules (8%) or that they had actually broken the rules (4%). 33% did not know whether their own MP had been implicated or not.

Asked to tick those things that were important to them in a local MP, only 37% said that being honest with their expenses was important, rating behind being in touch with ordinary people (51%) and having the independence of mind to put their constituency above their party sometimes (51%). Those who did think honesty in expenses was an important issue were more likely than not to think that they own MP was honest.

There will probably be exceptions in a few seats with high profile scandals or challengers, but the impact of expenses sleaze in marginal seats seems to be less than expected. Most people think their own MPs were either exonerated, or don't seem to care.

Campaigning

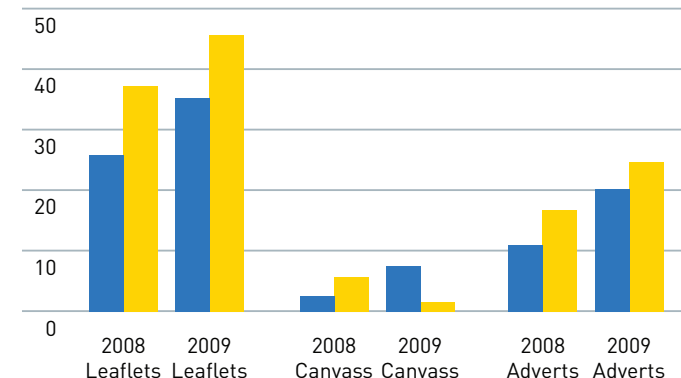
Liberal Democrats ahead on the ground game

A YEAR CLOSER TO THE GENERAL ELECTION, THE ON-THE-GROUND campaigns are gradually ramping up. The proportion of people who recall receiving leaflets or seeing adverts from the main parties is on the rise. In seats contested between Labour and the Conservatives the level of campaigning seems quite closely matched.

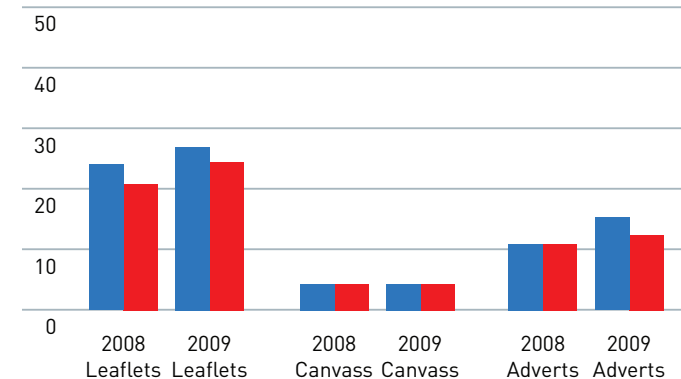
Despite Labour's fears that the Conservatives are outspending them in marginal seats; the amount of activity that the public actually recall is quite similar with respondents reporting having experienced only slightly more Conservative than Labour activity.

The level of activity in seats contested between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats is much higher though, and there is much more of a gap between the parties. Respondents are far more likely to recall having received literature or seen adverts from the Liberal Democrats than the Conservatives.

Campaigning in Con -vs- Lib Dem seats



Campaigning in Con -vs- Lab seats



Changing opinions

DESPITE VOTING INTENTIONS NARROWING, THE PUBLIC'S OPINION of the government in marginal seats has barely softened. 68% of respondents thought that Gordon Brown was the wrong man to lead the country (barely changed from 69% last year), 63% agreed that Labour had failed and it was time for a change (slightly down from 66%). Their biggest improvement was that 32% of people in marginal seats now think Brown has experience for hard times, compared to 27% last year.

The drop in the Conservative lead seems to be more to do with increased reticence about the Conservatives, perhaps because of the credit crunch, which really started to bite after our 2008 survey was complete

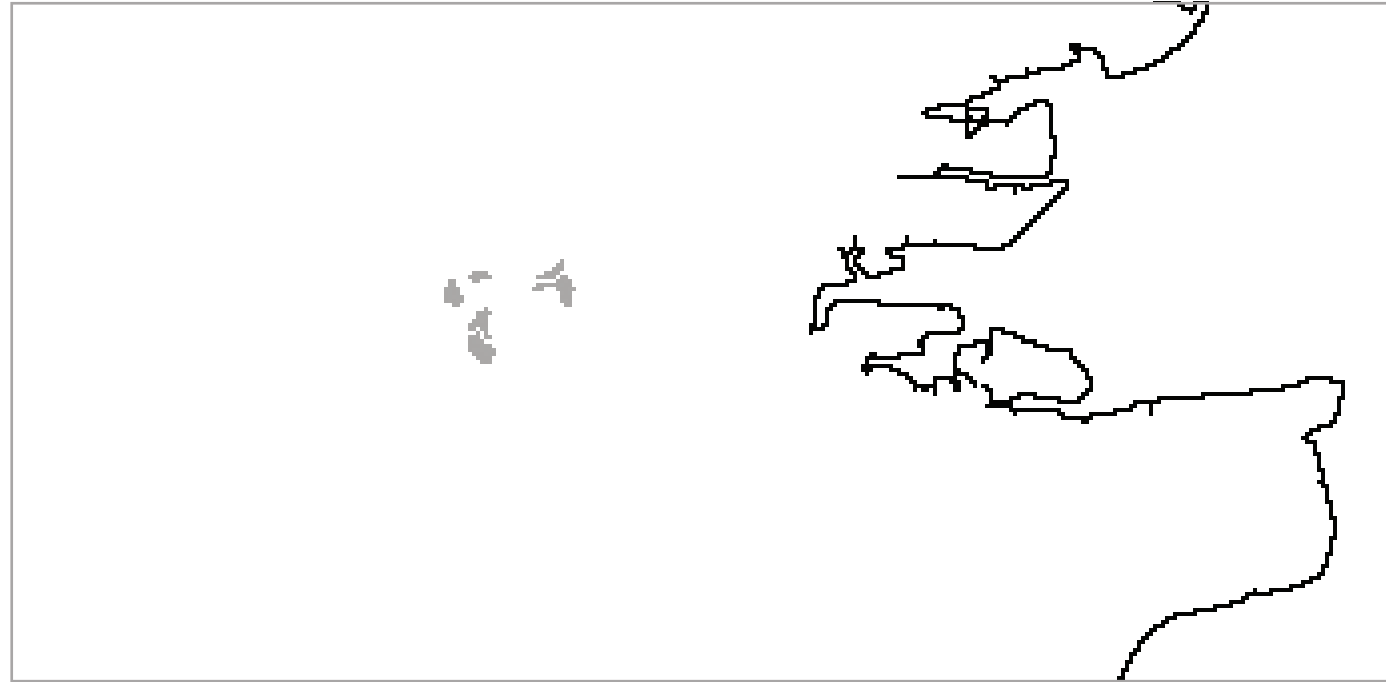
While the majority of respondents still thought that David Cameron had changed the Conservative party, the proportion of people who thought they would slash public services had sharply increased. This is perhaps somewhat made up for by the fact that other polls show increasing public appetite for cuts, however, our survey also suggests that the Conservatives are seen as being more of a risk than last year, and more people see them as only being for the rich.

