

Survey of public attitudes towards conduct in public life

○ Summary of key findings

Prepared for the Committee on Standards in
Public Life

Prepared by BMRB Social Research;
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The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, SIR ALISTAIR GRAHAM

I am delighted to publish this report on the research into public attitudes about standards of conduct in public life. It was commissioned by the Committee and carried out by Bruce Hayward and colleagues at BMRB.

This is a substantial and authoritative piece of work. It is not a “quick and dirty” snapshot poll, but the culmination of nearly three years qualitative and quantitative work, initiated by my predecessor, Sir Nigel Wicks and his Committee. The research is the first of its kind, exploring public attitudes, expectations and perceptions of the behaviour of those in public life. It will, therefore, provide an important benchmark or baseline, which can be tracked over time.

The research demonstrates that the Seven Principles of Public Life (set out by the Committee in 1995) broadly reflect the views and priorities of the public. The results show that the public places a high priority on public office-holders:

- acting solely in the public interest (selflessness & integrity);
- on making appointments and awarding contracts on the basis of merit (objectivity); and
- on explaining the reasons for actions and decisions and in owning up when mistakes are made (accountability & openness).

However, the public places a high priority on a much broader definition of “honesty” than currently described by the Seven Principles. It is clear that the public wants public office-holders to be more honest or truthful about policies and services, acknowledging difficulties and competing pressures, and also admitting or owning up when things go wrong or have unintended consequences. The Committee will be reviewing the Seven Principles, in particular the descriptions that accompany each principle, in light of the results of the research.

This research gives some key pointers to the changes in behaviour that might start to address negative public perceptions and increase confidence in the political system. I would urge all those in public life to reflect on

the findings and consider how their own and their organisation’s behaviour matches up to the expectations placed upon them by the public. The results show that the public hold comprehensive and sophisticated views on standards of conduct in public life.



The Committee intends to repeat this quantitative research every two years, beginning in 2005/6. We hope that this will be an important measure of: the changes in public expectations and perceptions; the extent to which the gap between expectations and perceptions is being narrowed; and the effectiveness of work by this Committee and others concerned with ensuring the highest standards of conduct in public life.

I must thank the Committee’s Research Advisory Board, without whose unstinting and unpaid work over the past three years, this research would not have come to fruition. The Advisory Board is chaired by Hazel Genn CBE, Professor of Socio-Legal Studies at University College London and member of the Committee. Other members are:

- Professor Alan Doig
- Professor Charlie Jeffery
- Jean Martin
- Dr Mark Philp
- Peter Riddell
- Professor Alice Brown (until 31 March 2003)
- Deirdre Hutton CBE (until 31 March 2003)

Finally our thanks go to all those members of the public who gave up their time, in their own homes, to sit face to face with BMRB’s researchers to discuss and complete the detailed and comprehensive questionnaire. It is their insights that are presented in this report.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alistair Graham". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a long, thin horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to acknowledge the support provided during the course of the project by Robert Behrens, Richard Jarvis, Steve Pares and Trudy Payne of the Committee's Secretariat. We would also like to thank the Committee's Research Advisory Board, in particular Hazel Genn, Jean Martin and Mark Philp, for their input and feedback at all stages of the study. In the early stages of the research we had valuable discussions with Anthony Heath, Miles Hewstone, David Hine and Bridget Taylor, all at the University of Oxford, and we are grateful for the ideas and feedback that they provided. At BMRB, we would like to thank Anna Ullman for her work in the early stages

of the project and Patten Smith for his contributions to the research design and analysis. We would also like to thank the field management team at BMRB for its hard work during the fieldwork stage of the project, with particular thanks to Laurent Peacock, and all of the interviewers and supervisors from BMRB's fieldforce who carried out the interviews. Above all, we would like to thank the members of the general public who gave up their time to take part in the survey.

*Bruce Hayward, Ed Mortimer and Tim Brunwin
June 2004*

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Introduction

In March 2003 the Committee on Standards in Public Life commissioned BMRB Social Research to conduct a national survey of public attitudes towards the standards of conduct of public office-holders in Britain. The survey was part of a long-term study to establish a benchmark of public opinions about standards of conduct in public life and followed a preliminary stage of exploratory qualitative research conducted by the National Centre for Social Research in 2002.

The aims of the survey were:

- to establish what the public sees as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour on the part of elected and appointed holders of public office and the extent to which the Seven Principles of Public Life reflect public priorities;
- to assess how far the public believes that the behaviour of holders of public office is, for the most part, acceptable or unacceptable;
- and to assess how far the public believes that holders of public office are effectively held responsible and accountable for their conduct.

BMRB interviewed a nationally representative random sample of 1,097 adults aged 18 or over in Britain between 5 November 2003 and 7 March 2004. Interviews were carried out in respondents' homes using computer-assisted interviewing (CAPI). The response rate at addresses that fell within the scope of the survey in the sample was 53.7 per cent.

This is a summary of the full report published by the Committee on 8 September 2004. Copies of the full research report are available free of charge by telephoning 0800 6921516 or by e-mail: Standards.evidence@gtnet.gov.uk or by post from: The Committee on Standards in Public Life, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ or from the Committee's web site: www.public-standards.gov.uk.

