
Survey of public attitudes towards conduct in public life 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This summary provides an overview of the key insights from the 2012 survey on public attitudes to standards in public life linked to findings from the previous four surveys in the series conducted biennially since 2004.

The analysis allows us to chart changes in attitudes over time and to identify which demographic and political factors (age, social grade, party affiliation) are related to particular attitudes. It has also been possible to identify groups of attitudes that can be linked to demographic and political factors more confidently than is the case for responses to individual questions. The full results of this analysis are described in sections 10 and 11, and the methods presented in full in the Technical Appendices. The bullet points below identify core findings and draw attention to particularly significant patterns of relationships.

1 Key changes in overall perceptions of standards in public life

- Over the lifetime of the survey, there has been a continuous and substantial decline in the percentage of respondents rating standards as “quite high” or “very high”, while the percentage of respondents rating standards as “quite poor” or “very poor” has steadily increased, showing a clear trend.
- However, this account of continuous decline misses some important variations that are revealed when a range of different dimensions to respondents’ evaluations of standards across a broad range of issues are combined.
- Of the four groups identified, the proportion of the population falling into the two groupings characterised by generally positive attitudes (‘all is well’ and ‘hopeful’) increased from 62 per cent in 2004 to 82 per cent in 2008. In 2010, the year of the MPs’ expenses scandal, the proportion of the population in these positive groups fell to 55 per cent. In the latest survey, a slight improvement (59

per cent) was registered. However, public confidence has not yet returned to its 2004 level, let alone to the level reached in 2008, when only 18 per cent of the population held systematically sceptical views about those in public office.

The analysis of the cumulative data from the surveys indicates that public attitudes are responsive to events and their presentation and that public confidence can be improved as well as damaged by the way in which individuals and groups of individuals behave in public life.

2 Trust in those holding public office to tell the truth

- Over the five surveys, public perceptions of whether a range of professions in the public domain can be trusted to tell the truth demonstrate consistent *relative* ratings: High Court judges and senior police officers score highly, while tabloid journalists, government ministers and MPs in general, score poorly. When these findings are compared with other British and European data, levels of trust in these professions are not especially low, except in comparison with the Netherlands and Scandinavia. Moreover, the evidence suggests that low levels of stated trust in office holders or individuals may be accompanied by much higher and rising levels of confidence in institutions, such as the legal system.
- Trust in both tabloid and TV journalists has risen over the surveys, although most of the positive change was between 2008 and 2010, when responses were likely to have been influenced by the MPs’ expenses scandal.
- In 2012 MPs and government ministers were evaluated less favourably than all other categories (except tabloid journalists), but the position of MPs recovered slightly between 2010 and 2012.
- Levels of trust are slightly higher among younger respondents, those from higher

social grades, and those from ethnic minorities.

Questions on trust are asked widely in surveys conducted in the UK and in many other European countries. They allow useful comparisons to be drawn between the UK and other European states. However, such questions often fail to capture more subtle differences, as in that between trusting office holders and trusting institutions. In this report, answers to questions of trust are contextualised by reference to a range of other data allowing a more nuanced appreciation of its significance.

3 Expectations and perceptions of Westminster MPs

- In relation to Westminster MPs, the public broadly share a set of expectations that are in line with the seven principles of public life. However, they have consistently low levels of confidence that MPs actually meet these standards. In the latest survey, pessimism was less marked than in 2010, when attitudes were affected by the then recent events of the MPs' expenses scandal, but levels of confidence have not returned to their 2008 levels.
- The majority of respondents believe that all or most MPs "do not take bribes". In terms of each of the other standards, however, public perceptions of the probity of MPs is much more negative; a majority of respondents think that half or fewer MPs meet all other standards – such as not using power for personal gain, being competent at their jobs, being dedicated to doing a good job, giving reasons for their actions, setting a good example in their private lives, making sure public money is spent wisely. Moreover, since the first survey in 2004, the percentage of respondents holding negative views has increased across all ten standards. The particularly steep decline in 2010, in the wake of the MPs' expenses scandal, has been partially reversed in relation to several items. However, none has returned to pre-2010 levels.

Public attitudes to MPs have not recovered significantly since the 2010 survey. However, when the broader measure based on clusters of attitudes is used, it is clear that the dramatic fall in positive attitudes towards standards in public life has been halted and shows some slight signs of turning.

4 Attitudes to acceptable motives for MPs in voting

- In all the surveys to date respondents have consistently identified the following three key factors that should influence MPs in deciding how to vote in the House of Commons: "what would benefit people living in the country as a whole" has been the most popular response, closely followed by "what would benefit people living in the MP's constituency" and "what their party election manifesto promised". These remain the key factors, although in each case support for them has fallen since the last survey.
- The evidence suggests there may be less public consensus on the principle of selflessness for elected officials. In the 2012 survey there was a slight increase in tolerance towards MPs taking personal motives into account when deciding how to vote in Parliament, for example how the decision would affect an MP's political career; how it would affect an MP's chances of a job outside politics; and what would benefit an MP's family. The percentage saying that it is reasonable for an MP to consider what would make their party more popular with the electorate has also increased. In each case, however, only a minority of respondents expressed these views, although over time this has changed from negligible to often sizeable minorities.

These results indicate that there has been some change in what has been hitherto a robust public culture of high expectations regarding the selflessness of individuals who assume public office. However, as the most dramatic changes in public attitudes were detected in only the most recent survey, it is not clear if this is the start of a longer term shift in expectations or a temporary response to currently salient factors.

5 Public office holders and accountability

- Over the lifetime of the survey there have been marginal changes in the pattern of responses when the public are asked about how confident they are that national authorities are committed to upholding standards; how far the authorities and the media play a role in this process; and whether those who are caught doing wrong will be punished. In the latest survey, there

has been some diminution of confidence in the authorities' commitment to upholding standards.

- Perhaps the most striking findings are the slow decline in the number of those expressing confidence that the media will uncover wrong doing and the slight recovery in confidence that the authorities will detect and punish wrong doing.

Attitudes to the effectiveness of accountability processes have proved relatively stable over the ten years of the survey – showing slightly different patterns than other measures. For example, although confidence in the authorities' commitment to upholding standards peaked in 2008, downward changes registered in 2010 and 2012 were not dramatic. The increase in the proportion of the public expressing confidence that wrong doing will be uncovered and punished (from a low of 33 per cent in 2006 to 40 per cent in 2012) suggests that scandals may damage public confidence most when the public sees them as being swept under the carpet. The decline in confidence that the media will uncover wrong doing has been slow but continuous since 2006. Nonetheless, confidence is still high: 70 per cent in 2012 say that they believe the media will generally uncover wrong doing.

6 Fairness of treatment by front-line public services

- Responses to a new question in the 2012 survey indicate people's widespread belief that they will receive fair treatment from a range of public services. A large majority of respondents thought they would be treated fairly by doctors, policemen, judges, and local planning bodies.

New questions on attitudes towards front-line staff at both senior and junior levels with whom members of the public are more likely to have had personal contact, reveal high levels of confidence in the fairness with which people will be treated. Only 15 per cent or fewer of those surveyed expressed concern that they would be treated worse than other people. Younger respondents were more likely to say they anticipated worse treatment at the hands of the police, in court, or in a planning applications committee; they were also more likely to say that they might be treated better than other people – indicating a wider distribution of responses than for older groups.

7 Assessment of standards of conduct and accountability for front-line staff across sectors

- Respondents express more confidence in the probity of relatively junior front line staff – in terms of putting the public interest first, owning up to making mistakes, and being held accountable for mistakes – than in that of more senior managers.
- They express more confidence in the probity of public sector employees than in those in the semi-public or private sectors.
- They believe that they are themselves more likely than people in public office to act with probity in a range of given scenarios that are associated with honesty and integrity.
- Respondents also support the use of external scrutiny and audit mechanisms and the development of a strong internal culture fostering standards and openness as means for improving professional integrity and increasing confidence in public institutions. However, they do not favour the use of financial incentives.

In a further series of new questions, respondents' views on a wider range of those public office holders were canvassed. These complement the questions on the fairness of front line services and suggest that the negative attitudes towards national politicians do not relate at all directly to evaluations and expectations of other public officials.

8 Data analysis

- The analysis of the data for the 2012 survey has been undertaken alongside longitudinal analysis across the five surveys and establishes that there is a relatively independent set of attitudinal dimensions in relation to public life that can be used to identify four broad groups of attitudes in the population, ranging from 'all is well', through 'hopeful' and 'sceptical' to 'deeply sceptical.'
- These groupings of attitudes show stability over time. However, the proportion of the population subscribing to these attitudes varies. These variations suggest that confidence in standards can be both positively and negatively influenced by public

events, their reporting, and the way in which they are responded to by governments and public bodies.

- These groupings of attitudes also demonstrate closer relationships to demographic variables than do individual responses alone. Variables including social grade, age, ethnicity and engagement with the party political system demonstrate particularly notable influence on these groups of attitudes to standards in public life.
- Those who are likely to feel most sceptical come from lower social grades, have a white-British or white-Irish background, are middle aged or older, and have little or no engagement with the political system.

It is important that falling or persistently low levels of public confidence in standards are addressed by public authorities. One particular cause for concern arising from this study is the number of people (especially young people) who feel disconnected from the political system and political parties. The growth in the size of this group presents a challenge to political parties, politicians, and local organisations and community groups to work to provide the British public with a sufficiently attractive and relevant set of political options from which they can choose.

INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) takes significant interest in the public's understanding of and attitudes towards the principles that underlie public life. These principles were set out and defined in the First Report of the Committee to the Prime Minister in 1995.¹ In 2002 the Committee commissioned initial qualitative research, followed by in 2004 the first of its national quantitative surveys, in order to:

- Establish what the public sees as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour on the part of holders of public office;
- Assess how far the public believes that the behaviour of holders of public office conforms to these standards; and
- Assess public confidence that holders of public office are effectively held responsible and accountable for any unacceptable conduct.

Surveys have been carried out every two years since then, most recently in 2012, to track changes in public attitudes over time. Each survey has retained the same core set of questions, covering the seven principles of public life.² Each survey has also included a number of additional items relating to currently salient issues to determine how people react to topical questions concerning standards in public life.

The surveys have shown that public attitudes about how people in senior public office should behave are relatively stable. Even if they lack a detailed understanding of the nature of public office and its demands, members of the public expect:

- To be committed to public rather than private ends (selflessness and integrity);

- To be honest and open in decision-making;
- To make decisions in the light of the best evidence (objectivity);
- To be held accountable; and for senior public figures; and
- To in some respect lead exemplary lives (leadership).

The public has consistently prioritised these principles across the five surveys, with only minor changes of emphasis appearing in the findings. In this sense, the surveys have met the first of the three objectives established for the research: it is clear that the public has definite expectations as to the behaviour of public office holders. However, it will remain important to test whether support for these principles continues or changes in the future, as the composition of the population changes and as citizens are confronted with changing political, social and economic circumstances.

While the surveys have shown that the public have consistent and stable views about the standards that those in public office should comply with, they have also registered declining confidence that those in public office actually abide by those standards. However, the extent to which this represents a crisis of faith more broadly in those who work in the public sector is less clear.

Early surveys focused on attitudes to elected politicians and, with less emphasis, on attitudes to other senior public office holders. Attitudes to front-line public servants involved directly in the delivery of services were included for the first time in the 2012 survey that we report on here. This latest survey also asked respondents about the treatment they expect to receive from a number of non-elected and less senior public officials with whom they are much more likely to have had direct contact, and – for comparative purposes – from people working in the private sector.

These questions offer further insight into what the public sees as appropriate motivation and expected behaviour for people in a wide range of public positions, thereby extending the knowledge base under all three of the Committee's objectives.

¹ The Seven Principles on Public Life were set out in the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in 1995. The principles are: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership. The principles have recently been further clarified in the Committee's fourteenth report, *Standards Matter: A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life* (Command 8519, January 2013).

² See below, sections 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Figure 1 Map of questions asked in CSPL Survey, 2012

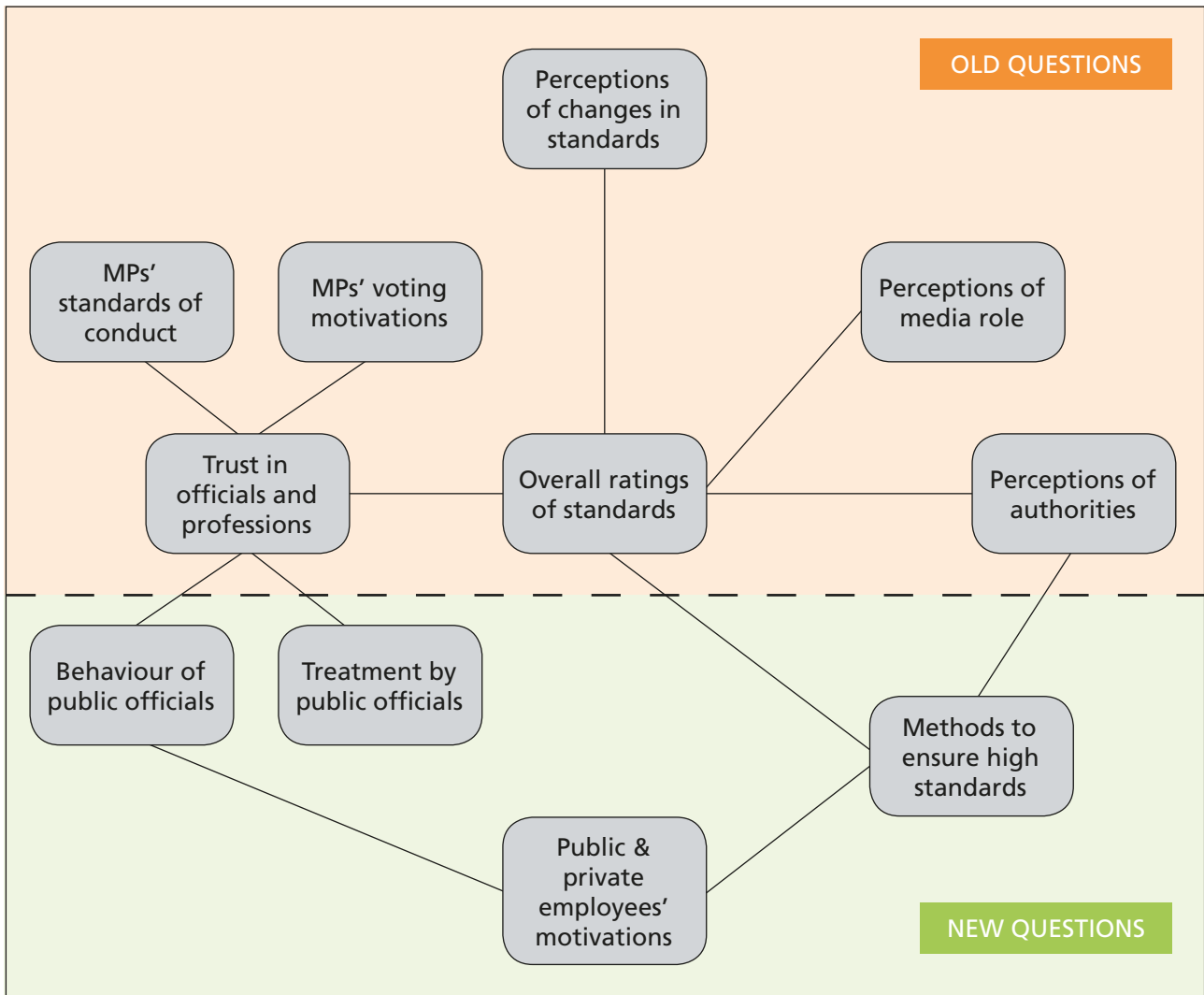


Figure 1 shows how additional topics covered in the 2012 survey (given below the broken line) link to those of previous surveys and to overall perceptions of standards in public life.

Reporting conventions

The commentary in the following chapters is supported by summary figures and tables. The findings are based on the sample of adults in Great Britain (GB) except where otherwise noted. The GB base is used so that findings of

the 2012 survey can be compared with those from 2006 and 2008 (which included booster samples for the devolved administrations) as well as those for 2004 and 2010, which were conducted in GB only. Readers should note that, for the sake of consistency across all the surveys, some questions in these chapters ask respondents for their views about issues concerning standards in public life with respect to the UK as a whole. This gives rise to some figures in which judgments about the UK are being reported on the basis of the GB sample.

1 OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

1.1 Summary

Since 2004 the percentage of respondents rating the standards of public office holders as “quite poor” or “very poor” has steadily increased while the percentage rating standards as “quite high” or “very high” has decreased.

There has been a notable increase in the proportion of respondents who believe that standards have declined compared with a few years ago and a concomitant decrease in those believing that standards have improved.

1.2 Overall perceptions of standards

As in all four previous surveys, respondents in 2012 were asked, “Overall, how would you rate the standards of conduct of public office holders in the United Kingdom?” They were offered five response options on a scale from very low to very high. This question offers the opportunity to assess respondents’ general view of standards of conduct of people in public life without specifying any particular individuals or institutions. As such, it is a measure of the general public mood as to standards in public life. Subsequent questions in the survey allow more specific and detailed probing of these attitudes.

The latest results show an increase in the number of people expressing negative perceptions of overall standards of conduct. More than a quarter of all respondents (28 per cent) indicated that they believed that standards were “quite low” or “very low”. This is the most negative result so far; as **Figure 1.1** [page 11] shows, throughout the lifetime of the study there has been a steady rise in the proportion of people reporting standards as either “quite low” or “very low” and a decrease in the number reporting standards as “quite high” or “very high”. Although a larger percentage of the population think overall standards of conduct are high rather than low, positive views exceeded negative views by 35 percentage points in 2004, but by only 7 percentage points in 2012.

The basic trend, as shown by the regression lines for the high and low values in **Figure 1.1**, is a consistent downwards trend for positive perceptions and a consistent increase in negative perceptions of overall standards.

1.3 How overall perceptions of standards compare with a few years ago

Since the MPs’ expenses scandal in 2009 there has been an increase in:

- high-profile reporting of misdemeanours; and
- the implementation of new controls and procedures to deal with those doing wrong.

To assess what impact, if any, these have had on the public’s views of standards respondents were asked: “How do you think standards of public office holders in the United Kingdom today compare with a few years ago?” The five response options ranged from “got a lot worse” to “got a lot better”.

Figure 1.2 [page 12] shows that over the five surveys, the main pattern of response to this question has been an increase in negative judgments and a decrease in positive judgments.

In 2012, almost four in ten respondents said that they thought standards in the UK had “got a bit worse” or “got a lot worse” compared with a few years ago. There was little evidence that the new regulatory measures had had a positive impact on the percentage of people who thought that standards had “improved a lot”. However, neither was there continuation of the hitherto clear downward trend observed since 2004.

Figure 1.1 Overall rating of standards of conduct ("Quite" or "Very" Low and "Quite" or "Very" High), 2004-2012

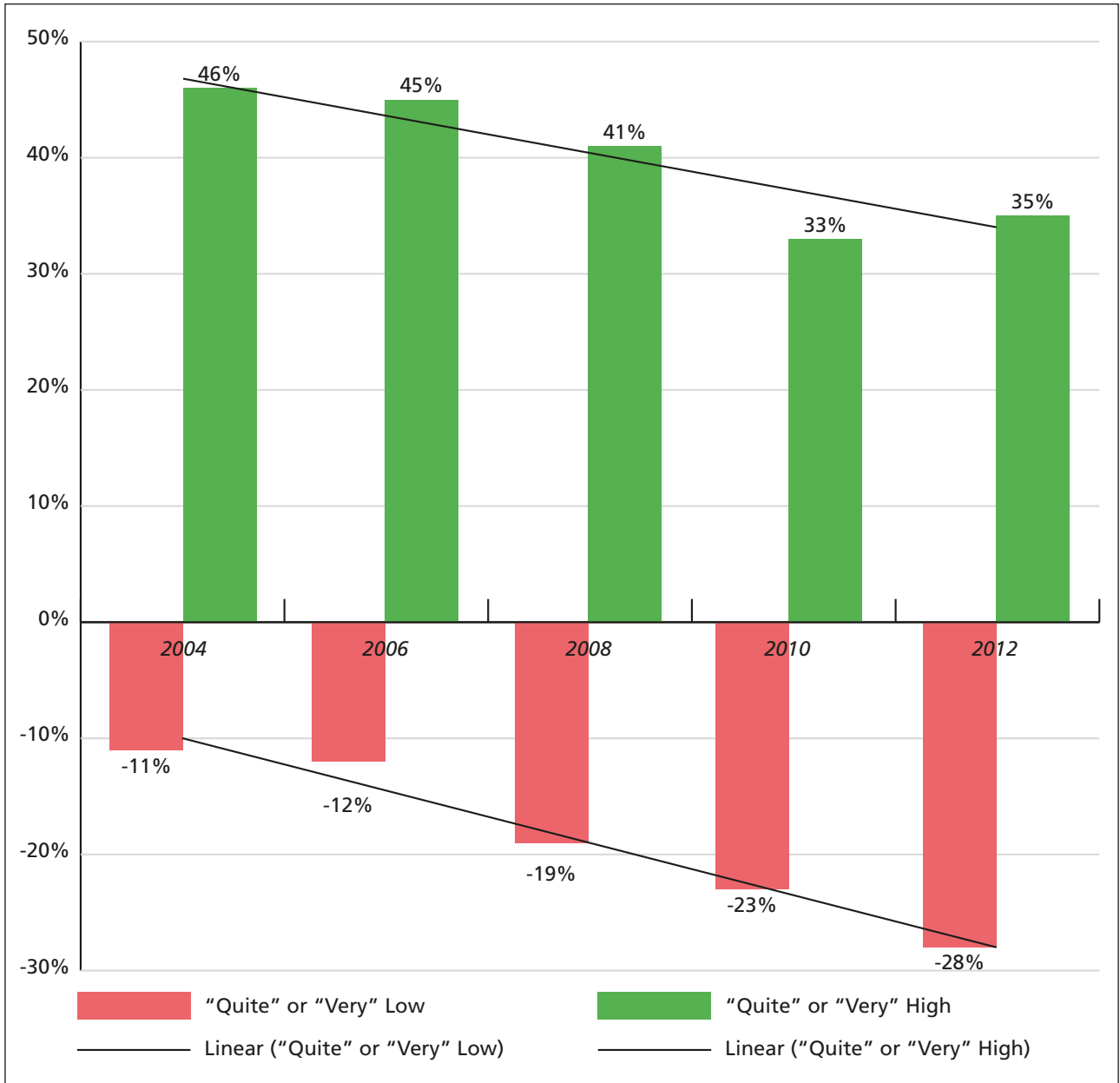
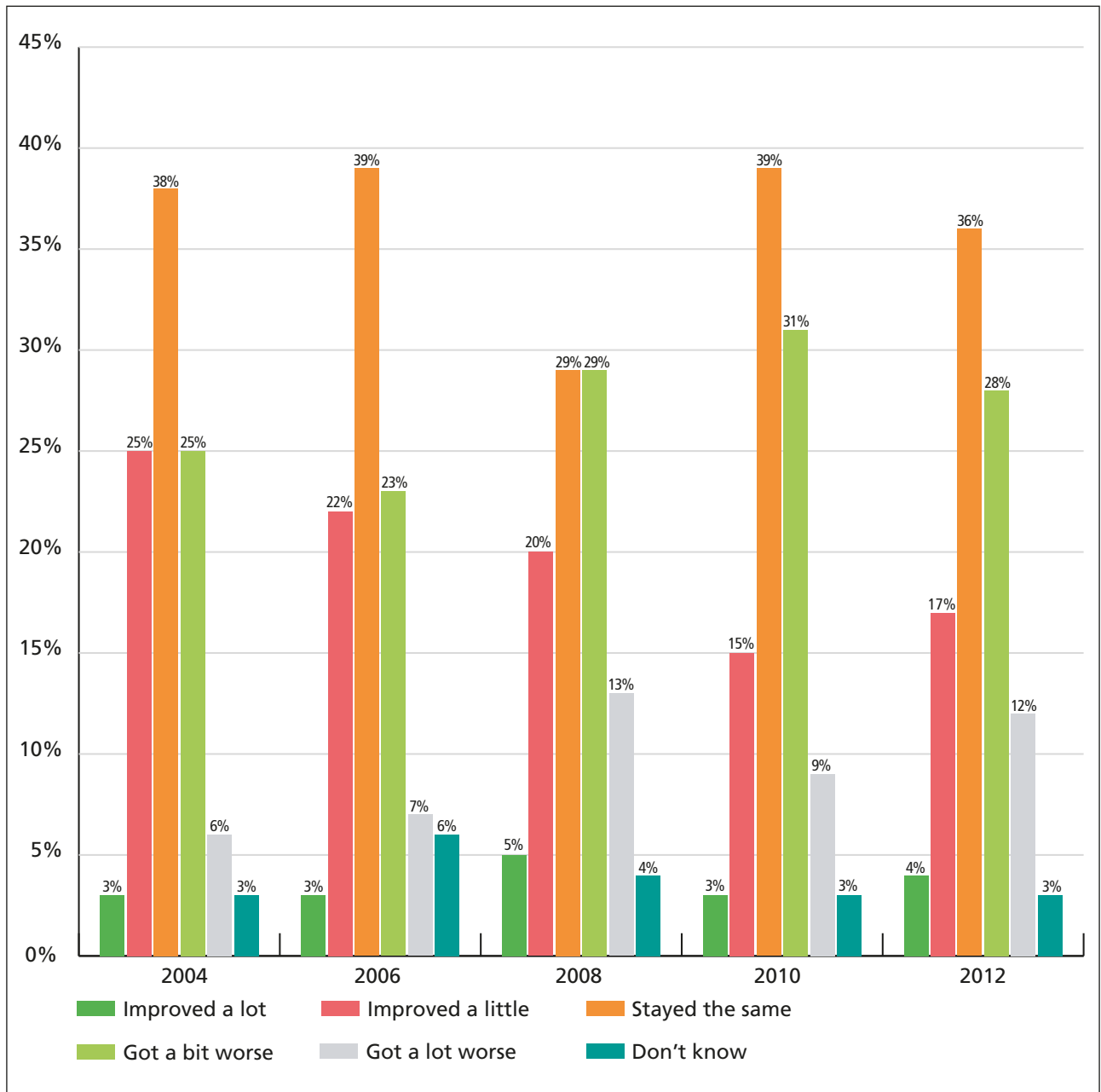


Figure 1.2 Ratings of how standards in the UK compare with a few years ago, 2004-2012



2 TRUST IN PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS TO TELL THE TRUTH

2.1 Summary

Every survey has asked respondents if they trust people in various professions to tell the truth. These professions have ranged from elected officials to legal professionals and journalists. The question is one asked widely in attitudinal surveys, although generally with respect to a much narrower range of professionals. Responses to this question offer evidence of the public's comparative assessments between professions.