Asked about the Liberal Democrats, the idea the Lib Dems would have a moderating effect upon an incoming Tory government has gained some traction. However, 50% still think they seem like nice people, but their policies wouldn't work.

	2008		2009	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Gordon Brown is the wrong man to lead the country	69	23	68	26
Labour have failed Britain; it is time for a change	66	28	63	31
Conservatives would slash our public services	41	36	57	26
A strong Liberal Democrat presence in the House of Commons would help moderate a future Tory government	49	39	54	27
The Liberal Democrats seem like decent people but their policies wouldn't work	50	33	50	33
A Conservative government would be too risky	38	48	44	45
David Cameron has changed the Conservative party	59	28	57	30
The burden of tax on ordinary people is too high and should be reduced even if some services have to be cut	61	31	54	38
David Cameron and the Conservatives are for the rich and privileged not people like me	41	48	45	45
I would vote Liberal Democrat if I though they could win here	34	49	37	48
Gordon Brown has the experience to lead the country through hard times	27	59	32	56
There is too much interfering in peoples' lives by the government	73	20	70	22

Regional breakdowns

Inner London



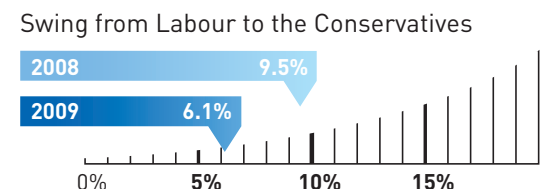
INNER LONDON CONTAINS SOME OF THE SAFEST CONSERVATIVE seats in the country, but also some solid Labour territory. In contrast to outer London, here the demographic trend is in the Conservative party's direction as gentrification moves areas up the social scale. Despite this, in London our survey found one of the lowest swings to the Conservatives of anywhere in the country. The new Hammersmith seat, the remainder of the old Hammersmith and Fulham seats which will be dismembered by boundary changes, looks likely to be Labour.

Uniquely amongst the groups of seats we surveyed, support for "other" parties fell, largely because of the collapse in support for others, suggesting that Labour will be able to retake Bethnal Green and Bow from Respect.

Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Battersea	LAB	CON GAIN
Bethnal Green and Bow	RESPECT	LAB GAIN
Hammersmith	(LAB)	LAB HOLD
Poplar and Limehouse	LAB	CON GAIN
Tooting	LAB	CON GAIN
Westminster North	LAB	CON GAIN

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	29	40	16	0	15
2008 Voting Intention	41	34	17	0	7
2009 Voting Intention	37	36	18	0	9
Change from 2005 to 2009	8	-4	2	0	-6



Outer London

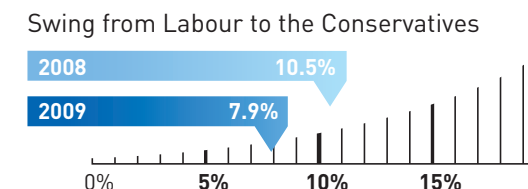


LONDON AS A WHOLE DISPLAYS A SMALLER SWING TO THE Conservatives than elsewhere in England. Here the swing is under 8%, allowing Labour to hold on to some of their suburban marginals. Ealing North, Dagenham & Rainham, Feltham & Heston and Harrow West are all seats that we predicted would fall a year ago, but now seem to be back in Labour territory.

Marginals Polled

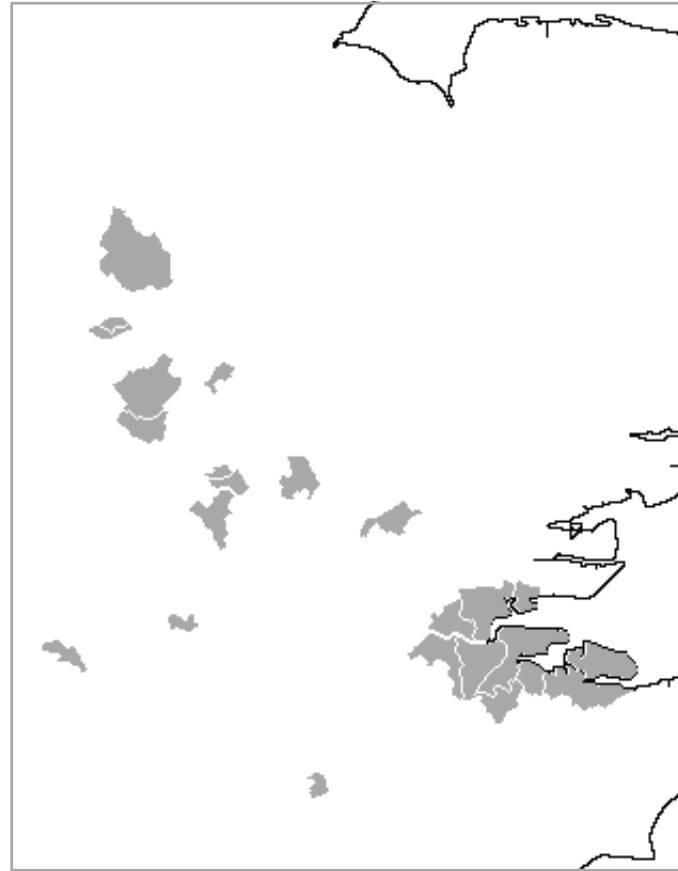
Seat	Currently	Prediction
Brentford and Isleworth	LAB	CON GAIN
Bromley and Chislehurst	CON	CON HOLD
Croydon Central	(LAB)	CON GAIN
Dagenham and Rainham	LAB	LAB HOLD
Ealing Central and Acton	(CON)	CON HOLD
Ealing North	LAB	LAB HOLD
Eltham	LAB	CON GAIN
Enfield North	(CON)	CON HOLD
Feltham and Heston	LAB	LAB HOLD
Finchley and Golders Green	LAB	CON GAIN
Harrow East	LAB	CON GAIN
Harrow West	LAB	LAB HOLD
Hendon	LAB	CON GAIN