1 The political context and influences on public opinion

The events that respondents said had influenced their views suggest a shift in emphasis from *sleaze* to *spin* as the key public concern in relation to standards in public life.

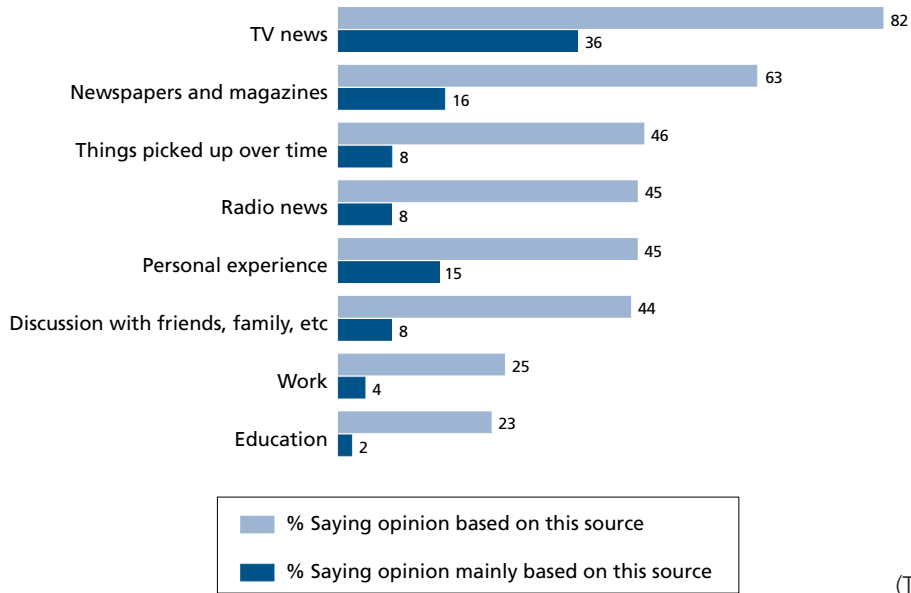
When asked about the basis of the opinions they had given in the survey, respondents were particularly likely to cite the media, especially television and the printed media, as having influenced their views, and less so to mention personal influences such as their own experience or their friends and family (Box 1).

The survey took place during a period when the political landscape was dominated by issues associated with the war against Iraq, in particular the criticisms levelled at the Government's dossier on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the death of Dr David Kelly and the ensuing inquiry by Lord Hutton. While only 39 per cent of respondents claimed that their opinions had been influenced by external events, these issues figured prominently among those that they mentioned as having had a bearing on their views (Box 2).

More generally, the influences that respondents cited are suggestive of a shift in emphasis from *sleaze* to *spin* as the key public concern in relation to standards in public life. The fact that the examples respondents gave almost invariably, if predictably, involved the alleged misconduct of those in public office reflects the emphasis on misconduct in media coverage of standards issues. If people's perception of the media as a key influence on their opinions is accepted as being valid, it follows that a potential consequence is for the public to have exaggeratedly negative perceptions of how those in public office behave.

Box 1 Self-reported influences on respondents' opinions

Base: All respondents (1,097)

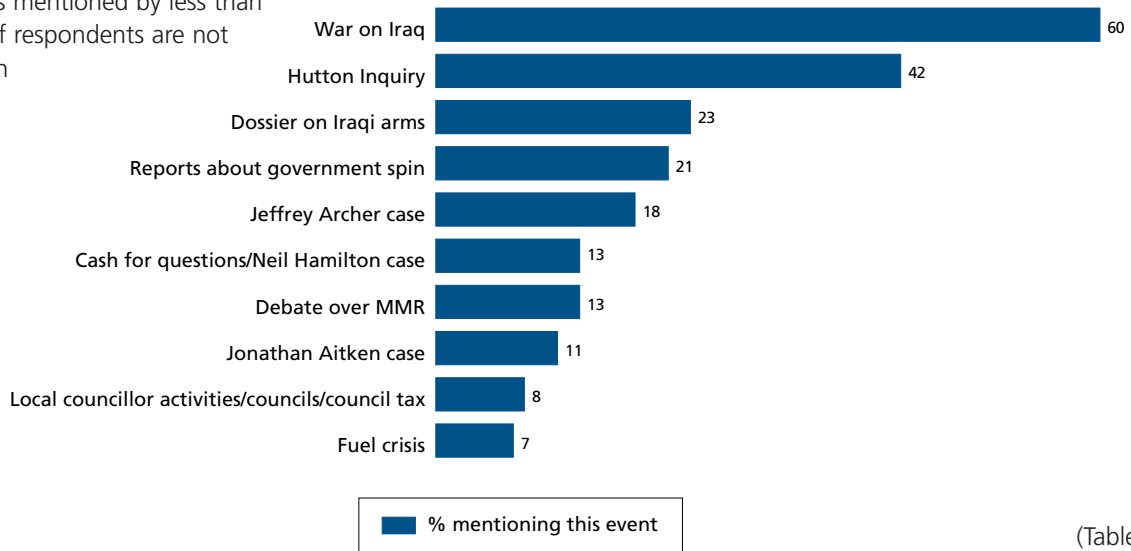


(Tables 142 and 143)¹

Box 2 Could you say what events might have influenced your answers?

