
Overlooked But Decisive

Connecting with England's
Just About Managing classes

James Frayne



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James has worked for a number of high-profile organisations in politics and the corporate world. He was Campaign Director of the successful North East Says No campaign in the 2004 referendum and began his career as a policy researcher at Business for Sterling, the anti-euro campaign.

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Contents

	About the Author	2
	Acknowledgements	4
1	Introduction: The Just About Managing Classes	5
2	Analysing England's Permanent Marginal Seats	11
3	Swing Seats and the Just About Managing Classes	16
4	The Values of those Just About Managing	25
5	The Issues of England's Marginal Seats	40
6	Reaching England's C1/C2 Voters	59
7	Conclusion: Connecting with those Just About Managing	62

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1

Introduction: The Just About Managing Classes

Building the right society

C1 and C2 voters make up just under half of the population. Creating a satisfied and settled society depends heavily on their prosperity and welfare. These families tend to own their own homes, they work hard in both the private and public sectors, and they have a very strong commitment to family life. They make the country work.

These provincial English families are a long way from the stereotype of the middle class residents of the Home Counties. They are not privately educated; they do not live in large homes in leafy suburbs; they do not drive new so-called “Chelsea Tractors”; and they do not take expensive annual skiing holidays. While they are not poor, they do not have significant disposable incomes and they do not set aside large sums for their retirement.

These families are independent and want to get on with their lives, but they depend on Government. They rely heavily on public services – particularly state schools and the health service. And with home ownership common but the cost of living relatively high, they rely on a stable economy, low inflation and low interest rates to keep them in permanent employment and to make mortgage payments manageable. The C1/C2 families of provincial England are the “Just About Managing” classes – people who just manage to get by each month but whose resilience to economic shocks is not high.

Both main parties should be seeking to help improve the everyday lives and the life chances of the Just About Managing classes – and to extend the middle class in which they sit more generally. Governments need to ensure that this huge section of the population – families that work hard, pay their taxes and play by the rules – get the support they need. It is also important that they see society being run in a fair way – where people *get and are seen to get* what they deserve from life. The Just About Managing classes need proportionate attention to their size.

Despite their fundamental importance, politicians have often collectively overlooked the concerns of the C1/C2 families over the last decade. While the Conservatives gradually evolved a policy programme over the last Parliament that was more attractive to C1/C2 voters – with welfare reform being the obvious example – political rhetoric and policy development in recent times have generally focused on the top and bottom – on the needs of businesses, or on those families that depend on welfare. It has become something of a Westminster trend that politicians of all parties give speeches that primarily amplify the concerns of those on benefits.

Often vulnerable, these poorer families unquestionably need serious support, and politicians and Government have a clear moral duty to provide it. That is completely beyond question. But by focusing ever more closely on families on benefits in their campaigning and media announcements, as well as on entrepreneurs and businesses, politicians have often effectively sent the message to C1/C2 families that their lives are not worth worrying about. This needs to change and political debate needs to become more mainstream.

Over the course of the next year, Policy Exchange will be developing policy ideas to address the challenges the Just About Managing classes face in their everyday lives – and ideas that appeal to their concerns.

The Just About Managing classes and parliamentary majorities

Prioritising the improvement of the lives of C1/C2 families and addressing their concerns will make for a better society but it is good politics too. It will give both parties the chance of building majorities in future elections.

These make up the majority of the electorate in most marginal seats, which are disproportionately found across provincial England. They have coherent values

“Building a happy and settled society – and winning elections – depends above all on seeking to help the majority of families”

and concerns, and they are politically open-minded. While they split for the Conservatives this time around, they are not tribal and it is clear they will vote for either Labour or the Conservatives. No other groups come as close to these

voters in political importance, and neither of the main parties has a permanent lock on their loyalties. Whoever wins most of these Just About Managing families can reasonably expect to be walking into Downing Street with a decent majority.

Culturally and practically, Labour have furthest to travel as they try to speak to provincial English C1/C2 families. Under Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband they gradually lost touch with them. The Labour Party is seen as the party of people on benefits, of those on low pay, and of trade unionists. Many Labour activists will no doubt be proud of such an identity, but it is not one that will help them secure power in coming elections.

The party does need to rebuild entirely in Scotland, but while they would have been competitive in the last election if they had carried Scotland like in previous elections, it would be wrong to rely on a political strategy of “more of the same – and sort out Scotland.” For Labour, securing majorities depends on doing what Tony Blair did and connecting with the English middle class more broadly. A number of senior Labour politicians are making this point forcefully in the aftermath of their 2015 defeat, although it is an open question as to whether they take this more sensible route.

The Conservatives are in a better frame of mind to attract these voters and have exercised a better political approach in recent times. They clearly tapped into C1/C2 voters’ concerns in last couple of years before the election – and during the election campaign itself. Iain Duncan Smith’s welfare reforms clearly put the party on the side of hard working people and George Osborne’s last two budgets were clearly heavily focused on this demographic, as was the Northern Powerhouse project. He is a politician that understands the power of the Just About Managing classes.

But the party still needs to do more if they are to build workable majorities that will allow them to remake the country as they hope. The Conservatives have only relatively recently begun to aggressively court the C1/C2 vote and these voters' concerns do not run through the DNA of the party.

A number of iconic policies – such as welfare reform – coupled with a highly focused and competent campaign, contributed heavily to Labour's defeat in the 2015 election. But the party cannot unthinkingly rely on C1/C2 support. Too often in the last two Parliaments, the party, consciously or not, chose to amplify niche issues like the environment or to position themselves primarily with small groups of voters like metropolitan centrists (who are tiny in number) or, increasingly, rhetorically at least, those on benefits. And while the party's commitment to free markets and economic stability should be applauded – along with their opposition to the excesses of Ed Miliband's populism – until very late in the Parliament, two of the party's highest profile tax cuts were focused on businesses (cutting corporation tax) and higher earners (cutting the 50p tax rate).

The focus on business and those on benefits has inevitably made little impact on the party's long-term brand and the Conservatives are weighed down with an ongoing reputation of being the party of the rich and of business. This is strongly felt across the country, including amongst these crucial C1/C2 voters. Some in the party will continue to call for the Conservatives to deal with their image problems by overwhelmingly focusing on families on benefits – essentially, showing that “the rich” care about “the poor”. The party, now in Government, should do everything in their power to help those that need it. But building a happy and settled society – and winning elections which bring workable majorities – depend above all on seeking to help the majority of families. Assuming vast swathes of the country do not need any support and can be left to look after themselves makes no sense morally or politically.

Our research programme

Extensive new Policy Exchange opinion research reveals just how important C1/C2 voters are to Labour and the Conservatives as they seek to secure Parliamentary majorities in future – and how much each party needs to do to attract these voters.

Polling in March and April, a month before the election, our research focused on England's “permanent swing seats” – the seats that have been in close contention in the last few elections, and that are likely to remain close in the next few coming elections. We polled voters in those seats that, before the election, the Conservatives would need to take to secure a working majority of 50, and those seats that Labour would need to take to secure the same working majority. (The 2015 election results inevitably change the battleground to an extent – but this group of seats was chosen because it will likely always cover the core battleground between Labour and Conservative.)

Our research focused on long-term, structural issues and values, rather than on temporary/timely issues. We avoided questions about personalities, issues arising from the election and their views on Government and Opposition performance at the time of the poll or in the previous Parliament. The aim was to work out what people really think and feel about politics, the economy and society as a whole, rather than to work out what they happened to think about the election.

We also used YouGov's massive and revolutionary "Profiles" database to deeply probe the lifestyle choices, values and political views of voters on a constituency by constituency basis. Profiles gives political analysts a phenomenally powerful tool that has never existed before, allowing us to look in extreme detail at voters' lives and into their hearts and minds. Together this research provides a richly detailed and comprehensive look at who makes up England's marginal seats and allows us to set out a recommended strategy for the parties.

The values and issues of the Just About Managing classes

Voters are primarily emotional rather than rational. They do not make up their minds on the basis of a long, reasoned calculation of what is good for them and for the country. They make up their minds on what the parties make them feel. That is why we need to understand their values as well as their specific concerns about issues. We need to understand why they take certain positions on issues and ideas. We asked about both in detail in our research programme.

When we asked voters about their own values, their perceptions of the parties' values and who the parties stood for, it became clear that both Labour and the Conservatives need to take significant action to secure the longer-term loyalty of C1/C2 voters. Both have some brand problems with these crucial swing voters – problems which mean their future behaviour at the ballot box is unpredictable.

One of the most powerful questions in politics is the following: whose side are you on? C1/C2 voters are clear that Labour are not on their side. They believe, along with voters as a whole, that Labour stand for people on low incomes, trade unionists and people on benefits. This reflects the reality of the party's governing agenda and campaigning agenda over the last decade.

However, more encouragingly for the Labour Party, many of their perceived values are still similar to those the public claim for their own. Given a list of 27 options, the public, including C1/C2 voters, say their own values are family, fairness, hard work and decency. Labour's perceived values, even if they do not marry the interest groups to whom the party is seen to be on the side of, are equality, fairness, family and hard work. There is clearly something to build on here as the party considers its strategy for this Parliament and beyond.

While the Conservatives' increasingly attractive policy focus over the last Parliament paid dividends at the 2015 election, party strategists are right to consider how they can continue to improve their brand for the future. The party is often seen to be primarily on the side of rich people and businesspeople. Furthermore, their perceived values are thought to be entrepreneurship, tradition, hard work and ambition. While hard work plays well with the public, their other perceived values are down the list of public affection. The Conservatives are not considered to be strong on the values of family and fairness, which is a problem that needs addressing.

Understanding the power of family and fairness is extremely important in understanding all voters, but particularly the Just About Managing classes. It affects everything, including their policy priorities for the parties.

What do these values mean in practice? While they are arguably abstract terms, the rest of the poll makes it clear that, for ordinary people, "family" means prioritising the health, happiness and safety of those closest to you. This is a broad definition perhaps, but one that is incredibly powerfully held

nonetheless – and one that politicians ignore at their peril. “Fairness” means making sure that people’s efforts are rewarded and that people do not get “something for nothing”.

The top issues for the public in these “permanent” marginal seats are the following: (a) improving the quality of the health system; (b) controlling the level of immigration; (c) keeping the cost of living down; (d) reducing poverty and the gap between rich and poor; and (e) keeping the country safe from terrorism and threats abroad. C1/C2 voters have the same policy priorities but they take controlling immigration and keeping the cost of living down more seriously than most other groups.

Improving the quality of the health service, keeping the cost of living down, and keeping the country safe reflect their focus on family. Protecting their family and providing for them is a hugely powerful instinct. Controlling immigration and reducing the gap between rich and poor both reflect the public’s desire for fairness. (Other research has shown that, on immigration, while numbers are important, what the public really want to ensure is a perceived level playing field on issues like welfare).

Improving the Conservatives’ standing with women

The Conservatives’ problem with women was widely discussed over the last Parliament. To a large extent, this was overdone. Women have been less likely overall than men to vote Tory, but more women voted Tory than Labour in both the 2010 and 2015 elections. What our research revealed is that the Conservatives have a potential problem with these middle class women in marginal seats – one that does not exist nationally.

Nationally, according to Ipsos-Mori’s post-election estimate, as expected male and female ABs voted Conservative, and male and female DEs voted Labour. Again, nationally, and as a whole, C1/C2 voters seem to have voted Conservative. However, our polling (taken before the election) showed that while C1/C2 men and women were planning nationally to vote Conservative, in the marginals C1/C2 men were planning to vote Tory by a large amount while C1/C2 women were evenly divided. In other words, the Conservatives seem to be struggling to convert women from the Just About Managing classes of provincial England.

Those that think women require a “softer” approach to politics and a much stronger focus on traditionally “women’s issues” are largely mistaken. It is true that C1/C2 class women are more concerned about the cost of living, the health service and childcare than men. But these same female voters are more concerned than men about immigration, keeping the country safe from terrorism, discipline in schools, health tourism and weak sentencing.

This is explained in part by their values. C1/C2 women are hugely more likely to name “family” as one of their own defining values (56 per cent say this, compared to 35 per cent of C1 and C2 men) and they also rate fairness personally more highly. When asked about perceived Tory values, these women were less likely than men to say the party stood for either family or fairness. The Conservative values problem is therefore even more serious for women voters.

Appealing to C1/C2 women voters should follow the model for these middle class voters as a whole. Both Labour and the Conservatives need to embrace and project the values of family and fairness – not least by developing policies that

bring these values to life. This means policies that help these families' everyday lives and those that correct perceived unfairness within the country as a whole.

We can draw the same sort of lesson for public sector workers – another group of voters that Conservatives worry about. While public sector voters as a whole in marginal seats were planning to vote Tory and Labour in similar numbers, our polling showed that C1 and C2 voters in both the public sector and the private sector were planning to vote Conservative – and by a similarly large margin. This reflects the fact that – by and large – public and private sector workers have the same values and the same policy priorities. While C1/C2 public sector workers are a little less likely to worry about financial issues, they take a hard line on issues like controlling immigration, keeping the country safe from terrorism, reducing health tourism and ending the automatic release of prisoners (presumably because these issues are more visible to them in the public sector).

2

Analysing England's Permanent Marginal Seats

The importance of provincial England

Our research programme focused on the 134 seats in the “permanent” electoral battleground. We surveyed the seats that, before the recent election, would have been enough to give the Conservatives a workable majority of 50 if they had won them, or would have been enough to give Labour a workable majority of 50 if they had won them. Almost by definition the seats that form the electoral battleground change over time as the support for parties rises and falls, but this group of seats will likely always cover the core battleground between Labour and the Conservatives. In other words, they are not temporary swing seats that happen to be up for grabs because of a one-off, unexpected shift in public attitudes or demographics.

Of these 134 seats, we removed Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish seats, which are primarily decided by national politics and not all of which are contested by all the main parties. While voters across the United Kingdom have much in common, particularly in terms of values, the political conversations in the nations that make up the UK are very different. As we saw at the recent election, this is true for Labour particularly, but all the parties need specific strategies for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and this is beyond the scope of this document. This leaves us with 119 English seats, which we focus on here.