In all of the surveys, MPs, government ministers and tabloid journalists have been among those least trusted by the public to tell the truth; in contrast, judges and senior police officers have consistently been among those most trusted to tell the truth.

The above findings are consistent with data from the European Social Survey (2002-2010), which also indicates that 'representative institutions', such as national parliaments, political parties and politicians, tend to be trusted less than 'implementing institutions', such as the police or national legal systems in many other European countries.

2.2 Trust in public office holders to tell the truth

The first survey in 2004 asked the public whether they trusted members of seventeen professions to tell the truth. The list was reduced to nine in 2010 after analysis of earlier results showed the same underlying orientations for certain clusters of professions. The shorter list included: (1) Journalists on newspapers like *The Times*, *Telegraph* and *Guardian*; (2) Television news journalists; (3) Journalists on newspapers like the *Sun*, the *Mirror* and the *Daily Star*; (4) Judges; (5) Senior police officers; (6) Westminster MPs in general; (7) Your local Westminster MP; (8) Senior civil servants; and (9) Government ministers in Westminster.

In 2012, the list was broadened to include two further groups ("People who run large companies" and "Local councillors").

Figure 2.1 [page 14] shows, for each profession, the average proportion of respondents across all five surveys who said that they trust members to tell the truth.

The relative ratings of the professions have remained consistent over time despite minor fluctuations. For example, judges and senior police officers have consistently been rated as the most trusted while tabloid journalists and political professionals have rated poorly.

However, a number of changes not shown in **Figure 2.1** are worth noting:

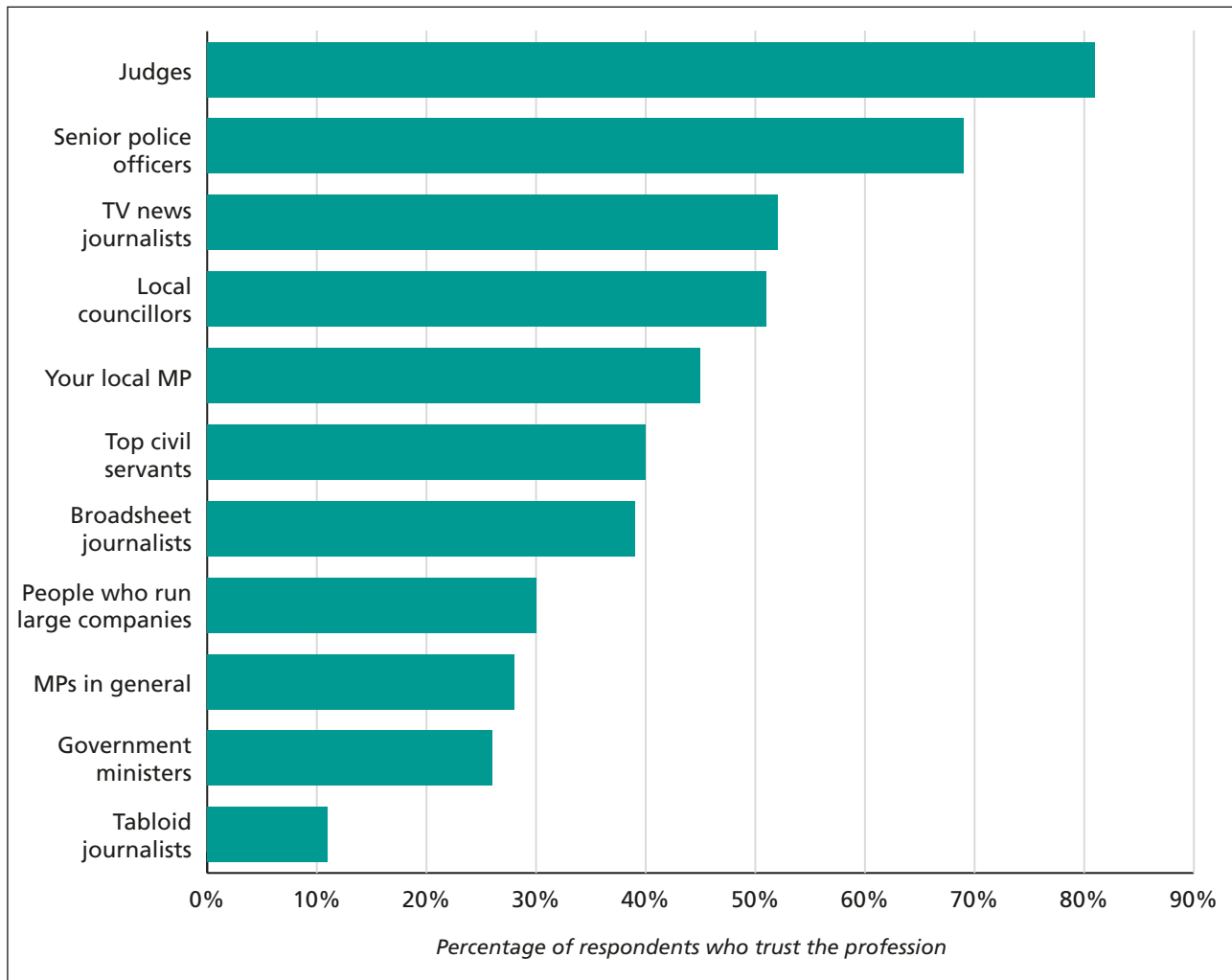
- Trust in tabloid journalists has doubled since the first survey (from 7 per cent to 14 per cent), and trust in TV journalists has also increased notably (from 49 per cent to 57 per cent) in the same period. Most of this increase occurred between 2008 and 2010 when the media played a high profile role in exposing the MPs' expenses scandal.³
- In 2012 MPs and government ministers were evaluated less favourably than all other categories (except tabloid journalists), but the position of MPs recovered slightly between 2010 and 2012.

Across all the surveys, respondents have consistently viewed their local MP much more favourably than government ministers or MPs in general (44 per cent compared with 32 per cent and 30 per cent respectively in 2012). This could be because local MPs tend to be familiar figures and therefore more likely to attract positive ratings.

Local councillors also scored much more favourably than ministers and MPs (51 per cent in 2012 trusted them to tell the truth). However, as this was a new profession added to the survey in 2012, we are unable to determine if this more positive evaluation persists across a longer time period.

³ Similar increases are not evident in the data for broadsheet journalists.

Figure 2.1 Average level of trust in professions to tell the truth, 2004-2012



2.3 Comparative British data

The patterns described above are similar to those observed in other surveys of public opinion. For example **Figure 2.2** [Page 15] shows trends across surveys carried out by IPSOS MORI between 1999 and 2011. Judges were consistently ranked as the most trustworthy professionals and police officers were also consistently rated highly (trusted by about six out of ten respondents). MPs generally, government ministers and journalists were the three lowest ranked professionals, with politicians and government ministers ranked bottom from 2009 onwards. Civil servants were trusted by just under half of all respondents in almost every wave of the survey.

2.4 Levels of trust in the UK compared with other European countries

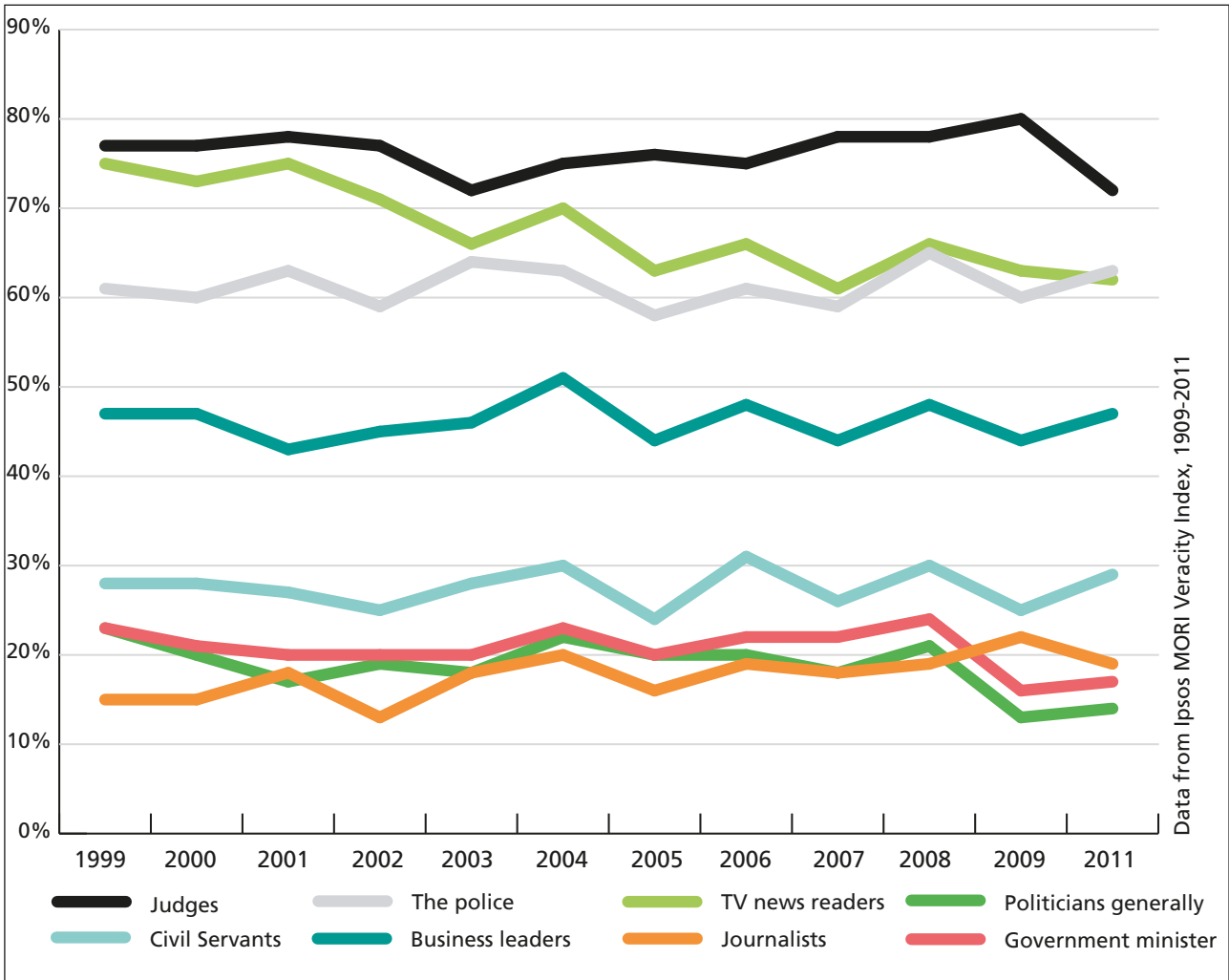
Trust in professions has been a much-discussed topic in many European democracies and a number of attitudinal surveys have included

items that reflect this concern. For example, the European Social Survey (ESS) has collected data on trust from a number of European countries over the past decade.⁴ Although not all questions were asked in every country in every year, the data allows comparisons to be made between various countries over the period 2002 to 2010. Respondents to the ESS were asked to rate their level of trust in a number of actors and institutions, on a scale from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust).

Figure 2.3 [page 16] shows the proportion of respondents in each of eight countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain,

⁴ ESS Round 1: European Social Survey Round 1 Data (2002). Data file edition 6.3. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data; ESS Round 2: European Social Survey Round 2 Data (2004). Data file edition 3.3. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data; ESS Round 3: European Social Survey Round 3 Data (2006). Data file edition 3.4. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data; ESS Round 4: European Social Survey Round 4 Data (2008). Data file edition 4.1. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data; ESS Round 5: European Social Survey Round 5 Data (2010). Data file edition 3.0. Norwegian Social Science Data Services, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data.

Figure 2.2 Trust in professions to tell the truth, 1999-2011



Sweden and the UK) that gave a trust rating of six out of ten or more to their country's parliament, politicians and political parties. This indicates the proportion of respondents with positive evaluations of these institutions and groups. Trust in national parliaments has tended to be higher than trust in politicians and political parties across all eight countries. This suggests a pattern across these countries of greater levels of trust in the institutions of government, than in the individuals and groups who run them.

The UK recorded similar levels of trust in the national parliament as both France and Germany but higher levels of trust in politicians and political parties. Throughout this period, there was relatively trendless fluctuation in all three countries. Levels of trust in Norway and Sweden, as well as the Netherlands, were noticeably higher, and have been increasing in all of these nations. The most noticeable declines in political trust were in Spain and Ireland from 2008 onwards. This is perhaps unsurprising as both of these countries were

experiencing particularly serious economic problems during this period.

In general political institutions in all eight countries scored lower than their country's legal system and police force. Respondents in the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden hold the most positive views of the trustworthiness of their legal systems while those in Spain show the lowest level of trust. Levels of trust in the UK legal system remain similar to those in France and Ireland, though they peaked at 49 per cent in 2010.

Evaluations of national police forces were even more positive. In the past four waves, the majority of respondents in every country have indicated that they trust their country's police force. Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands once again offer the most positive evaluations with the UK ranking alongside Ireland and Spain with more than six out of ten respondents holding positive views of the trustworthiness of the police.

Figure 2.3 Percentage of respondents reporting trust in political actors

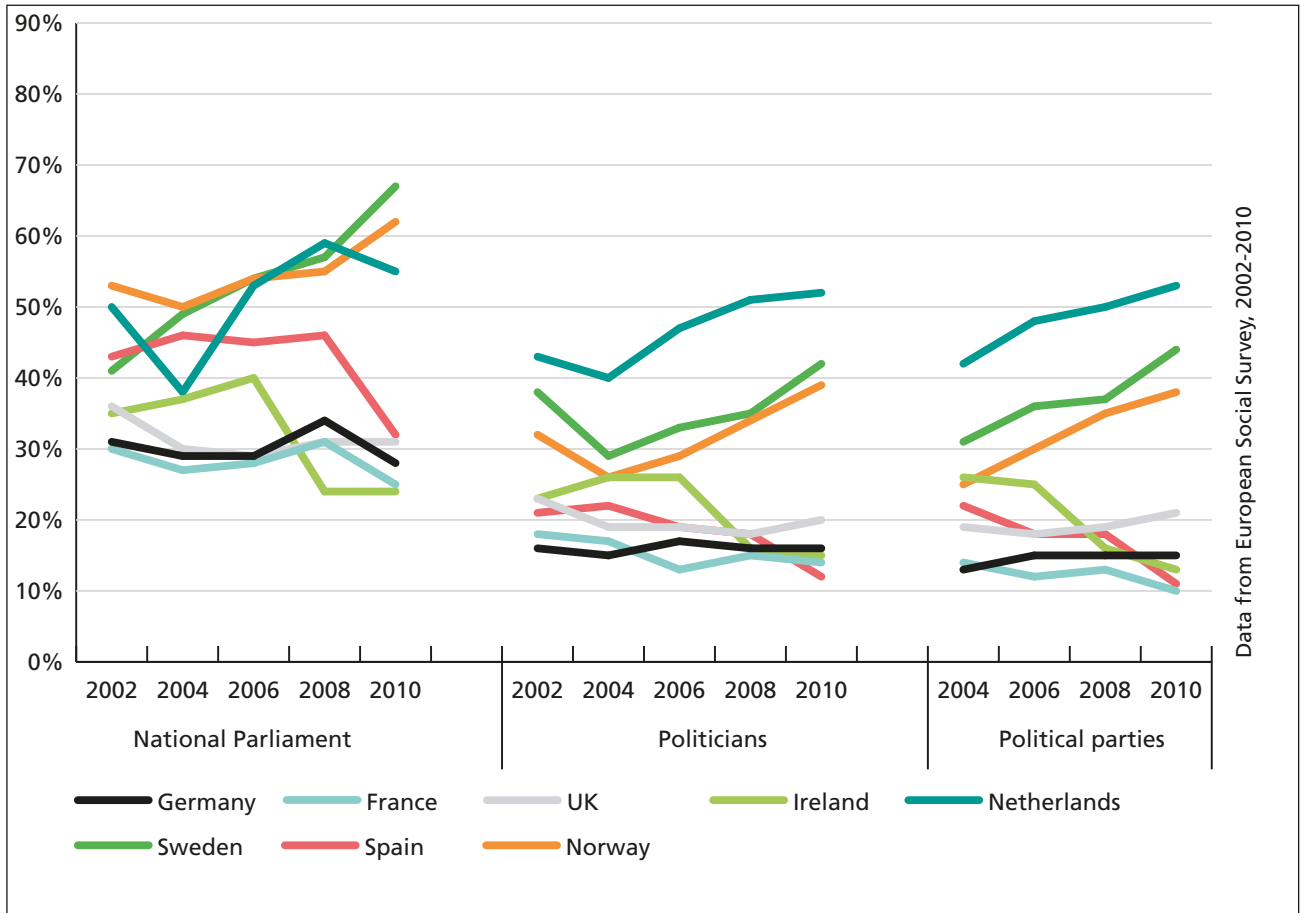
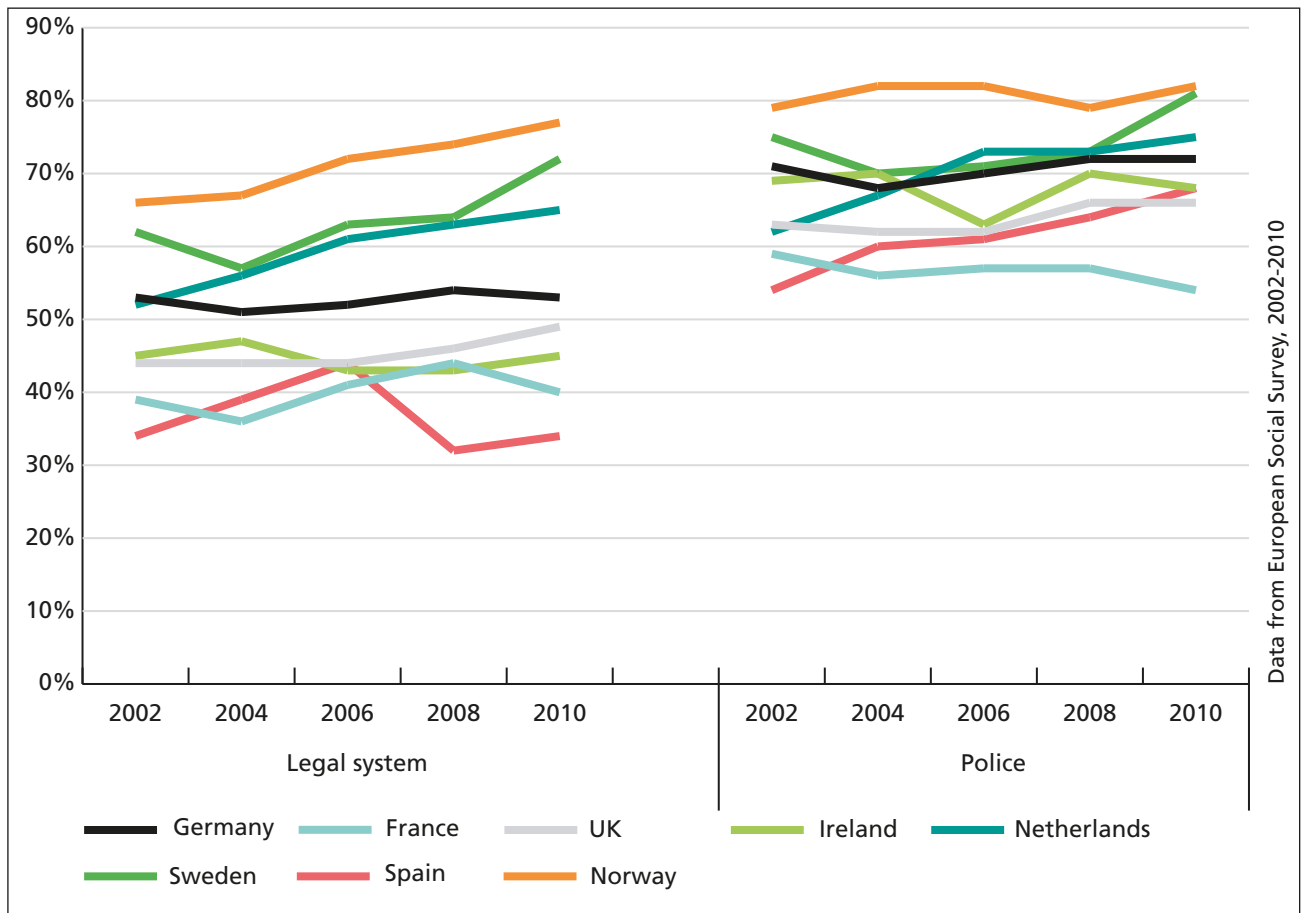


Figure 2.4 Percentage of respondents reporting trust in legal system and police



3 PERCEPTIONS OF WESTMINSTER MPS

3.1 Summary

From the outset, the surveys have canvassed views about the conduct of Members of Parliament at Westminster. Respondents have been asked about the standards of behaviour they expect from their elected representatives, and the extent to which they think that these are upheld in practice. Each of the ten items of behaviour that respondents are asked to assess (see next section) is linked to one or more of the CSPL's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The majority of respondents believe that all or most MPs "Do not take bribes". In terms of each of the other standards however, public perception about the behaviour of MPs is much more negative; a majority of respondents think that half or fewer MPs met all other standards. Moreover, since the first survey in 2004, the percentage of respondents holding negative views has increased across all ten standards. A particularly steep decline in 2010, in the wake of the MPs' expenses scandal, has been partially reversed in relation to several items. However, none has returned to pre-2010 levels.

3.2 Perceptions of conduct of MPs

In the first four surveys (2004-2010), respondents were asked which three of the following ten standards they saw as most important:

- not taking bribes;
- not using power for their own personal gain;
- being competent at their jobs;
- being dedicated to doing good for the public;
- explaining the reasons for their actions;
- telling the truth;
- setting a good example in their private lives;
- being in touch with the general public;
- making sure public money is spent wisely; and
- owning up when they make mistakes.

Over this period, telling the truth, making sure that public money is spent wisely and being dedicated to doing a good job for the public were consistently rated as among the most

important of the standards. There has been little variation in responses on most items. This suggests relatively widespread and deeply held views that MPs should adhere to the seven principles of standards in public life, with greatest importance being attached to honesty, objectivity, selflessness, and openness.

There have been, however, marked changes across the lifetime of the survey in relation to three particular standards. This could be because of the high-profile events taking place during this period. Firstly, there was a dramatic *reduction* in the percentage of people who prioritised not taking bribes (from 46 per cent in 2004 to 25 per cent in 2010). Conversely, there were notable *increases* in the proportions that prioritised MPs explaining the reasons for their actions and decisions (12 per cent to 20 per cent) and setting a good example in their private lives (5 per cent to 12 per cent) as one of the three most important behaviours.