Base: All respondents influenced by recent events (422)

Events mentioned by less than 5% of respondents are not shown



(Table 145)

¹ These figures refer to the source table in the full set of data tabulations, which has been issued separately and is available from www.public-standards.gov.uk or by post from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ.

2 Trust in public office-holders

People express higher levels of trust in 'frontline' professionals and those whom they perceive to be impartial or independent than they do in senior managers and administrators and those whom they perceive to be politically motivated.

The findings in this survey reflect patterns found elsewhere in research on trust in public office-holders, notably that people express higher levels of trust in 'frontline' professionals and those whom they perceive to be impartial or independent than they do in senior managers and administrators and those whom they perceive to be politically motivated.

When asked to say which of a number of professions – including a range of senior public office-holders and other professions – they trusted to tell the truth, more

than three quarters of respondents said that they trusted doctors, head teachers, judges and local police officers, while only a quarter said that they trusted MPs and government ministers. Levels of trust in other types of public office-holder – senior police officers, NHS managers, local councillors, senior civil servants and local authority managers – fell in between these two extremes (Box 3).

Interestingly, there was a significant gap between the proportion of respondents who said that they trusted their local MP (47 per cent) and the proportion who said that they trusted MPs in general (27 per cent). This might be seen as an indication that people trust party politics at the national level considerably less than they trust MPs in their constituency role.

Levels of trust varied by age and educational attainment. Trust in most professions was higher among young adults (aged 18-24) and those with higher education qualifications and lower among those with no educational qualifications.

Box 3 Which of these professions would you generally trust to tell the truth?

Base: All respondents (1,097)

Note: Public office-holders covered elsewhere in this research are shown in italics

| | Generally trusted to tell the truth? | | Net trust* |
|---|--------------------------------------|----|------------|
| | Yes | No | |
| | % | % | % |
| Family doctors | 92 | 7 | +85 |
| <i>Head teachers in schools</i> | 84 | 12 | +72 |
| Judges | 80 | 16 | +65 |
| Local police officers on the beat in your area | 77 | 17 | +60 |
| <i>Senior police officers</i> | 68 | 26 | +42 |
| Television news journalists | 49 | 46 | +3 |
| <i>Your local MP</i> | 47 | 45 | +2 |
| <i>Senior managers in the National Health Service</i> | 44 | 49 | -5 |
| <i>Local councillors</i> | 41 | 52 | -11 |
| <i>Top civil servants</i> | 37 | 53 | -16 |
| Journalists on newspapers like the <i>Times</i> , <i>Telegraph</i> or <i>Guardian</i> | 38 | 56 | -18 |
| <i>Senior managers in local councils</i> | 35 | 56 | -21 |
| <i>MPs in general</i> | 27 | 67 | -40 |
| People who run large companies | 24 | 68 | -43 |
| <i>Government ministers</i> | 24 | 70 | -46 |
| Estate agents | 20 | 75 | -55 |
| Journalists on newspapers like the <i>Sun</i> , <i>Mirror</i> or <i>Daily Star</i> | 7 | 89 | -83 |

* Net trust = % who would trust the profession to tell the truth minus the % who would not trust the profession to tell the truth

(Table 19)

3 Public expectations and priorities

Honesty and the public service ethic emerge as key priorities for the general public. Private behaviour emerges as a lower priority than public conduct, but is still regarded by most people as being important for both national politicians and appointed officials.

The survey findings show that the general public has high expectations of its elected and appointed representatives. The public expects senior public office-holders – whether elected or appointed – to uphold a wide range of values and principles in the way in which they behave. Of ten attributes, based on both values inherent in the Seven Principles and other values that emerged as public priorities in the exploratory research, nine – all concerned with the public role of office-holders – were regarded as extremely or very important for both elected and

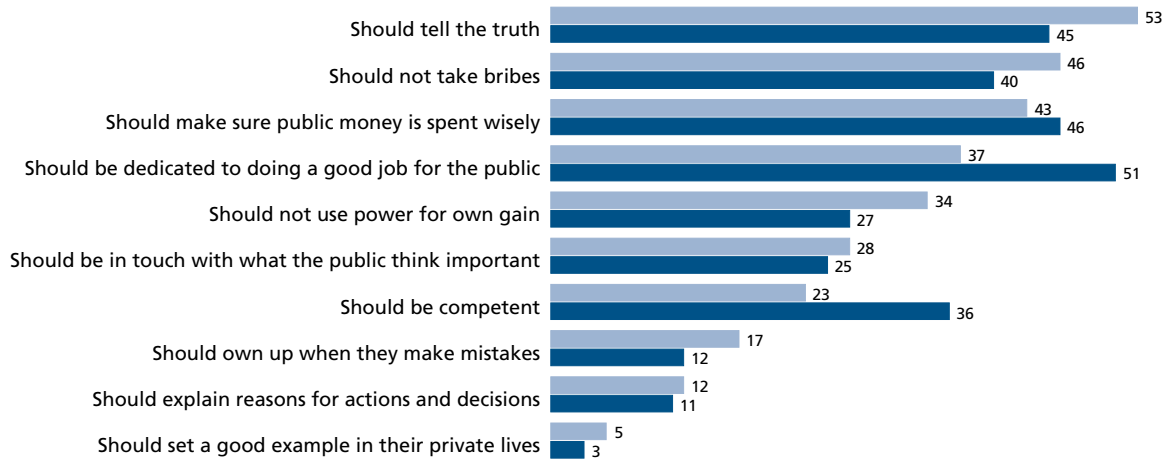
appointed officials by more than 80 per cent of respondents. Private behaviour emerges as a lower priority for the public when compared with public conduct, but is still regarded by most people as being important for both national politicians and appointed officials.