There are three main clusters of seats. Firstly, there are 24 seats in London and the South East. Secondly, there are 16 in the South West of England. Thirdly, and most importantly, there are 73 seats that sit in the “heart of England” – a relatively coherent cluster, concentrated in the industrial spine of the country, which runs from just South of Middlesbrough to Luton, and from Birmingham to Peterborough. There is also a small group of half a dozen seats in the rural and coastal East of England.

While the South West region has generally been a Lib Dem/Tory battleground, and might become so again if the Lib Dems recover post their 2015 devastation, the table below shows that the battleground in most marginal seats, and particularly in the heart of England, is fought between Labour and the Conservatives.

Table 1: Our sample of marginal seats

Constituency name	Held by	Challenger	Region
Derby North	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Gedling	Labour	Conservative	East Midlands
Nottingham South	Labour	Conservative	East Midlands
Derbyshire North East	Labour	Conservative	East Midlands
Sherwood	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Broxtowe	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Amber Valley	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Lincoln	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Corby	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Northampton North	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Erewash	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Loughborough	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
High Peak	Conservative	Labour	East Midlands
Luton South	Labour	Conservative	Eastern
Thurrock	Conservative	Labour UKIP	Eastern
Norwich South	Labour	Conservative	Eastern
Waveney	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Bedford	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Ipswich	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Stevenage	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Watford	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Norwich North	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Great Yarmouth	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Peterborough	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Harlow	Conservative	Labour	Eastern
Hampstead & Kilburn	Labour	Conservative	London
Eltham	Labour	Conservative	London
Tooting	Labour	Conservative	London
Westminster North	Labour	Conservative	London
Dagenham & Rainham	Labour	UKIP Conservative	London
Hendon	Conservative	Labour	London
Brent Central	Labour	Conservative	London
Brentford & Isleworth	Labour	Conservative	London
Enfield North	Labour	Conservative	London
Croydon Central	Conservative	Labour	London
Harrow East	Conservative	Labour	London
Ealing Central & Acton	Labour	Conservative	London
Ilford North	Labour	Conservative	London
Battersea	Conservative	Labour	London
Finchley & Golders Green	Conservative	Labour	London
Sutton & Cheam	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	London
Middlesbrough S & Cleveland E	Labour	Conservative	North East

Constituency name	Held by	Challenger	Region
Stockton South	Conservative	Labour	North East
Bolton West	Conservative	Labour	North West
Wirral South	Labour	Conservative	North West
Chorley	Labour	Conservative	North West
Blackpool South	Labour	Conservative	North West
Oldham East & Saddleworth	Labour	Conservative	North West
Lancaster & Fleetwood	Labour	Conservative	North West
Morecambe & Lunesdale	Conservative	Labour	North West
Carlisle	Conservative	Labour	North West
Weaver Vale	Conservative	Labour	North West
Warrington South	Conservative	Labour	North West
Manchester Withington	Labour	Liberal Democrat	North West
Burnley	Labour	Liberal Democrat	North West
Bury North	Conservative	Labour	North West
Blackpool North & Cleveleys	Conservative	Labour	North West
Chester, City of	Labour	Conservative	North West
Wirral West	Labour	Conservative	North West
Pendle	Conservative	Labour	North West
Rossendale & Darwen	Conservative	Labour	North West
South Ribble	Conservative	Labour	North West
Crewe & Nantwich	Conservative	Labour	North West
Cheadle	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	North West
Southampton Itchen	Conservative	Labour	South East
Southampton Test	Labour	Conservative	South East
Brighton Pavilion	Green	Labour	South East
Brighton Kemptown	Conservative	Labour	South East
Hove	Labour	Conservative	South East
Hastings & Rye	Conservative	Labour	South East
Milton Keynes South	Conservative	Labour	South East
Dover	Conservative	Labour	South East
Plymouth Moor View	Conservative	Labour	South West
Exeter	Labour	Conservative	South West
Stroud	Conservative	Labour	South West
Plymouth Sutton & Devonport	Conservative	Labour	South West
Gloucester	Conservative	Labour	South West
Kingswood	Conservative	Labour	South West
Swindon South	Conservative	Labour	South West
Somerset North East	Conservative	Labour	South West
Bristol North West	Conservative	Labour	South West
St Ives	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
St Austell & Newquay	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
Wells	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
Chippenham	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West

Constituency name	Held by	Challenger	Region
Dorset Mid & Poole North	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
Somerton & Frome	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
Cornwall North	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	South West
Dudley North	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Telford	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Walsall North	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Birmingham Edgbaston	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Walsall South	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Warwickshire North	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Wolverhampton South West	Labour	Conservative	West Midlands
Halesowen & Rowley Regis	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Nuneaton	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Worcester	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Cannock Chase	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Warwick & Leamington	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Birmingham Yardley	Labour	Liberal Democrat	West Midlands
Dudley South	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Stafford	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Stourbridge	Conservative	Labour	West Midlands
Solihull	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	West Midlands
Great Grimsby	Labour	Conservative UKIP	Yorks & the Humber
Morley & Outwood	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Halifax	Labour	Conservative	Yorks & the Humber
Wakefield	Labour	Conservative	Yorks & the Humber
Bradford East	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Yorks & the Humber
Dewsbury	Labour	Conservative	Yorks & the Humber
Pudsey	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Keighley	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Elmet & Rothwell	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Cleethorpes	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Colne Valley	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Brigg & Goole	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber
Calder Valley	Conservative	Labour	Yorks & the Humber

Source: Electoral Calculus

YouGov’s Profiles data

Together with our marginals poll, and a standard nationally representative poll of the whole country, we also used YouGov’s new database, Profiles. This provides 120,000 data points collected from over 200,000 members of YouGov. These include vast amounts of data on consumer habits, brand perception, political attitudes, personal values, personality types and general lifestyle questions.

By providing all this data in one place, and allowing the endless use of crossbreaks, Profiles allows us to build up an extremely detailed picture of the lives, beliefs and opinions of our target group. For example, as we will see in the next chapter, we are able to probe the work and social life of the Just About Managing classes, as well as their long and short-term financial status, and, crucially, their views on an array of important political issues.

Such data has not been available to political strategists on such a basis before. Profiles allows us to create a detailed image of target voters and at rapid speed. It transforms our ability to analyse these C1 and C2 voters and to make recommendations for how best to persuade them. The parties will be able to supplement this data with their own data on past voter turnout, street by street intelligence and so on, to help with their own "Get Out The Vote" operations. For us, Profiles gives us a much more sophisticated look at the electorate than was ever possible before.

3

Swing Seats and the Just About Managing Classes

The dominance of C1/C2 voters

England's marginal seats are classic "Just About Managing" territory. A look at the 2011 census data for the socio-economic breakdown of constituencies (for working age people between 16 and 64 – the only data available) showed that in 97 of these 119 marginal seats, C1 and C2 voters collectively make up more than 50 per cent of the electorate. C1/C2 families effectively dominate the electoral process, even if they do not dominate the attention of politicians.

The political parties have a duty to represent everyone across the country. They cannot and should not be seen to be ignoring certain socio-economic groups or particular regions. They should also be looking to address long-term weaknesses with certain groups and certain parts of the country. But the parties have limited resources and time – just as the public only have so much time they are willing and able to devote to politics – and so parties have to make campaign choices. They have to decide who they are going to prioritise and with what messages.

C1/C2 swing voters

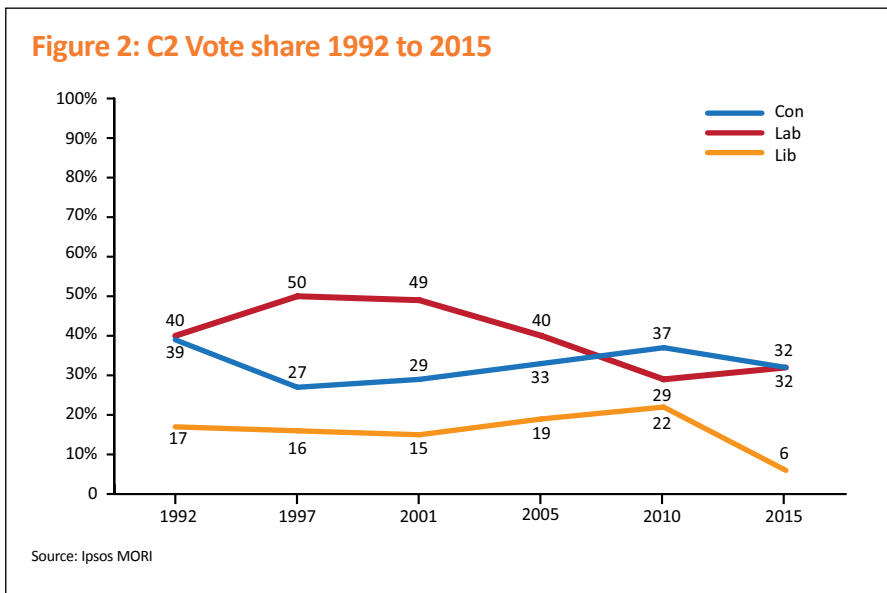
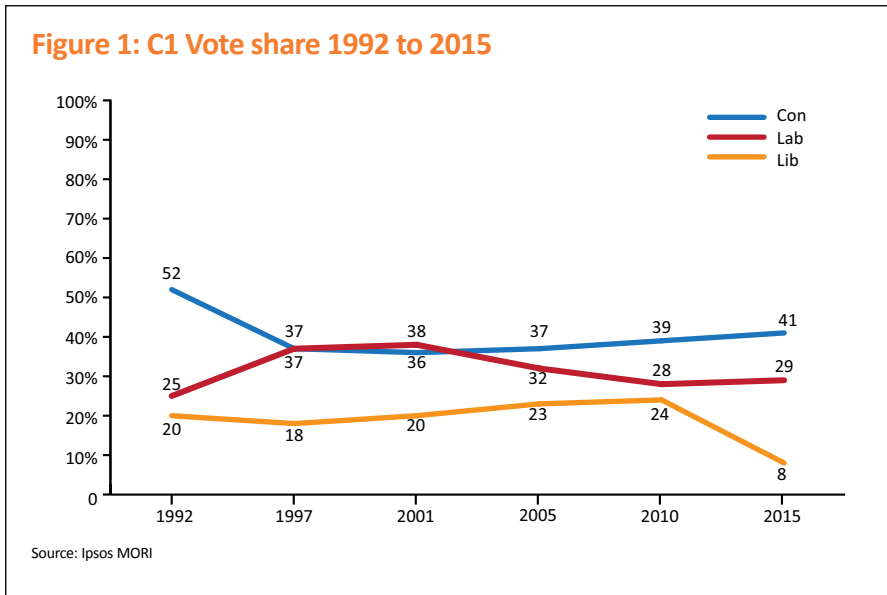
C1 and C2 voters are important because they are large in number, but their importance also derives from the fact that they are politically open-minded. Fundamentally, ABs vote Conservative and DE voters vote Labour. Clearly both parties secure significant votes from every social group, but these are general rules. However, C1/C2 voters swing. C1 voters (nationally) massively voted Conservative in 1992, split evenly in 1997, voted Labour in 2001, and have gradually gone more and more Conservative since 2005. C2 voters very narrowly voted Labour in 1992, massively voted Labour

in 1997 and 2001, and more narrowly at elections following until 2015, when they were evenly divided.

Our April 2015 research (weighted after the election to ensure its accuracy) showed that, for the 2015 election, A voters in *marginal seats* were planning to vote Conservative over Labour by 48 per

cent to 34 per cent, while B voters were planning to turn out for the Conservatives over Labour by 45 per cent to 33 per cent. Surprisingly, D voters were planning in 2015 to vote Conservative over Labour by 36 per cent to 35 per cent but E voters were planning to choose Labour over the Conservatives by 47 per cent to 31 per cent.

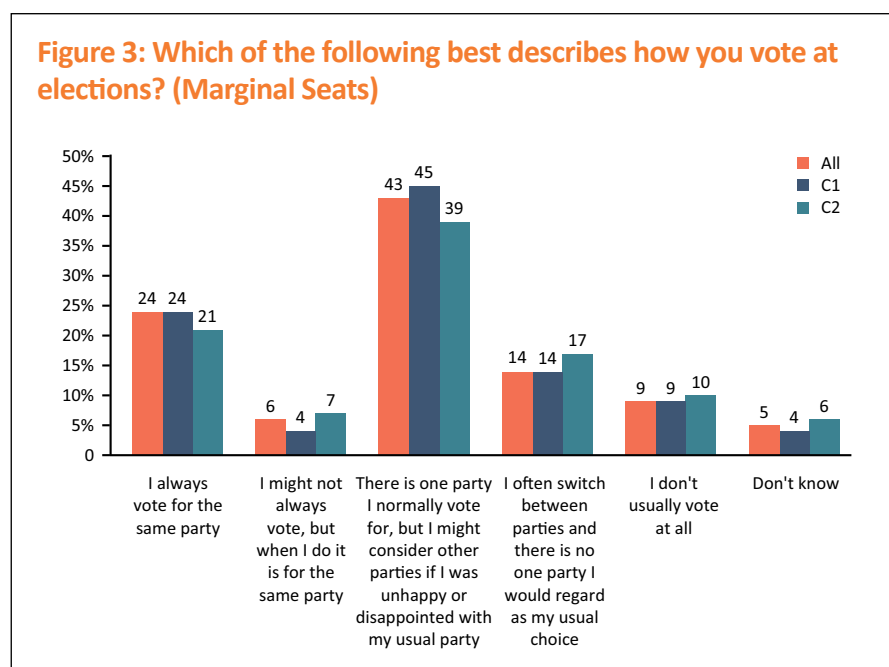
“The political parties have a duty to represent everyone across the country. They cannot and should not be seen to be ignoring certain socio-economic groups or particular regions”



In April, C1 voters in marginal seats were planning to vote Tory over Labour by 43 per cent to 33 per cent and C2 voters were planning to vote Tory over Labour by 42 per cent to 35 per cent. In 2010, C1s nationally (not in marginals – the national data is the only data available) went Conservative over Labour by 39 per cent to 28 per cent while in 2005 the numbers were 37 per cent to 32 per cent. In 2001, C1 voters voted Labour by 38 to 36 per cent. In 2010, C2s voted Tory by 37 to 29, but they voted Labour in 2005 by 40 to 33, and Labour again in 2001 by 49 to 29 per cent. Securing widespread support from the Just About Managing classes is viable for both parties – and vital for both parties if they want to secure workable majorities.