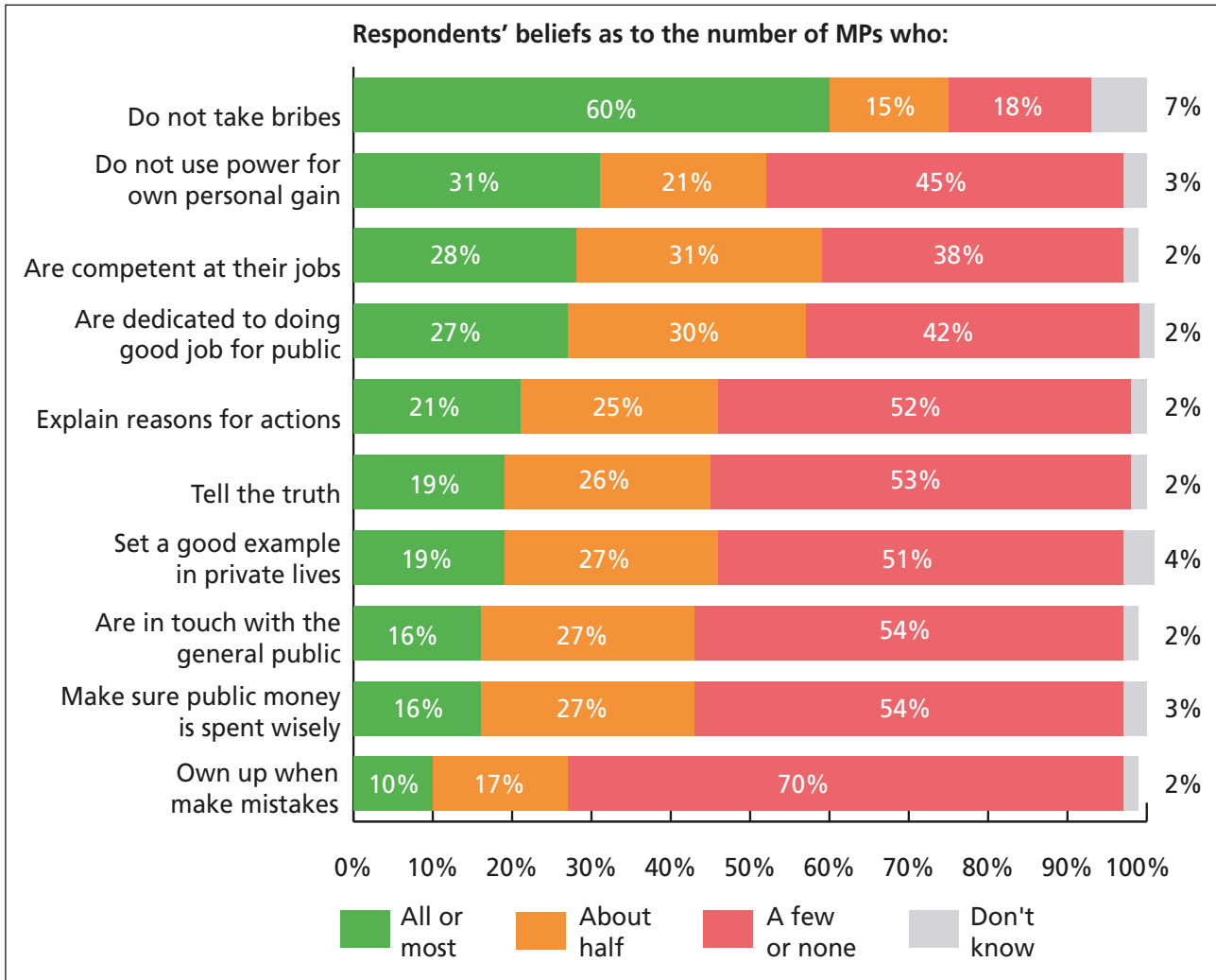
Despite these fluctuations, previous surveys established a clear and stable hierarchy of importance for these standards. Consequently, these questions were not asked again in the 2012 survey.

In all five surveys, including 2012, respondents were asked to indicate roughly how many MPs they thought behaved in accordance with the ten criteria of conduct for public office holders. Five answer categories were offered: "all", "most", "about half", "a few" or "none".

As in previous years, the results for 2012 are generally negative. **Figure 3.1** [page 18] shows that although a majority of respondents said they thought that all or most MPs do not take bribes, less than a third of respondents thought that all or most MPs conformed to the other nine desired norms of conduct. Most respondents therefore appeared to believe that high standards of behaviour could be expected from only a minority of MPs.

Respondents were particularly pessimistic about the behaviour of MPs in areas consistently reported as being of greatest importance

Figure 3.1 Perceptions of conduct of MPs, 2012



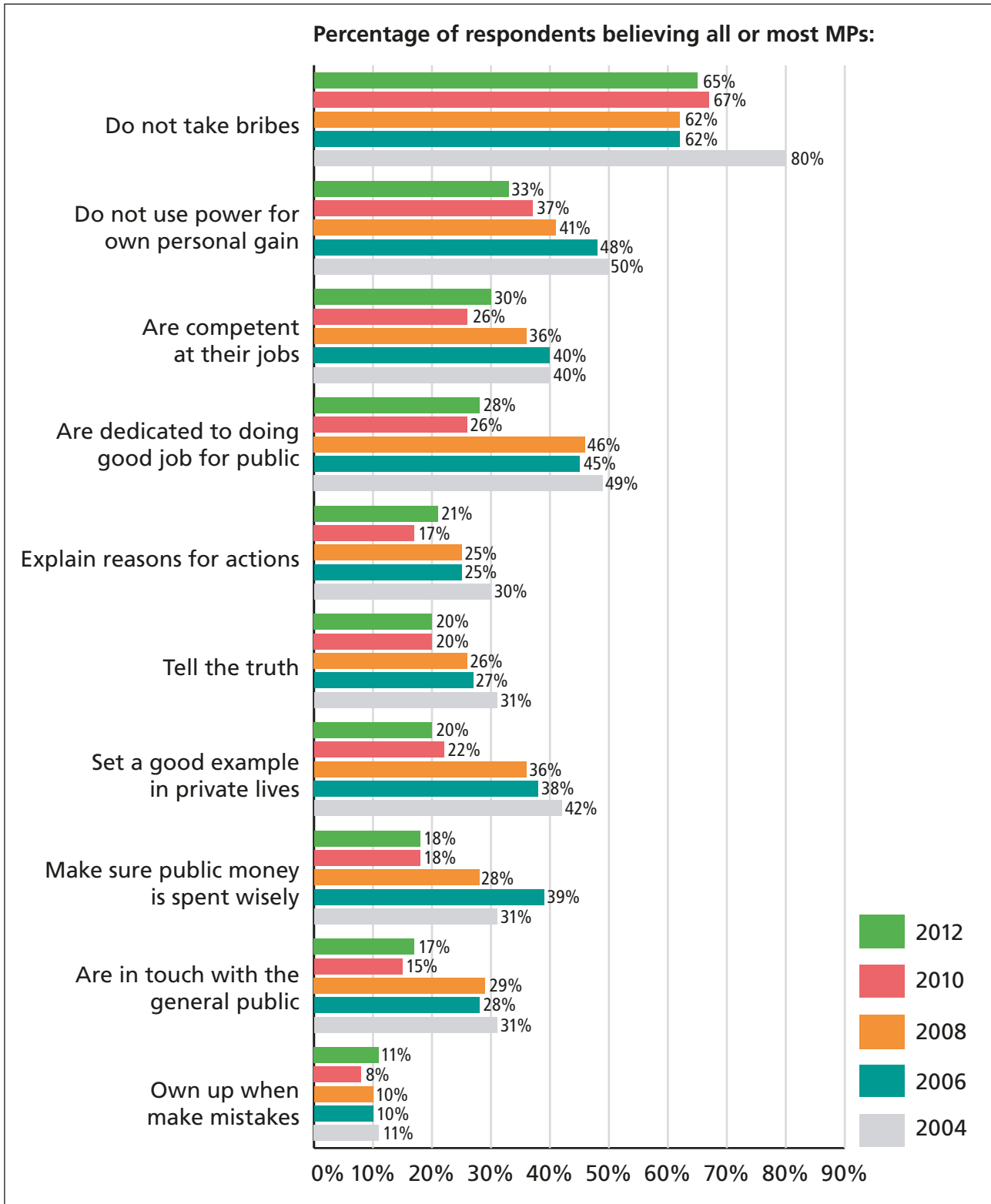
to members of the public over the first four surveys: telling the truth and making sure that public money is spent wisely. Less than one in five respondents thought that “all” or “most” MPs met either criterion. Such low ratings were not unusual: on five of the ten criteria (MPs are in touch with the general public, make sure public money is spent wisely, tell the truth, explain the reasons for their actions and set a good example in their private life) most respondents believed that fewer than half of all MPs met the standard. An even greater proportion (70 per cent) thought that only a “few” or “no” MPs own up when they make mistakes. Views were still largely negative, but more evenly split, in response to questions about whether MPs are competent at their jobs, use power for their own personal gain, and are doing a good job for the public.

3.3 Changes over time in the perceptions of the conduct of MPs in England

In 2008 questions about perceptions of the conduct of MPs were not asked of respondents in either Scotland or Wales, so trends in responses to these questions across the lifetime of the survey can be examined only in relation to England.

Figure 3.2 [page 19] shows that positive perceptions declined generally from the first survey onwards, with a particularly dramatic decrease in perceived good conduct between 2008 and 2010 after the MPs’ expenses scandal and the onset of the economic crisis. Findings from the 2012 survey indicate that since 2010 there has been some improvement on many items and several ratings have recovered substantially. For example, in 2012 a markedly higher proportion of respondents than in 2010 said that they believed that “all” or “most” MPs are competent at their jobs, dedicated to doing

Figure 3.2 Perceptions of conduct of MPs 2004-2010 (England only)

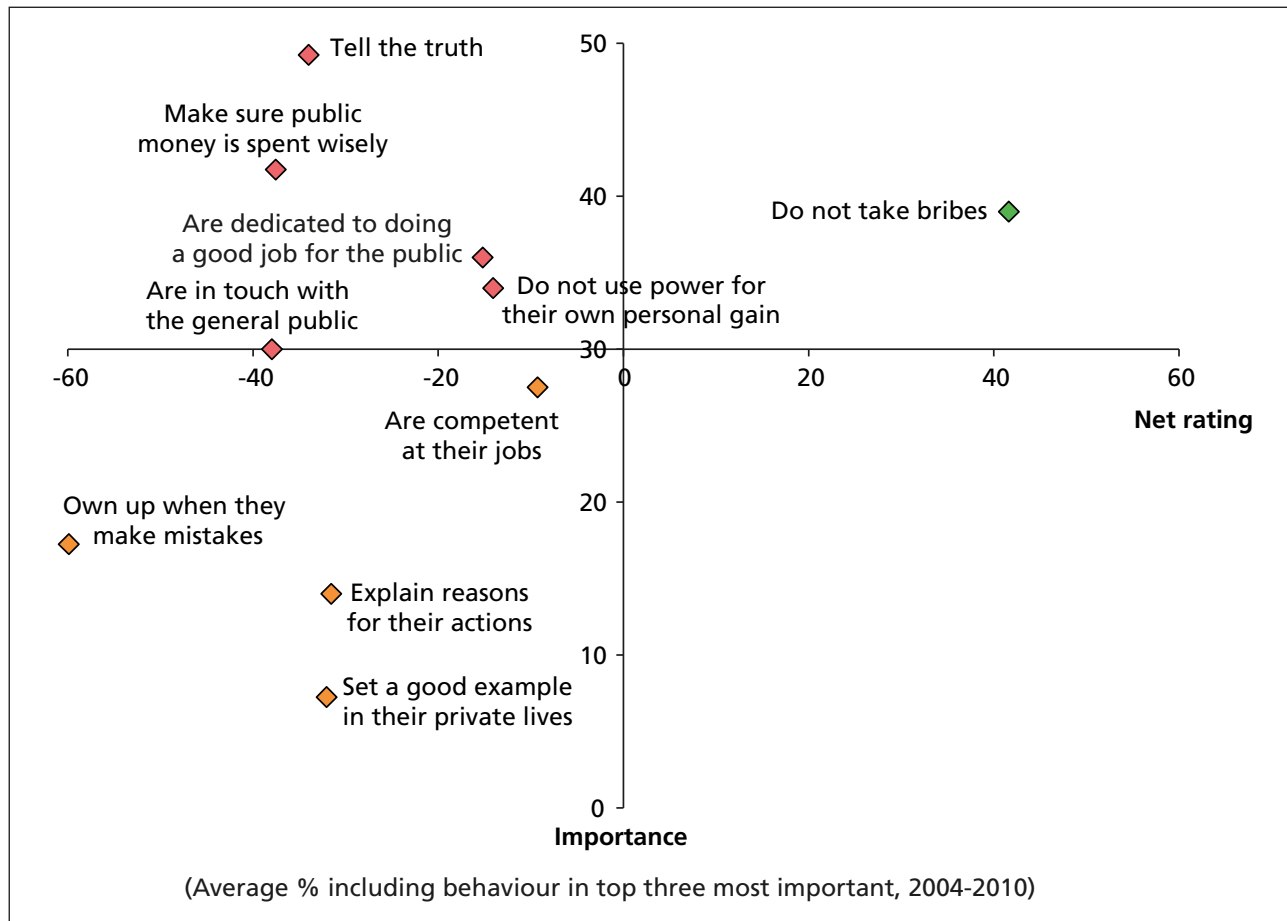


a good job for the public, explain reasons for their actions, are in touch with the general public and own up when they make mistakes. However, this is not a return to pre-2010 levels, nor does it reverse the longer term trend of decline that has been observed since 2004. No item was rated more positively in 2012 than it had been in 2004.

3.4 The performance gap

'Net' performance ratings are calculated as the difference between the proportion of respondents in the 2012 survey who believed that "few" or "no" MPs met a desired norm of conduct and the proportion who believed "most" or "all" MPs behaved in that way.

Figure 3.3 Gap analysis for importance and perceptions of MPs' conduct



Negative net ratings, therefore, highlight areas where more respondents believe that the majority of MPs do not act in the desired way.

Figure 3.3 compares the net rating for each standard of conduct with its respective importance rating established in the first four surveys (2004-2010).⁵ Items in the top left-hand quadrant represent standards of behaviour that the public sees as most important but which they do not believe the majority of MPs meet. Items in the top right-hand corner represent behaviour that the public sees as important and for which there were positive net ratings. Items below the horizontal axis were considered less important by the public; and net ratings of MPs' behaviour were negative for all of these, hence their position in the bottom left-hand quadrant of Figure 3.3.

Behaviour highlighted by red markers in the top left-hand quadrant of Figure 3.3 represent the areas of greatest concern regarding perceptions of MPs' conduct. In particular, three items that were considered by the public to be among the most important factors had net ratings below

30 in 2012. They included: "telling the truth", "making sure public money is spent wisely" and "being in touch with the general public". Three further factors considered to be amongst the most important standards of conduct also had negative net ratings: MPs "being dedicated to doing a good job for the public", "not using power for personal gain" and "being competent at their jobs".

Items highlighted by orange markers, in the bottom left-hand quadrant of Figure 3.3, represent negative net rated behaviour of lower importance to the public. For example, "MPs owning up when they make mistakes" scored the lowest negative net rating but was regarded as important by relatively few respondents (less than one in five).

In 2012, only one standard of behaviour ("MPs not taking bribes") both scored positive net ratings and was regarded as important by the public (top right-hand quadrant of the figure).

These findings are similar to those reported in 2010.⁶

⁵ The horizontal axis is set at 30 per cent because respondents were asked to select the three most important criteria out of a list of ten offered.

⁶ *Survey of Public Attitudes towards Conduct in Public Life 2010* London: Committee on Standards in Public Life, (2011). p 27.

4 MPS AND VOTING IN PARLIAMENT

4.1 Summary

Survey questions about what factors it is reasonable for MPs to take into account when voting in Parliament help to indicate what respondents think MPs should prioritise when voting – their constituents, the country, their party or their own concerns. This contributes to a better understanding of how people understand the role of their MP in Parliament.

In all the surveys to date respondents have favoured three key factors: “What would benefit people living in the country as a whole” has been the most popular response, closely followed by “What would benefit people living in the MP’s constituency” and “What their party election manifesto promised”. However, since 2010 there has been a notable increase in the number of respondents who think it is reasonable for MPs to consider what would benefit their family or their future career – either inside or outside Parliament. The percentage who think it is reasonable for an MP to consider what would make their party more popular with the electorate has also increased, as more respondents were accepting of motivations related to potential personal or professional gain. However, as this has been measured in only a single survey, we are unable to determine whether this is a long-term shift in attitudes or a one-off event in the 2012 survey responses.

4.2 Views on what should influence MPs’ voting behaviour

In 2012, as in previous surveys, respondents were asked what it is reasonable for MPs to take into account when voting in Parliament; selecting from a list of 11 response categories (e.g. “what would benefit people living in the country as a whole” and “how the decisions might affect the MP’s political career”), shown in **Figure 4.1** [page 22].

Across the five surveys, including this latest in 2012, findings have shown a widespread

endorsement of the principle of ‘selflessness’. As Figure 4.1 indicates, the most common responses have been that it is reasonable for an MP to consider what would benefit the wider community – either their own constituents or the country as a whole. An MP’s political party’s election promises also scored consistently more highly than what would directly benefit an MP personally.

However, there is some indication that selflessness was attributed less importance in 2012 than in earlier surveys. In this latest period, there has been a notable decline in the proportion of people who think that MPs should take into account:

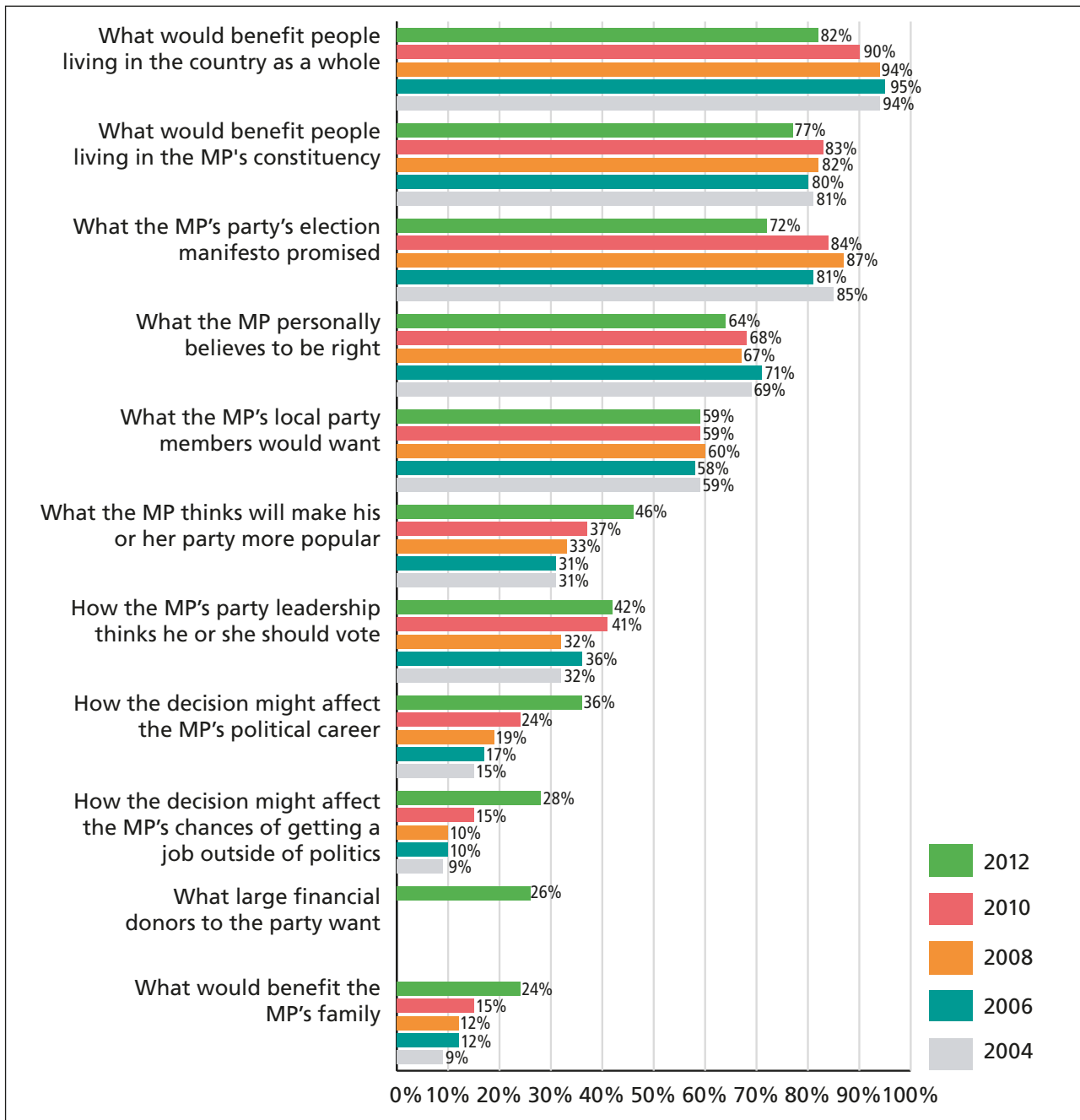
- “What would benefit people living in the country as a whole” (down by 8 percentage points);
- “What would benefit people living in their own consistency” (down by 6 percentage points); and
- “What the MP’s party’s election manifesto promised” (down by 12 percentage points).

This is consistent with a substantial increase since 2010 (between 9 and 13 percentage points) in the proportion of respondents who said it was reasonable when casting a vote in Parliament for MPs to take into account how a decision might affect their political career, their family, and their chances of getting a job outside politics. A similar increase was recorded in relation to “what the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular”.

In 2012 the survey included a new item in this set of motivations, namely “what large financial donors to the party want the party to do”. 28 per cent of respondents thought it was reasonable for an MP to take this into account when casting a vote (the same proportion as indicated it was reasonable to consider “pursuing one’s own or one’s family benefits”).

In 2010, in response to a different question about sources of party funding, over 80 per cent of respondents said that they had some concerns about donors. Although these responses are not

Figure 4.1 Reasonable factors for MPs to take into account when voting, 2004-2012



directly comparable, this suggests that there may have been a shift towards greater tolerance in relation to or simply less concern about the influence of donors on political decision-making.

These results indicate that there has been some change in what has been hitherto a robust public culture of high expectations regarding the selflessness of individuals who assume public office. However, as the most dramatic changes in public attitudes were detected in the most recent survey only, it is not clear if this is start of a long-term shift in expectations or a temporary response to currently salient factors.

5 PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 Summary

National authorities and the media play an important role as watchdogs in ensuring that high standards of conduct are maintained in public life. The survey asks respondents if they have confidence in these bodies to detect wrongdoing. The survey also asks if respondents believe that those caught doing wrong will be punished for their actions. Responses to these questions allow us to assess public views as to the effectiveness of these bodies in their attempts to maintain high standards.

Over the lifetime of the survey there have been marginal changes in the pattern of response when the public are asked about how confident they are that national authorities are committed to upholding standards; how far the authorities and the media play a role in this process; and whether those who are caught doing wrong will be punished. Perhaps the most striking finding is the slow decline in the number of those expressing confidence that the media will uncover wrongdoing, and the slight recovery in confidence that the authorities will detect and punish wrong doing.

5.2 Confidence in the authorities' commitment to upholding standards

Respondents to every survey since 2004 have been asked "How confident do you feel that the authorities in the United Kingdom are committed to upholding standards in public life?" In 2012 as many people (49 per cent) indicated that they were "very" or "fairly" confident in the authorities as said they were "not very" or "not at all" confident. These were similar findings to 2004 and 2006, but they represent a decline since 2010 (and also 2008) when a small majority of respondents indicated they were at least fairly confident in the commitment of the authorities.

5.3 Confidence that wrongdoing will be uncovered and punished

To command public confidence, standards authorities must be trusted to uncover wrongdoing and punish those found to have done wrong. The media also have an important watchdog role, so public confidence in their ability to uncover bad behaviour is also important.

Over the lifetime of the survey, respondents' views as to the authorities' contribution to maintaining standards have remained relatively stable. Although the surveys recorded notable lows in 2008, ratings have largely recovered to levels recorded in the first two surveys (see **Figure 5.2** [page 25]).

However, public perception of the media's ability to uncover wrongdoing has declined since the first survey in 2004 – in particular over the last two surveys (2010 and 2012). In 2012, 70 per cent of respondents said that they had confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing, down from 80 per cent in the first three surveys.