While the general public attaches considerable importance to a wide range of principles of conduct, honesty – defined in its broadest sense, rather than in the Committee’s sense of declaring and resolving conflicts of interest – and the public service ethic emerge as key priorities (Box 4).

Although the key priorities are broadly similar for elected and appointed officials, people place more emphasis on the importance of dedication to public service, competence and financial prudence in relation to appointed officials and of honesty, financial propriety and accountability in relation to national politicians.

Box 4 Most important attributes for national politicians and senior appointed officials

Base: All respondents (1,097)



■ % choosing as one of three most important attributes for national politicians
■ % choosing as one of three most important attributes for appointed officials

(Tables 31 and 78)

4 Perceptions of the behaviour of public office-holders

There is a widespread perception of a culture in which politicians try to cover up the mistakes that they make, which sits uncomfortably alongside a strongly expressed desire among the public for them to ‘come clean’.

Public perceptions of how national politicians behaved in relation to these same ten attributes revealed mixed views about the standards of conduct of MPs and government ministers (Box 5). While most people believe that overtly corrupt practices such as accepting bribes are the exception rather than the rule, and the majority credit at least a reasonable proportion of national politicians with being competent and dedicated to public service, the public is less charitable in its judgements of the honesty with which politicians communicate with the public, reflecting the earlier finding on levels of trust.

MPs and government ministers are particularly poorly rated on handling mistakes – *there is a widespread perception of a culture in which politicians try to cover up the mistakes that they make, which sits uncomfortably alongside a strongly expressed desire among the public for them to ‘come clean’.*

In general, the findings suggest that people tend not to discriminate between government ministers and MPs in the way in which they perceive politicians to

behave, although MPs tended to receive slightly higher ratings than government ministers who were particularly likely to be perceived as being out of touch with public priorities.

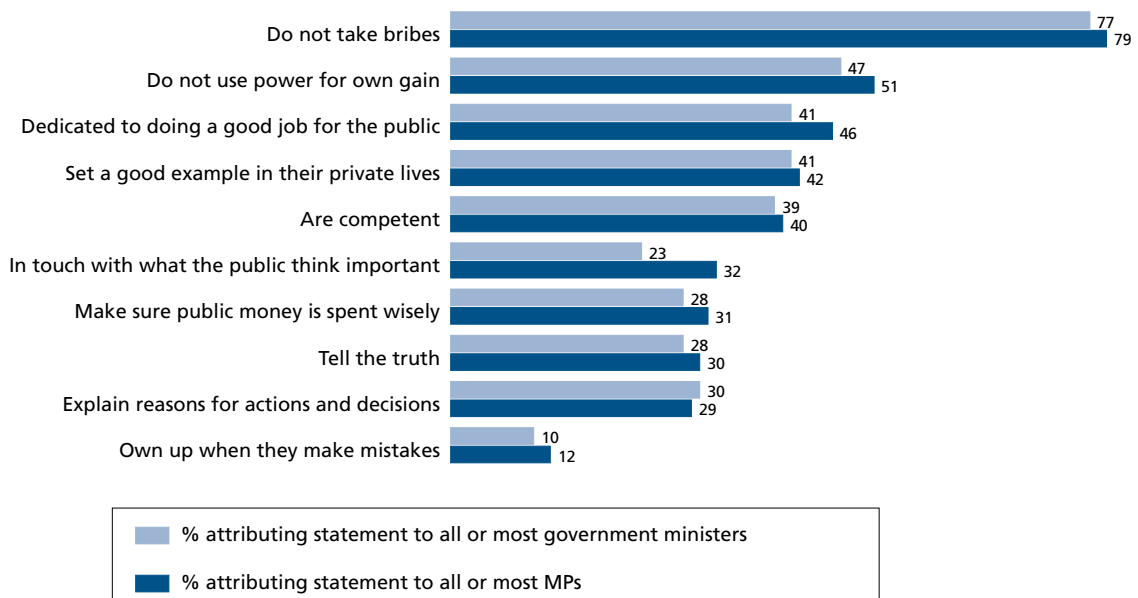
While these results do not portray national politicians in Britain in a particularly positive light, they generally echo the findings of other research on a similar theme. Thus, while the results show that people have, at best, mixed views about the standards of conduct of MPs and government ministers, this is not in itself a new or surprising finding.

The more detailed findings indicate that confidence in the behaviour of national politicians is somewhat higher than average among groups that would be expected to be relatively well informed about politics – those with higher education qualifications, readers of broadsheet newspapers, those with a political party affinity and those with an interest in current affairs.

Perceptions of appointed officials and local politicians also reflected the findings on levels of trust in public office-holders, with head teachers generally perceived quite positively and senior police officers more highly regarded than either senior managers in the NHS, senior civil servants or elected and appointed local authority officials (Box 6). In common with national politicians, there was a tendency for respondents to rate appointed officials and local politicians less positively in relation to the handling of mistakes than in relation to other attributes.