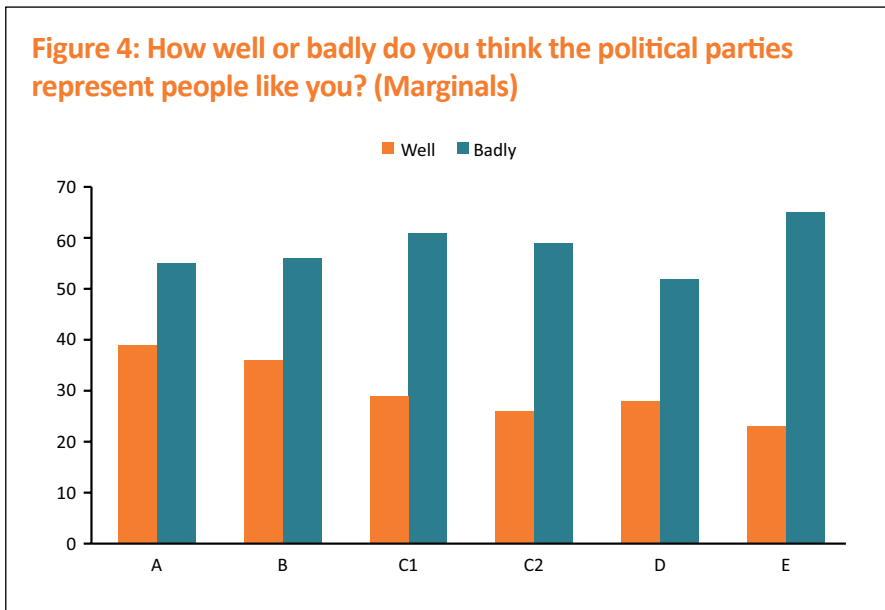
We asked voters about their likelihood of voting for the main parties in future elections. Overall, the data shows that C1/C2 voters are divided on whether they would or would not consider either a Conservative or Labour vote. It also shows

that C1/C2 men are more likely to vote Conservative in future elections than women, but that women are still divided – nearly half of them say they are open to a Conservative vote. Half of female C1/C2 voters say they would consider a Labour vote. A further question revealed that 60 per cent of C1/C2 men and 56 per cent of C1/C2 women said either that they would vote for a different party if they were disappointed with their usual choice, or that they often switch between parties.



We should attach a serious health warning to these questions. Probing future thinking and future action is an incredibly inexact science; it is hard to ask people how they might hypothetically think about something years ahead when the facts at the time would clearly make them feel differently. We are therefore reluctant to ascribe too much importance to the crossbreaks through the poll looking at what “Conservative considerers” or “Labour considerers” think. What these questions reveal is, however, that voters from the Just About Managing classes – men and women – are essentially open minded about who they would vote for.

Some of the open-mindedness we see here is clearly borne of frustration. C1/C2 voters in marginal seats do not feel that they are being well represented. Asked how well the political parties represented “people like you”, C1/C2 voters were less likely to say “well” and more likely to say “badly”. Also, when asked who they thought the Conservative Party was most concerned about, they said rich people and business people by a very large margin. People on middle incomes came third, but a distant third. Labour was judged to be most concerned about people on low incomes, trade unionists and people who rely on benefits. (C1/C2 women were a little kinder to the Labour Party – fewer of them thought that Labour mostly represented trade unionists than men did, and more of them thought Labour represented families with children than men did – likely reflecting Labour’s traditional focus on issues like free childcare).



This frustration is also leading a significant number to turn to UKIP. According to our YouGov data, 14 per cent of C2s were planning to vote for UKIP in marginal seats. This compares to 8 per cent of As and Bs, 12 per cent of C1s, 18 per cent of Ds and 16 per cent of Es. Ipsos-Mori's post-election estimate suggested that 8 per cent of ABs voted UKIP nationally, as well as 11 per cent of C1s, 19 per cent of C2s and 17 per cent of DEs.

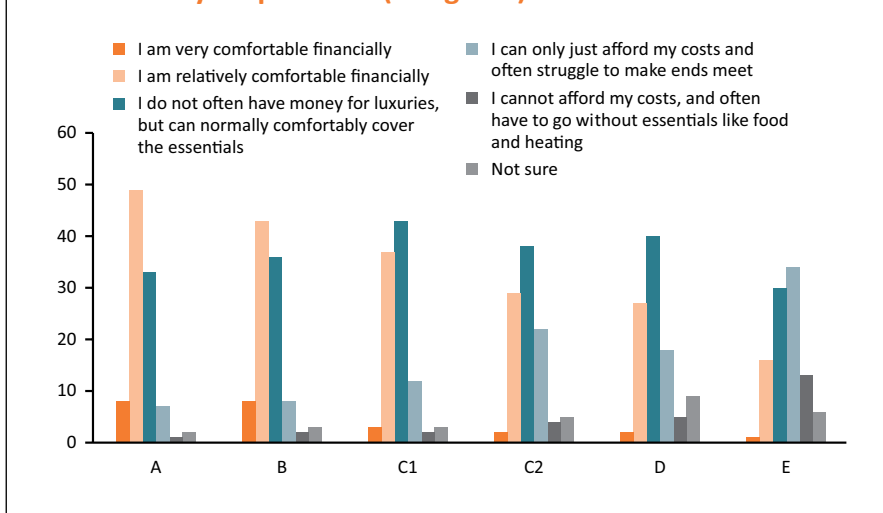
Who are the Just About Managing classes?

What do we mean by the "Just About Managing" classes? They are C1/C2 voters and therefore, fundamentally, middle class voters. Class is obviously an emotive term and the term "middle class" – in common usage in the media and certainly in politics – tends to denote affluent suburbia with children at private school and parents working in financial services or one of the professions. This is a million miles away from the experience of these voters – and the overwhelming majority of voters in England's predominantly provincial marginal seats. Most would never be able to even contemplate sending their child to a private school.

However, the majority of voters in these marginal seats are relatively financially comfortable. 76 per cent of all voters in marginal seats said either that they were comfortably off or could normally comfortably cover the essentials. 16 per cent said they could only afford their costs and 4 per cent said they often had to go without essentials like food and heating. Of those that said they were struggling financially, they were more likely to be in the E socio-economic group – which is what you would expect, but it underlines the point that this was not rich people saying they could not afford daily luxuries.

83 per cent of C1 marginal voters said they were financially comfortable or relatively comfortable and 69 per cent of C2 voters said the same. 12 per cent of C1 voters and 22 per cent of C2 voters said they struggled to make ends meet. While the number of those in the Just About Managing classes that say they struggle to make ends meet is not insignificant, as a whole they are not anywhere near to poverty or real struggle.

Figure 5: Thinking about your finances, which of the following best reflects your position? (Marginals)



While most marginal seats are made up of a majority of C1/C2 voters – who are, as we suggest above, essentially middle class or “lower middle class” – not all of them self-identify as such. While 51 per cent of C1 voters in marginal seats describe themselves as lower middle class or middle class, just 32 per cent of C2 voters do. 35 per cent of C1 voters describe themselves as working class or upper working class and 52 per cent of C2 voters describe themselves in this way.

The lifestyles of the Just About Managing classes

Properly understanding the Just About Managing classes means trying to understand their everyday lives. Only by understanding how these voters live, how they work, and what they spend their money on and where, can the political parties understand their values, concerns and policy priorities.

What sort of lives do the families in the C1/C2, Just About Managing classes lead? YouGov’s Profiles database allows us to answer this question in extreme detail, going down to a constituency by constituency level. We set out below details about C1 and C2 voters’ lives in our marginal seats.

Money and work

As we have seen, most of these voters are not struggling financially. The majority of C1/C2 voters in these crucial marginals – 56 per cent – say they own their own home through a mortgage (33 per cent) or outright (23 per cent). A quarter of these voters either rents off a private landlord (19 per cent) or from their local authority (6 per cent). Furthermore, they live in decent-sized houses: nearly half (48 per cent) have a garden which is between half a tennis court and two tennis courts in size. 35 per cent have a garden less than half a tennis court.

While our poll shows that C1/C2 voters are not excessively concerned about money, with most saying that they are happy with the lives they lead, most of them, according to Profiles, have relatively little disposable income. We need to attach another health warning to this data – with people essentially describing how much they think they have to “spend”, rather than necessarily giving a fully

worked out description of their financial situation. In a sense, these figures give a sense of how much they *feel* they have to spend.

While nearly a fifth refused to answer the question (18 per cent) and 15 per cent said they did not know, 16 per cent said they had less than £125 a month disposable income, 14 per cent had £125 to £249, 13 per cent said £250 to £499, and 7 per cent £500 to £749. 7 per cent said they had “nothing” to spend at the end of the month. (The differences here are no doubt affected by the number of children they have and their age).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, few say they are making serious moves to plan for their retirement. 21 per cent name their home as being their source of providing for their retirement. 14 per cent have cash ISAs and 6 per cent have premium bonds. Just over a third (35 per cent) are currently making no plans for their retirement.

C1/C2 voters have conventional types of debt – they are not taking out vast amounts of payday loans, for example. 35 per cent of these marginal voters have no debt, while 32 per cent say their debt is in the form of a mortgage. Other forms of debt include: credit cards (27 per cent); student loans (12 per cent); authorised overdrafts (12 per cent); unsecured personal loans (9 per cent); and car finance loans (6 per cent). Just 1 per cent have payday loan debt and 1 per cent have an unauthorised overdraft. 36 per cent have one credit card, 16 per cent have two and 5 per cent have three. 36 per cent have no credit cards.

“Few say they are making serious moves to plan for their retirement... Just over a third (35 per cent) are currently making no plans for their retirement”

Along with their home, the cost of running a car is a considerable expense for most voters, including these marginal C1 and C2 voters. Just under half have a second hand car, with just 21 per cent having a new car (29 per cent said the question was not applicable to them). Ford was their most popular choice, followed by Vauxhall and Nissan.

And the car is completely dominant in these families’ lives. In the marginal seats of provincial England, half of these voters have not used the train at all in the last year. 40 per cent use their car to get to work, compared to the next most popular ways of getting to work – walking and the bus – which were the modes of travelling for just 9 per cent of these C1 and C2 voters. 5 per cent used the train and just 3 per cent cycle. Many of these voters drive a great deal. A quarter say they drive between 5,001 and 10,000 miles a year and 24 per cent drive between 1,001 and 5,000 miles.

This is completely different to London voters. Just 27 per cent of all London voters say they have not used the train in the last year. 42.9 per cent have used the London Overground and more than 20 per cent have used South West Trains and South Eastern. Just 16 per cent of London voters used their car to get to work, compared to 20.7 per cent who used the train and 16.5 per cent who used the tube or DLR.

Predictably, these C1/C2 class people are generally not managers in their working life. More than half of these voters in marginal seats (54 per cent) said they had no management responsibility, around a fifth said they were junior managers or team leaders, 10 per cent said they were owners or proprietors, and 7 per cent said they were middle managers. Of those that did have decision-

making authority, this was most commonly found in office management, training and development, IT, advertising/marketing/PR, and business development/sales.

Trade unions are largely irrelevant for those in the Just About Managing classes in these crucial marginals; they play little role in their lives. 91 per cent of these voters said they were not a member of a trade union, with just 3 per cent belonging to Unison, 2 per cent to Unite, and 1 per cent each to the Public and Commercial Services Union and the GMB.

Shopping and retail

These families' weekly spending at supermarkets varies quite widely – depending again, no doubt, on the size of their family and the number of children. 10 per cent of C1/C2 voters spend between £50 and £60 a week, and 10 per cent also spend between £40 and £50, between £30 and £40 and between £20 and £30. 7 per cent each spend between £60 and £70, £70 and £80, and £90 and £100. 58 per cent visit the supermarket once a week or more and only 3 per cent visit a supermarket once a month. 71 per cent never use online supermarket shopping.

Tesco remains the top supermarket choice for this group of people, with 26 per cent using it as their main supermarket. This is followed by Asda (19 per cent), Sainsbury's (17 per cent), Morrisons (11 per cent), Aldi (11 per cent) and Lidl (4 per cent). 2 per cent use Waitrose and 1 per cent use both Marks and Spencer and Ocado.

While few use Marks and Spencer for food, this is the top choice for C1/C2 families in our marginal sample for clothing and accessories. 17 per cent have shopped here in the previous three months. 14 per cent have shopped at Primark, 12 per cent at Next and Asda, 10 per cent have shopped on Ebay and 9 per cent at Tesco. Asked about their purchase motivation, 24 per cent said the cheapest prices overall, 14 per cent said the best quality products and the best special offers.

Leisure and holidays

C1/C2 families eat out and visit bars relatively infrequently. 57 per cent eat out once a month or less. 20 per cent eat out several times a month; 15 per cent eat out once a week; and just 5 per cent eat out several times a week. The average monthly spend on eating out was relatively low: 33 per cent spend up to £25 a month; 18 per cent spend between £26 and £50; and 11 per cent spend between £51 and £75. And takeaways do not replace restaurant food for most people. 9 per cent said they never got takeaway food and 54 per cent said they went to takeaways once a month or less. Just 23 per cent said they spent more than £10 a month on takeaways.