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	36	42	17	0	5
2008 Voting Intention	46	30	16	0	7
2009 Voting Intention	42	32	16	0	10
Change from 2005 to 2009	6	-10	-1	0	5



Regional breakdowns

London Commuter Belt

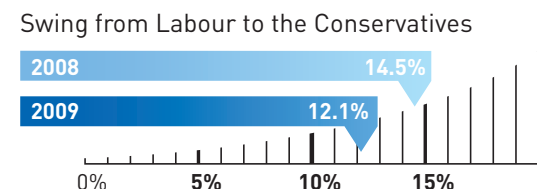


Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Bedford	LAB	CON GAIN
Castle Point	(CON)	CON HOLD
Chatham and Aylesford	LAB	CON GAIN
Crawley	LAB	CON GAIN
Dartford	LAB	CON GAIN
Gillingham and Rainham	(CON)	CON HOLD
Gravesham	CON	CON HOLD
Harlow	LAB	CON GAIN
Hemel Hempstead	CON	CON HOLD
Kettering	CON	CON HOLD
Luton North	LAB	CON GAIN
Luton South	LAB	CON GAIN
Milton Keynes North	LAB	CON GAIN
Milton Keynes South	LAB	CON GAIN
Northampton North	LAB	CON GAIN
Northampton South	LAB	CON GAIN
Reading West	LAB	CON GAIN
Rochester and Strood	(CON)	CON HOLD
Sittingbourne and Sheppey	(CON)	CON HOLD
Slough	LAB	CON GAIN
South Basildon and East Thurrock	LAB	CON GAIN
Stevenage	LAB	CON GAIN
Thurrock	LAB	CON GAIN

THESE SEATS ARE VERY MUCH THE "LOW HANGING FRUIT" FOR the Conservatives. While there are some seats on this list that enjoyed substantial majorities in 2005, many are ultra marginals. In Kent alone there were 5 seats with majorities under 1,000. Were Gordon Brown to retain an overall majority at the next election he would need to be retaining seats like these. In the present political situation they will fall easily to David Cameron's Conservatives on one of the larger swings to the Conservatives.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	38	42	15	0	5
2008 Voting Intention	52	27	14	0	8
2009 Voting Intention	46	26	15	0	12
Change from 2005 to 2009	8	-16	0	0	7



Seaside towns

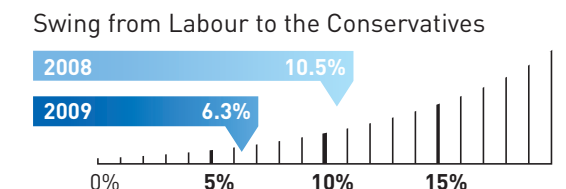


Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Blackpool North and Cleveleys	LAB	CON GAIN
Blackpool South	LAB	LAB HOLD
Brighton Kemptown	LAB	CON GAIN
Brighton Pavilion	LAB	GRN GAIN
Cleethorpes	LAB	CON GAIN
Dorset South	LAB	CON GAIN
Great Yarmouth	LAB	LAB HOLD
Hastings and Rye	LAB	CON GAIN
Hove	LAB	CON GAIN
Morecambe and Lonsdale	LAB	CON GAIN
Thanet South	(CON)	CON HOLD

SEASIDE TOWNS FORM A DISTINCT CLUSTER AMONGST THE KEY marginal seats at the next election – there are a surprising number of them in the list of Conservative targets. With a much higher proportion of elderly residents and often problems with unemployment due to the decline of the traditional seaside holiday they also have distinct demographics. They continue to show one of the lower swings towards the Conservatives, and by far the highest shift towards "other parties". This is mainly benefiting the Green party who on these figures would win their first Parliamentary seat in Brighton Pavilion.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	34	43	15	0	8
2008 Voting Intention	44	30	14	0	11
2009 Voting Intention	36	32	14	0	19
Change from 2005 to 2009	2	-11	-1	0	11



Regional breakdowns

Labour's southern bastions



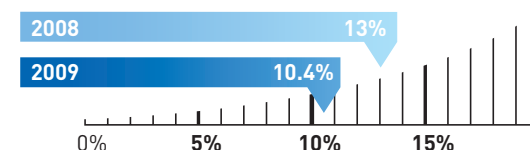
OUTSIDE OF LONDON AND ITS SATELLITE COMMUTER TOWNS THE South of England is dominated by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. Labour's seats are largely confined to urban seats like those in Southampton, Portsmouth and Plymouth. The swing to the Conservatives here remains strong, though has fallen slightly since our 2008 poll, suggesting John Denham may save his Southampton Itchen seat after all.

Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Bristol East	LAB	CON GAIN
Bristol North West	LAB	CON GAIN
Dover	LAB	CON GAIN
Exeter	LAB	CON GAIN
Gloucester	LAB	CON GAIN
Ipswich	LAB	CON GAIN
Kingswood	LAB	CON GAIN
Norwich North	(LAB)	CON GAIN
Plymouth Moor View	LAB	CON GAIN
Plymouth Sutton and Devonport	LAB	CON GAIN
Portsmouth North	(CON)	CON HOLD
Somerset North East	(CON)	CON HOLD
Southampton Itchen	LAB	LAB HOLD
Southampton Test	LAB	CON GAIN
Stroud	LAB	CON GAIN
Swindon North	LAB	CON GAIN
Swindon South	LAB	CON GAIN
Waveney	LAB	CON GAIN

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	33	43	18	0	6
2008 Voting Intention	44	29	19	0	8
2009 Voting Intention	39	29	19	0	12
Change from 2005 to 2009	6	-14	1	0	6

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Urban West Midlands



Marginals Polled

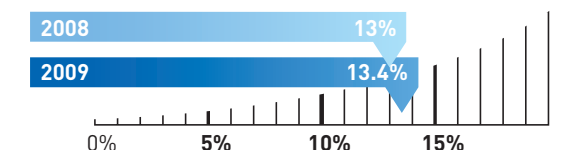
Seat	Currently	Prediction
Birmingham Edgbaston	LAB	CON GAIN
Birmingham Northfield	LAB	CON GAIN
Birmingham Selly Oak	LAB	CON GAIN
Coventry South	LAB	CON GAIN
Dudley North	LAB	CON GAIN
Dudley South	LAB	CON GAIN
Halesowen and Rowley Regis	LAB	CON GAIN
Stourbridge	LAB	CON GAIN
Walsall North	LAB	CON GAIN
Walsall South	LAB	CON GAIN
Wolverhampton South West	LAB	CON GAIN

If this swing was repeated in other urban seats in the West Midlands the Conservatives would also gain Wolverhampton North East, Stoke on Trent South and Coventry North West.