Box 5 Statements attributed to all or most MPs and government ministers

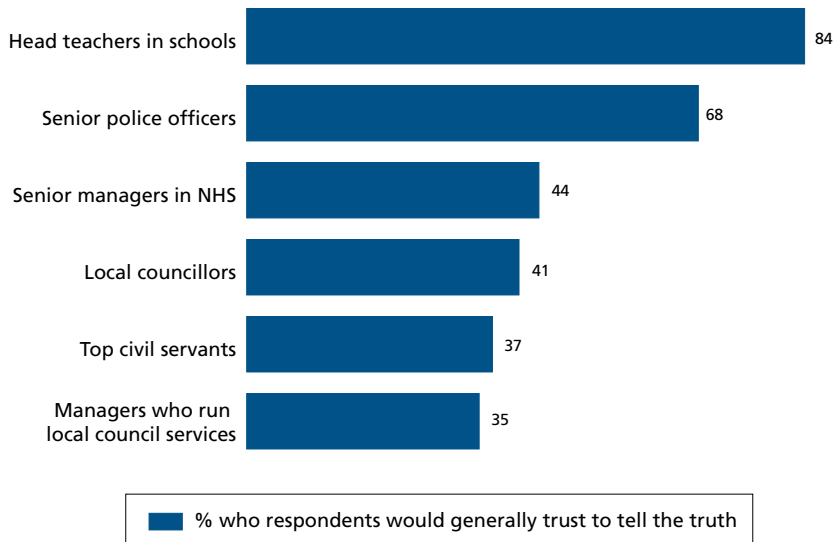
Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Tables 42 and 53)

Box 6 Trust in senior public officials

Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Table 19)

5 MPs and voting in Parliament

The general public tends to reject party loyalties and political leadership as legitimate influences on MPs' decisions and firmly rejects self-interest as a guiding principle.

In their views on what should and should not influence MPs when voting on important national issues in Parliament, **the general public tends to reject party loyalties and political leadership as legitimate influences on MPs' decisions and firmly rejects self-interest as a guiding principle.** Instead people believe that MPs should vote on the basis of the public interest (the 'Selflessness' Principle) and they value personal integrity and independence of opinion over adherence to the party line.

The overriding importance that the general public attaches to the public interest as a guiding principle for MPs' voting behaviour is affirmed by the finding that 94 per cent of respondents considered "what

would benefit people in the country as a whole" as a reasonable basis on which to vote, 62 per cent choosing this as the most important of ten possible factors. In contrast, only 32 per cent of respondents thought it reasonable for an MP to consider the wishes of his or her party leadership when deciding how to vote and less than one per cent thought that the views of the party leadership should be the key factor that dictated MPs' voting.

While the majority of respondents believed that decisions on voting behaviour should be guided above all by the public interest, only ten per cent felt that most MPs would vote on this basis in practice (Box 7). Instead, the most widely held perception was that voting behaviour would be dictated by party political considerations, 21 per cent feeling that most MPs would vote according to the expectations of their party leadership and 17 per cent feeling that they would vote on the basis of what would make their party more popular. There was, however, little evidence to suggest that people felt that MPs voted on the basis of self-interest.

Box 7 What people think most MPs would base their decision on in practice versus what they think is the most important thing for MPs to take into account

Base: All respondents (1,097)

| | Most important thing to take into account % | What most MPs would base decision on in practice % |
|--|--|--|
| How the MP's party leadership thinks he or she should vote | * | 21 |
| What the MP thinks will make his or her party more popular with the general public | 1 | 17 |
| What the MP personally believes to be right | 8 | 12 |
| How the decision might affect the MP's political career | * | 11 |
| What the MP's party's election manifesto promised | 10 | 10 |
| What would benefit people living in the country as a whole | 62 | 10 |
| What would benefit people living in the MP's local constituency | 15 | 7 |
| What the MP's local party members would want | 2 | 6 |
| How the decision might affect the MP's chances of getting a job outside politics | * | 1 |
| What would benefit the MP's family | * | 1 |
| Don't know | * | 4 |

(Tables 65 and 66)

6 Views on public sector recruitment practice

While people believe that appointments to public office should be based on the principle of selection on merit, there is a widespread perception that formal procedures are often bypassed in favour of cronyism.

There is widespread approval among the general public of selection on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as a guiding principle in public sector recruitment. Efficiency, though widely regarded as important, is generally seen as a secondary consideration. Selection on merit emerges as a key priority for the general public, 53 per cent of respondents rating the principle of awarding public sector jobs to the best candidates as the most important of seven criteria, while the second most popular option – ensuring that all applicants for a job had a fair chance of success – was chosen by 28 per cent. Efficiency-based criteria were rarely considered to be the most important (Box 8).