More than half of C1/C2 voters (61 per cent) go out to the pub or to bars less than once a month. 15 per cent go to pubs or bars several times a month; 13 per cent once a week; and 7 per cent several times a week. And most of these voters are relatively light drinkers: 29 per cent say they never drink; 14 per cent drink 1 to 2 units a week; 13 per cent drink 2 to 5; and 13 per cent drink 6 to 10. 25 per cent drink more than 11 units a week. Asked which pubs they visited most regularly, they gave a very wide mix, although a fifth had visited a JD Wetherspoon pub in the previous month.

That said, despite eating and drinking out relatively infrequently as a whole, C1/C2 voters in marginal seats named restaurants and cafes as their top places

to visit in their spare time (58 per cent), followed by parks and gardens (46 per cent), cinema (45 per cent), shopping malls/high street stores (43 per cent), pubs and nightclubs (40 per cent), historical sites and attractions (38 per cent) and museums (36 per cent).

A significant number have not taken a holiday in the last year (29 per cent) but many have taken one or two (26 per cent have taken one; 21 per cent have taken two). A break of four to seven nights for their most recent holiday is common, with 43 per cent taking holidays of this length, while 21 per cent's most recent holiday was for two to three nights and 14 per cent's most recent holiday was for 11 to 14 nights. Beach holidays are the most common holidays and the favourite holidays.

Asked about their most recent holiday, UK breaks were most common (37 per cent), followed by a short haul holiday to Europe (32 per cent) and a long-haul holiday (which was much less common, with 11 per cent saying this was their most recent break). Almost half of these voters spent less than £500 on their last holiday (42 per cent), with a fifth (20 per cent) spending between £500 and £1,000.

When asked about their hobbies, voters named a surprising mix. Top choices were reading (60 per cent) cooking (37 per cent), playing computer games (29 per cent), gardening (29 per cent), exercising (27 per cent), and DIY (18 per cent). Some surprising choices included: knitting and sewing (13 per cent), writing or composing (8 per cent) and singing (8 per cent).

What this means for political strategists

Generally speaking, these families in the Just About Managing classes live lives of relative frugality in their own homes. Most of them are financially comfortable now, although their disposable incomes are quite low and a significant number seem unprepared for the future. Most of them own their own home with their own garden. They drive to work in second hand Fords and Vauxhalls where they generally work for other people. Pub trips and restaurant trips are common but not terribly frequent – they do not drink excessively – and they avoid takeaways. Families take quite short holidays in Britain and Europe.

Political strategists often talk about “retail politics” or their “retail offer” to the electorate. This usually translates into little giveaways or gimmicks that are designed to make people's lives easier or to make “fun” things easier or cheaper. This approach should be encouraged – politicians should spend more time thinking about the lives of ordinary families across the country – but the parties need to be realistic about what is going to make a difference to people's lives.

For C1 and C2 voters, reducing the cost of running their home and car is going to be far, far more helpful than reducing the cost of rail fares or beer, wine and spirits. Reducing the cost of bills, or slowing their rise at least, and therefore maximising disposable income, is going to be more helpful than cutting taxes on bingo. And trying to keep the cost of holidays in the UK down is going to be more helpful than reducing air passenger duty on long-haul flights.

The political parties need to develop an extreme interest in – and an encyclopaedic knowledge of – the lives of those in the Just About Managing classes as they look for competitive advantage in policy terms. Some of the data we have highlighted here from Profiles will no doubt strike some as being obvious.

But the parties have not acted upon this data to anything like the necessary extent in recent times. From a purely political perspective, it is completely unbelievable that the parties do not do more to help reduce the cost of driving, for example.

Developing such a detailed knowledge of the lives of these target voters will also help massively in presentation terms. The examples politicians use in their speeches, the places they choose to visit, where they choose to hold their surgeries and their general descriptions about the lives of ordinary voters will all be massively influenced by knowing how people spend their time and money.

4

The Values of those Just About Managing

The importance of values to voters

Traditionally, opinion polls tend to focus overwhelmingly on what people think, rather than why people think what they do. Overwhelmingly, political polls ask people their views on topical issues, politicians and parties. The data is given crucial context by being split by party affiliation, age, gender, broad socio-economic grouping, and region of residence. All of this is extremely useful but this approach can often provide data which is relatively superficial and short-term. The main way polls are made relevant is by repeating them and tracking data over time.

Very few public political polls really delve into peoples' values – those big things that really drive their outlook on the world around them. But values ought to be central to every serious piece of public research – and at the forefront of every party's communications in Government, Opposition, and during election campaigns. Voters want to know what politicians believe in their hearts – this helps them to understand politicians' motives and their likely action in the future.

Voters are not wholly rational – although this is different from being “unreasonable”. They do not vote solely on the basis of carefully considered reasoning about what the parties are offering and what that means for their family, although they clearly think about this to an extent. And voters certainly do not go through the parties' manifesto announcements with a calculator. (Profiles data shows that 40 per cent of C1/C2 voters in marginal seats admit that their heart tends to rule their head). Voters make up their minds primarily on the basis of an emotional feeling towards parties and candidates – how the parties make them feel. For example, in politics, the question: “whose side are you on?” is one of the most powerful.

Parties need to project their values to the public in order to generate an emotional feeling. Voters need to feel a connection with the people they are voting for. Policy announcements are the most important part of that – in that parties have to tell people what they would actually do in office – but other things matter greatly. For example, the rows and arguments that the parties choose to have are an important way of projecting values. So are the endorsements that parties seek to secure from third parties and so are the actual places where senior politicians choose to make their speeches.

Values in England's marginal seats

In our poll of marginal seats, we deeply probed the values of the electorate and their perceptions of the values of the parties. We gave voters 27 options that might best describe their own values. As the chart below shows, these ranged from family to opportunity to morality to self-reliance. Overwhelmingly, voters chose four above all: family; fairness; hard work and decency. Some way off were equality, freedom, morality, self-reliance, and independence.

Family, fairness, hard work and decency were the highest rated values across all groups. However, C1/C2 voters in marginals were particularly committed to family. There was, for example, a 12 per cent gap between C2 voters' commitment to family over fairness.

We then asked people to name the values that they thought best reflected those of the Labour Party and the Conservative Party. Over the course of the last decade – and really since Tony Blair left office – Labour has become an increasingly niche party. Under Tony Blair it made visible efforts to appeal to “Middle England”. Under Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband, it moved gradually further and further away from this crucial constituency. Labour now sits in the public mind essentially as the party of those on low pay and benefits.

However, just as the polls often show that the public tends to trust parties on particular issues for the long-term, with the Tories traditionally being seen as the party of law and order, for example, and Labour being seen as the party of the NHS, so the public has views about the values of the Labour Party that appear to be a lasting legacy of their past. The public, including C1/C2 voters still have some good will towards the party. They perceive Labour's values to be equality, fairness, family, and hard work, which are not dissimilar to their own.

In the last Parliament, the Conservatives gradually built up a perceived track record of success on key issues for the electorate. Welfare reform is the obvious example. While much of the electorate continued to worry about the slow recovery and its effect on living standards, the Conservatives demonstrated economic credibility and a strong record on growth. The Conservatives, by the time the election came around, gave off an image of competence and security.

But senior party strategists have long worried about the long-term “brand” of the party – its reputation with the electorate. Our research shows they are right to be concerned. Along with their often perceived status as the party of the rich and business, they need to try to change the values that they project to the electorate. Voters, including C1/C2 voters, think that the party stands for entrepreneurship, tradition, hard work and ambition. None of these values are “bad”, but they sit further down the list of values that the public consider important. Furthermore, the public's stated values of family and fairness are not associated with the Conservatives.

Figure 6: Below are a list of values and principles, which of the following best reflect your own values? Please tick up to four (Marginals)

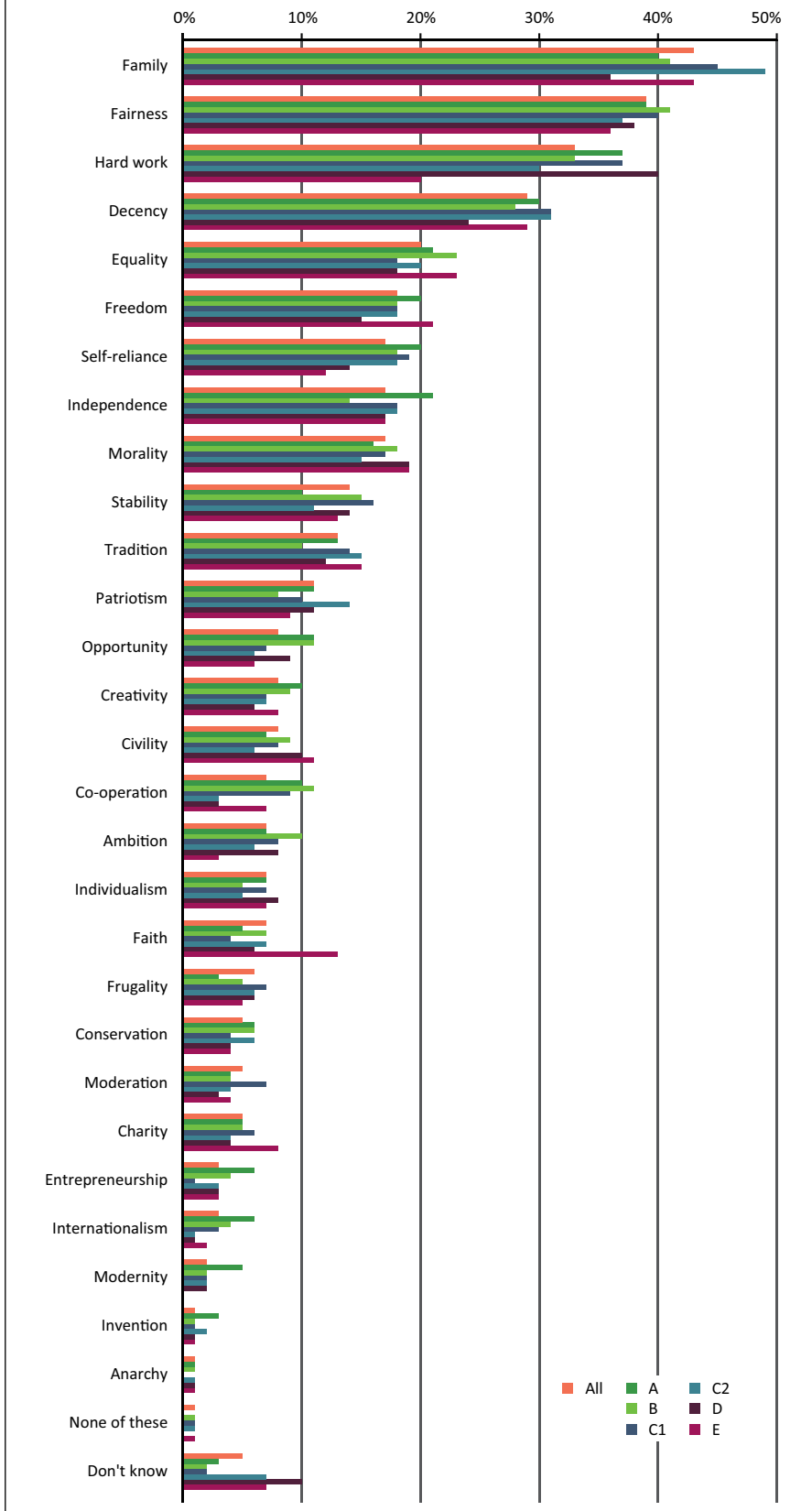


Figure 7: Whether or not you agree with them, which of the following do you think best reflect the values of the Conservative party? (Marginals)