Nonetheless, in each survey substantially more people indicated confidence in the media to uncover unacceptable behaviour in public office than in the authorities' ability to do so. This is perhaps due to the high profile role the media has played in exposing the misconduct of those in the public spotlight.

Figure 5.1 Confidence in authorities' commitment to upholding standards, 2004-2012

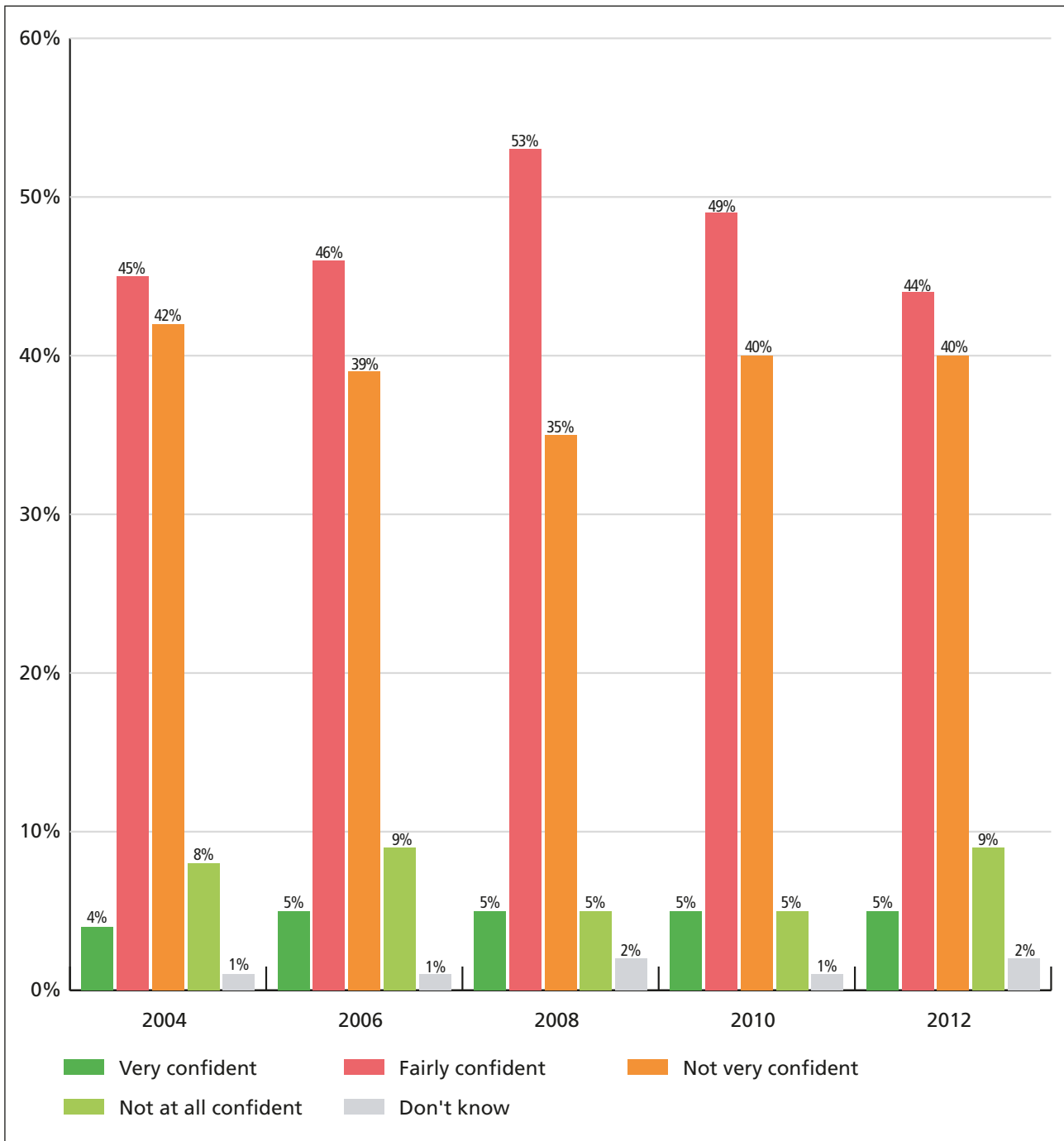
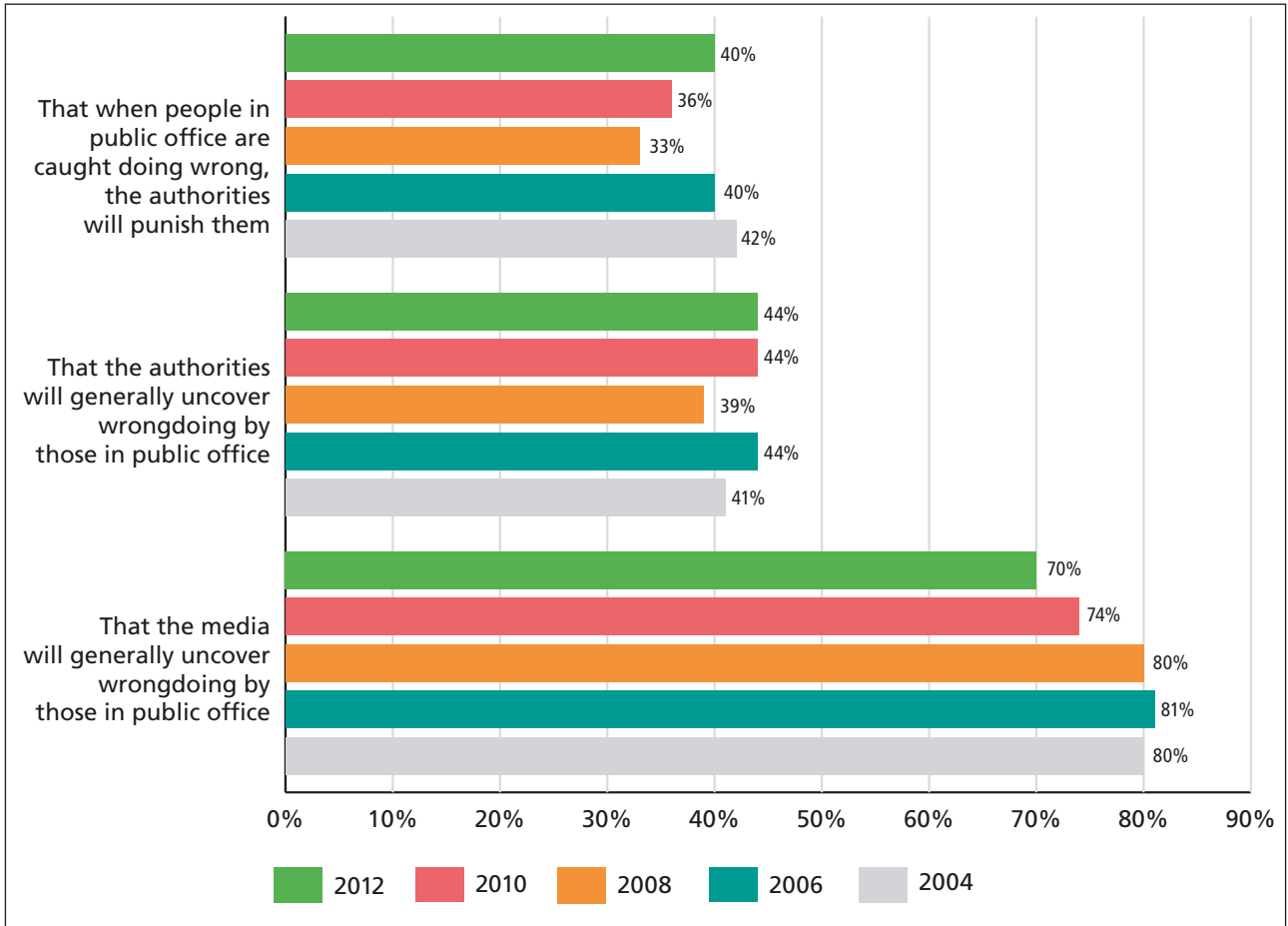


Figure 5.2 Proportion of respondents confident that wrongdoing will be uncovered and punished, 2004-2012



6 EXPECTATIONS OF FAIR TREATMENT BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS

6.1 Summary

While the first four surveys focused on senior public office holders, the 2012 survey included questions for the first time about attitudes towards front-line staff at both senior and junior levels with whom members of the public are more likely to have had personal contact. The aim was to determine if levels of public confidence in standards were similar or different.

Respondents were asked how they thought they would be treated in four different scenarios (see next section for details): Overall only a small minority of respondents believed that they would be treated worse than other people, suggesting these elements of public service are not regarded as discriminatory or unfair.

6.2 Expectations of treatment by public officials

Respondents were presented with four different scenarios in which they might find themselves: appearing in court accused of a crime; receiving medical care at their local doctor's surgery; a victim of crime reporting it to the police; applying to their local council for planning permission to extend their house. In each case, they were asked about the extent to which they thought these services would treat them fairly and equitably in comparison with other citizens.

In all four settings, the great majority of respondents (70 per cent to 74 per cent) thought they would be treated the same as most other people.

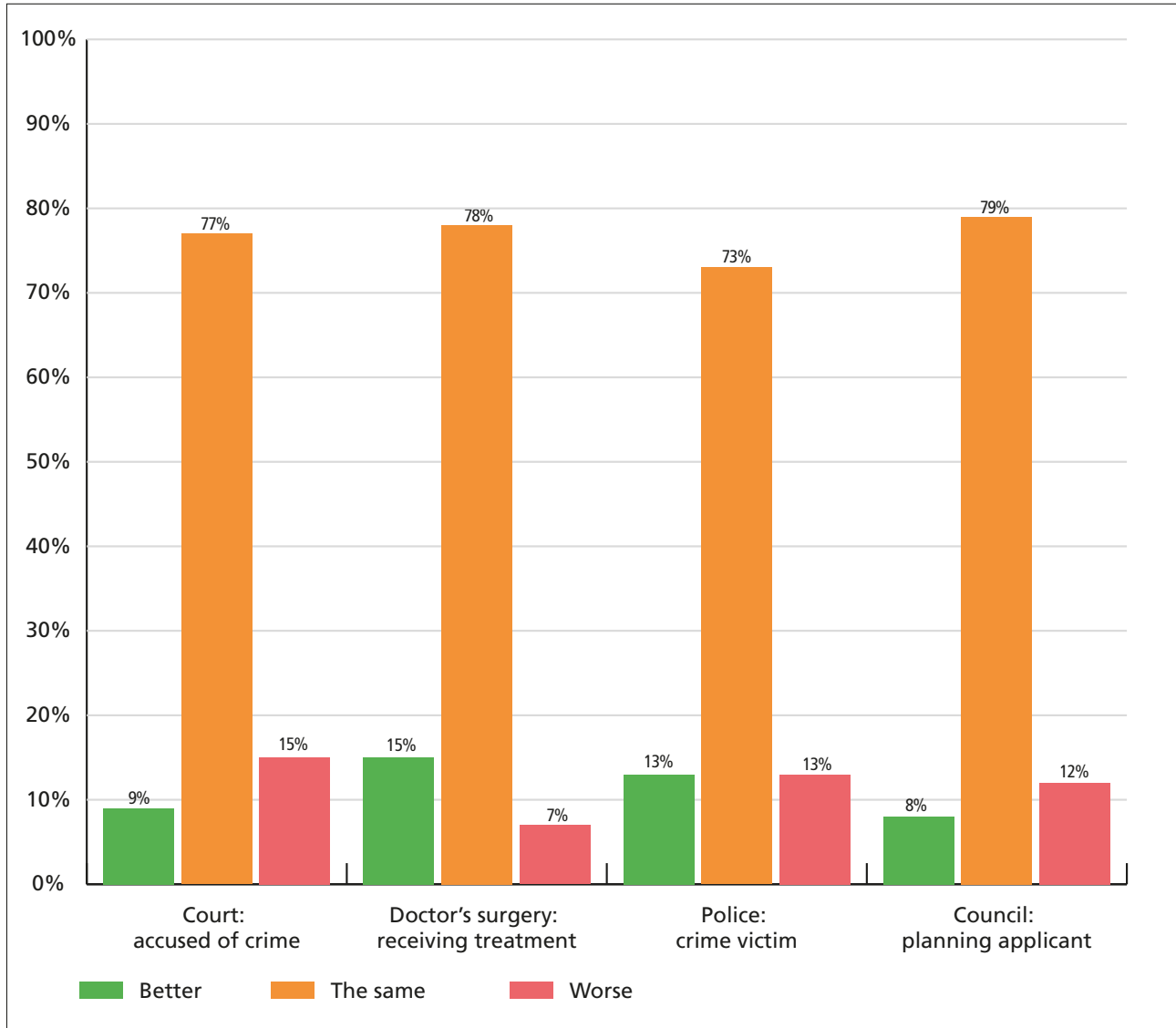
Although only a minority of respondents thought they would be treated better than other people, unfair treatment of this kind was more likely to be associated with the doctor's surgery when receiving treatment (15 per cent) and with reporting a crime as a victim to the police (13 per cent) than with appearing in

court accused of a crime (9 per cent) or applying to a local council for planning permission (8 per cent). Only a small minority of respondents said they thought that they would be treated worse than other people overall suggesting that these areas of public service are not widely considered to be discriminatory or to exhibit other forms of favouritism.

The findings above suggest that, while trust in senior public officials may not always be high, there are high levels of confidence in more face-to-face services. This greater confidence is borne out further by responses to the question on trust discussed in Section 2.

Those respondents who think that standards of behaviour in public life are low, or who have low confidence in the authorities to uphold standards, are no more likely to expect worse treatment than those who think standards are high or have high confidence in the authorities to uphold standards. However, those who think standards are high, or have high confidence in the authorities, are more likely to expect to be treated better than most people.

Figure 6.1 Expectations of treatment by public officials



7 INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR

7.1 Summary

To explore attitudes towards front-line staff in more detail, respondents were asked about the extent to which job holders in three different areas of public service put the interests of the public they serve above their personal interests, own up when they make mistakes or cover it up, and are held to account when they make mistakes.

Half the respondents were asked about senior positions – a senior police officer, the owner of a large firm of builders, and the senior manager of a train company, while the other half were asked about more junior positions – a junior police officer, an independent builder, and a train conductor.

This question was included to explore attitudes to and expectations of public servants at different levels of seniority, and also to examine whether public and private sector employees are evaluated differently. The three representative organisations included a large public sector organisation (the police), a private company (a firm of builders), and a formerly public owned private company (a train company).

Findings indicate that members of the public have more confidence in the probity of relatively junior front line staff – in terms of putting the public interest first, owning up to making mistakes, and being held accountable for mistakes – than in that of more senior managers. They also have more confidence in the probity of public sector employees compared with those in the semi-public or private sectors.

7.2 Integrity and accountability in the private and public sector

Respondents were asked about the extent to which job holders in three different areas of service: put the interests of the public they serve above their personal interests; own up when they make mistakes or cover it up; and

are held to account when they make mistakes. Half the respondents were asked about senior positions – a senior police officer, the owner of a large firm of builders, and the senior manager of a train company, while the other half were asked about more junior positions – a junior police officer, an independent builder, and a train conductor.

Respondents were asked to rate job holders on a scale from 1-7 for each dimension of conduct; where a score of '1' means the job holder "puts the interests of the public they serve above their personal interests", "owns up when they make mistakes", and "is held to account when they make mistakes"; and a score of '7' means the job holder "puts their personal interests above the interests of the public they serve", "tries to cover up mistakes", and "is not held to account when they make mistakes".

In **Table 7.1** [page 29], a rating of less than 4 means that on average respondents think that the job holders in question (e.g. junior police officers) tend more towards putting the public interest first, and owning up when they make mistakes, and are likely to be held to account when they make mistakes.

Conversely, a rating of *more* than 4 means that on average respondents think that the job holders in question tend more towards putting their personal interests above the interests of the public they serve and trying to cover up mistakes, and are not held to account when they make mistakes.

Two patterns emerge clearly from these figures. First, junior employees were generally rated more highly than those in more senior positions in the same industry or organisation. In all but one case (independent builders owning up), the junior employees were thought to put the interests of the public first more of the time, to own up to mistakes, and to be more accountable. Second, employees in the construction industry (private sector) were rated less positively than those who work for train

Table 7.1 Mean rating of professions in terms of integrity and accountability

	Senior police officer	Owner builders firm	Senior manager train company
Interests	3.5	4.9	4.1
Own up to mistakes	4.5	4.1	4.5
Held to account	3.6	4.1	3.7

	Junior police officer	Independent builder	Train conductor
Interests	3.1	4.5	3.2
Own up to mistakes	3.9	4.9	3.6
Held to account	3.0	4.3	3.1

companies (semi-public), who were in turn rated less positively than people who work in the police force (public service).

Average scores clustered around the mean rating of 4; with a low of 2.98 and a high of 4.91. Therefore, differences in views were not extreme and positive and negative opinions appear to be balanced within the survey population.

The positive responses on average suggest that a majority of people think that senior and junior police officers usually put the interests of the public ahead of their own personal interests. A majority of respondents also indicated that, more often than not, senior and junior police officers, along with train conductors, are held to account when they make mistakes.

The negative responses on average suggest that a majority of people think that the owner of a large builders firm would put their personal interests ahead of the public's interest more often than they put the public interest first. A majority of people also think that an independent builder is more likely to try to cover up their mistakes than own up to them.

Within the established survey questions, respondents were also asked what proportion of MPs they thought own up when they make a mistake. Almost 90 per cent said that only a few or none do.⁷ Although not directly comparable, this appears to be a much less favourable rating than the results described above for the similar question asked in relation to other professionals.

It is notable that the rating of one profession on a given scale is strongly correlated with ratings of other professions on other scales. This suggests that these scales reflect consistent underlying judgements about how public officials (and in this case some private sector employees) behave, or underlying dispositions to respond positively or negatively (this idea is developed more fully in sections 10 and 11).

Accordingly, positive ratings of all six professions on all three scales are correlated with thinking that standards of conduct in public life are generally high. They are also correlated with high confidence in the authorities to uphold standards of conduct. Nevertheless, the judgements on these scales are significantly different from one another, which implies that the differences reported in opinion over senior/junior and public/private sector professions reflect real differences in the way that the public evaluates these groups.

⁷ See Figure 3.2

8 HOW HONEST DO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THINK THEY WOULD BE WHEN COMPARED WITH REAL OFFICIALS?

8.1 Summary

A further set of new questions explored whether members of the public think that they personally would demonstrate consistently higher standards of behaviour than public officials.

Respondents were asked about likely behaviour in three separate scenarios with half the sample answering questions about public officials, and the other half answering questions about themselves.

Results suggest that members of the public believe that they personally are more likely than people in public office to act with probity in given situations.

8.2 Question wording

Respondents were presented with three scenarios of difficult situations in which public office holders could find themselves. Half of the sample was asked how they thought the public official would act and half was asked how they thought they themselves would act in each of the three following scenarios:

Scenario 1 – A member of a local authority planning committee is contacted by an old friend who now works for a private company. They are asked for advice about a planning application the friend is submitting to the committee. After the committee member explains that they cannot discuss the application, the friend says that they would still like to catch-up and offers to take them out and pay for lunch.

Given this scenario, survey respondents were asked “In general, what do you think most local authority members/you would do in this situation? Do you think they would:

- Decline the offer of lunch until the application process has closed; or
- Accept the lunch offer but refuse to discuss the planning application.

Scenario 2 – A police officer on patrol stops a vehicle travelling at 40mph in a 30mph zone. The driver turns out to be a friend of theirs who risks losing their driver’s license if they receive another speeding ticket. No one saw them stop the driver.

Given this situation, survey respondents were asked “In general, what do you think most police officers/you would do in this situation? Do you think they would:

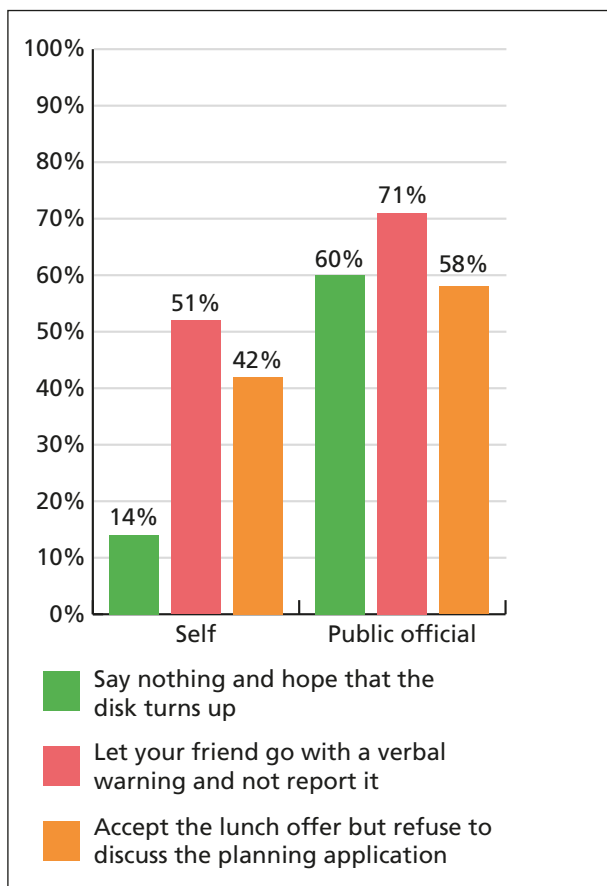
- Let their friend go and not report it to anyone; or
- Issue their friend with a speeding ticket.”

Scenario 3 – A civil servant working in a government department discovers that a disk containing the names and addresses of several thousand members of the public who have used your department’s services has gone missing. They were responsible for ensuring the disk was safe. There is no other information on the disk and they have no reason to believe it has fallen into the wrong hands.

Given this scenario, survey respondents were asked “In general, what do you think most civil servants/you would do in this situation? Do you think they would:

- Say nothing and hope the disk turns up; or
- Own up to the error and accept the consequences.”

Figure 8.1 Predicted behaviour of respondents and public officials in difficult situations



8.3 Predicted behaviour of respondents and public officials

The results, displayed in **Figure 8.1**, show clearly that the majority of respondents thought that public office holders would behave dishonestly in each of the given scenarios. However, though not unsurprisingly, they were much less likely to think badly of themselves. Only 14 per cent of respondents said that they would not own up to losing a disk containing the names and addresses of members of the public, compared with nearly 60 per cent who thought that a civil servant would not own up in the event of such an incident. Similarly, 51 per cent said they would let a friend off if they caught them speeding, compared with 71 per cent who thought that a police officer would do this. Finally, 42 per cent said they personally would accept the offer of lunch from a friend hoping to discuss a planning application, compared with 58 per cent who thought that a planning committee member would do the same. These indicate both that a large majority of the population are mistrustful of public officials; and that they believe that, if they were the relevant post holder, their own behaviour would compare well in difficult or tempting circumstances. Figure 8.1 predicted behaviour of respondents and public officials in difficult situations

Figure 8.2 Percentage of respondents who say less honest behaviour is acceptable

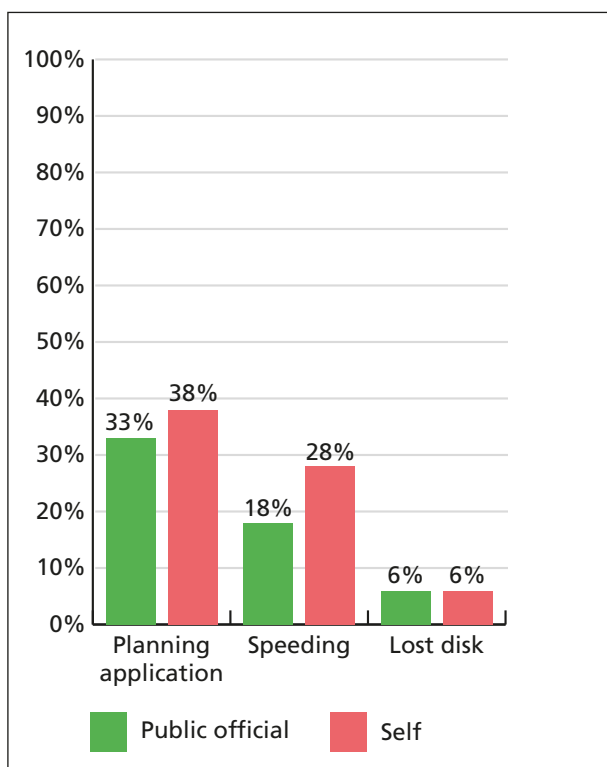


Figure 8.2 illustrates the percentage of respondents who thought it would be *acceptable* to choose the less honest option in these three scenarios. This question was asked only of respondents who said that they or a public servant would choose such an option.