The more detailed findings show that the more highly qualified a person and the more advanced they are in a professional, ‘white collar’ career, the more likely they are to prioritise selection on merit as a recruitment principle. Hence, those with higher education qualifications, full-time students and those in managerial and professional occupations were all

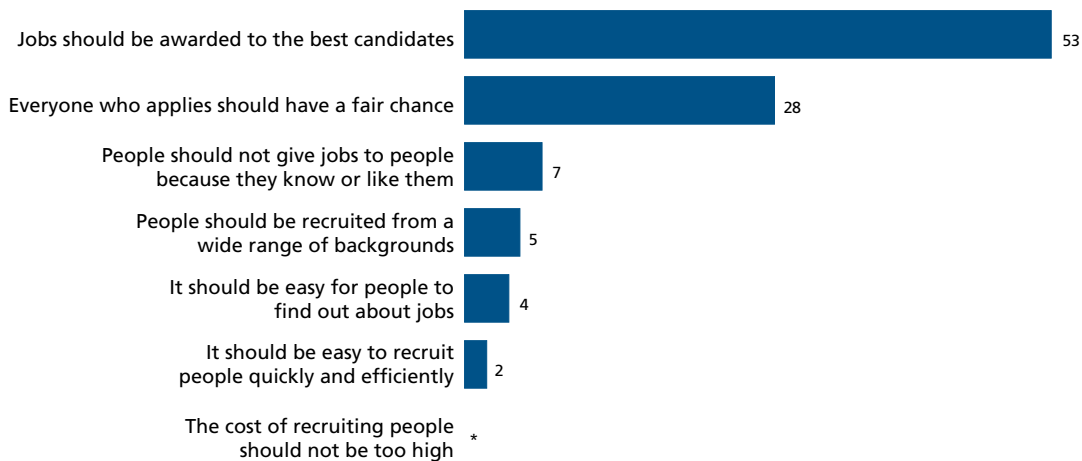
particularly likely to rate the principle of awarding jobs to the best candidates as the most important of the seven criteria.

The public’s concern that competition for public sector jobs should be fair is also apparent in their firm rejection of cronyism in public sector recruitment. In the context of their views on what help or advice a council official should be allowed to give a friend who was a potential candidate for a senior council job, respondents widely rejected the notion that the official should provide the friend with privileged information or should try to put pressure on the interviewing committee to appoint the friend (Box 9).

However, there is a clear disparity between public expectations and perceptions in this respect. While people believe that appointments to public office should be based on the principle of selection on merit, there is a widespread perception that formal procedures are often bypassed in favour of cronyism: 68 per cent of respondents felt that people in public office got jobs through someone they knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’. Furthermore, the belief that this practice is on the increase is more prevalent than the view that it is in decline. While perceptions in relation to cronyism did not vary substantially between sub-groups, those with higher educational qualifications, readers of broadsheet newspapers and younger respondents all tended to express less cynical views on the subject than others.

Box 8 Most important of seven criteria for making public appointments

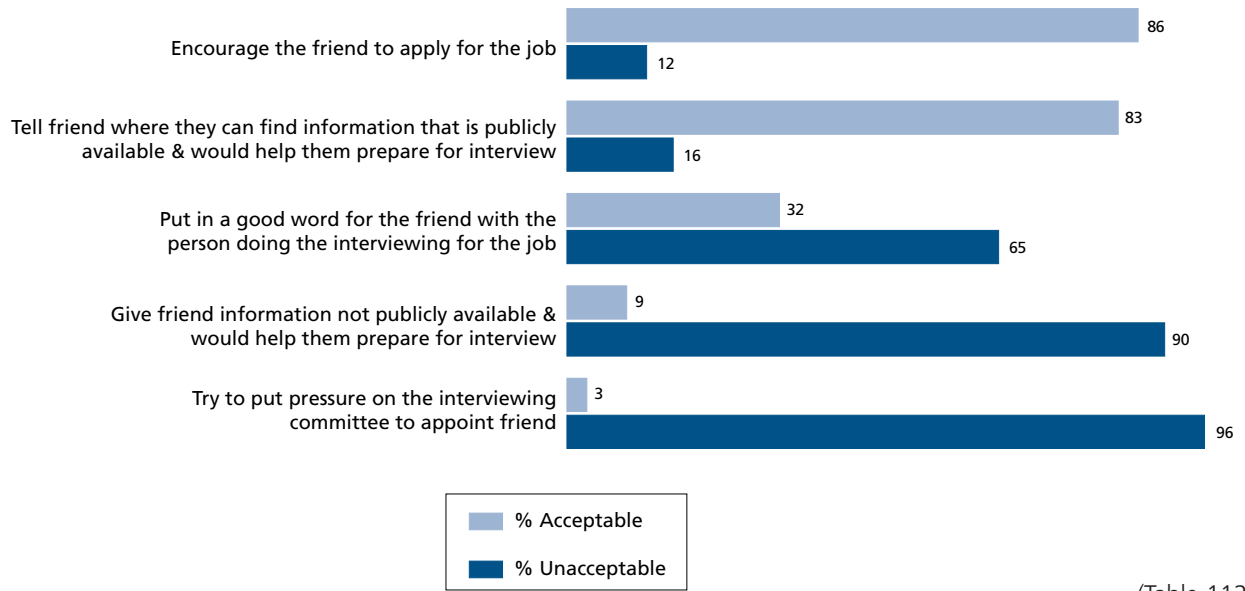
Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Table 121)

Box 9 Perceptions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in recruitment situations

Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Table 112)

7 Media scrutiny and the private lives of public office-holders

On the whole people accepted that there were limits to the extent to which senior public office-holders should expect the media to examine their private lives.