WHILE THE CONSERVATIVES REMAIN LARGELY OUT OF THE running in the industrial cities of the North like Newcastle and Liverpool, it is a different case in England's second city. Birmingham and the West Midlands metropolitan boroughs contain key marginals and our survey continues to show a strong swing towards the Conservative party. On this swing they would hold over half the seats in the West Midlands Metropolitan county.

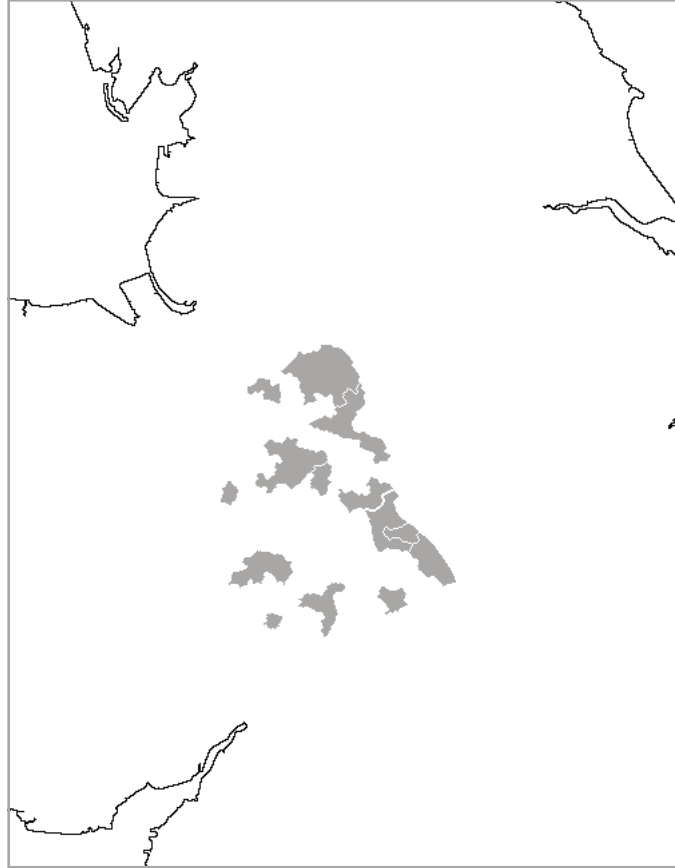
	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	33	46	14	0	7
2008 Voting Intention	43	30	15	0	11
2009 Voting Intention	41	27	16	0	16
Change from 2005 to 2009	8	-19	2	0	9

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Regional breakdowns

West Midlands hinterland



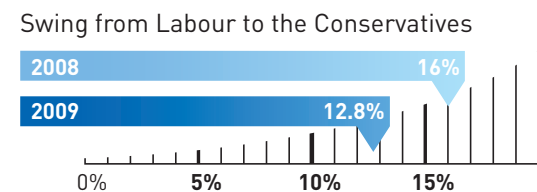
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Burton	LAB	CON GAIN
Cannock Chase	LAB	CON GAIN
Newcastle under Lyme	LAB	CON GAIN
Nuneaton	LAB	CON GAIN
Redditch	LAB	CON GAIN
Rugby	CON	CON HOLD
Stafford	LAB	CON GAIN
Staffordshire Moorlands	(CON)	CON HOLD
Tamworth	LAB	CON GAIN
Telford	LAB	CON GAIN
Warwick and Leamington Spa	LAB	CON GAIN
Warwickshire North	LAB	CON GAIN
Worcester	LAB	CON GAIN
Wyre Forest	KHCC	KHCC HOLD

OUTSIDE OF THE WEST MIDLANDS CONURBATION THE WEST Midlands contains many marginal seats, largely commuter towns and new towns like Telford. Along with the East Midlands, marginals in this region saw the strongest swing to the Conservatives in our 2008 survey. It remains one of their better performing areas, with a 12.8% swing to the Tories.

As in other areas there has been a further movement to "other" candidates and, if he stands again, this may be enough for Dr Richard Taylor to retain Wyre Forest against the Conservative advance.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	35	42	14	0	9
2008 Voting Intention	51	26	14	0	8
2009 Voting Intention	45	27	15	0	13
Change from 2005 to 2009	10	-15	1	0	4



East Midlands



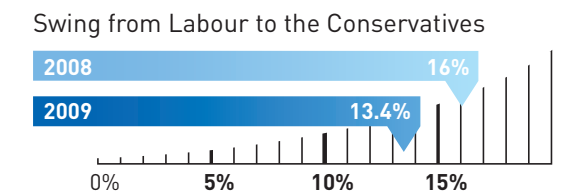
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Amber Valley	LAB	CON GAIN
Bassetlaw	LAB	CON GAIN
Brigg and Goole	LAB	CON GAIN
Broxstowe	LAB	CON GAIN
Corby	LAB	CON GAIN
Derbyshire South	LAB	CON GAIN
Erewash	LAB	CON GAIN
Gedling	LAB	CON GAIN
High Peak	LAB	CON GAIN
Leicestershire North West	LAB	CON GAIN
Lincoln	LAB	CON GAIN
Loughborough	LAB	CON GAIN
Nottingham South	LAB	CON GAIN
Sherwood	LAB	CON GAIN

WHILE THEY HAVE FALLEN BACK SLIGHTLY IN LINE WITH THE national trend, the East Midlands remains the best performing area for the Conservative party. The swing of over thirteen percent would easily be enough for the party to win their target marginals, mainly market towns and the M1 corridor, and if repeated across the region would also see urban seats like Nottingham East, Leicester West and Geoff Hoon's Ashfield fall to the Conservatives.