The results show a clear hierarchy in the acceptability of the “less honest” behaviour in the three scenarios. The most acceptable is allowing a friend to buy lunch while deciding the outcome of their planning application. This may be due to the proviso in the scenario that the ‘guest’ will “refuse to discuss the planning application” which offers a potentially valid excuse for such behaviour. The least acceptable behaviour involves saying nothing after losing a disk containing names and addresses of members of the public.

The findings also show that, in general, respondents were more likely to excuse their own “less honest” behaviour than they were to excuse that of public office holders. 38 per cent thought it would be acceptable for them to accept an offer of lunch from a friend with a planning application, compared with 33 per cent who thought it would be acceptable

for a planning officer to accept lunch in equivalent circumstances. Similarly, 28 per cent of respondents said that it would be acceptable if they personally were to let a friend off for speeding, but only 17 per cent thought it would be acceptable for a police officer to do so. There was no difference in the perceived acceptability of not owning up to losing a disk, but the base line levels of acceptability on this issue are very low to start with.

The implications of this question are important. In general, people are more confident that they would do 'the right thing'; they are also more likely to excuse themselves – that is, they are more likely to regard their own behaviour as acceptable – than they are to regard identical behaviour in a public official as acceptable.

Finally, **Figure 8.3** shows, for each scenario, the percentage of respondents who believed that either they or the public official would take the less honest course of action even though they judged it unacceptable to do so.

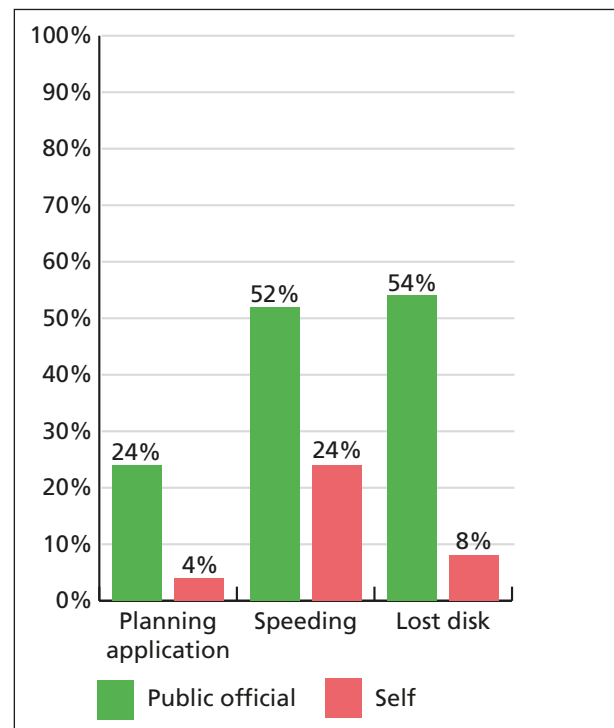
In every case, substantially more respondents thought that public office holders would behave unacceptably than thought they themselves would do so in the same situation.

While respondents with negative evaluations on the scales tended to offer more negative evaluations of public office holders in these scenarios, these negative views did not influence their responses when they were asked how they themselves would act if they were in each of the three situations. Negative ratings of the conduct of people in public life do not appear to prompt people to lower their view of the standards that their own conduct should meet.

8.3 Expected behaviours and general perceptions of standards in public life

Although we are unable to determine whether respondents' expectations of the behaviour of public office holders drives their over-arching views of standards in public life, or vice versa, answers to a number of survey questions allow us to determine to what extent these two factors are related. In particular, such expectations may be related to a respondent's views on the overall levels of standards in the UK, their trust in both public officials and journalists, their perception of MPs' behaviour and their confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing.⁸ Only if negative views are so

Figure 8.3 Percentage who would behave less honestly knowing it was unacceptable, by scenario and actor



pervasive that individuals believe that there is little point conforming to norms of good conduct are general views as to standards in public life likely to influence expectations as to how they should act compared with how people in public office would act.

This can be displayed by comparing the proportion of respondents with generally positive and generally negative views who indicated that they thought that public officials or they themselves would choose the less honest course of action.

Table 8.4 [page 33] shows that respondents who generally rate standards negatively, are less trustful of public officials and journalists, do not believe that the majority of MPs meet most standards of desirable behaviour and are not confident that the media will uncover wrongdoing are substantially more likely to believe that a civil servant working in a government department would not own up if they lost a computer disk containing sensitive

scale together, and are thus assumed to be stimulated by, a single latent concept. For each set of questions that were scaled together (overall levels of standards in the UK, trust in public officials, trust in journalists and perception of MPs' behaviour) a count variable was constructed to show on how many of these items a respondent held a positive opinion. Each count variable was then collapsed into a dichotomy showing if they held positive views on 50 per cent or more of these items or not. Respondents' confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing was measured through a single survey question that was also collapsed into a binary variable to split positive and negative responses. Further details of how these factors (later used to create a typology of respondents) were generated can be found in Appendix C.

⁸ These factors reflect responses to similar survey questions that

Table 8.4 Proportion of respondents indicating they thought they/a civil servant would not own up to losing a computer disk

		Self	Civil Servant
Overall ratings of standards and authorities	Negative	15%	69%
	Positive	14%	45%
Trustworthiness of public officials	Negative	13%	73%
	Positive	16%	50%
Trustworthiness of journalists	Negative	16%	64%
	Positive	13%	54%
View of MPs' behaviours	Negative	15%	67%
	Positive	13%	43%
Confidence in media to uncover wrongdoing	Negative	20%	63%
	Positive	13%	59%
Total sample		15%	60%

information. Even when controlling for a range of socio-demographic factors, these differences remain significant. However, there were only minor (and largely insignificant) differences in the way that respondents with either broadly positive or negative views asked about what they thought they themselves would have acted in the same situation.

Similar differences can also be detected when comparing the expectations of respondents asked if they believed that they or a police officer would let their friend go with a verbal warning rather than issuing them with a speeding ticket. **Table 8.5** [page 34] shows that, in particular, respondents with negative views of overall standards, who do not trust public officials and who have negative perceptions of MPs' behaviour are substantially more likely to believe that a police officer would let their friend go with a verbal warning. However, there are no significant differences between respondents with negative and positive views when asked about their own behaviour.

The smallest differences are found when comparing responses as to whether respondents thought they or a planning officer would accept lunch from a friend who was applying for planning permission, on the proviso that they would not discuss this application. As Figure 8.3 above displays, this was considered to be the most acceptable of the three less honest scenarios, so these smaller differences are perhaps unsurprising. However, people with negative perceptions of overall standards

in public life and the trustworthiness of public officials were noticeably more likely to believe that the planning officer would accept lunch (see **Table 8.6** [page 34]). However, there were also similar differences when respondents were asked what they thought they themselves would do in such a situation. Respondents with a positive rating of overall standards, *negative* evaluations of MPs' behaviours and no confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing were notably more likely to believe that they would have lunch with their friend applying for planning permission.

Overall, it appears that respondents' general assessments of standards in public life and of the trustworthiness of public officials are consistently correlated with their expectations as to the behaviour of public actors in these three situations. Interestingly, even though none of these scenarios relates to Members of Parliament, respondents with negative perceptions of MPs' behaviours are also more likely to believe that public officials will chose a less honest course of action.

Yet, while respondents with negative evaluations on the scales tended to offer more negative evaluations of public office holders in these scenarios, the same can not be said for similarly negative respondents when asked how they would act if they found themselves in each of the three situations. Negative ratings of the conduct of people in public life do not appear to prompt people to lower their view of the standards that their own conduct should meet.

Table 8.5 Proportion of respondents indicating they thought they/a police officer would let their friend go with a verbal warning if caught speeding

		Self	Police officer
Overall ratings of standards and authorities	Negative	53%	75%
	Positive	50%	62%
Trustworthiness of public officials	Negative	53%	75%
	Positive	51%	69%
Trustworthiness of journalists	Negative	51%	71%
	Positive	53%	68%
Reasonable for MPs to consider personal benefit	Negative	53%	73%
	Positive	49%	63%
Confidence in media to uncover wrongdoing	Negative	50%	71%
	Positive	53%	70%
Total sample		52%	70%

Table 8.6 Proportion of respondents indicating they thought they/a planning officer would accept lunch from a friend applying for planning permission

		Self	Planning officer
Overall ratings of standards and authorities	Negative	39%	60%
	Positive	46%	53%
Trustworthiness of public officials	Negative	42%	61%
	Positive	41%	54%
Trustworthiness of journalists	Negative	42%	59%
	Positive	41%	55%
Reasonable for MPs to consider personal benefit	Negative	43%	61%
	Positive	38%	48%
Confidence in media to uncover wrongdoing	Negative	46%	58%
	Positive	40%	58%
Total sample		42%	57%

9 THE PUBLIC'S VIEW ON HOW TO ENSURE GOOD STANDARDS OF CONDUCT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ORGANISATIONS

9.1 Summary

This section explores which measures for ensuring good standards of conduct in public life elicit most public support. The questions were informed by a common distinction drawn between compliance-based or integrity-based behaviour: that is, between good behaviour resulting from a well-designed and systematically enforced external set of rules, and good behaviour that is internally driven and the result of strong ethical character.

Both approaches are evident in the seven principles of public life; the commitments to openness and accountability, for instance, can be seen as commitments to processes to ensure that wrongdoing cannot be hidden, whilst the principle of selflessness is more concerned with the character of office holders and their actions.

Respondents were asked to choose up to three policies they thought important in ensuring high standards in a particular context. Half of the respondents were asked about a large public organisation like the NHS, and the other half about large private organisations like banks.

Findings suggest that members of the public favour adopting elements from both the compliance and integrity models. They do not endorse attempts to ascertain people's morals at interview, through internal self-regulation, or through a culture of financial incentives for those doing a job. They do favour people setting a good example, and training people in a code of conduct, but they also want protection for 'whistle blowing' and external regulators for organisations (whether public or private sector).

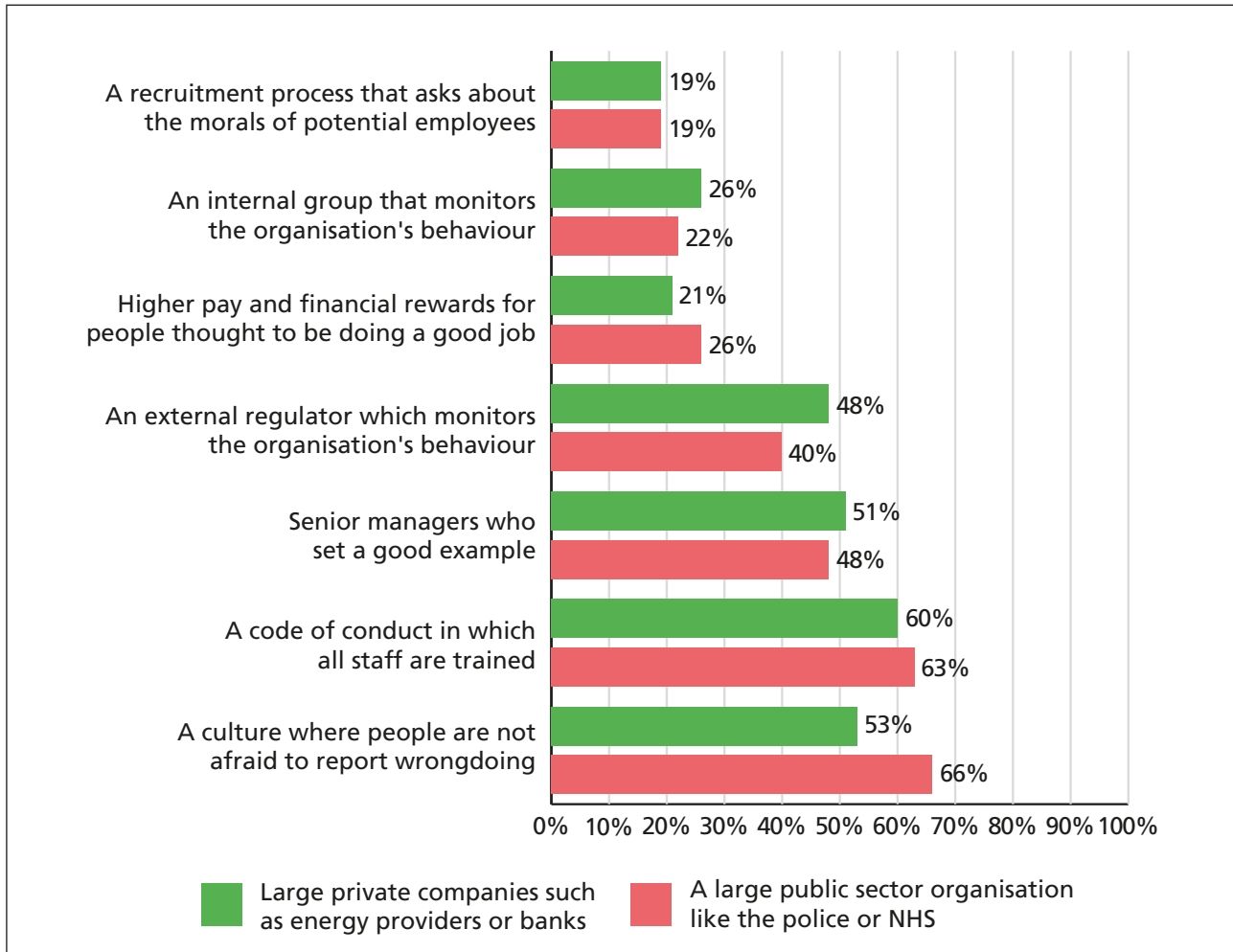
9.2 Views on how to ensure good standards of behaviour

Respondents were asked to choose up to three things that they thought were important in ensuring high standards in an organisational context. Response options included: a recruitment process that asks about the morals of potential employees; an internal group that monitors the organisation's behaviour; higher pay and financial rewards for people thought to be doing a good job; an external regulator which monitors the organisation's behaviour; senior managers who set a good example; a code of conduct in which all staff are trained; and a culture where people are not afraid to report wrongdoing.

Half of the respondents were asked about large public organisations like the police or NHS, and the other half about large private organisations such as energy providers or banks. The results are shown in **Figure 9.1** [page 36].

Findings show little difference between views about how best to regulate large public sector organisations and how best to regulate large private sector organisations. In both cases high priority was given to encouraging a culture where people are not afraid to report wrongdoing (66 per cent for large public sector organisations and 53 per cent for private); training in a code of conduct (63 per cent for large public sector organisations and 60 per cent for private); and senior managers setting a good example (48 per cent for public sector organisations and 51 per cent for private). There was much more support for an external regulator than an internal regulator doing the same job of monitoring organisational

Figure 9.1 Preferred methods for ensuring good standards of conduct in private and public organisations



behaviour (40 per cent versus 22 per cent for large public sector organisations and 48 per cent versus 26 per cent for private). There was not much support either for financial rewards for good behaviour (26 per cent for large public sector organisations and 22 per cent for private); or a dependency on morality screening during recruitment (19 per cent for both sectors).

Three of the four most popular responses are best understood in terms of an 'integrity model'

– whereby good behaviour is internally driven and the result of strong ethical character. The fourth most popular response – the external regulator – is allied to a 'compliance model' whereby good behaviour is ensured by well-designed and systematically enforced external rules.

The findings suggest that the public believes that elements from both models are important in ensuring public probity.

10 A BROADER VIEW OF STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE IN GREAT BRITAIN

10.1 Summary

Although the previous chapters offer discreet insights into people's responses to individual questions across the survey, they do not inform us of the broader views of standards in public life that people hold. This chapter, therefore, brings together responses to a range of questions across the survey to allow us to better understand the bigger picture of people's perceptions of standards in GB.

10.2 Creating a typology of groups

To achieve the bigger picture we classified respondents into different groups on the basis of combinations of answers given to various survey questions (for details see Appendix C). As the survey contains a very large number of questions, the quantity of such combinations can become so large that it obscures rather than facilitates a more encompassing view. We therefore focussed on a limited number of questions of central importance in monitoring public opinion with respect to standards in public life. These are questions relating to (a) general perceptions of standards in public life (see section 1 of this report); (b) trust in various officials and professionals to tell the truth - which is one of the principles of good standards (see section 2 of this report); (c) perceptions of behaviour of MPs (see section 3 of this report); and (d) confidence in the media to uncover improper behaviour in public office (see section 5 of this report). All these questions have been included in each of the surveys commissioned by the Committee. This makes it possible to monitor how public opinion has changed since 2004 in a more encompassing manner.

Previous analyses of responses to these various questions in earlier surveys have revealed that there are clusters of questions which elicit answers that all relate to the same underlying attitude or general view of respondents.⁹ Thus, for example, respondents' answers to questions

about whether or not they trust MPs to tell the truth reflect the same views as those about whether they trust judges, or GPs or police officers to tell the truth.¹⁰ These responses can therefore be combined into a more general score reflecting 'trust in public officials'. However, these previous analyses also revealed that whether or not respondents trust various kinds of journalists to tell the truth is different and needs to be distinguished from trust in officials. There is a single underlying attitude that makes people more or less trusting of broadsheet journalists, tabloid journalists and TV journalists. These responses can therefore be combined in a single measure of 'trust in journalists'.

On the basis of similar evidence an overall perception of standards has been constructed from answers to the questions about respondents' overall ratings of standards and their perceptions as to how standards have changed compared with a few years ago as well as their confidence in the authorities to uphold high standards, uncover wrongdoing and punish those caught doing wrong. Finally, we constructed an overall measure of perceptions of MPs' behaviour from respondents' answers to questions about how they believe most MPs behave (see the items described in more detail in section 3 of this report).

These new measures, along with the use of respondents' confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing, identify five qualitatively different clusters of perceptions and attitudes that characterise our respondents:

- *Overall perceptions of standards*, combining responses about overall ratings of standards and their perceptions of how standards have changed compared with a few years ago as

⁹ PhD thesis by Jonathan Rose, University of Nottingham (2012): *Citizens' perceptions of standards in public life*.

¹⁰ The fact that answers to different questions reflect a single underlying attitude or orientation does not imply that the answers are identical: many people say that they do trust judges to tell the truth, but not MPs. This difference is not because the two questions probe different orientations, but because they are different in 'difficulty' (just like multiplication is more difficult than adding, while both nevertheless reflect the same phenomenon: mathematical ability).

Table 10.1 Ratings of groups

	"All is well"	"Hopeful"	"Sceptical"	"Deeply sceptical"
Overall perception of standards				
Trust in public officials				
Trust in journalists				
Perception of MPs' behaviour				
Confidence in media				

Key: Positive ratings Positive or negative ratings Negative ratings

well as their confidence in the authorities to uphold high standards, uncover wrongdoing and punish those caught doing wrong. In our next analyses we distinguish two groups on the basis of this overall score: people with high scores (who have rather positive perceptions of standards and the authorities designed to uphold them) and people with low scores (who have rather negative perceptions in this respect);

- *Trust in public officials*, combining answers about whether people do or do not trust the following officials and professionals to tell the truth: judges, senior police officers, MPs in general, the respondent's local MP, senior civil servants and government ministers in Westminster. Again, in our subsequent analyses we distinguish two groups: people who trust most of these officials, and people who do not trust most of them.
- *Trust in journalists*, combining answers about whether broadsheet, tabloid or broadcast journalists can be trusted to tell the truth. Here too we distinguish those who generally trust journalists from those who generally do not.
- *Perceptions of MPs' behaviour*, which reflects whether respondents believe that most MPs are dedicated to doing a good job for the public, do not use their power for their own personal gain, do not take bribes, own up when they make mistakes, explain the reasons for their actions and decisions, set a good example in their private lives, tell the truth, make sure public money is spent wisely are in touch with what the general public think is important, and are competent at their job. In the analyses that follow we distinguish people who think that most MPs act in most of these ways from those who do not.

- *Confidence in media to expose wrongdoing*. Responses to the question about whether people have confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing. Respondents are distinguished between those who do and those who do not have confidence in the media to expose wrongdoing.

These five measures, each distinguishing high scores from low scores, give rise to 32 different combinations of responses. However, some of those combinations are very rare, because answers to these different kinds of questions tend to be correlated. This makes it possible to represent most people's responses in a fourfold classification, as illustrated in **Table 10.1**. Here positive scores are indicated in green, and negative ones in red. Those areas in which respondents could have either positive or negative responses are represented by the red-green hash.¹¹

These four groups of respondents see the world in different ways. Each group can conceivably be characterised by different frames of mind that encapsulate their own expectations about standards of behaviour in public life. These four groups have the following characteristics:

Group 1: "All is well": Positive perception of standards, and high trust in public officials. Respondents in this first group have positive scores in all areas; they had positive overall ratings of standards in the UK, they trusted the majority of both public officials and journalists, they believed that the majority of MPs complied

¹¹ The vast majority of respondents in the two middle categories hold at least one positive view and one negative view on overall perceptions of standards, trust in journalists, perceptions of MPs' behaviour or confidence in the media. Less than 0.5 per cent of the sample (only 8 respondents) did not trust most public officials but were positive on all other measures. However, notably more (almost 5 per cent or 96 respondents) indicated that they trusted the majority of public officials but had negative perceptions on the four other measures.

Table 10.2 Size of groups, 2012

	"All is well"	"Hopeful"	"Sceptical"	"Deeply sceptical"
2012	10%	49%	31%	10%

with most of the desired behaviours asked about in the survey and they had confidence in the media to uncover wrongdoing.

Group 2: "Hopeful": Positive or negative perceptions of standards, MPs' behaviour and media and journalists, but high trust in public officials.

These respondents all indicated that they trusted the majority of public officials to tell the truth, but they did not offer consistently positive ratings across the other four areas. Therefore, they may have offered positive or negative evaluations of overall standards and their enforcement, the trustworthiness of journalists, MPs' behaviour or the media's ability to uncover wrongdoing.

Group 3: "Sceptical": Positive or negative perceptions of standards, MPs' behaviour and media and journalists, but low trust in public officials.

Like Group 2, this group does not offer consistently positive or negative ratings of overall standards in the UK, the trustworthiness of journalists, MPs' behaviour and the media's ability to uncover wrongdoing. However, all respondents in Group 3 are united by responses that indicated that they did not trust the majority of public officials.

Group 4: "Deeply sceptical": Negative perceptions of standards and low trust in public officials.

Respondents in Group 4 offered the most negative responses. They rated overall standards and their enforcement negatively and did not trust either the majority of public officials or most journalists. They also believed that the majority of MPs acted in accordance with fewer than half of the desirable behaviours asked about in the survey and were not confident that the media would uncover wrongdoing.

10.3 Classification of respondents

As **Table 10.2** shows, only 10 per cent of respondents fell into either the most positive or the most negative category in 2012. The

vast majority of respondents did not hold consistently positive or consistently negative ratings of all aspects of standards of conduct in the UK. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents can be considered to hold positive views about the trustworthiness of officials; 59 per cent of the sample indicated that they trusted the majority of public officials, no matter their ratings of other aspects of standards in public life.

10.4 Changes in group sizes since 2004

The size of the groups that have been described in terms of their outlook – 'all is well', 'hopeful', 'sceptical' and 'deeply sceptical' – can expand or contract over time as a consequence of what happens in the public sphere. When looking across the five surveys that have been conducted since 2004 we can observe some remarkable changes, as displayed in **Figure 10.3** [page 40].

These substantial fluctuations reflect how the British public reacted to events that have occurred during over this period. Because the surveys give a series of snapshots, with two-year intervals in between, but not a continuous monitoring of public opinion, it is impossible to pinpoint exactly which events were the most influential in changing the public's outlook on standards issues and trust. Yet, it is certainly possible to identify key events that coincided with the most notable fluctuations.

Both the earliest and two most recent surveys recorded notably larger negative groups than those conducted in either 2006 or 2008. The first survey was conducted between November 2003 and March 2004 in the immediate aftermath of the Iraqi invasion and the controversies over its legitimacy. At this time the Government's decisions and actions came under fire from the media and civil society. The two most recent surveys (2010 and 2012) were conducted in the wake of both the global economic crisis and the MPs' expenses scandal. These high profile events – pertaining to both policy and probity of politicians – have dominated the British political agenda and news reporting of political actions since they first broke.