The finding that most people think it important that senior public office-holders maintain high standards in their private behaviour is reflected in views about media scrutiny of the private lives of public servants. The majority of respondents felt that senior public office-holders, irrespective of their position, should accept a certain level of media examination of their private behaviour (Box 10).

The fact that people consider it more important for national politicians than for appointed officials to set a good example in their private lives is also reflected in their views on media scrutiny. While around 75 per cent of respondents felt that national politicians

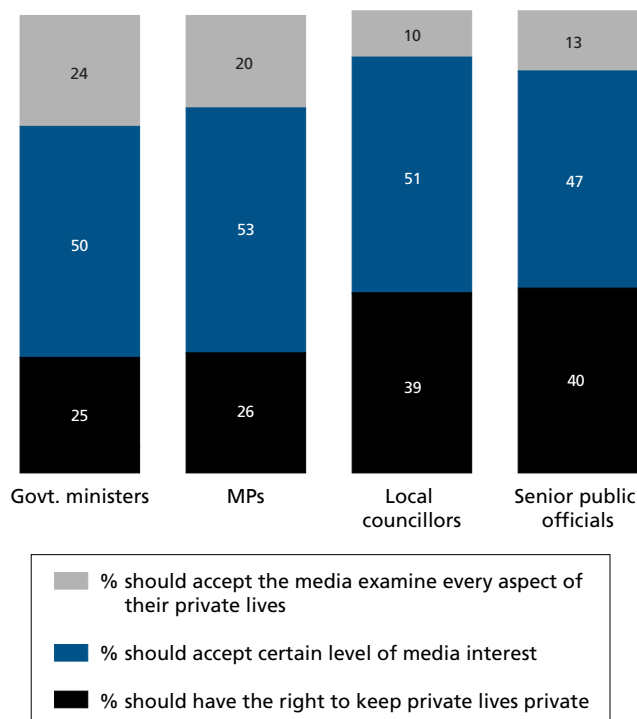
should accept at least a certain level of media interest in their private lives, only around 60 per cent applied the same stipulation to appointed senior public officials and local councillors.

On the whole people accepted that there were limits to the extent to which senior public office-holders should expect the media to examine their private lives. However, a sizeable minority of respondents (24 per cent in the case of government ministers and 20 per cent in the case of MPs) thought that national politicians should accept that the media examine every aspect of their private lives. In relation to senior public officials and local councillors, these proportions fell to 13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Opinions on this issue were broadly similar across different sub-groups. However, young people (aged 18-24) were more likely than other age groups to advocate the right to privacy.

Box 10 Extent to which people feel that public office-holders should expect scrutiny of their private lives

Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Tables 125 – 128)

8 Public office-holders and accountability

People are more confident that wrongdoing will be uncovered by the media than through official channels, although most think that standards in public life will improve as a result of the Committee’s work.

Although mistrust of the media – in particular the tabloid press – is relatively widespread, people nonetheless see the media as an effective channel for policing the behaviour of public office-holders and perceive it to perform this role more successfully than official activity does. Although more than half of respondents felt confident that the authorities were committed to improving standards in public life, only about 40 per cent felt confident that the authorities

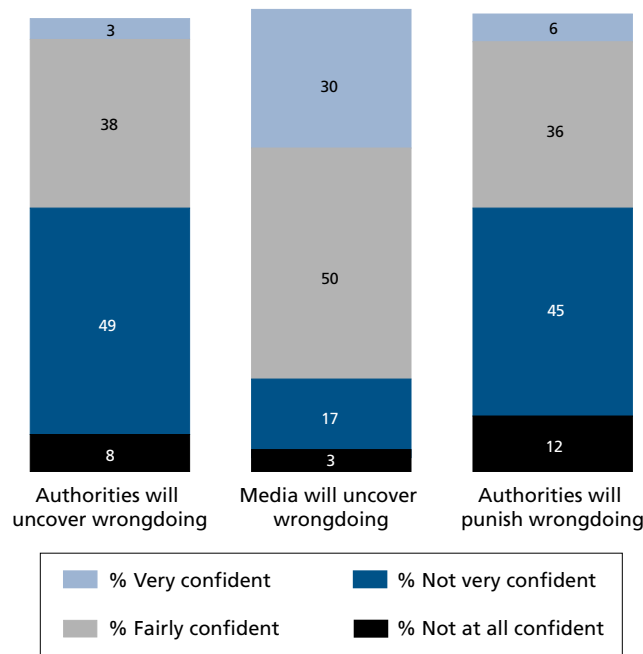
would either uncover or punish wrongdoing in public office. In contrast, 79 per cent were confident that the media would expose wrongdoing (Box 11).

This finding is not surprising: media activity in exposing the misdemeanours (or alleged misdemeanours) of public figures is much more visible to the general public than official activity in this sphere and it seems likely that, even when official activity in exposing wrongdoing is reported in the media, some people would attribute the activity itself to the media.

In this context, it is encouraging that 73 per cent of respondents, when told about the type of work that the Committee does, thought that standards in public life would improve as a result of this work, albeit most of them anticipating that the gain would be minor rather than significant (Box 12).