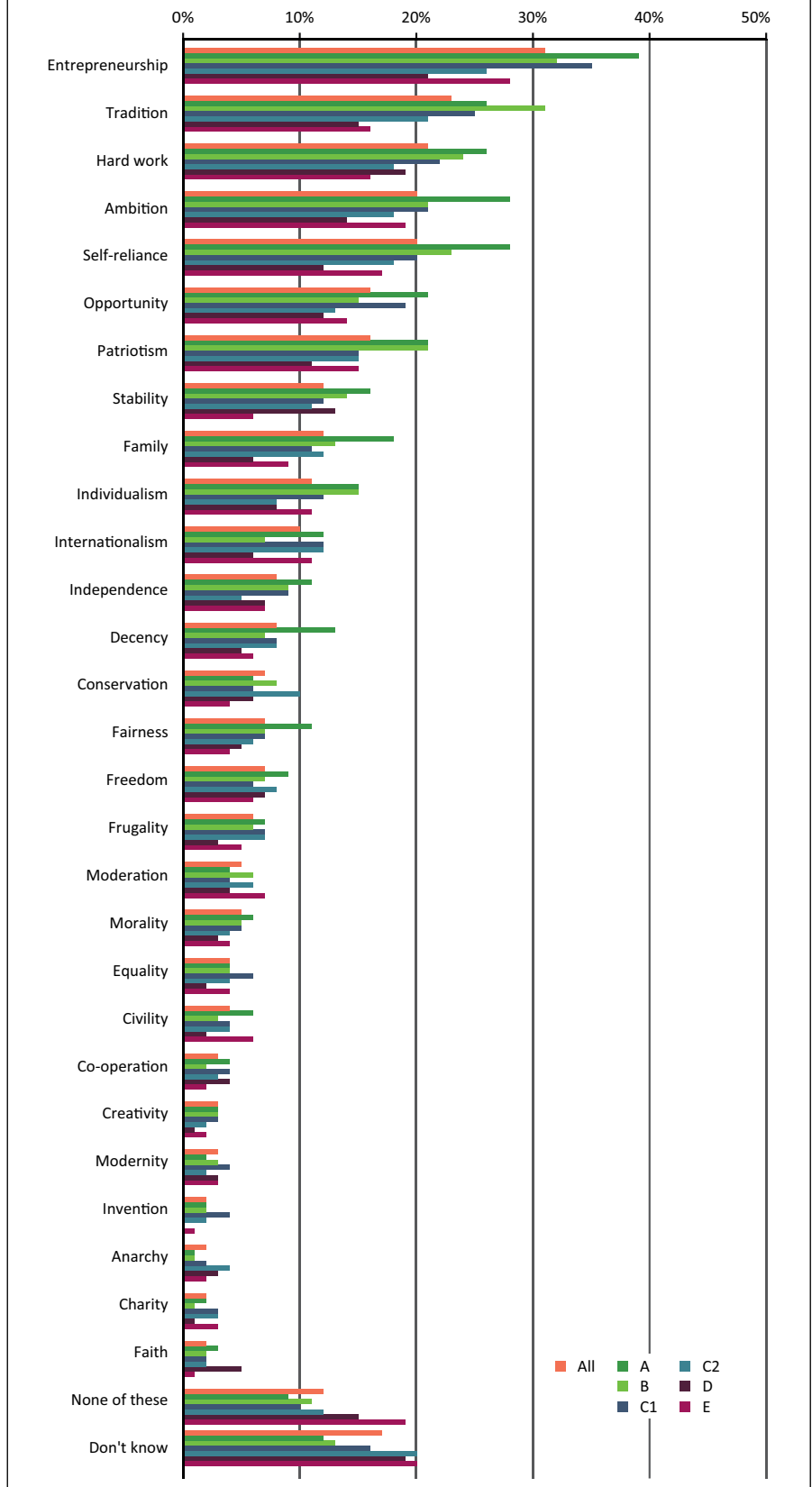
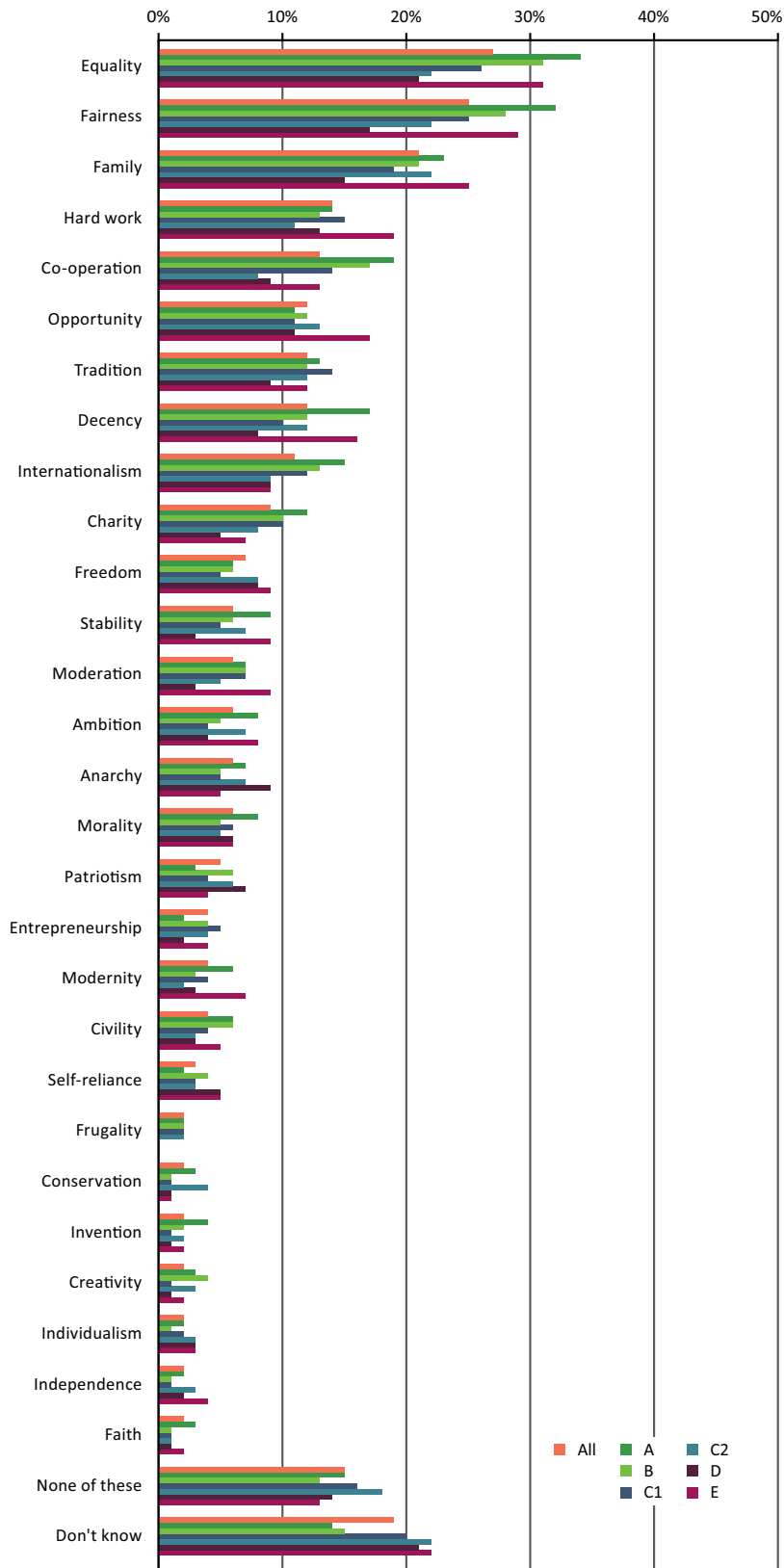


Figure 8: Whether or not you agree with them, which of the following do you think best reflect the values of the Labour party? (Marginals)



Values-based statements

We also gave voters a range of value statements and asked them to choose between them. Here, their stated values of family and fairness (and decency and hard work) come out very strongly. For example, the public have very little sympathy with those that commit crime, saying that there is never any excuse for breaking the law. The public also think that human rights laws have been abused and that the welfare state has become too generous to people that do not do enough to help themselves. Crucially, C1/C2 voters are more likely to say they vote primarily on the basis of what parties' policies will mean for them and their families. C1/C2 voters are also more likely than most other groups to oppose inheritance tax on the basis of it being unfair.

The questions revealed that most voters in English marginal seats, including C1 and C2 voters, display a mix of strong belief in the role of Government with a deep scepticism about politicians' ability to deliver and a belief that, in

“While Conservative considerers said they would use private healthcare and education if they could afford it, Labour considerers would not”

some areas, Government has actually grown too much or in the wrong way. Contradictory? Not exactly; it reflects a pragmatic belief that the Government should help people (which broadly helps Labour), but that politicians cannot always deliver and that the Government has, for example, been

insufficiently tough on welfare (which broadly helps the Conservatives).

Voters in marginal seats are also relatively pessimistic about the future and they are not conventionally aspirational. Generally speaking, voters are not desperate to move to a larger house and secure a greater income, they are also quite divided on whether they would use private healthcare and education even if they had the money. While a majority said they would go private, a significant minority said they would not.

There were some important differences between Conservative and Labour considerers in these value statements. Conservative considerers were narrowly more likely to be optimistic about Britain's future; while Conservative considerers said they would use private healthcare and education if they could afford it, Labour considerers would not; Conservative considerers were narrowly more sympathetic to the argument that choice in public services was a good thing (although most still opposed it); Conservative considerers thought overall that Government should be as small as possible, unlike Labour considerers; Conservative considerers were highly sceptical about the value of human rights laws, unlike Labour considerers.

Table 2: On the following pages are some pairs of statements, in each case please tick the one that you most agree with. If you do not agree exactly with either statement, please tick the one that comes closest to your view (Marginals)

	Total %	C1	C2
Britain is in decline and our best is all behind us	32	33	31
Britain is improving and our best is still to come	34	35	34
Neither	25	27	23
Do not know	8	5	12
	Total %	C1	C2
Young people today will probably grow up to have a better quality of life than their parents	27	30	27
Young people today will probably grow up to have a worse quality of life than their parents	52	50	51
Neither	12	13	10
Do not know	9	7	12
	Total %	C1	C2
I am keen to move up in life, to get a bigger home, higher income and more luxuries in life	24	30	21
I am generally happy with what I have in life, as long as I have my health, friends and family I do not aspire to having more	63	61	67
Neither	9	6	6
Do not know	4	2	5
	Total %	C1	C2
If I was able to afford it I would use private health and education	47	47	46
Even if I could afford it, I would not use private health or education	35	34	34
Neither	10	11	11
Do not know	8	8	9
	Total %	C1	C2
The main political parties today are all much the same with the same policies, and it does not really matter who wins	34	36	31
There are important differences between what the political parties say and do, and who wins makes a real difference to the country	48	47	50
Neither	9	11	8
Do not know	8	6	11
	Total %	C1	C2
Choice in public services increases competition and therefore drives up standards, leading to better services for all	29	29	27
Choice and competition in public services is wasteful and does not actually end up improving services at all	48	50	46
Neither	10	8	10
Do not know	14	13	17

	Total %	C1	C2
Government should be as small as possible, it should provide a safety net when people are in real trouble, but the rest of the time it should leave ordinary working people to get on with their lives	34	32	35
Government can be a force for good, and it should do more to offer ordinary working people help and assistance at every stage of their life	46	49	42
Neither	8	9	8
Do not know	11	9	14
	Total %	C1	C2
Politicians are basically competent and they should be responsible for managing crucial public services like our education system and the health service	16	17	16
Politicians do not have sufficient expertise to successfully manage crucial public services, which should be run by experts in their field	64	65	61
Neither	9	10	10
Do not know	11	8	13
	Total %	C1	C2
I trust charities to spend the money they receive on giving genuine help to people who really need it	25	27	19
I do not trust charities to spend the money they receive on actually helping people, too much goes on bureaucracy, campaigning and on paying themselves	60	58	63
Neither	8	9	7
Do not know	8	6	10
	Total %	C1	C2
People that commit crime are often victims themselves, for example many have suffered a difficult upbringing, and we should be sympathetic towards them	17	18	12
There is never any excuse for breaking the law and those that do so deserve punishment rather than sympathy	61	62	67
Neither	16	16	13
Do not know	6	5	8
	Total %	C1	C2
Britain should intervene militarily in the world where the lives of large numbers of people in other countries are threatened	16	17	10
Britain has spent too much time and money trying to police the world. We should only intervene militarily when our interests are directly threatened	64	64	66
Neither	11	10	9
Do not know	10	9	14
	Total %	C1	C2
Human Rights laws are a valuable protection against the Government ignoring the human rights of British people, and on balance are a good thing	30	31	24
Human Rights laws are abused by lawyers making spurious cases on behalf of criminals and on balance they are been a bad thing	52	51	54
Neither	8	9	6
Do not know	11	9	15

	Total %	C1	C2
Families should be able to pass on the wealth they have accumulated over their lifetime to their children, without state interference	67	71	68
Inheritance tax is important because it stops rich families passing on their wealth and giving their children an unfair advantage in life over the children of ordinary families	18	17	16
Neither	7	8	5
Do not know	7	4	10
	Total %	C1	C2
I mostly decide who to vote for based on what their policies will mean for me and my family	44	46	46
I mostly decide who to vote for based on what their policies will mean for society as a whole	37	37	31
Neither	11	12	10
Do not know	8	5	13
	Total %	C1	C2
The welfare state has become too generous to people that do not try hard enough to help themselves	58	64	61
The welfare state helps those that need it and we should try to protect it at its current level	27	22	23
Neither	8	10	7
Do not know	6	4	10
	Total %	C1	C2
Decisions about how public services are run should be made as locally as possible to reflect the needs and priorities of local people	55	55	54
Decisions about how public services are run should be made at a national level to ensure people in all parts of the country receive the same levels of service	27	29	24
Neither	7	7	6
Do not know	11	9	16

Female versus male values

There is a significant gap between C1/C2 male and female values, in the sense that women are even more committed to the top values of family, fairness, hard work and decency than men. 56 per cent of C1/C2 women say family is one of their top values, compared to 35 per cent of men; 41 per cent of women say fairness

“Women are far more likely than men to say they decide who to vote for on the basis of what policies mean for their family”

is important, compared to 36 per cent for men; 38 per cent of women name hard work compared to 30 per cent of men; and 34 per cent of C1/C2 women name decency as a top value, while 28 per cent of men do. Roughly speaking, women see the parties' values systems

in the same way that men do, although C1/C2 women associate the Tories with family and fairness to a lesser extent even than men, and more women associate Labour with family than men.

Looking at the values statements, C1/C2 women take similar positions to men. However, there are a few significant differences. For example, these women are even less likely to say they want to move to a bigger home, even less likely to say that choice in public services is a good thing, and even less likely to say Government should be as small as possible. They are even more likely than men to oppose inheritance tax. They take a similarly sceptical line as C1/C2 men on the benefits of human rights legislation and they take a similar view on what they see as the excessive generosity of the welfare state and on the need for criminals to be punished rather than shown sympathy. C1/C2 women are *far more likely* than men to say they decide who to vote for on the basis of what policies mean for their family, rather than society as a whole.