If this swing was repeated in other East Midland seats the Conservatives would also gain Ashfield, Nottingham East, Leicester West, Derbyshire North East, Great Grimsby and Scunthorpe.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	35	45	15	0	4
2008 Voting Intention	49	27	16	0	8
2009 Voting Intention	46	29	15	0	10
Change from 2005 to 2009	11	-16	0	0	6



Regional breakdowns

West Yorkshire



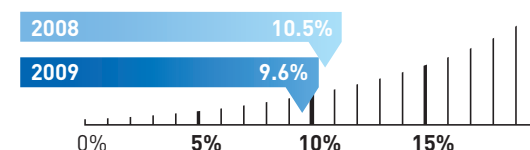
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Batley and Spen	LAB	CON GAIN
Bradford West	LAB	CON GAIN
Calder Valley	LAB	CON GAIN
Colne Valley	LAB	CON GAIN
Dewsbury	LAB	CON GAIN
Elmet and Rothwell	LAB	CON GAIN
Halifax	LAB	CON GAIN
Keighley	LAB	CON GAIN
Leeds North East	LAB	CON GAIN
Pudsey	LAB	CON GAIN
Selby and Ainsty	(CON)	CON HOLD
Shipley	CON	CON HOLD
Wakefield	LAB	CON GAIN

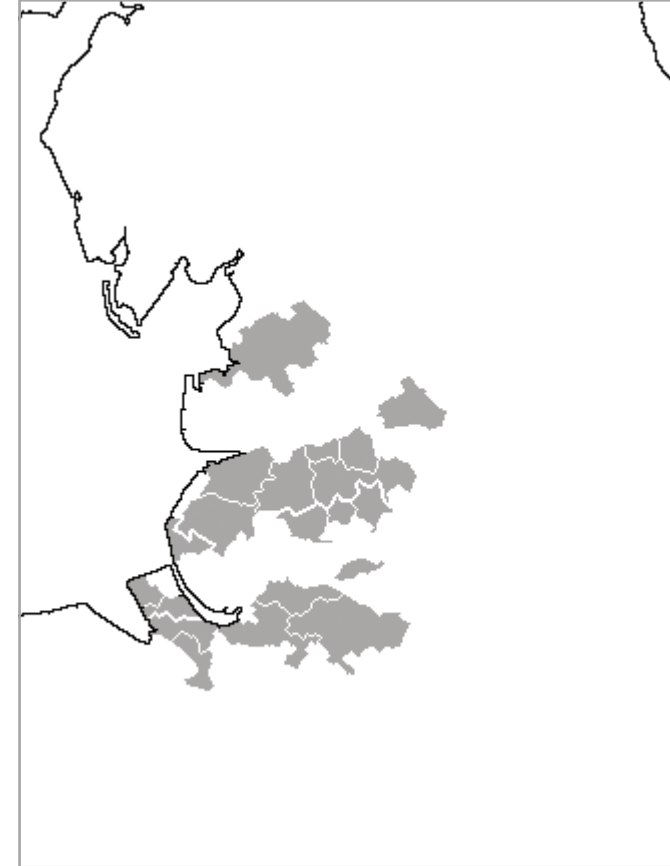
ALONG WITH THE NEIGHBOURING SEAT OF SELBY AND AINSTY, West Yorkshire forms a tight group of key marginal seats. Local election results and our survey last year both suggested the Conservatives were doing comparatively badly here and this year's figures continue to suggest it is one of their weaker areas. The swing is still enough to secure for the Conservatives all their West Yorkshire target seats, but not the sort of magnitude that would be necessary to start threatening Labour's safer seats in South Yorkshire.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	34	42	17	0	7
2008 Voting Intention	43	30	16	0	10
2009 Voting Intention	40	29	17	0	14
Change from 2005 to 2009	6	-13	0	0	7

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



North West



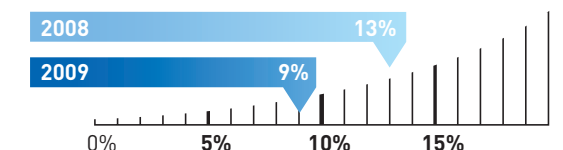
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Blackburn	LAB	LAB HOLD
Bolton North East	LAB	CON GAIN
Bolton West	LAB	CON GAIN
Bury North	LAB	CON GAIN
Chorley	LAB	CON GAIN
City of Chester	LAB	CON GAIN
Crewe and Nantwich	(LAB)	CON GAIN
Ellesmere Port and Neston	LAB	CON GAIN
Hyndburn	LAB	CON GAIN
Lancashire West	LAB	CON GAIN
Lancaster and Fleetwood	LAB	CON GAIN
Pendle	LAB	CON GAIN
Rossendale and Darwen	LAB	CON GAIN
Sefton Central	LAB	CON GAIN
South Ribble	LAB	CON GAIN
Stretford and Urmston	LAB	LAB HOLD
Warrington South	LAB	CON GAIN
Weaver Vale	LAB	CON GAIN
Wirral South	LAB	CON GAIN
Wirral West	(CON)	CON HOLD

IN CONTRAST TO WEST YORKSHIRE, THE NORTH WEST WAS ONE OF the Conservatives' better regions in our 2008 survey and we predicted several gains beyond those seats we polled. This year they have fallen back significantly as more support goes to "other party" candidates. It remains a very fruitful area for them with a projected 17 gains, but their advance is faltering.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	33	45	18	0	4
2008 Voting Intention	46	31	15	0	7
2009 Voting Intention	40	33	15	0	12
Change from 2005 to 2009	7	-12	-3	0	8

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Regional breakdowns

North East



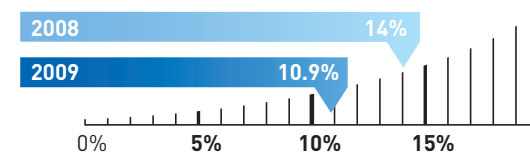
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland	LAB	CON GAIN
Stockton South	LAB	CON GAIN
Sunderland Central	LAB	LAB HOLD
Tynemouth	LAB	CON GAIN

A TRADITIONAL STRONGHOLD FOR THE LABOUR PARTY, THERE are very few true marginal seats in the North East. A swing of 10.9% would gain the Conservatives three seats, but would not be enough for the new Sunderland Central seat.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	32	49	15	0	3
2008 Voting Intention	47	36	11	0	6
2009 Voting Intention	41	36	14	0	8
Change from 2005 to 2009	9	-13	-1	0	5

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Cumbria



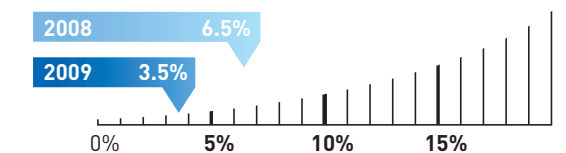
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Barrow and Furness	LAB	LAB HOLD
Carlisle	LAB	LAB HOLD
Copeland	LAB	LAB HOLD
Workington	LAB	LAB HOLD