Figure 10.3 Size of typology clusters, 2004-2012

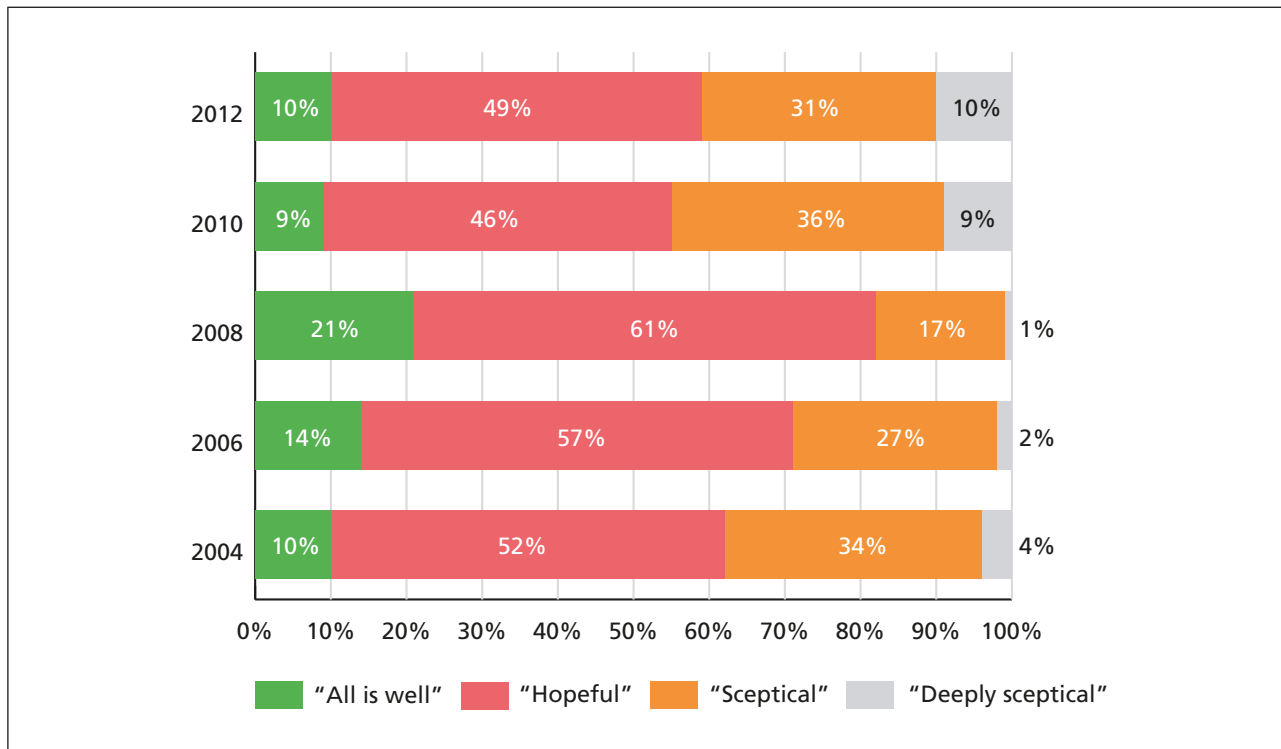


Figure 10.3 demonstrates a steady increase in positive outlooks from the first survey in 2004 to that conducted in 2008. However, this did not continue beyond 2008 and the 2010 survey records a sharp increase in the proportion of respondents who regard the public sphere in sceptical or deeply sceptical terms (a total of 45 per cent). Respondents were therefore the most positive in the 2008 survey when 21 per cent recorded positive ratings in all measures on which this classification is based. A further 61 per cent were trustful of the majority of public officials but held mixed views as to overall standards, the trustworthiness of journalists,

MPs' behaviour and the media's ability to uncover wrongdoing. Conversely, only 1 per cent of respondents held negative views in all five categories in 2008. In fact, in each survey year, a majority of respondents has fallen into the two most positive categories ('all is well' and 'hopeful' respondents). Even with fluctuations across the surveys, this can be considered to be a reassuring finding for those concerned by the public's evaluation of standards in public life. Nonetheless, the data also indicates how easily public trust can be lost, as in the sharp increase in scepticism after 2008.

11 HOW MEMBERSHIP OF ATTITUDINAL GROUPINGS VARIES ACROSS THE POPULATION

11.1 Determining key characteristics of attitudinal groups

In this section we investigate how the four groups identified in section 10 on the basis of their different outlooks on standards in public life (“all is well”, “hopeful”, “sceptical” and “deeply sceptical”) differ in other respects. Are these groups similar or different in terms of their demographics, their political preferences, and so on?

To address this question we have employed a method that divides the entire sample into subgroups on a number of socio-demographic and political factors. This creates groups that are as homogenous as possible with regards to their outlooks on standards in public life but which differ very widely on a number of key characteristics. A statistical routine (known as CHAID, further details of which can be found in the technical appendix) evaluates all the possible ways in which this ‘dividing’ can be achieved. This technique indicates on what grounds a division in the sample will achieve both the greatest amount of homogeneity within the groups and the most significant difference between the groups. Having implemented this division, the entire process is repeated for each of the subgroups created until no more significant divisions can be made.

As this process divides the original sample into ever-smaller sub-groups, this rapidly reduces the size of the groups available for further division. The number of divisions that can be undertaken is therefore limited by the sample size of this survey. For this sample, the groups become too small to continue this process after four divisions. This limitation means that great care has to be given to the choice of the four characteristics by which the sample is divided. Our selection of these four criteria has been informed by a range of exploratory analyses, as well as by the relationships found between

each individual survey question and other socio-demographic and political variables (see Appendix B of this report). All these results pointed consistently to the same variables to be used in this process: occupational grade, age, ethnicity and party-political preferences.

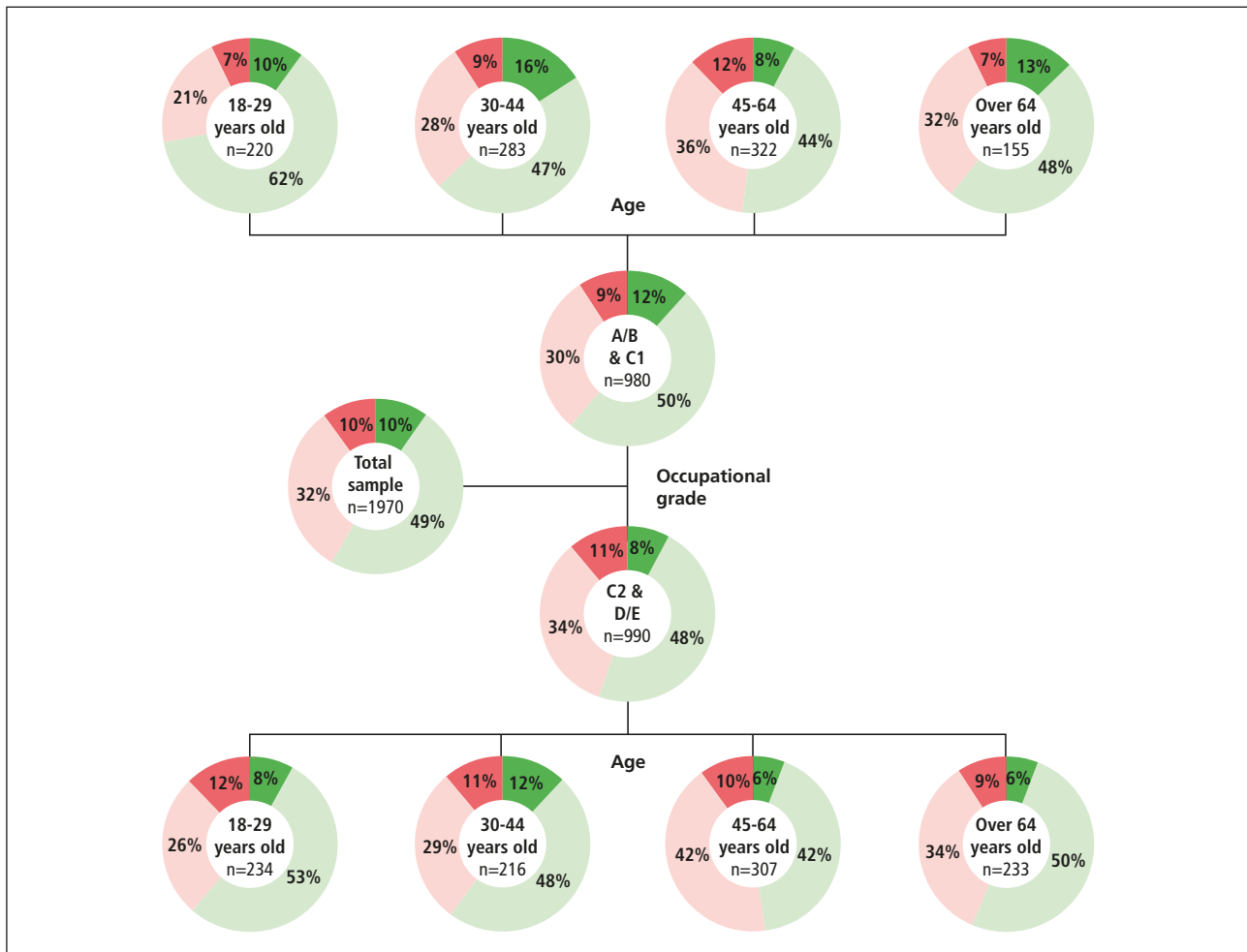
The use of the four selected ‘splitter’ variables creates 22 sub-groups of the British population. However, to clarify the process we present the analysis in the first instance by using only two of the division variables, namely occupational grade and age. This identifies eight groups that differ in their outlook on standards in public life and trust in public officials. After describing these results we proceed by adding two additional divisions: ethnicity and party-political preferences. As not every group can be divided in the third and fourth layer of divisions, this results in 22 different segments.

11.2 Divisions of groups by occupational grade and age

As stated above, exploratory analyses and results from an analysis of individual questions led us to start the process of splitting the entire sample by occupational grade, and subsequently by age. **Figure 11.1** [page 42] reports these results.

The process starts with the undivided sample which is represented by the ‘doughnut’ at the middle left of the figure (the centre of each doughnut indicates the make-up of this group, both in its key characteristic and how many respondents it comprises). How the four different outlooks on standards and trust are distributed in the entire sample is indicated by the differently coloured segments of each doughnut, which correspond to the same colours used in Figure 11.1. The dark green segment represents the “all is well” outlook; the light green the “hopeful” outlook; the light red the “sceptical” outlook; and the dark red the “deeply sceptical” outlook.

Figure 11.1 Classification of respondents by occupational grade and age



The first division implemented is on the grounds of occupational grade. The distinction found between A/B/C1 grades on the one hand and C2/D/E grades on the other generates a stronger contrast between the resulting two groups than any other way of splitting on the basis of occupational grade would have yielded.

Respondents in the higher occupational grades (A/B/C1) display, on average, somewhat more positive views than those in the lower grades (C2/D/E). Only 56 per cent of respondents in the lower grades fall into either of the two most positive classifications (the “all is well” and “hopeful” groups), compared with 62 per cent of those in higher occupational grades.

In the next stage, each of the two occupational grade segments is itself split on the basis of age; the age span of the groups that are distinguished is indicated in the centre of each doughnut, together with the number of cases that fall into each sub-group. To interpret the meaning of each group correctly, one has to follow the sequence of the divisions of the data. The group at the top left of Figure 11.1, for example, is made up of those 18-29 years old

within the higher occupational grades, the group at the bottom right of the figure is comprised of the over 64s amongst the lower occupational grades, and so on.

The second level-division on the basis of age reveals a number of interesting differences in outlook between the resulting eight groups. First of all, the contrast between more positive outlooks amongst the higher grades and more negative outlooks amongst the lower grades persists across all age groups. For each one of the four age ranges, respondents in the A/B/C1 occupational grades tend to be more positive than those in C2/D/E grades. This is most pronounced amongst the youngest respondents; while 72 per cent of 18-29 year olds in the higher occupational grades fall into the two most positive outlooks, this proportion is 11 per cent lower for 18-29 year olds in the C2/D/E occupational grades.

Second, comparing different age groups, the two youngest groups (18 to 29, and 30-44 year olds) were the most likely to offer a positive outlook on standards and trust (the dark green segment representing the “all is well” outlook and the light green segment representing the “hopeful”

segment). Conversely, those aged between 45 and 64 were the most negative, irrespective of whether they are in the higher or lower social grades.

Third, when comparing the eight groups that result from the successive divisions on occupational grade and age based on outlook, we see more differences than each of the divisions produces by itself. This is particularly noticeable when comparing the groups of respondents with the most positive and most negative outlooks; the most positive group is made up of 18-29 year olds in the higher occupational grades (72 per cent of whom embraced either the “all is well” or “hopeful” outlook) while the most negative group is made up of 45-64 year olds in the lower occupational grades, of whom only 48 per cent belongs to the “all is well” or “hopeful” outlooks.

11.3 Further division of groups

Although age and occupational grade offer some insight into how perceptions vary across the population, a number of additional factors can also help to describe how these views vary. We therefore continue with two other variables that consistently came up as the most informative: ethnicity and party political preferences. The results of these further divisions are displayed in **Figure 11.2** [page 44]. This figure can be read in the same way as Figure 11.1 that was described above (indeed, Figure 11.1. comprises the middle section of this new and larger figure 11.2). To facilitate discussion of findings, each group in this figure (irrespective of whether or not they are subsequently divided further) is identified by a number shown above the doughnut displaying the make-up of outlooks within each group.

Ethnicity

Building on the first divisions by occupational grade, then by age, a third division can be made which splits these sub-groups between those respondents from a White-British or White-Irish background and those from an ethnic minority background. However, not all sub-groups can be divided by this criterion without compromising the size of the final group. In particular, there are too few older and higher occupational grade respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds to permit the analysis of this division. Therefore, this division is only made within five out of the eight sub-groups created by the first two levels of analysis reported above.

Divisions based on ethnicity show that ethnic minority respondents tend to be more positive

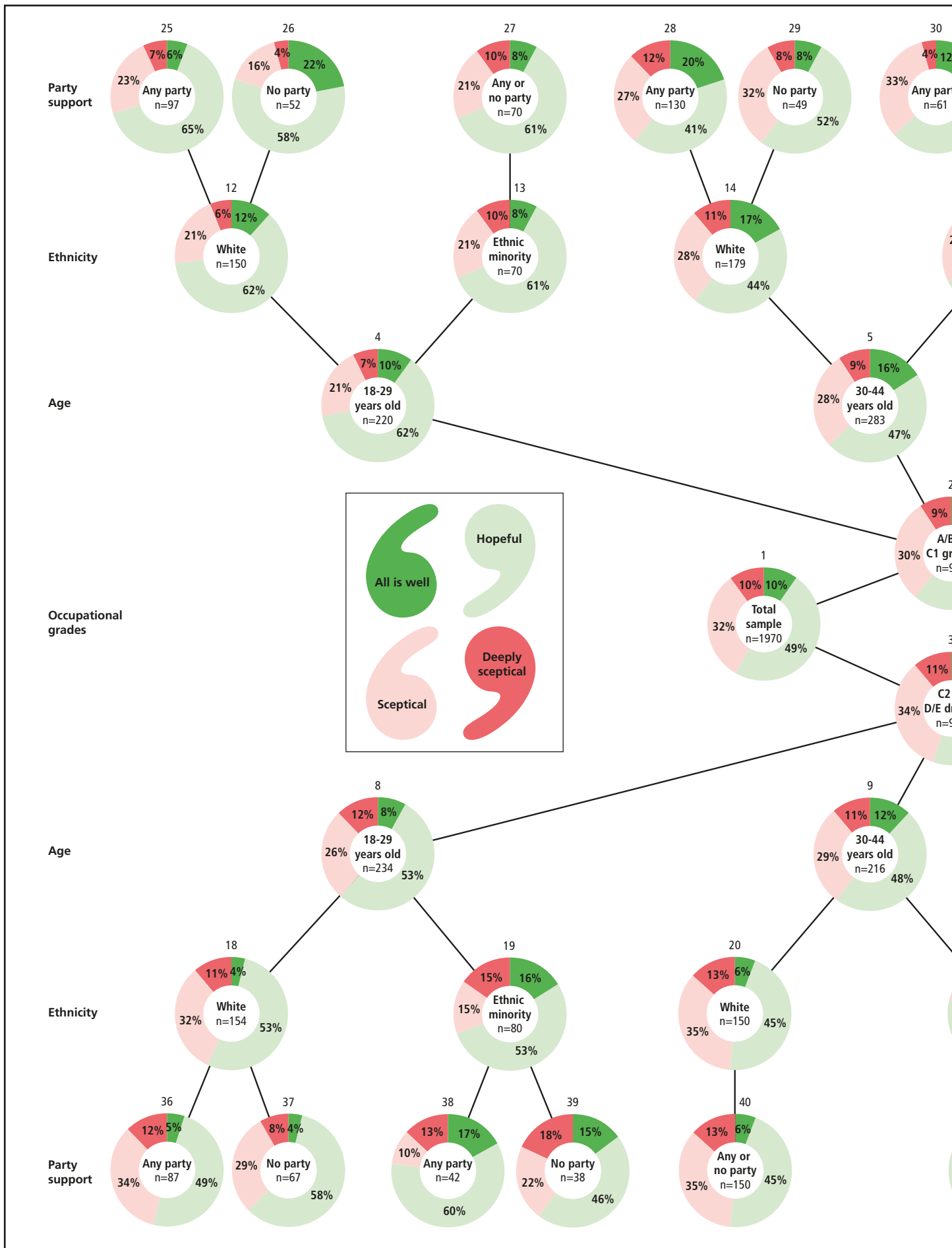
than those from White-British or White-Irish backgrounds. In some groups, however, this tendency is not borne out: amongst the youngest age group of higher occupational grades (group 4 in the diagram) the white British/Irish group (group 12) is somewhat more positive than the ethnic minority group (group 13). Also, in the 30-44 year olds upper grades group (group 5) the more positive tendency of ethnic minorities shows itself only when the two most positive outlooks are taken together. Otherwise, when comparing these two groups the “all is well” outlook is more often seen amongst white respondents (group 14) than amongst the ethnic minority group (group 15).

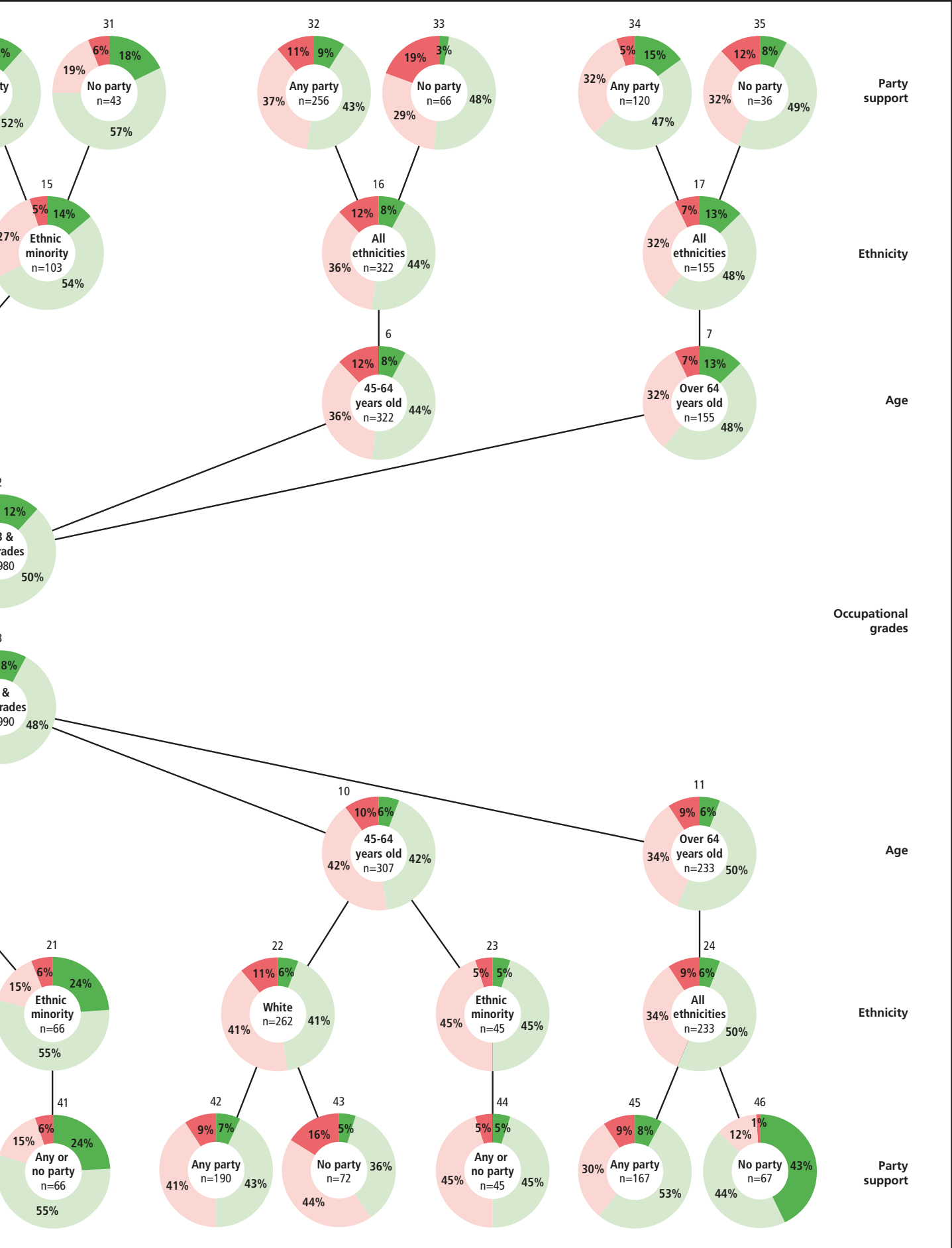
Amongst the lower occupational grades, however, the more positive outlook of ethnic minorities is particularly pronounced. This is most evident when comparing groups 20 and 21, made up of respondents between the ages of 30 and 44 years old from lower occupational grades; when these respondents are split according to ethnic background, only 6 per cent of those from a white-British or white-Irish background have an “all is well” outlook compared with 24 per cent of those from an ethnic minority background. Furthermore, the more optimistic outlooks of ethnic minorities amongst lower social grades is so strong that its impact often more than offsets the tendency of higher social grades to be the most optimistic. This is very clear when comparing groups 19 and 13 in the diagram, and groups 21 and 15.

When comparing the outlooks on standards and trust between the groups that resulted from the first three rounds of analysis, we find a very wide range of differences. The most negative group is group 22 (white, 45-64 year olds in the lower occupational grades) with only 47 per cent holding the “all is well” and “hopeful” outlooks. The most positive group is group 21 (ethnic minority, 30-44 year olds in the lower occupational grades) where 79 per cent hold either of the two most positive outlooks.

Had we considered the relationships of outlooks with occupational grade, age or ethnicity alone, we would have found only minor differences. But by combining these factors and grouping people’s attitudes we find that the effects of these distinctions are not uniform across the entire population. As demonstrated here particular combinations of these characteristics result in much starker contrasts between the outlooks of different groups that should not be overlooked.

Figure 11.2 Classification of respondents by occupational grade, age, ethnicity and political engagement





Engagement with the party system

The fourth and final variable used to divide various groups in the population was based on respondents' party political preferences. Respondents were asked if they would consider voting for a number of listed political parties or an unspecified "other" party in a general election. This allowed them to indicate if there was one, or even more than one, party that they found sufficiently attractive to consider voting for it in a general election. They could, however, also give a negative response for each party or a 'don't know' answer. Such responses would indicate that a respondent finds no party sufficiently attractive to indicate that they would consider voting for it. Distinguishing respondents on this basis thus reflects their relationship with the British political system: those unable to identify any party (including 'Other') for whom they would consider voting can be considered to be alienated from the system, whereas those who perceive at least one party sufficiently attractive to consider voting for it can be seen as integrated within the system. This distinction between politically alienated and politically integrated respondents was used as the fourth and final split in our analysis.

Splitting the third level sub-groups on this criterion also highlights how these respondents are distributed through the wider sample. In the entire sample respondents who name at least one political party as sufficiently attractive outnumber those who are clearly alienated in this respect (69 per cent of the entire sample versus 31 per cent). Amongst the youngest age groups, however, the proportion of alienated respondents is substantially larger (41 per cent).

No fourth division could be made for a number of groups. After three previous levels of splits, many of the resulting sub-groups do not have enough respondents to merit being split further, or the proportion of 'politically alienated' respondents was too small to result in a separate group with a sufficient number of cases in it. This precluded further splits for ethnic minority respondents under 30 in the higher occupational grades (group 13 in the diagram) or aged between 45 and 64 in the lower occupational grades (group 23). Respondents aged between 30 and 44 years old in the lower occupational grades, no matter their ethnicity (groups 20 and 21), could also not be divided further on this basis.

Although there is a general tendency for politically alienated respondents to hold less positive outlooks on standards and trust, this

does not hold uniformly. Notably, the youngest, white respondents and respondents from an ethnic minority background aged between 30 and 44 who are alienated from the party system are more likely to fall into the most positive category than their counterparts who recognise at least one party as being sufficiently attractive to vote for it in a general election. In fact, almost twice as many alienated young white respondents from the highest occupational grades (group 26) hold the most positive outlook on standards and trust as the sample as a whole (22 per cent compared with 10 per cent).