Figure 9: Below are a list of values and principles, which of the following best reflect your own values? (Marginals)

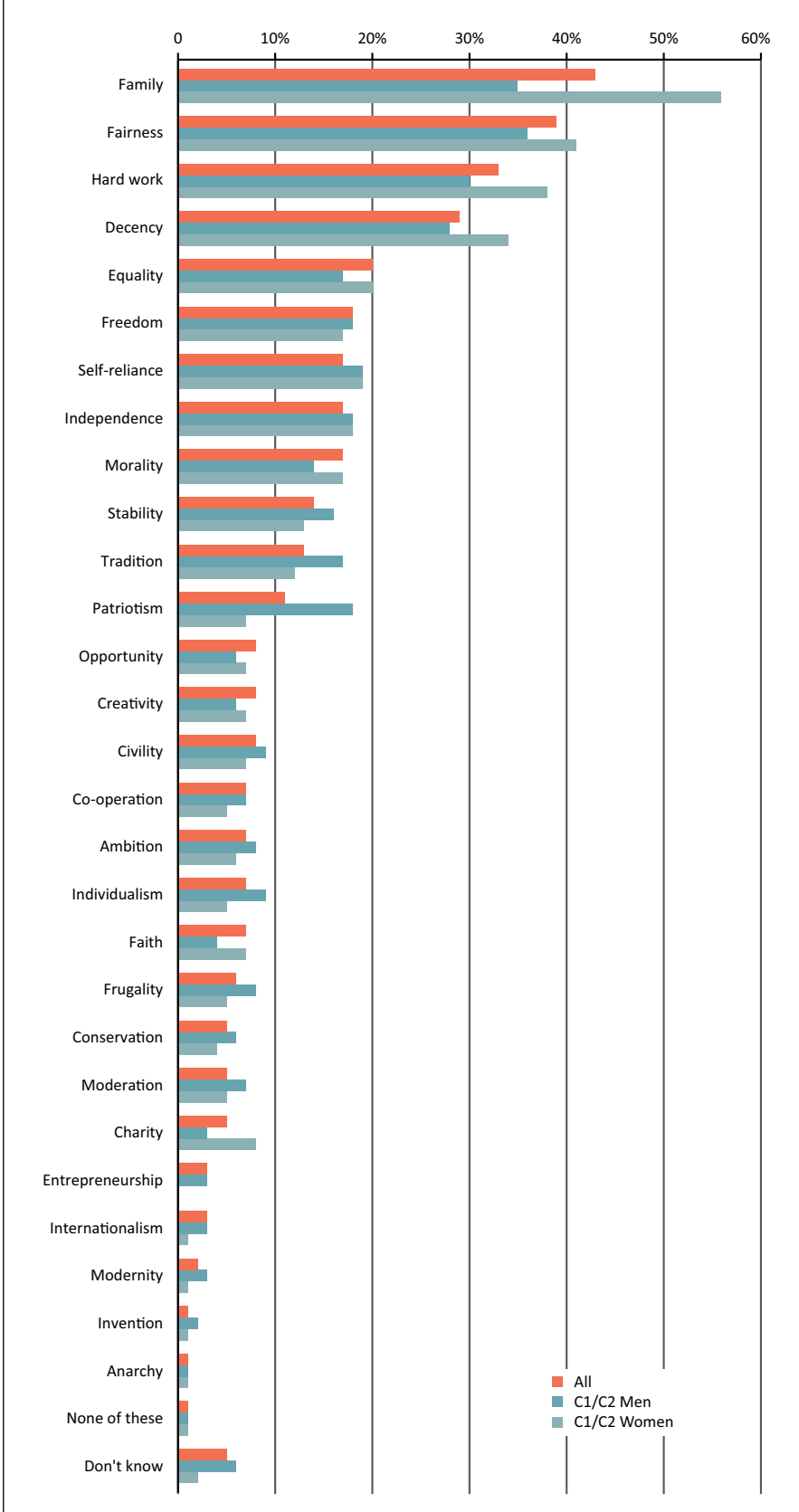


Figure 10: Whether or not you agree with them, which of the following best reflect the values of the Conservative party? (Marginals)

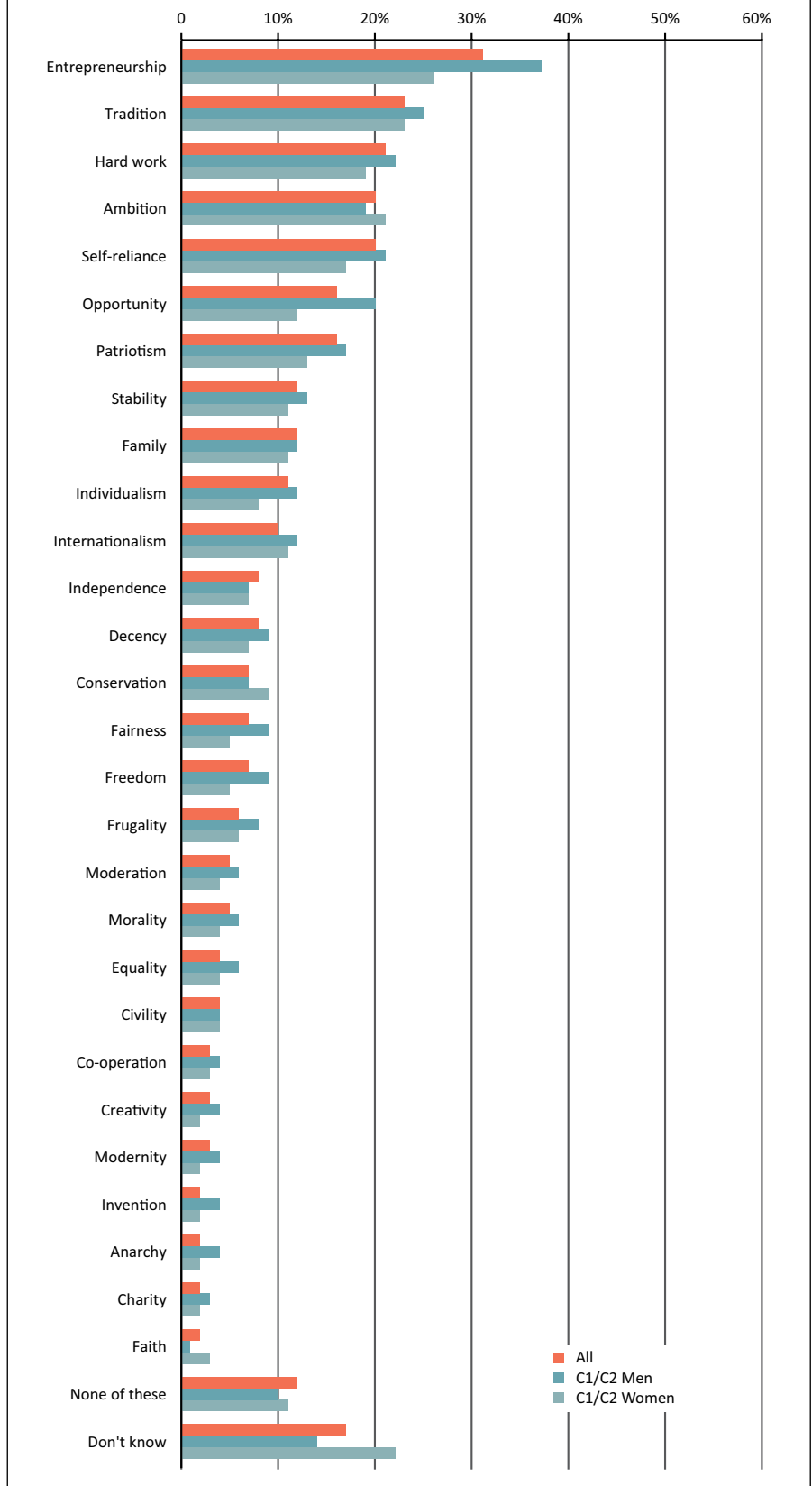
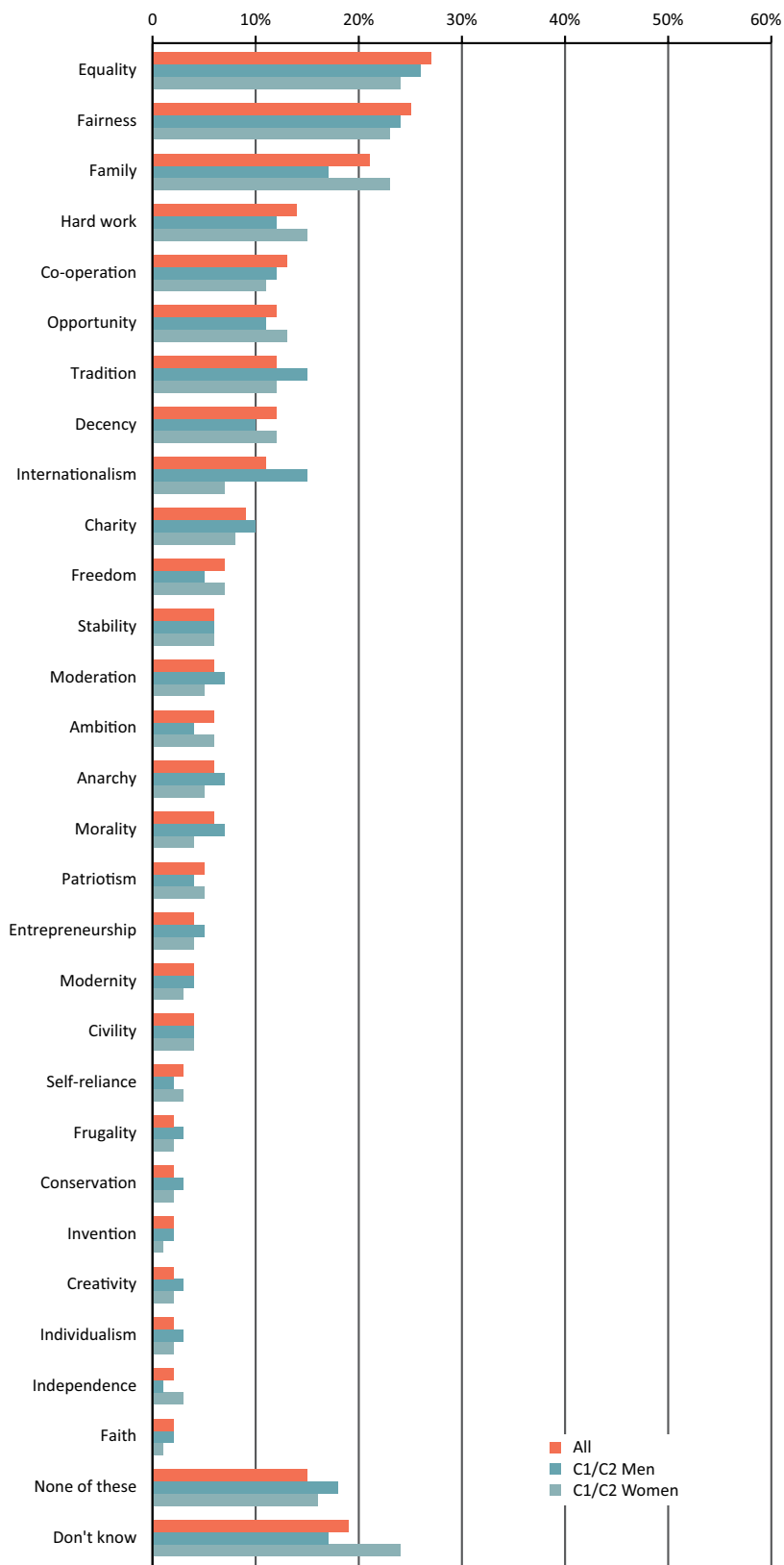


Figure 11: Whether or not you agree with them, which of the following do you think best reflect the values of the Labour party? (Marginals)



The similarities between public and private sector workers

As we outlined in the introduction, despite Conservative concerns about their weakness with public sector workers, in fact their problem is not as bad as many think. In marginal seats in April 2015, C1/C2 private sector voters were planning to vote Conservative by 44 per cent to 30 per cent. C1/C2 public sector voters were also planning to vote Conservative – and by a surprisingly large margin of 45 per cent to 32 per cent. (We do not have a post-election voting estimate).

The similarities in voting intention reflect the similar values that provincial English public and private sector workers have. Family, fairness, hard work and decency are these public sector workers' most important values although, interestingly, they put hard work second above fairness. The main difference that emerges – and this probably comes as no real surprise – is that private sector workers favour “freedom” over “equality”, while the opposite is true for public sector workers.

Looking at the pairs of value-based statements, public and private sector workers take similar views except on a small number of areas. Again, these are perhaps predictable. For example, public sector C1/C2 voters are less likely to say they want to move up in life (for a bigger home etc), and they are even less likely to say that choice in public services drives up standards. However, for the most part, public and private sector workers in the Just About Managing classes are bound together by their financial circumstances – by their class, essentially.

Appealing to those Just About Managing

The values of those in the Just About Managing classes are a long way from those that politicians project from Westminster. We regularly hear politicians on the right drive an American-style “freedom agenda” of small Government and choice in public services and many talk as if the public is full of highly conventionally aspirational people who are endlessly optimistic about the future. We hear politicians on the left talk as if the public was collectively horrified about the evils of cuts to welfare.

Much of this rhetoric is lost on ordinary voters. Ordinary voters have little in common with the politicians and activists of the two main parties. They have no abstract vision of a dynamic, entrepreneurial economy where families and

“Much of this rhetoric is lost on ordinary voters. Ordinary voters have little in common with the politicians and activists of the two main parties”

individuals are desperate to set up exciting new businesses and to take more control over their lives. In other words, they are not “strivers” in the way that some politicians think they are. While they oppose their existing wealth being eroded and their existing lifestyles being adversely affected, they

do not want to work vastly longer hours for promotion or higher pay; they are generally content with what they have got and want to be left alone to enjoy it.

While they do not reflect the vision of many free market politicians, nor do they recognise the descriptions of a country that is mired in poverty and massive widespread cuts, and dealing with these problems (real or otherwise) is not one of their concerns. Labour politicians' and activists' dire warnings about growing poverty and the explosion in the number of foodbanks is lost on C1/C2 voters

– those Just About Managing – even those with very little disposable income and few savings.

That is not to say that articulating a positive vision of the future is a waste of time; quite the opposite. Rather, it means that parties need to articulate a vision of the future which reflects their values of family and fairness, and of hard work and decency. Politicians need to show they understand the challenges families face in their everyday life and to explain how they can help them. They also need to set out how they will create a society which is fair for all – where those that play by the rules are rewarded and those that cheat the system or break the rules are punished. This is particularly true for crucial C1/C2 women voters. These female voters are even more committed to this set of values.

5

The Issues of England's Marginal Seats

The public's consistent worldview

The most important issues to voters in marginal seats look, on a first superficial viewing, as if they are a slightly random mixture. Presented with a list of more than twenty policy options, the top five in marginal seats were the following: controlling the level of immigration; keeping the cost of living down; improving the quality of the health system; keeping the country safe from terrorism and threats abroad; and reducing poverty and the gap between rich and poor.