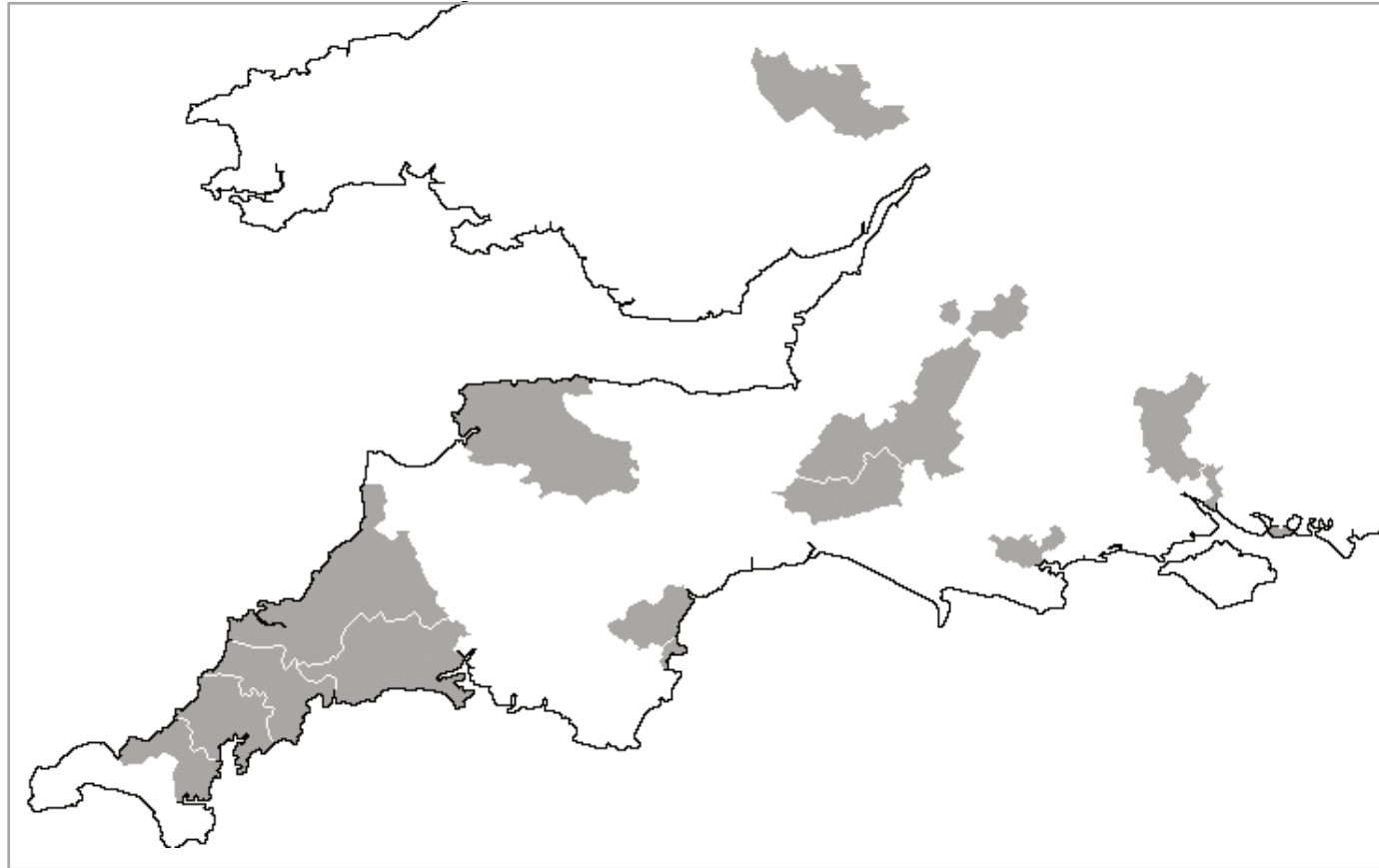
IN LAST YEAR'S SURVEY THE CLUSTER OF MARGINALS IN CUMBRIA had the lowest swing to the Conservatives of any group we surveyed. The same remains true today. Labour have improved their position since 2008 and can now expect to hold all four of their marginal seats in the county.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	33	47	15	0	4
2008 Voting Intention	38	39	15	0	7
2009 Voting Intention	34	41	13	0	11
Change from 2005 to 2009	1	-6	-2	0	7

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats in the South West

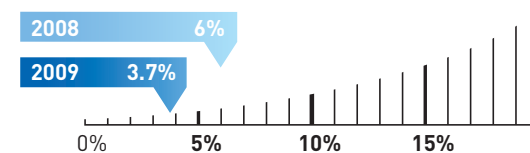


WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS THE BATTLEGROUND BETWEEN THE Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in the South West is largely a rural one, stretching across much of Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. Tactical voting and the personal vote of MPs makes a huge impact here – the figures below reflect our locally prompted voting intention figures which are in sharp contrast to how voters in these seats say they would vote when not prompted to think specifically about their own seat.

This year's survey shows a slightly smaller swing from the Liberal Democrats to Conservatives, but enough for them to lose seven seats (along with Cheltenham, which we did not poll, and Somerton and Frome which is already notionally Conservative on new boundaries).

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	36	14	45	0	5
2008 Voting Intention	43	9	42	0	6
2009 Voting Intention	40	10	40	0	10
Change from 2005 to 2009	4	-4	-5	0	5

Swing from Labour to the Conservatives

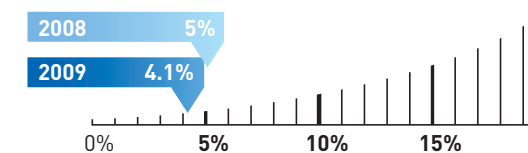


Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Bath	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Camborne and Redruth	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Chippenham	LDEM	CON GAIN
Eastleigh	LDEM	CON GAIN
Hereford and North Herefordshire	LDEM	CON GAIN
Mid Dorset and North Poole	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Newton Abbott	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
North Cornwall	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
North Devon	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Portsmouth South	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Romsey and Southampton North	LDEM	CON GAIN
Somerton and Frome	(CON)	CON HOLD
South East Cornwall	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
St Austell and Newquay	LDEM	CON GAIN
Taunton Deane	LDEM	CON GAIN
Torbay	LDEM	CON GAIN
Truro and Falmouth	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Winchester	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Yeovil	LDEM	LDEM HOLD

On this swing the Conservatives would also gain Cheltenham, which was not included in the survey.

Swing from Liberal Democrats to the Conservatives



Regional breakdowns

Conservatives vs Liberal Democrats elsewhere



WHILE THE BATTLEGROUND BETWEEN THE CONSERVATIVES AND Lib Dems in the South West tends to be rural, elsewhere in the country it is more often well-heeled middle class suburbia, places like South West London, or the affluent suburbs of Greater Manchester and Sheffield.