However, when comparing the overwhelming majority of sub-groups created by these fourth level divisions, "politically integrated" respondents were substantially more positive than their "alienated" counterparts. The difference between these sub-groups is most noticeable among white respondents aged between 30 and 44 years old from higher occupational grades; 20 per cent of these respondents who recognise at least one attractive party (group 28) held the "all is well" outlook and so were positive on all criteria used to create the typology. This is compared with only 8 per cent of those found in the same age group, occupational classes and from the same ethnic background who are alienated from the party system (group 29). Furthermore, the least positive sub-group in the entire sample (group 46) consists of respondents who are alienated from the party system who are from lower occupational grades and aged 65 or over (only 1 per cent of this group holds the "all is well" outlook).

Similar differences can also be found when comparing respondents with the most negative evaluations of standards in Britain. From the second level divisions, respondents in higher occupational grades aged between 45 and 64 years old (group 6) were the most likely to fall into the most negative group of the typology (12 per cent compared with 10 per cent of the sample as a whole). However, when this group is divided between those who would and would not consider voting for any party at an election (groups 32 and 33 respectively), there is a substantial difference between these two groups: 11 per cent of those willing to vote for any party fall into the most negative group of the typology compared with 19 per cent of those unable to name a party for whom they would consider voting. Almost as stark differences can be found when comparing people who would consider voting for any party with those who would consider none among

respondents from higher occupational grades aged 65 or over (5 per cent of these integrated respondents (group 34) compared with 12 per cent of alienated respondents (group 35) fall into the most negative category), ethnic minority respondents aged under 30 from lower occupational grades (13 per cent of group 38 compared with 18 per cent of group 39) and white respondents aged from 45 to 64 from lower occupational grades (9 per cent of group 42 compared with 16 per cent of group 43).

11.4 Conclusions

The segmentation analysis provides us with a more encompassing perspective on perceptions of standards and trust in public officials than the analyses of separate survey questions reported in the earlier chapters. It also clarifies why variables such as age and occupational grade, which in many other surveys are strongly associated with similar attitudinal responses, are of less importance here: the effects of these factors are not uniform in direction and magnitude across the entire population.

For example, younger age groups, people in higher occupational grades, and ethnic minorities are in general more likely to have a positive outlook about standards in public life. Yet, these relationships are relatively weak (see also the detailed breakdowns in terms of personal characteristics reported in Appendix B). However, the contrasts in outlooks on public life identified in the segmentation analysis are stronger. The reason for this is that many of these differences, such as that between age groups, run in different directions within different sub-groups of the population. Therefore, when looking at respondents' personal characteristics one by one, these contradictory effects tend to cancel each other out. This leaves only a muted impression of the importance of these characteristics for perceptions of standards and trust. In contrast, when these characteristics are viewed in conjunction with one another, the relationships between respondents' characteristics and their perceptions, attitudes or orientations become much clearer.

These intricate patterns also help us to understand how people's daily lives impinge on their views on public life. For example, that young people do not in all circumstances have a more positive view of standards and trust than comparable older people shows that these perceptions and orientations are not inherently linked to age. It is, therefore, incorrect to infer that people tend to acquire

more negative perspectives as they age. Rather, the relationships between orientations and attitudes on the one hand and age on the other seem to reflect the fact that for many younger people their everyday life fosters expectations and experiences that are conducive to a more positive outlook. Nonetheless, the everyday lives of some younger people afford very different experiences and generate different expectations that are echoed in their less positive perceptions of public life and trust in public officials.

A similar reasoning applies to differences between social grades and ethnic groups. It is more productive to think of the differences that were highlighted in the segmentation analyses (see Figure 11.2) not as reflecting the effects of age, occupational grade or ethnicity as such, but rather as the effects of the kinds of experiences and expectations that flow from people's everyday lives. What these experiences and expectations contain in detail is beyond the scope of this study. But in general terms, we can see them as reflecting the effects of socialisation (the ways in which people's upbringing, schooling, work, and social circles affect their outlook on life and on politics along with the opinion climate of the period in which this outlook was formed). This inevitably causes people in different stages of their life cycle to have different experiences and expectations that spill over in their perceptions of and attitudes towards public life, but not uniformly so according to any single factor.

There are many everyday life experiences: they may include insecurity about employment, income level, housing situation, health and education. They may also include people's experience of public services and their interaction with government and public services (at all levels) and whether or not they consider these to be effective, 'in touch' or inspirational – or elitist, self-serving, bureaucratic or hostile. But these experiences are not a function of unchangeable demographic characteristics, but of experiences that can be influenced by politics and policy. It is this nexus that provides a promising area for further exploration.

The segmentation analyses also provides clear evidence that people's outlook on public life is strongly affected by how they relate to the narrower domain of politics and in particular to the landscape of political parties. Of particular relevance is whether respondents recognise the existence of at least one political party that is sufficiently attractive to vote for in a general election. Many people do so, and some even see more than one party as a potentially

attractive option to support in an election. But a considerable proportion of the British population (40 per cent in this survey) is in effect 'disconnected' (or alienated) from the domain of party politics. For them, the system offers no party sufficiently attractive to win their vote. These citizens in particular hold sceptical or deeply sceptical perceptions of standards and do not trust those in public life.

This disconnect is not a matter of not feeling represented by the parties in the incumbent government, because many people see one of the opposition parties as an attractive option to support in the next general election. Nor can it be interpreted as a reflection of dismay with 'traditional' political parties, because the disconnected are also not willing to consider voting for any of the newer political parties in Britain (such as the Greens, UKIP and the BNP).¹² This alienated group of citizens just sees no party that could sufficiently express their political views or represent their interests, and is overwhelmingly sceptical or deeply sceptical about public life. Moreover, they are particularly located in the younger age groups, with 46 per cent of the under 30s falling into this category.

From other studies we know that this group has grown significantly since the 1990s¹³, a period in which participation in general elections has also declined. These findings strongly suggest that deep scepticism about standards in public life, a lack of trust in political institutions and actors, a feeling that none of the existing political parties represents one's own outlook or interests and a reluctance to be involved in formal political activity are all aspects of an entrenched political disenchantment in Great Britain which appears to have acquired a growing foothold in the British public. Whether this disenchantment also harbours the potential for rejection of the system of representative democracy and for democratic norms remains a topic for further study. Nonetheless, the number of disconnected citizens detected in this survey, and the growth of the size of this group reflect a challenge to political parties, politicians, local organisations and community groups to work to provide the British public with a sufficiently attractive and relevant set of political options from which they can choose.

¹² Respondents could indicate if they would be willing to consider voting for the Conservative Party, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the SNP, Plaid Cymru, UKIP, the Green Party, the BNP, Respect or another, un-named party. Alternatively, they could indicate a willingness to vote for no party or say they did not know.

¹³ The Hansard Society's Audit of Public Engagement 10, published in May 2013, recorded its lowest ever levels of public engagement across almost every area surveyed. Its previous report, published in 2012, had already identified a "disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged" public.

12 WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This concluding chapter examines a small number of overarching themes that have emerged from this and the previous surveys on the public's views of standards in public life. Each theme is presented in the form of a statement, with its implications being drawn out in the subsequent discussion.

12.1 Orientations and perceptions about standards in public life are well-developed in the British public

In evaluating responses to any survey, a key criterion is the extent to which respondents' answers appear to be internally consistent. 'Real' rather than ephemeral responses are characterised by consistency, by co-occurring with other responses in coherent and intelligible ways and by the consistent way that they respond and react to changes in real-world circumstances. Consistent responses (and consistent patterns of responses over different surveys) are unlikely to be superficial or 'arbitrarily' given and should be taken as indicating the basis on which people react or fail to react to real world experience and developments in practice.

The responses in this series of surveys have demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency in relation to orientations to and perceptions of standards in public life, suggesting that the responses are indeed well formed. Specifically we have found:

- Respondents consistently and overwhelmingly show support for the seven principles of public life as criteria for evaluating performance in public office, and they have done so across all five biennial surveys conducted since 2004.
- The patterns of attitudes that underlie responses to a wide range of questions in the survey demonstrate coherent patterns. These attitudes and orientations relate particularly to trust in officials and professionals telling the truth, to the perceived quality of standards in public life, and to confidence

that public officials will be held to account if their behaviour does not conform to these standards.

- Responses to questions about standards are driven, not by 'superficial' considerations such as political affiliation and which party is in power. Instead, perceptions of standards reflect individuals' views of how the country is governed, with an emphasis on the process of governance rather than on the substance of policies or their outcomes.

Of course, individuals in general have limited information about, and even less direct experience of, the actual behaviour of various kinds of public officials, such as judges, senior police officers, Cabinet Ministers and MPs with whom they rarely interact. But the information from news coverage in the media, from 'opinion leaders', and from the few who do occasionally interact with these officials is drawn upon by ordinary people to develop coherent perceptions and orientations with respect to standards. The fact that people do indeed develop coherent perceptions and orientations also reflects that they feel that the quality of standards in public life is important and worthy of their attention. That their views are coherent does not mean they are accurate; but it does mean that their views are likely to have a stable relationship to how they act in a range of settings.

12.2 The public's perception of the quality of standards in public life is not static but evolves in reaction to events and developments in the domain of politics and governance

In 2004 slightly over one third of the British public was sceptical or deeply sceptical about the quality of standards in public life and the trustworthiness of public officials (see Chapter 10 of this report). Over the next four years, to 2008, the proportion holding sceptical or deeply sceptical views fell to slightly less than two in ten, but doubled thereafter to over 40

per cent in 2010 and 2012. The survey series thus provides valuable evidence of fluctuations in public scepticism about standards and the trustworthiness of those in public office that are linked to events in the sphere of politics and governance more broadly.

In this case, although the marked increase in scepticism after 2008 cannot categorically be linked to specific events, it seems likely to be rooted in the MPs' expenses scandal, and possibly also, in the political handling of the economic crisis.

This dynamic character of public perceptions of standards and trustworthiness has two important implications. One is that it is short sighted for commentators to dismiss these findings on the basis that 'there will always be people who are disaffected or distrustful'. Undoubtedly, some people may always be more inclined to see the glass 'half empty' where others see it as 'half full', but that cannot explain why public opinion changes in such significant respects. These changes respond to events and developments in politics and governance, and to the perceived behaviour of public officials in response to these developments. The research shows that the public evaluates this behaviour using criteria that are essentially similar to the seven principles formulated by the Committee. To the extent that citizens are sceptical or deeply sceptical, this tells us about the way that they are reacting to changes they perceive in the public sphere of politics and governance.

The surveys also provide evidence that public perceptions can improve in response to events in the public sphere, as is evident for the period 2004-2008. There is no reason to assume that individuals who are currently sceptical or deeply sceptical could not become more hopeful in their perception and evaluation of politics and governance. But that does require actors in that domain to be seen as demonstrating selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. This focus on the performance of actors in the public sphere is particularly relevant in view of subsequent findings¹⁴ that positive perceptions of standards generate trust, and perceptions of poor standards undermine trust, whereas there is no empirical support for the view that increasing levels of trust engenders positive perceptions of standards.

14 Jonathan Rose, *The Public Understanding of Political Integrity: The Case for Probity Perceptions* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in January 2014)

12.3 Perceptions of standards in public life are driven to a limited extent by citizens' social and economic backgrounds. They are also driven by their responses to experiences with and expectations about politics and governance

All five surveys conducted since 2004 demonstrate that perceptions of standards are, to a limited extent, related to demographic, social and economic characteristics of individuals. All things being equal, younger people are somewhat less sceptical than older ones, those in higher social grades are somewhat more positive than comparable people in lower social grades, and individuals from ethnic minorities are somewhat more positive than comparable people from white British and Irish backgrounds.

Yet, these relationships are relatively weak. The differences in how people perceive standards become more distinct when comparing subgroups defined in terms of several of these characteristics. Such analyses (see Chapter 11) also demonstrate that variables such as age, social grade and ethnicity do not exert a uniform effect on perceptions of standards. This implies that it is not people's social and economic background as such that is relevant, but that these variables are (imperfect) proxies for relevant experiences of politics and governance and expectations about public officials that people derive from their daily life.

12.4 Perceptions of standards in public life have important political consequences.

The surveys to date have focussed mainly on providing systematic evidence about trends in perceptions of standards in public life. Research in a number of other countries has demonstrated that these perceptions can influence the scope for innovative policy making and reform¹⁵, support for government programmes that entail high costs and unequal benefits for citizens,¹⁶ and the extent of citizens' compliance with the state's laws and

15 Hetherington, M. J. (2005). *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism*. Princeton University Press.

16 Trüding, E.M. & Bollow, U. (2011). 'Evaluations of Welfare State Reforms in Germany: Political Trust Makes a (Big) Difference'. In Sonja Zmerli & Marc Hooghe. *Political trust – Why context matters*. Colchester: ECPR Press

regulations.¹⁷ How these and similar effects operate in the British context, and under what circumstances they are most likely to occur, needs to be studied further, and constitutes a logical and important follow-up to the empirical work done so far.

Perceptions that standards are poor and high levels of mistrust in politics are associated with the view that no political party exists to represent one's interests and political outlook (see Chapter 11). This helps explain why such perceptions are linked to low turnout in elections. It may also result in greater support for extreme parties.¹⁸ However, many of these consequences for the political behaviour of individuals are currently under-researched in Great Britain, and deserve more systematic study.

12.5 Perceptions of standards in public life can be influenced by performance

The evidence points to the fact that perceptions of standards change in response to events like the MPs' expenses scandal, but also in response to how those in authority react to those events. For example, ratings of standards in public life were shown to have improved immediately following the swift action taken in 2008 to discipline an MP for misuse of his parliamentary allowance. One plausible hypothesis about the expenses scandal is that it did so much damage because of the large numbers of MPs involved, the long-drawn out response and the reluctance on the part of Parliament to move immediately to full disclosure after the initial leaks. In contrast, the prompt investigative action by MPs of the phone hacking scandal in 2011 led to improved ratings for MPs, and declining ratings for journalists.¹⁹

Steps taken to increase engagement in the political process might be expected to improve public confidence in standards. It also seems likely that perceptions of standards would respond to better public information about how different institutions try to ensure that they live up to the principles in public life. For example, by making clear their procedures, the basis

on which decisions are made, the grounds for restrictions on transparency, and so on. These issues show how standards of conduct in public office are linked to the quality of democracy in British society. They also indicate the need for further research to explore what steps can be taken to develop and sustain the public's confidence in the institutions of governance that is a central component of a modern democratic society.

17 Scholz, J. T., & Lubell, M. (1998). Trust and Taxpaying: Testing the Heuristic Approach to Collective Action. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(2), 398-417.

18 Hooghe, M., Marien, S., & Pauwels, T. (2011). *Where Do Distrusting Voters Turn if There is No Viable Exit or Voice Option? The Impact of Political Trust on Electoral Behaviour in the Belgian Regional Elections of June 2009*. *Government and Opposition*, 46(2), 245-273

19 Jonathan Rose and Cees van der Eijk, "A scandal of two halves", in *Ballots and Bullets* 16 September 2011; <http://nottspolitics.org/2011/09/16/a-scandal-of-two-halves>

TECHNICAL APPENDICES

Appendix A Analysis and variables

The 2012 survey of perceptions of standards in public life has been carried out by TNS BMRB on behalf of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. TNS BMRB included a core set of tracking questions as well as a number of new questions for the 2012 survey in a single wave of their face-to-face CAPI Omnibus that was run in November 2012. A total of 1968 interviews took place.

For the data collected in this survey, this report initially focuses on a top-line analysis to show the proportion of respondents that have positive or negative views of a particular aspect of standards in public life. Data gathered on questions that have been asked throughout the lifetime of the study are also used to demonstrate how beliefs have changed since 2002. In a subsequent stage of analysis, perceptions of standards were compared for different groups in the British population. The analysis in this report only highlights these differences if they exceed a given threshold, and are then referred to as notable (differences of more than 5 per cent) or substantial (more than 10 per cent).

Such comparisons across groups, however, do not take into account that these groups may also differ in other respects which influence perceptions of standards. A range of demographic, socio-economic and political factors may impact an individual's views of standards in public life. In order to take such factors also into account, multivariate logistic models²⁰ are employed. These allow us to better isolate the effect of our key variables of interest while controlling for other, potentially confounding, variables. Post-estimate Wald Tests are used to determine which, if any, of these additional factors are statistically significant predictors of individual's responses to questions regarding standards in public life.

²⁰ Multivariate logistic regression allows us to predict the outcome of a binomial dependent variable (with values of 0 or 1) according to a number of predictor variables.

Appendix B Demographic and political correlates of attitudes

In the following analysis, only statistically significant differences are discussed. An asterisk after a number in a table indicates that this difference is statistically significant at the 95 per cent level. That is, there is at most a 1 in 20 chance that it could have occurred through random sampling variation. This sort of analysis, when applied to a great many variables can throw up spurious results. Accordingly, we comment only on clear patterns in the data and we ignore significant results that occur in isolation.

Differences in opinion are illustrated using the weighted survey responses, but only differences that remained statistically significant in a multi-variate analysis are commented on. For instance, ethnic minority respondents on average might perceive standards to be higher than people who are white British or white Irish, but this may be due to the different economic characteristics of these groups. The analysis here takes such possibilities into account, allowing us to say that all other things being equal, ethnic minority individuals are more likely to think that overall standards are higher than white British and white Irish individuals. The characteristics taken into account are age group, gender, ethnicity, whether someone lives in England, Scotland or Wales, occupational grade, whether they have ever attended a fee-paying school, housing tenure, and political affiliation. Further details of all the variables can be found in Appendix A.

Age

Respondents have been divided into four roughly equally sized age bands, reflecting both life cycle and generational effects: 18 to 29, 30 to 44, 45 to 64 and 65 or over.

Younger age groups are somewhat more trusting of high-level public officials. As **Table 1** illustrates, 18-29 year olds are more likely than other age groups to say they trust judges, top civil servants, government ministers, people who run large companies, and local councillors. However, this is not reflected in the questions (Section 9) which asked about three scenarios with the possibility for improper behaviour from a public official – in these questions there are very few significant differences between age groups. The one exception is that more people over 45 think that a planning officer on the local council would accept a lunch invitation from a friend whose case was being discussed by the council.

Different age groups disagree on what it is reasonable for MPs to take account of when voting in Parliament, as illustrated in **Table 2** [page 54]. Younger respondents were substantially less likely to say that it is reasonable for an MP to take into account what would benefit people living in their constituency, what their local party members would want, what the MP personally believes to be right, how it might affect their chances of getting a job outside of politics, and how the decision might affect their political career.

Table 1 Trust in professions by age group

Trust in...	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+ (ref)
Broadsheet journalists	42%	48%	38%	39%
TV news journalists	48%	62%	59%	59%
Tabloid journalists	14%	18%	13%	14%
Judges	84%*	83%*	76%	75%
Senior police officers	75%	72%	64%	67%
MPs in general	35%	34%	24%	27%
Your local MP	44%	44%	41%	48%
Top civil servants	60%*	52%*	32%	36%
Government ministers	41%*	36%	25%	26%
People who run large companies	34%*	31%*	30%	27%
Local councillors	59%*	56%	44%	47%

Respondents in all of the three youngest groups were also notably less likely to approve of MPs considering how their party leadership wants them to vote and what would benefit their family compared with respondents aged 65 and over. These differences do not appear to reflect a different agenda for what MPs should take into account when they vote – younger people were not more likely to favour other considerations their MPs might be influenced by. It seems likely that older respondents have a more realistic and accepting understanding of what might influence MPs decisions.

Younger people were more likely to indicate that they were confident that the authorities were committed to upholding standards (58 per cent of 18-29 year olds compared with 43 per cent of 45-64 year olds), although they were no more likely to believe that those caught doing wrong will be punished, or to have higher perceptions of standards in public life in general.

Table 3 [page 55] shows that younger people were more likely to expect better treatment

than most other people if they were a defendant in court and if they applied for planning permission, whereas older people were more likely to expect better treatment at the doctor's surgery.

Gender

In general there are very few significant differences between men and women in their response to this survey. Nevertheless two areas stand out. Firstly, men and women disagree on what are reasonable factors for an MP to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament. Secondly, there are a number of notable differences in how men and women think they will be treated compared with other people by public servants they may have direct experience of.

Notably more men than women indicated that they thought it is reasonable if an MP takes into account how the party leadership thinks they should vote, what they personally believe to be right, what they think will make their party more popular, how the decision might

Table 2 Factors that people think are reasonable for MPs to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament by age group

Reasonable factors	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+ (ref)
What the MP's party's election manifesto promised	69%	74%*	73%	68%
What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency	69%*	72%*	81%	82%
What would benefit people living in the country as a whole	79%	82%	84%	82%
What the MP's local party members would want	49%*	56%	64%	67%
How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote	41%*	41%*	42%*	48%
What the MP personally believes to be right	55%*	61%	66%	71%
What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular	44%	46%	46%	51%
How the decision might affect the MP's political career	32%*	33%*	38%	41%
What would benefit the MP's family	24%*	22%*	24%*	30%
How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics	23%*	27%*	29%	34%
What large financial donors to the party want the party to do	30%	23%	27%	27%

Table 3 How people expect to be treated by public servants by age group

Expectations	18-29	30-44	45-64	65+ (ref)
In court: better	10%	9%	9%	6%
In court: same	71%	75%	78%	85%
In court: worse	20%	17%	13%	9%
Doctor's surgery: better	15%*	12%	14%	21%
Doctor's surgery: same	78%*	80%	79%	73%
Doctor's surgery: worse	6%	8%	7%	5%
Police: better	18%	13%*	10%*	13%
Police: same	67%	72%	75%	80%
Police: worse	15%*	15%	14%	7%
Planning committee: better	10%	9%	8%	6%
Planning committee: same	74%	80%	80%	84%
Planning committee: worse	17%*	11%*	12%	9%

affect the MP's career, what would benefit the MP's family, and how the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside of politics. This is shown in **Table 4**. Again, this does not reflect a substantively different agenda of what should influence MPs voting decisions, because women do not prioritize different considerations but instead think fewer things are reasonable.

Men were more likely than women to anticipate worse treatment if they were appearing in court accused of a crime, if they were a victim of crime and reporting it to the police and if they applied to their local council for planning permission. In contrast, women were more likely than men to expect worse treatment when receiving medical care at their local doctor's surgery. Men were also more likely

Table 4 Factors that people think are reasonable for MPs to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament by gender

Reasonable factors	Men	Women
What the MP's party's election manifesto promised	73%	69%
What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency	79%	74%
What would benefit people living in the country as a whole	82%	81%
What the MP's local party members would want	59%	59%
How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote	46%	40%*
What the MP personally believes to be right	68%	60%*
What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular	51%	43%*
How the decision might affect the MP's political career	41%	32%*
What would benefit the MP's family	29%	21%*
How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics	23%*	27%*
What large financial donors to the party want the party to do	30%	23%

than women to say that they think they would get better treatment if they applied for planning permission. **Table 5** summarizes these. As stated above, it is unclear whether these differences reflect respondents' experience of these situations, or if they reflect ideas about institutions that do not have a basis in personal experience.

Ethnicity

The most consistent differences between groups are evident when we compare people from ethnic minority backgrounds with those from a white British or white Irish background. In general, ethnic minority respondents tended to offer more positive ratings of standards in almost every area of questions. For this analysis we included respondents who described

themselves as "White – Other" in the ethnic minority category on the basis that a large proportion of this group will be recent Eastern European migrants. Nevertheless these results remain similar even if this group is excluded.

Respondents from ethnic minorities were substantially more likely to offer a positive rating of overall standards of conduct, and were more confident that the authorities are committed to upholding standards, would uncover wrongdoing and would punish those caught doing wrong. As **Table 6** shows, a majority of ethnic minority respondents offered a positive response to each of these questions, but only a minority of white British respondents did so.

Table 5 How people expect to be treated by public servants by gender

Expectations	Men (ref)	Women
In court: better	8%	9%
In court: same	75%	78%
In court: worse	17%	13%*
Doctor's surgery: better	16%	15%
Doctor's surgery: same	78%	77%
Doctor's surgery: worse	6%	8%
Police: better	13%	14%
Police: same	72%	75%
Police: worse	15%	11%*
Planning committee: better	10%	7%*
Planning committee: same	7%	8%
Planning committee: worse	15%	10%*

Table 6 Overall ratings of conduct and confidence in authorities by ethnicity

	White British/ Irish (ref)	Ethnic minority
Quite high or high overall rating of standards of conduct	33%	47%*
Confident that authorities are committed to upholding standards	47%	62%*
Confident that the authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	43%	53%*
Confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	71%	67%
Confident that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong	36%	58%*

Ethnic minority respondents were also more positive in their responses to questions about trust in professions: they were significantly more trusting of five out of the eleven professions included in the survey, including tabloid journalists (the least trusted profession listed – whom respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds were almost twice as likely to trust). Ethnic minorities were also substantially more likely to trust all the political professions. Most of these differences are over ten percentage points in magnitude, as shown in **Table 7**. Similarly, when asked what they thought public officials would do in three scenarios with the possibility for impropriety, ethnic minority respondents were almost twice as likely to expect officials to take the honest

course of action in two of the cases, although they were less likely to expect a real planning officer to decline lunch with a planning applicant (see **Table 8**).