But these all derive from the two most powerful values that the public hold most dear: family and fairness. Each of these policies reflects one or both of these values. Health, the cost of living, and keeping the country safe all reflect the desire of ordinary people to provide for their families and to protect them. Reducing poverty and the wealth gap is clearly a fairness issue, but so too is immigration.

Many commentators wrongly assume that the public are primarily concerned with numbers and culture, with regards to immigration. Clearly, some people are concerned about both. But the opposition to immigration that you see in opinion polls is far more about things like the perceived unfairness of recent immigrants accessing healthcare and welfare without having contributed. Whether this is factually right or not, this is what the public feel very strongly, just as English

“Many commentators wrongly assume that the public are primarily concerned with numbers and culture, with regards to immigration”

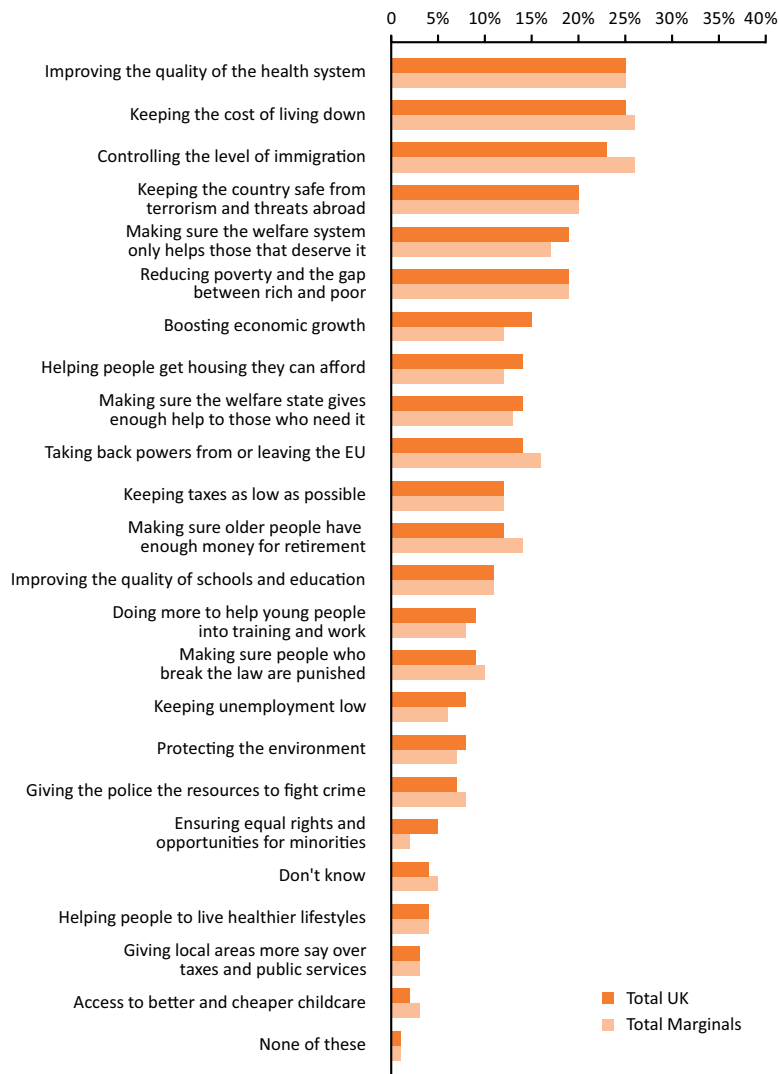
nationalism clearly reflects concerns that Scotland gets more than its fair share of English taxpayers' money.

C1 and C2 voters have slightly different policy priorities. C1 voters in marginal seats care most about keeping

the cost of living down and improving the quality of the health system, followed by controlling immigration (although all are close together). C2 voters care most about controlling immigration (by a considerable margin), followed by keeping the cost of living down and improving the quality of the health system.

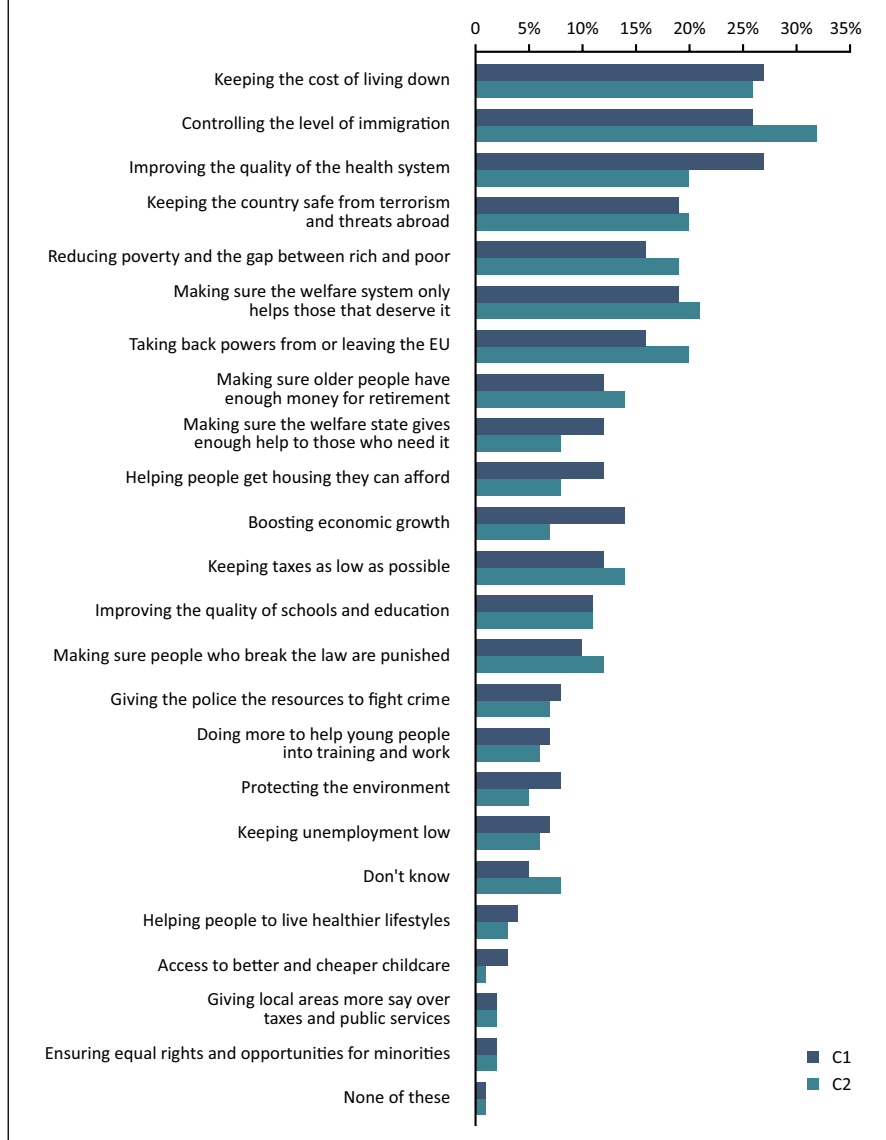
Interestingly for the Conservatives, the policy priorities for those people that said they would consider voting Conservative – i.e. explicitly excluding voters that said they would be unlikely to vote Conservative – were different again. Conservative considerers said their policy priorities were the following: controlling the level of immigration; taking back powers or leaving the EU; improving the quality of the health system; keeping the cost of living down; and keeping the country free from terrorism and threats abroad.

Figure 12: Which issues are most important to you and your family? Please tick up to three



Labour considerers ranked them in the following order: keeping the cost of living down and, jointly, improving the quality of the health system; controlling the level of immigration; keeping the country safe from terrorism and threats abroad and, jointly, reducing poverty and the gap between rich and poor.

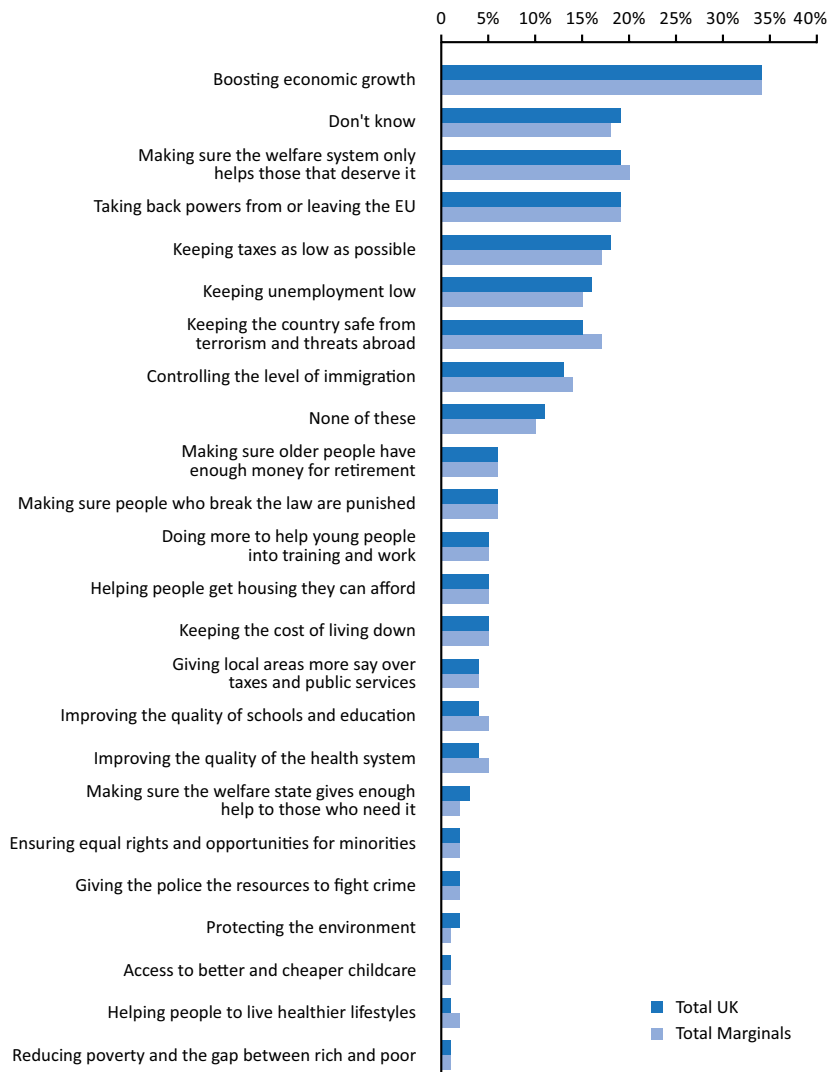
Figure 13: Which issues are most important to you and your family? Please tick up to three (C1s and C2s in Marginals)

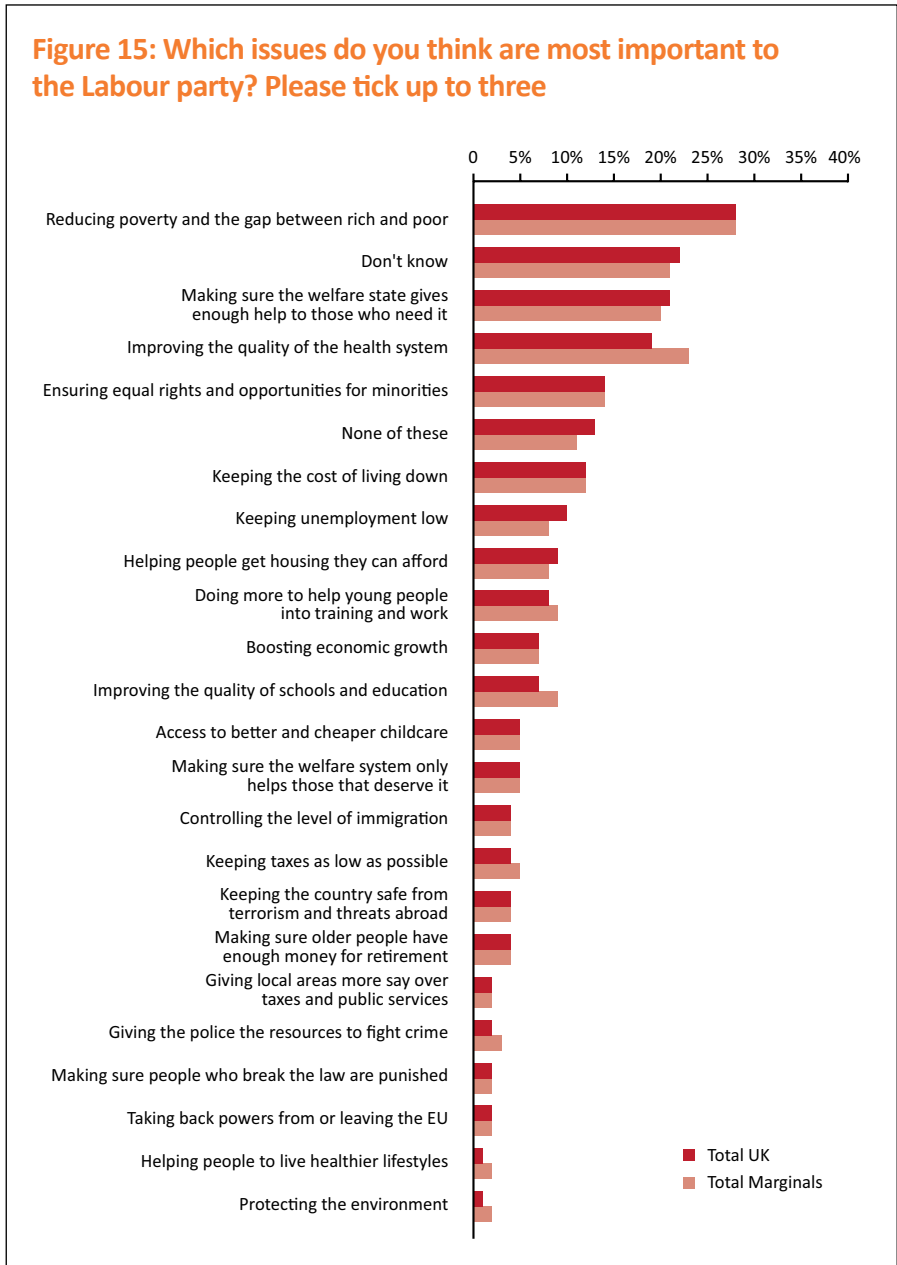


What people think the parties care about

Again, there is something of a mismatch between the public’s policy priorities and the perceived policy priorities of the parties. When voters in marginal seats were asked what issues they thought were most important to the Conservative Party, they responded in the following way: boosting economic growth; making sure the welfare system only helps those that deserve it; taking back powers from or leaving the EU; keeping the country safe from terrorism and threats abroad; and keeping taxes as low as possible. C1 and C2 voters shared these assumptions. Labour in marginal seats were associated with the following policy priorities: reducing poverty and the gap between rich and poor; improving the quality of the health system; making sure the welfare state gives enough help to those who need it; ensuring equal rights and opportunities for minorities; and keeping the cost of living down. C1 and C2 voters also shared these assumptions.