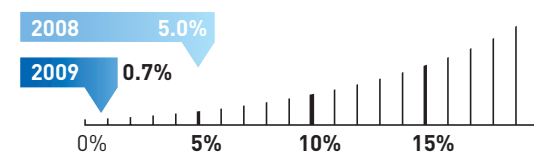
While the Conservatives are making modest advances against the Liberal Democrats in the South West, here the Lib Dems are holding their own, with the swing to the Conservatives only enough for them to reclaim Solihull (already notionally Conservative on the new boundaries). As in the South West though, local factors are important, and individual seats may well buck the trend.

Marginals Polled

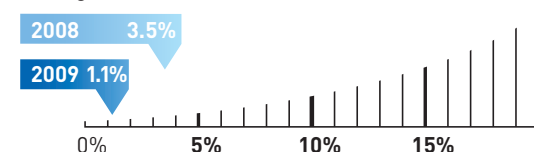
Seat	Currently	Prediction
Carshalton and Wallington	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Cheadle	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Colchester	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Harrogate and Knaresborough	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Hazel Grove	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Kingston and Surbiton	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Lewes	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Norfolk North	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Oxford West and Abingdon	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Richmond Park	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Sheffield Hallam	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Solihull	(CON)	CON HOLD
Southport	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Sutton and Cheam	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Twickenham	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Westmorland and Lonsdale	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
York Outer	LDEM	LDEM HOLD

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	36	14	48	0	4
2008 Voting Intention	41	11	43	0	6
2009 Voting Intention	36	11	46	0	7
Change from 2005 to 2009	0	-3	-2	0	3

Swing from Liberal Democrats to the Conservatives



Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Labour vs Liberal Democrat battlegrounds



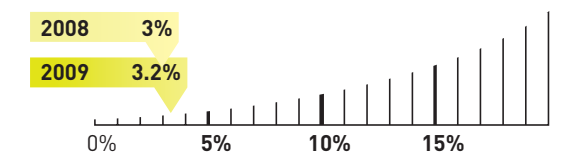
Marginals Polled

Seat	Currently	Prediction
Birmingham Hall Green	LAB	LAB HOLD
Derby North	LAB	CON GAIN
Durham City of	LAB	LAB HOLD
Hampstead and Kilburn	LAB	CON GAIN
Islington South and Finsbury	LAB	LDEM GAIN
Leeds North West	LDEM	CON GAIN
Leicester South	LAB	LAB HOLD
Liverpool Wavertree	LAB	LAB HOLD
Manchester Withington	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Norwich South	LAB	CON GAIN
Oldham East and Saddleworth	LAB	LAB HOLD
Oxford East	(LDEM)	LDEM HOLD
Rochdale	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Watford	LAB	CON GAIN

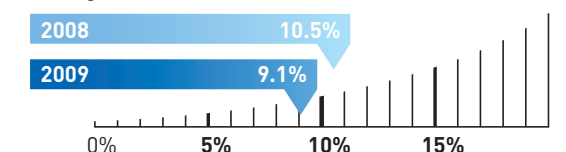
THERE IS STILL LITTLE EVIDENCE OF A LIBERAL DEMOCRAT advance in the seats where they are best positioned to beat Labour. Our survey suggested some tactical voting for the Liberal Democrats in these seats, but in these seats it is the Conservative party who are gaining most from Labour's unpopularity and they are projected to take several seats from third place.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	18	39	35	0	8
2008 Voting Intention	30	30	32	0	8
2009 Voting Intention	27	30	32	0	11
Change from 2005 to 2009	9	-9	-3	0	3

Swing from Labour to the Liberal Democrats

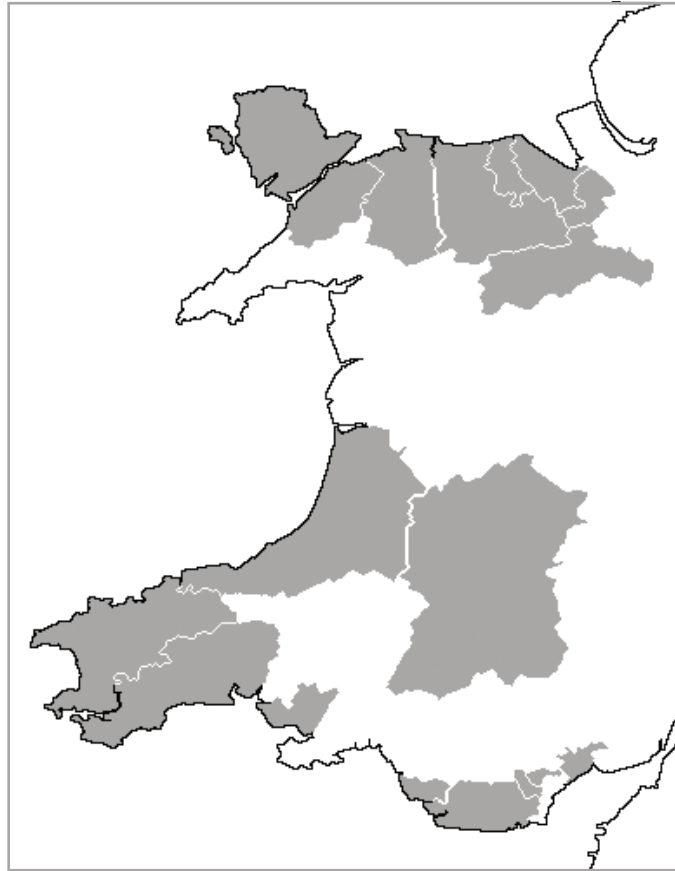


Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Regional breakdowns

Welsh marginals



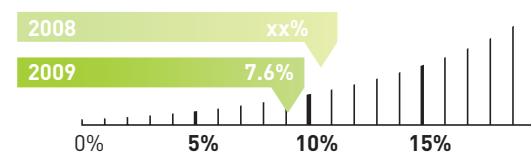
AFTER BEING WIPED OUT HERE IN 1997 OUR POLL SUGGESTS A major advance for the Conservatives in Wales, gaining an extra eight seats. On a more modest swing Plaid Cymru too will substantially increase their number of seats, winning Arfon, Ceredigion and Ynys Mon, and leaving them with their highest ever representation at Westminster.