Box 11 Confidence that wrongdoing will be uncovered and punished

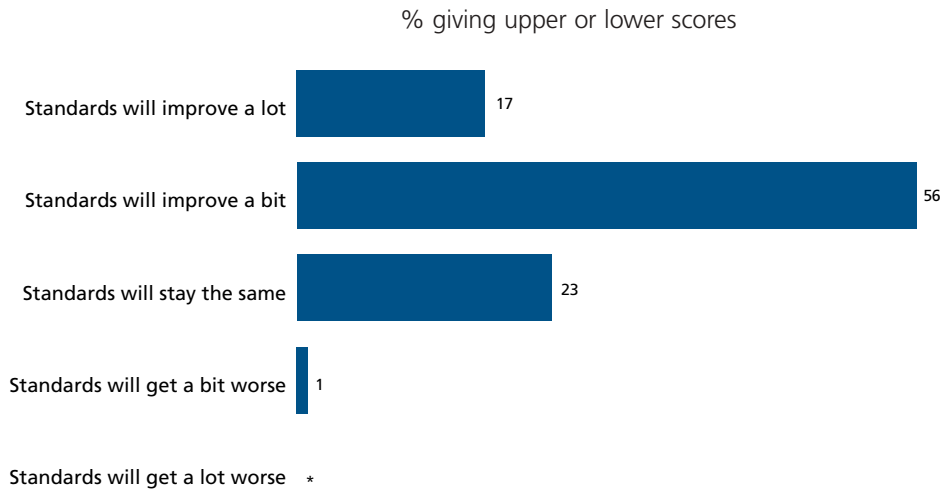
Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Tables 136 and 137)

Box 12 What effect people think Committee measures will have on standards in public life

Base: All respondents (1,097)



(Table 139)

9 Overall perceptions of standards in public life

For the most part British people perceive the standards of conduct of public office holders in their own country to be as high as or higher than average for Europe.

Although, when asked in detail about different aspects of behaviour in relation to different types of public office-holder, people tend to be quite critical, overall perceptions of the standards of conduct of public office-holders in Britain are, in the main, either neutral or guardedly positive. Forty-five per cent of respondents felt that overall standards were quite or very high, although only three per cent thought that they were ‘very high’. Forty-two per cent rated standards overall as neither high nor low, while only ten per cent thought that they were quite low and one per cent that they were very low.

Opinion was divided on whether standards were improving or deteriorating or had remained unchanged in recent years. While 28 per cent of respondents felt that standards had improved, when

compared with a few years ago, and 30 per cent that they had deteriorated, the largest group (38 per cent) felt that standards had remained the same. Among those who perceived a change, either for the better or for the worse, most thought that the change had been slight rather than significant.

For the most part British people perceive the standards of conduct of public office-holders in their own country to be as high as or higher than average for Europe. Thirty-three per cent of respondents felt that standards of conduct were higher than average in Britain and a further 45 per cent felt that they were about average. Only 14 per cent thought that they were lower than average for Europe.

In common with findings elsewhere in the survey, overall perceptions of public office-holders did not differ markedly between sub-groups within the population. However, those with higher education qualifications, readers of broadsheet newspapers and Labour supporters – all groups that expressed a higher than average level of confidence in national politicians – were all more likely than average to rate standards overall as being high.

10 Conclusions

The Seven Principles of Public Life largely succeed in articulating public expectations of the conduct of senior public office-holders, although the Committee might wish to consider whether the Principles should embrace a broader definition of 'honesty', in order better to reflect the value that the general public attaches to the principle of 'telling the truth'.

How far public confidence in the honesty of public office-holders, and of national politicians in particular, can be increased, is open to question – the absence of trust in politicians is so widespread as to make a disparity between public expectations and perceptions seem inevitable. The fact that so many people think that MPs should vote on the basis of the public interest, and not according to the party line, suggests that they feel that party politics is somehow at odds with the public interest or, at least, is more concerned with the partisan interests of politicians than with the needs of the country. While this mood of suspicion of party politics prevails, it is likely to colour people's views of politicians' behaviour and, arguably by association, their views of senior managers and administrators in the public sector.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

Terms of reference

The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established, under the chairmanship of the Rt Hon The Lord Nolan, by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon John Major, in October 1994, with the following terms of reference:

“To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life.”

The term “holders of public office” includes: Ministers, civil servants and advisers; Members of Parliament and UK Members of the European Parliament; members and senior officers of all NDPBs and of NHS bodies; non-Ministerial office-holders; members and other senior officers of other bodies discharging publicly-funded functions; and elected members and senior officers of local authorities.

On 12 November 1997, the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Tony Blair MP announced additional terms of reference:

“To review issues in relation to the funding of political parties, and to make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements.”

The Committee is an independent advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB). The Prime Minister appoints its members for renewable periods of up to three years.

The remit of the Committee excludes investigation of individual allegations of misconduct.

Membership of the Committee as at 1 September 2004

Sir Alistair Graham (Chairman), Rita Donaghy OBE, Professor Hazel Genn CBE, Dame Patricia Hodgson DBE, Baroness Maddock, The Rt Hon Gillian Shephard DL MP, The Rt Hon Chris Smith MP, Dr Elizabeth Vallance, Dr Brian Woods-Scawen DL.



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