A greater proportion of respondents from ethnic minority backgrounds offered positive ratings of MPs' behaviour. In particular, they were more likely to believe that MPs own up when they make mistakes, explain the reasons for their actions and decisions, and are in touch with the general public, as shown in **Table 9** [page 58].

When asked to predict their own behaviour, ethnic minority respondents were less likely than white British and Irish individuals to say

Table 7 Trust in professions by ethnicity

Trust in...	White British/ Irish (ref)	Ethnic minority
Broadsheet journalists	40%	50%
TV news journalists	58%	54%
Tabloid journalists	12%	23%*
Judges	79%	80%
Senior police officers	68%	75%
MPs in general	27%	43%*
Your local MP	42%	51%*
Top civil servants	41%	57%*
Government ministers	28%	46%*
People who run large companies	31%	29%
Local councillors	48%	64%*

Table 8 How people think they and real public servants would behave in three scenarios by ethnicity

	White British/ Irish (ref)	Ethnic minority
Real civil servant would own up	36%	53%*
Self as civil servant would own up	87%	80%*
Real police officer would issue ticket	25%	42%*
Self as police officer would issue ticket	48%	52%
Real planning officer would decline lunch	50%	43%
Self as planning officer would decline lunch	56%	65%*

Table 9 Perceptions of MPs by ethnicity

Believe that MPs...	White British/ Irish (ref)	Ethnic minority
... are dedicated to doing a good job for the public	26%	31%
... do not use power for own personal gain	32%	31%
... do not take bribes	66%	59%
... own up when make mistakes	9%	16%*
... explain reasons for actions	20%	28%*
... set a good example in private lives	19%	22%
... tell the truth	19%	21%
... make sure public money is spent wisely	16%	19%
... are in touch with the general public	15%	22%*
... are competent at their jobs	27%	36%

Table 10 Overall ratings of conduct and confidence in authorities by country

	England (ref)	Scotland	Wales
Quite high or high overall rating of standards of conduct	37%	28%	23%*
Confident that authorities are committed to upholding standards	51%	40%	40%
Confident that the authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	46%	41%	37%
Confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	70%	72%	73%
Confident that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong	42%	26%*	27%*

they would own up if they were a civil servant who had lost an important disk, but more likely say that they would refuse to have lunch with a friend who had submitted a planning application if they were a planning officer (see Table 8).

There were no differences between ethnic minorities and white British/white Irish respondents in their expectations of treatment if they were appearing as a defendant in court, if they were receiving treatment at their GP's surgery, if they were a victim of crime reporting it to the police, or if they applied to their local council for planning permission. It may be that the way we categorize ethnic minority has an effect on these results. The Citizenship Survey in 2011 showed very different levels of trust in the

police between black Caribbean and Pakistani-origin individuals when compared with people of Indian origin. With insufficient numbers to disaggregate these groups, our broader category may be obscuring some important differences. Nevertheless, the responses to this survey suggest that there is not a widespread perception among ethnic minority individuals that they will be treated worse than most other people in these four areas of public service.

Country

On the whole there were few differences between people in England, Scotland and Wales in their responses to this survey. Some differences do stand out however; respondents in Wales had lower trust in a number of professions, and people in Scotland and Wales

had lower confidence that the authorities will punish wrongdoing in public life (see **Table 10**).

Table 11 shows that people in Wales also reported substantially lower trust than respondents in England (and often Scotland) in judges, their local MP, top civil servants and local councillors. Nevertheless, they have higher trust in TV news journalists.

Respondents in Wales also rated two items of MPs' behaviour more negatively: they were notably less likely to say that MPs do not use power for their own personal gain (23 per cent compared with 33 per cent of respondents in England) or that they make sure public money is spent wisely (10 per cent instead of 18 per cent in England). When asked about what factors should influence MPs' voting behaviour, respondents in Wales were substantially less likely to indicate that it was reasonable for an MP to consider how their party leadership thinks they should vote (31 per cent compared with 44 per cent of respondents in England) but substantially more likely to indicate that it is reasonable to consider how a decision might affect an MP's political career (46 per cent compared with 35 per cent of respondents in England).

Social Grade

Social grade describes the type of job someone does. It is often thought of as a measurement of social or occupational class. We compare four occupational groups; Managerial and technical (A/B), clerical and supervisory (C1),

skilled manual (C2) and unskilled manual and unemployed (D/E).

Respondents in higher social grades were more likely to offer positive evaluations of standards in public life. Managerial and technical (A/B), clerical and supervisory (C1) and skilled manual (C2) workers were substantially more likely to offer a positive rating of overall standards than unskilled manual workers and the unemployed (D/E). Similarly, as **Table 12** [page 60] demonstrates, the majority of respondents in groups A/B to C2 indicated that they were confident that the authorities were committed to upholding standards, compared with 41 per cent of unskilled manual and unemployed workers (D/E).

Respondents in the highest occupational grade grouping tend to have the most positive evaluations of MPs' behaviour (**Table 13** [page 60]). People employed in managerial and professional positions were substantially more likely to believe that MPs tell the truth and that they do not take bribes. They were also notably more likely to believe that MPs are competent at their jobs, explain the reasons for their actions and decisions, and set a good example in their private lives. Nevertheless, although their attitudes were more positive, still only a minority of managerial and professional workers responded positively to most of the questions on MPs' behaviour.

The pattern of people in higher social grades giving more positive evaluations is not repeated

Table 11 Trust in professions by country

	England (ref)	Scotland	Wales
Broadsheet journalists	43%	40%	31%
TV news journalists	56%	60%	69%*
Tabloid journalists	15%	12%	18%
Judges	80%	80%	67%*
Senior police officers	70%	67%	66%
MPs in general	31%	21%	24%
Your local MP	45%	40%	31%*
Top civil servants	46%	35%	31%*
Government ministers	33%	26%	27%
People who run large companies	30%	30%	35%
Local councillors	52%	47%	38%*

Table 12 Overall ratings of conduct and confidence in authorities by social grade

	A/B	C1	C2	D/E (ref)
Quite high or high overall rating of standards of conduct	40%*	40%	35%	28%
Confident that authorities are committed to upholding standards	55%	54%	51%	41%
Confident that the authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	44%	48%	44%	42%
Confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	71%	72%	70%	69%
Confident that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong	44%*	40%*	41%*	37%

Table 13 Perceptions of MPs by social grade

Believe that MPs...	A/B	C1	C2	D/E (ref)
... are dedicated to doing a good job for the public	67%	72%	73%	77%
... do not use power for own personal gain	38%*	32%	31%	29%
... do not take bribes	77%*	67%*	58%	58%
... own up when make mistakes	10%	8%*	11%	12%
... explain reasons for actions	27%*	21%	22%	17%
... set a good example in private lives	25%*	19%	19%	17%
... tell the truth	26%*	20%	17%	15%
... make sure public money is spent wisely	18%	19%	16%	15%
... are in touch with the general public	17%	17%	16%	15%
... are competent at their jobs	34%*	30%	29%	26%

when we come to the questions asking about organizations and officials that people are more likely to have direct experience of. There is no pattern to how people expect to be treated if they were appearing as a defendant in court, if they were receiving treatment at their GP's surgery, if they were reporting a crime to the police as a victim, or if they applied to their local council for planning permission. Similarly, respondents in higher social grades are in general no more likely to expect a civil servant to own up to having lost a disk, a police officer to issue their friend with a speeding ticket, or a planning officer to avoid having lunch with a planning applicant.

A greater number of respondents in the highest social grades indicated a commitment to selflessness when asked what it was reasonable for MPs to take into account when voting

(shown in **Table 14** [page 61]). When compared with unskilled workers and the unemployed, notably more respondents in managerial and technical positions indicated that they believed MPs should consider what the election manifesto of their political party promised, what would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency and what would benefit people in the country as a whole. Supervisory and clerical workers were also notably more likely to consider it reasonable for an MP to consider what would benefit both people living in their constituency and people living in the country as a whole. People in managerial and professional jobs were also substantially more likely to consider it reasonable for an MP to take into account what he or she thinks to be right.

Correspondingly, fewer respondents from the highest social grades thought it was reasonable

Table 14 Factors that people think are reasonable for MPs to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament by social grade

Reasonable factors	A/B	C1	C2	D/E (ref)
What the MP's party's election manifesto promised	79%*	74%	69%	65%
What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency	86%*	78%*	77%*	69%
What would benefit people living in the country as a whole	89%*	85%*	79%	77%
What the MP's local party members would want	65%	60%	57%	56%
How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote	41%	42%	46%	43%
What the MP personally believes to be right	71%*	62%	67%*	59%
What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular	42%*	47%	46%	49%
How the decision might affect the MP's political career	30%*	37%	35%	39%
What would benefit the MP's family	20%	25%	26%	26%
How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics	22%*	26%*	30%	33%
What large financial donors to the party want the party to do	20%*	28%	29%	28%

for an MP to consider what would make their party popular with the general public, how it might affect their political career and what large financial donors to their party wanted them to do. They were also substantially less likely to suggest that MPs should take into account how a decision might affect their chances of getting a job outside politics.

Private schooling

When controlling for other factors, there are few significant differences between the responses of those who went to a fee-paying school and those who did not. The one clear pattern demonstrated in **Table 15** [page 62] is that people who attended a fee-paying school of any kind are more likely to expect to be treated better than most other people in all four scenarios where they might have experience of public services (when appearing in court accused of a crime, at the doctor's surgery receiving treatment, as a victim of crime reporting it to the police, and as a planning applicant to the council).

Housing Tenure

There are a number of significant differences

between housing tenure groups in their perceptions of standards of conduct in public life. People who rent their housing from a local authority or housing association are the most distinctive group, even when controlling for other economic and social characteristics. This group has lower trust in a number of professions, and lower perceptions of MPs' conduct.

People who rent their property from their local authority are substantially less likely than those who own their property outright to trust judges and, along with those who own their house on mortgage, to trust their local MP. They are also notably less likely to trust MPs in general and government ministers while respondents who rent their house privately are notably more likely to trust tabloid journalists, as shown in **Table 16** [page 62].

Respondents renting property from the local authority also tend to have poorer perceptions of MPs' conduct. Along with those who rent their property privately, they are substantially less likely to believe that the majority of MPs do not take bribes or that MPs tell the truth.

Table 15 How people expect to be treated by public servants by school type

Expectations	Non fee-paying (ref)	Fee-paying
In court: better	7%	18%*
In court: same	77%	70%
In court: worse	15%	12%
Doctor's surgery: better	14%	23%*
Doctor's surgery: same	79%	72%
Doctor's surgery: worse	7%	5%
Police: better	13%	21%*
Police: same	74%	68%
Police: worse	13%	11%*
Planning committee: better	8%	14%*
Planning committee: same	80%	75%
Planning committee: worse	13%	10%

Table 16 Trust in professions by housing tenure

Trust in...	Own outright (ref)	Own on mortgage	Local Authority rent	Private rent	Other
Broadsheet journalists	43%	41%	30%	48%	43%
TV news journalists	60%	60%	53%	56%	50%
Tabloid journalists	12%	11%	17%	21%*	7%
Judges	81%	81%	71%*	81%	75%
Senior police officers	67%	73%	63%	73%	65%
MPs in general	30%	27%	23%*	38%	25%
Your local MP	51%	38%*	37%*	47%	39%
Top civil servants	40%	42%	38%	56%	50%
Government ministers	29%	29%	23%*	43%	19%*
People who run large companies	31%	29%	32%	32%	31%
Local councillors	50%	48%	47%	58%	45%

Notably fewer respondents who rent their property from the local authority indicated that they believed that the majority of MPs are dedicated to doing a good job for the public, do not use their power for their own personal gain, and explain the reasons for their actions (see **Table 17** [page 63]).

When asked about what factors it is reasonable for MPs to take into account when voting, respondents who rent their property from the

local authority are substantially less likely to indicate that MPs should consider factors linked to the selflessness principle than respondents who own their own property. Substantially fewer local authority renters indicated it was reasonable for MPs to consider what their party's election manifesto promised, what would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency and what would benefit people living in the country as a whole. The only other significant difference of comparable magnitude is between the

Table 17 Perceptions of MPs' behaviour by housing tenure

Believe that MPs...	Own outright (ref)	Own on mortgage	Local Authority rent	Private rent	Other
...are dedicated to doing a good job for the public	27%	28%	19%*	33%	22%
...do not use power for own personal gain	36%	31%	27%*	30%	30%
...do not take bribes	75%	67%*	50%*	60%*	55%*
...own up when make mistakes	11%	8%	10%	12%	5%
...explain reasons for actions	23%	19%*	16%*	26%	13%
...set a good example in private lives	20%	20%	15%	22%	14%
...tell the truth	23%	20%	12%*	19%*	20%
...make sure public money is spent wisely	16%	17%	12%	19%	23%
...are in touch with the general public	15%	15%	14%	21%	15%
...are competent at their jobs	28%	29%	24%	35%	27%

proportion of respondents who live in privately rented accommodation and those who own their own home outright who believe MPs should consider what their local party members want (see **Table 18** [page 64]).

As **Table 19** [page 65] shows, people renting from a local authority were more likely to expect worse treatment if appearing in court accused of a crime, if they were a victim of crime reporting it to the police, and if they applied to their local council for planning permission. However, the same group was also more likely to expect better treatment in all four scenarios. People renting in the private sector were more likely to expect better treatment if they were appearing in court and if they applied for planning permission, but they were also more likely to expect worse treatment at their local doctor's surgery.

Political affiliation

We identify political affiliation according to whether people would consider voting in a general election for one party only (and which one), multiple parties, or no parties whatsoever. We can distinguish those who would not consider voting for any party from

those who would vote for the Labour Party, the Conservative Party or the Liberal Democrats, from those who would vote for other parties, and those who would consider voting for multiple parties. The Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru are both included in the 'Other party' category, due to their location specificity. In general, supporters of the three main parties had the most positive evaluations, whilst minor party supporters were the least positive group. Party political affiliation bears little relation to non-political evaluations however – there are few differences in how people expect to be treated by public servants they may have personal experience of, and in how they expect civil servants, police officers and planning officers to behave in situations where there is the possibility for wrongdoing.

People who would consider voting for one of the main political parties, and in particular for either of the two parties of government, were more likely to offer positive evaluations of standards than others. Liberal Democrat voters were substantially more likely to offer a positive overall rating of standards of conduct than respondents who indicated they would not consider voting for any party. Supporters of

Table 18 Factors that people think are reasonable for MPs to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament by housing tenure

Reasonable factors	Own outright (ref)	Own on mortgage	Local Authority rent	Private rent	Other
What the MP's party's election manifesto promised	73%	77%	62%*	70%	60%
What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency	83%	81%	67%*	72%	70%
What would benefit people living in the country as a whole	84%	87%	74%*	80%	78%
What the MP's local party members would want	67%	63%	57%	49%*	57%
How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote	43%	44%	43%	42%	35%
What the MP personally believes to be right	71%	64%	59%	58%	59%
What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular	50%	46%	46%	46%	40%
How the decision might affect the MP's political career	39%	32%	37%	37%	28%
What would benefit the MP's family	27%	23%	23%	24%	28%
How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics	32%	24%	30%	26%*	26%
What large financial donors to the party want the party to do	28%	25%	29%	26%	20%

the Conservative Party were substantially more likely to have confidence in the authorities to uncover wrongdoing. Those respondents who indicated that they would vote for either of the parties of government were also substantially more likely to say that they were confident that the authorities were committed to upholding standards. However, respondents who indicated that they would vote for a minor party were substantially less likely to believe that the authorities will punish those people caught doing wrong. These results are set out in **Table 20** [page 65].

Even compared with respondents who would not consider voting for any party, minor party supporters were substantially less likely to trust MPs in general and their local MP. On the whole, supporters of the main political parties offered the most positive perceptions of political professions; Liberal Democrat voters were the most likely to trust government ministers and Labour supporters were the most likely to trust local councillors (see **Table 21** [page 66]).

As **Table 22** [page 66] shows, supporters of the main political parties, and in particular the

Table 19 How people expect to be treated by public servants by housing tenure

Expectations	Own outright (ref)	Own on mortgage	Local Authority rent	Private rent	Other
In court: better	6%	9%	10%*	10%*	6%
In court: same	85%	78%	68%	73%	65%
In court: worse	9%	13%	22%*	17%	29%*
Doctor's surgery: better	16%	12%	21%*	14%	15%
Doctor's surgery: same	78%	81%	70%	79%	82%
Doctor's surgery: worse	6%	7%	9%	7%	4%
Police: better	11%	12%	17%*	16%	13%
Police: same	81%	75%	65%	69%	65%
Police: worse	8%	13%	18%*	15%	23%*
Planning committee: better	5%	8%	12%*	10%*	3%
Planning committee: same	85%	81%	72%	75%	80%
Planning committee: worse	10%	10%	17%	14%*	17%

Table 20 Overall ratings of conduct and confidence in authorities by political affiliation

	None (ref)	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Other	Multiple
Quite high or high overall rating of standards of conduct	35%	39%	36%	50%*	28%	27%
Confident that authorities are committed to upholding standards	47%	59%*	54%*	58%*	35%	40%
Confident that the authorities will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	42%	53%*	49%	51%	37%	29%
Confident that the media will generally uncover wrongdoing by those in public office	70%	75%	68%	77%	68%	77%
Confident that the authorities will punish those caught doing wrong	39%	44%	44%	45%	26%*	33%

Liberal Democrats, also tended to offer more positive perceptions of MPs' conduct. There were substantial differences between the proportion of Liberal Democrat voters and those who would vote for no party who believed that MPs do not use power for their own personal gain, are dedicated to doing a good job for the public and are competent at their jobs. Liberal Democrats were also substantially more likely to

believe that MPs do not take bribes, although even more Conservative voters believed this. Notably more Labour voters thought that MPs set a good example in their private and more Conservatives thought MPs were in touch with the general public. Supporters of the minor parties were notably less likely to believe that MPs tell the truth.

Supporters of the main political parties tend to be more likely to consider it reasonable for an MP to consider party political factors when voting. Conservative and Labour Party voters were more likely to think that it was reasonable for MPs to consider what they believe will make their party more popular, how their leadership thinks they should vote, and what large financial donors to the party want the party to do. They are also more likely to see it

as reasonable that MPs consider what their local party members would want (see **Table 23** [page 67]). Only Liberal Democrats were substantially more likely to believe that it was reasonable for MPs to consider what their party's election manifesto promised and Labour voters alone were notably more likely to suggest that it was reasonable for MPs to consider how the decision might affect their political career and what would benefit the MP's family.

Table 21 Trust in professions by political affiliation

Trust in...	None (ref)	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Other	Multiple
Broadsheet journalists	41%	40%	40%	50%	42%	55%
TV news journalists	56%	60%	56%	63%	58%	55%
Tabloid journalists	14%	12%	16%	18%	13%	8%
Judges	79%	83%	81%	77%	74%	76%
Senior police officers	70%	72%	71%	69%	62%	54%*
MPs in general	30%	34%	33%	38%	17%*	16%
Your local MP	44%	46%	46%	56%	32%*	36%
Top civil servants	45%	42%	48%	51%	31%	39%
Government ministers	31%	34%	33%	43%*	24%	17%
People who run large companies	28%	36%*	33%	32%	24%	28%
Local councillors	49%	49%	57%*	58%	46%	39%

Table 22 Perceptions of MPs by political affiliation

Believe that MPs...	None (ref)	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Other	Multiple
...are dedicated to doing a good job for the public	28%	33%	25%	42%*	19%	23%
...do not use power for own personal gain	31%	35%	33%	44%*	23%	32%
...do not take bribes	61%	78%*	62%	76%*	61%	68%
...own up when make mistakes	10%	11%	12%	12%	8%	7%
...explain reasons for actions	21%	20%	23%	23%	18%	15%
...set a good example in private lives	17%	23%	23%*	25%	14%	10%
...tell the truth	20%	23%	20%	26%	12%*	12%
...make sure public money is spent wisely	17%	17%	18%	23%	13%	14%
...are in touch with the general public	15%	20%*	18%	22%	9%	9%
...are competent at their jobs	28%	32%	32%	39%*	20%	21%

Table 23 Factors that people think are reasonable for MPs to take into account when they decide how to vote in Parliament by political affiliation

Reasonable factors	None (ref)	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Other	Multiple
What the MP's party's election manifesto promised	70%	75%	71%	81%*	68%	81%
What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency	76%	82%	74%	82%	75%	84%
What would benefit people living in the country as a whole	81%	88%	82%	85%	76%	90%
What the MP's local party members would want	54%	70%*	62%*	67%*	53%	59%
How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote	37%	53%*	46%*	40%	38%	43%
What the MP personally believes to be right	61%	74%*	65%	64%	56%	63%
What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular	40%	56%*	51%*	42%	50%*	41%
How the decision might affect the MP's political career	31%	37%	40%*	36%	41%	33%
What would benefit the MP's family	20%	26%	29%*	26%	28%	16%
How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics	24%	29%	31%	28%	32%	18%
What large financial donors to the party want the party to do	22%	29%*	33%*	27%	22%	21%

Appendix C

Creating a typology of respondents

Only questions that were asked in every survey wave were included in the creation of the typology. This allows us to compare those respondents who fall into each of these categories across all surveys and determine if and how these groups may have changed between 2004 and 2012.

As in much of the analysis of individual questions, respondents were categorised as having either a positive or negative view for each item used to create this typology. For example, respondents who indicated that they thought standards in general were “very high” or “quite high” or those who thought at least half of MPs complied with a desired behaviour were categorised as holding positive views. Those who thought standards in general were “neither high nor low”, “quite low” or “very low” or respondents who thought fewer than half met desired norms of conduct were classified as holding negative views.

Mokken scale analysis was used to determine if survey items pertaining to a similar concept scaled together on a single latent variable.²¹ For each section of questions that were scaled together, a count variable was constructed to show on how many of these items a respondent held a positive opinion (as determined by the newly constructed dichotomous variable). Each count variable was then collapsed into a dichotomy showing if they held positive views on 50 per cent or more of the items or not. These new variables reflect:

- i. Overall standards and confidence in the authorities. Composed of:
 - a. Overall rating of standards of public office holders
 - b. How standards have changed over recent years (improved or not)
 - c. Confidence that authorities are committed to upholding standards
 - d. Confidence that authorities detect wrongdoing
 - e. Confidence that authorities punish wrongdoing when detected

- ii. Trust in public officials. Composed of trust in:
 - a. Judges
 - b. Senior police officers
 - c. Westminster MPs in general
 - d. The respondent’s local Westminster MP
 - e. Senior civil servants
 - f. Government ministers in Westminster
- iii. Trust in journalists. Composed of trust in:
 - a. Tabloid journalists
 - b. Broadsheet journalists
 - c. Television news journalists
- iv. Perceptions of MPs’ conduct. Composed of belief that the majority of MPs:
 - a. Are dedicated to doing a good job for the public
 - b. Do not use their power for their own personal gain
 - c. Do not take bribes
 - d. Own up when they make mistakes
 - e. Explain the reasons for their actions and decisions
 - f. Set a good example in their private lives
 - g. Tell the truth
 - h. Make sure public money is spent wisely
 - i. Are in touch with what the general public think is important
 - j. Are competent at their job
- v. Confidence in the media to detect wrongdoing

To determine if there are differences in the classification of respondents according to this typology, Chi-squared Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) is used. This technique uses significance testing to determine if differences in the dependent variable (here, a respondent’s classification in the typology) are statistically significant. It allows us to investigate not only if there are differences between groups split according to individual socio-demographic and political variables but it also helps to detect interactive effects between these variables.

However, as CHAID involves splitting the data set multiple times, a limited number of variables can be included in this analysis without the population of these sub-groups becoming too small for findings to be reliable. Therefore, this analysis is limited to four variables for which there are notable differences between the sub-groups created. Although not each of these splits creates sub-groups that are significantly different, these significant tests are largely impacted by the size of the groups compared. Those differences that are not significant are largely those in the third and fourth level of

²¹ Mokken scale analysis is a type of Item Response Theory which groups together any survey responses that can be considered to be expressions of a single broader attitude that cannot be directly measured, but reflects itself in a series of survey questions.

analysis. No attempts are made to divide any groups containing fewer than 40 respondents because we cannot be confident of the conclusions found from such a small number of cases.

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