Marginals Polled

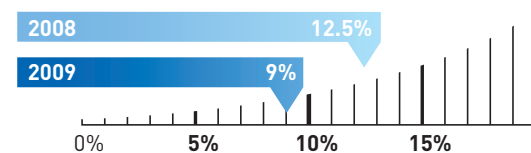
Seat	Currently	Prediction
Aberconwy	LAB	CON GAIN
Arfon	(LAB)	PC GAIN
Brecon and Radnorshire	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Bridgend	LAB	CON GAIN
Cardiff North	LAB	CON GAIN
Cardiff West	LAB	LAB HOLD
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	LAB	CON GAIN
Ceredigion	LDEM	PC GAIN
Clwyd South	LAB	LAB HOLD
Clwyd West	CON	CON HOLD
Delyn	LAB	LAB HOLD
Gower	LAB	CON GAIN
Llanelli	LAB	LAB HOLD
Newport West	LAB	CON GAIN
Preseli Pembrokeshire	CON	CON HOLD
Vale of Clwyd	LAB	CON GAIN
Vale of Glamorgan	LAB	CON GAIN
Ynys Mon	LAB	PC GAIN

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	27	37	18	13	4
2008 Voting Intention	38	23	15	19	6
2009 Voting Intention	34	26	15	17	8
Change from 2005 to 2009	7	-11	-3	4	4

Swing from Labour to Plaid Cymru



Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Scottish marginals



Marginals Polled

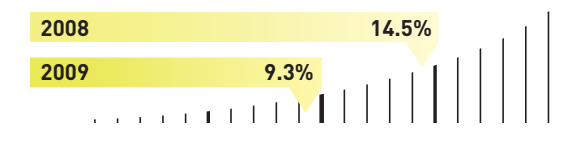
Seat	Currently	Prediction
Aberdeen North	LAB	LAB HOLD
Aberdeen South	LAB	LAB HOLD
Aberdeenshire West and Kincardine	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Angus	SNP	SNP HOLD
Argyll and Bute	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Berwickshire Roxburgh and Selkirk	LDEM	LDEM HOLD
Dumfries and Galloway	LAB	CON GAIN
Dundee East	SNP	SNP HOLD
Dundee West	LAB	SNP GAIN
Dunfermline and West Fife	(LAB)	LAB HOLD
Edinburgh North and Leith	LAB	LAB HOLD
Edinburgh South	LAB	LDEM GAIN
Edinburgh South West	LAB	LAB HOLD
Kilmarnock & Loudoun	LAB	LAB HOLD
Moray	SNP	SNP HOLD
Ochil and South Perthshire	LAB	SNP GAIN
Perth and North Perthshire	SNP	SNP HOLD
Renfrewshire East	LAB	LAB HOLD
Stirling	LAB	LAB HOLD

OUR POLL IN 2008 SHOWED A MASSIVE TURNAROUND IN SCOTLAND, with Labour losing 19 seats on a massive 14.5% swing to the SNP. This year our poll shows Labour performing much better in Scotland and the projected changes are far more pedestrian. The Conservatives now gain only one seat – in contrast to their strength in Wales, they are still struggling to return from their 1997 wipeout. The Liberal Democrats would also gain one seat in Edinburgh South. The SNP make a major advance in terms of support, up at 30% compared to only 19% in 2005.

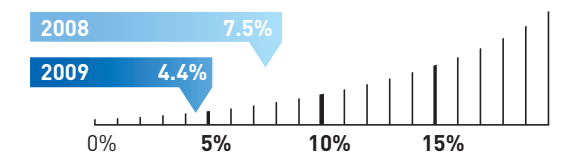
However, on a uniform swing this would bring little in the way of seats – they would gain only Dundee West and Ochil and South Perthshire, narrowly missing out in Kilmarnock and Loudoun.

	CON	LAB	LDEM	SNP/PC	OTH
2005 Result	22	33	23	19	3
2008 Voting Intention	25	21	14	36	4
2009 Voting Intention	23	25	17	30	6
Change from 2005 to 2009	1	-8	-6	11	3

Swing from Labour to the Scottish National Party



Swing from Labour to the Conservatives



Methodology

Fieldwork by YouGov PLC

YOUGOV INTERVIEWED 33610 PEOPLE ONLINE BETWEEN THE 11 to 21 September. The sample was drawn from 238 marginal constituencies using the new Parliamentary boundaries, classed as Labour held Conservative target seats, seats that are notionally Conservative on new boundaries, but currently have Labour MPs, Liberal Democrat held Conservative target seats, seats that are marginal between Labour and the Liberal Democrats, target seats for the SNP and Plaid Cymru and a small selection of other seats where MPs had defected or seats had changed hands at by-elections.

Analysis by PoliticsHome.com

The data was weighted by age, gender and social class to match the demographic make up of the selected marginal seats, based on data from the ONS. It was also weighted to match the geographic and political spread of marginal seats, and by party identification.

Voting intention was derived from four questions. Respondents were asked a traditional voting intention. They were then asked two contextual questions about their actual likelihood to vote, and whether they would be voting for the party they most wanted to win, or voting tactically. Finally they were asked to consider their own constituency, the candidates and parties likely to stand and say how they would vote there. Seat and swing projections in this report are based on the results of the local prompted question.

Seats and swing projections in this report are based on the results of the locally prompted question. Projections are based on the assumption that there will be a uniform swing within each group of marginal seats.

Notes

1. *If there were a general election held tomorrow which party would you vote for?*
2. *And on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 meaning definitely would vote and 1 meaning would not vote how likely are you to actually cast a vote at the next general election?*
3. *As you will know, many people cast their vote at general elections for the party that they most support, many other people vote tactically – that is, for a party that isn't their first choice, but are able to keep an even worse party from winning in their local constituency. Thinking about how you are likely to vote at the next election, will you...*

Vote for the party or candidate that I most want to win
Vote for a party or candidate that is not my first choice,
but who can stop a party I don't like from winning
Don't know
4. *And 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?*

Current seat figures are the swing needed to win individual seats are based on the notional 2005 results published by Anthony Wells on ukpollingreport.co.uk.

YouGov are a member of the British Polling Council and abide by their rules.

Analysis by
Anthony Wells
Head of Research
PoliticsHome

Research Editor
Jonathan Knott

Edited by
Freddie Sayers
Editor
PoliticsHome

News Editor
Patrick Casey

Founded by
Stephan Shakespeare
Chairman
PoliticsHome

Deputy News Editor
John Goodrich

Published by
PoliticsHome.com
5, The Sanctuary
Westminster
London SW1P 3JS

Tel: 020 7227 0420
Fax: 020 7222 2079
www.politicshome.com