Figure 14: Which issues do you think are most important to the Conservative party? Please tick up to three





Going into detail on specific areas

When given a list of potential financial policies that a Government could introduce, voters in marginal seats, including C1 and C2 voters, said the following: raising the personal allowance; reducing VAT; freezing energy bills; reducing taxes on petrol; and reducing the cost of public transport, although C1/C2 voters put cutting taxes on petrol before freezing energy bills.

In healthcare, marginals voters ranked potential policies like this: preventing so-called health tourism; extending GP opening hours; reducing the cost of care homes; increasing the number of nurses in hospital wards; and extending access to drugs that treat cancer. Again, C1 and C2s shared these priorities. C2s and Conservative considerers were particularly enthusiastic about cutting down on health tourism.

In education, marginal voters – including C1/C2 voters – favoured the following: introducing stricter discipline in schools; reducing class sizes; making sure exam standards matched the best in the world; spending more time teaching maths and science; and improving vocational education. C2 voters and Conservative considerers were particularly enthusiastic about the idea of introducing stricter discipline; Conservative considerers were more enthused about the idea of improving exam standards than most.

We also asked marginal seat voters about possible “family friendly” policies that the Government could potentially introduce. Increasing the number of free childcare hours was top for all, including C1/C2 voters, followed by: wherever possible, locating nurseries in primary schools; extending the school day; increasing statutory holiday entitlement; and making tax free saving for children more generous. C1 voters – but especially Labour considerers – were particularly enthusiastic about extending childcare.

Finally on issues, we asked marginal seat voters about crime and justice policies. Their top one was amending human rights laws to ensure the swifter deportation of criminals who were foreign nationals. This was followed by: harsher sentences for crimes involving violence and sexual assault; ending the automatic release of prisoners part way through their sentences; increasing the amount of police on the streets; and charging prisoners who have the money for the cost of their accommodation while in prison. C2 voters and Conservative considerers were particularly supportive of the need to amend human rights laws to deport foreign criminals.

Figure 16: Thinking about potential policies a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

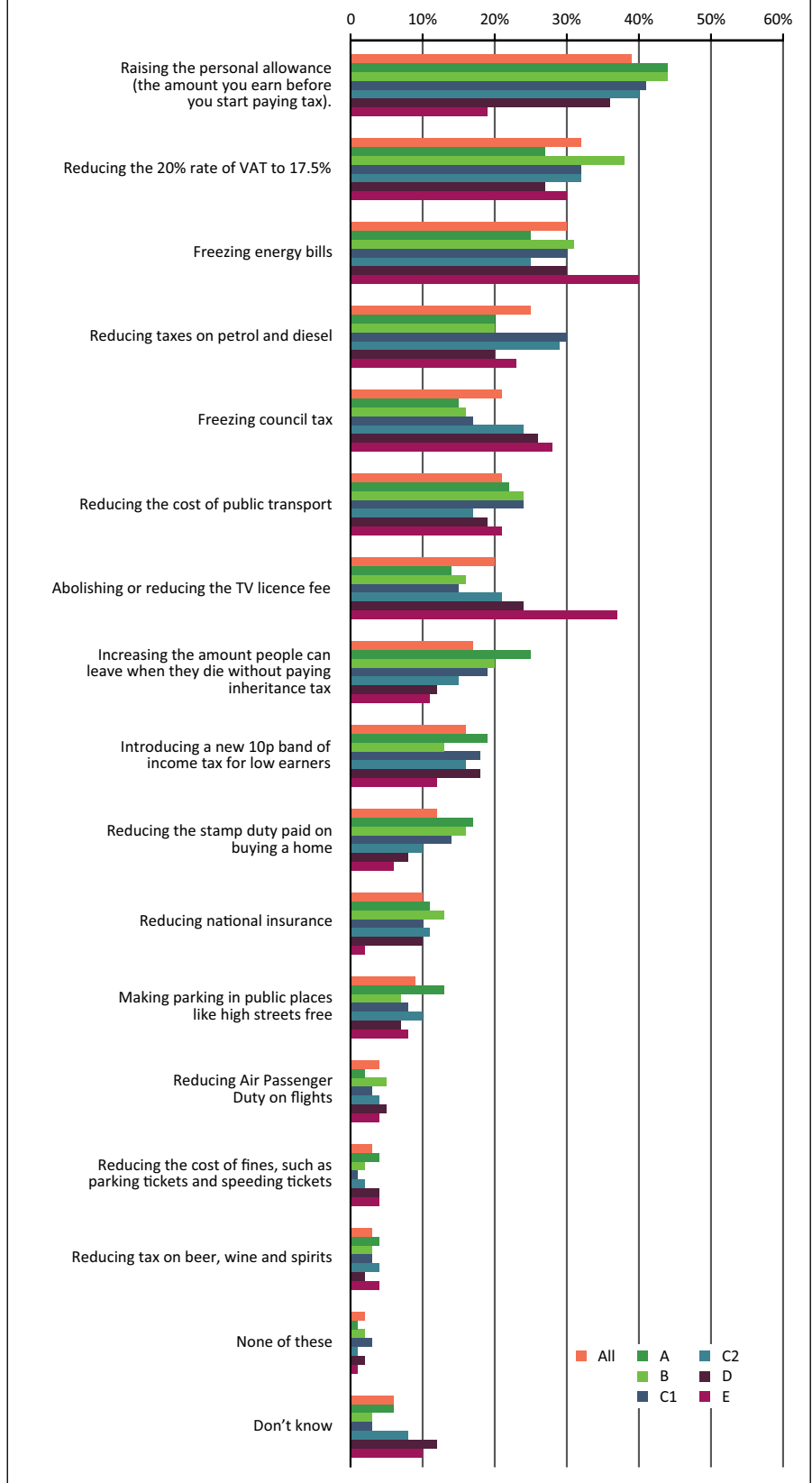


Figure 17: Thinking about potential policies on healthcare a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

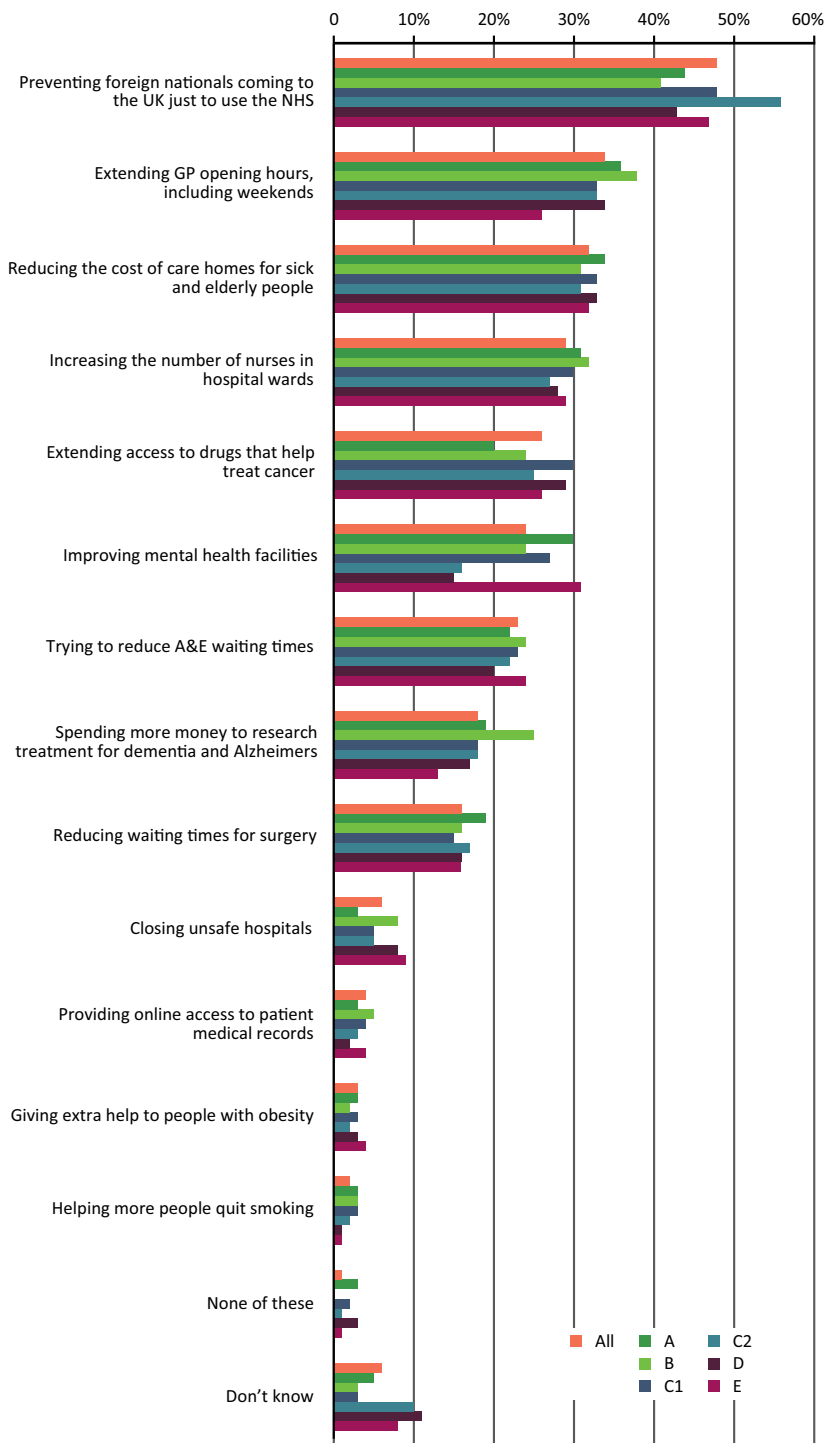


Figure 18: Thinking about potential policies on education a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

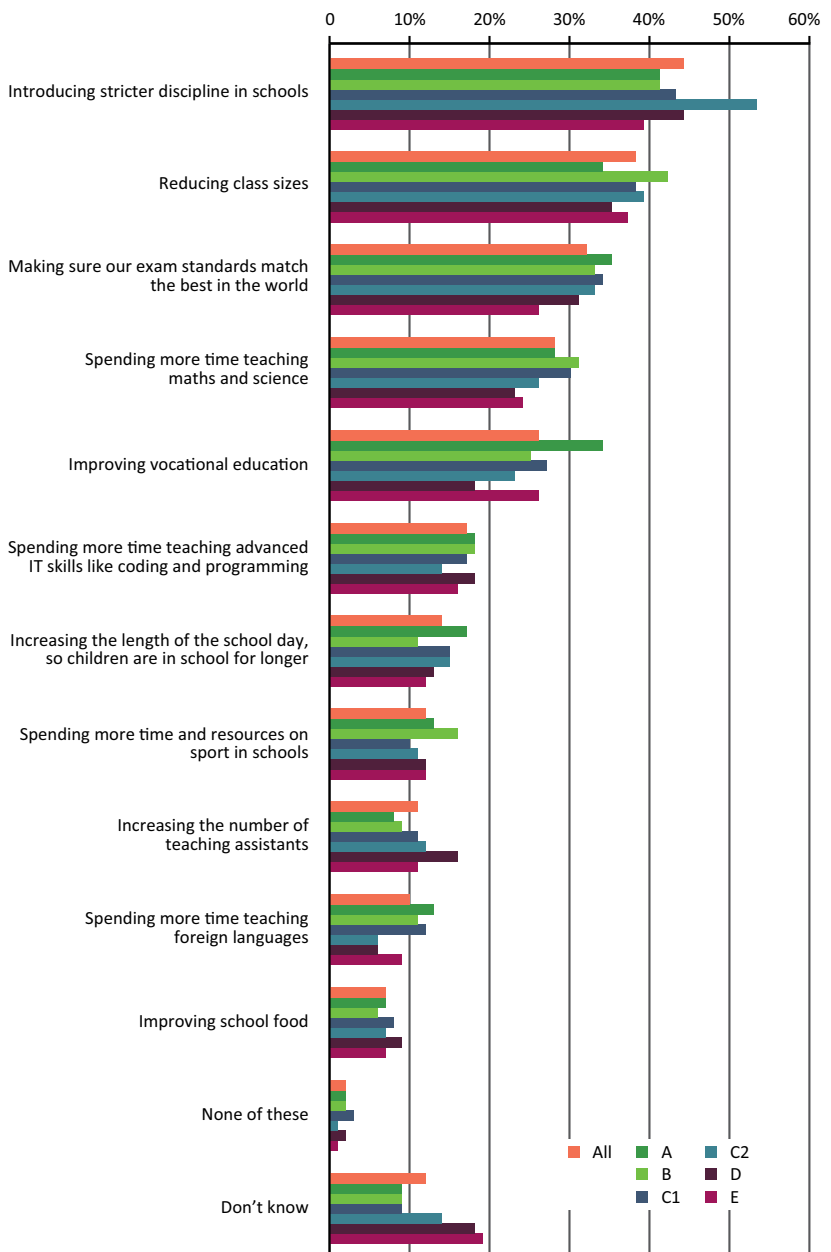


Figure 19: Thinking about potential policies that might help families that a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

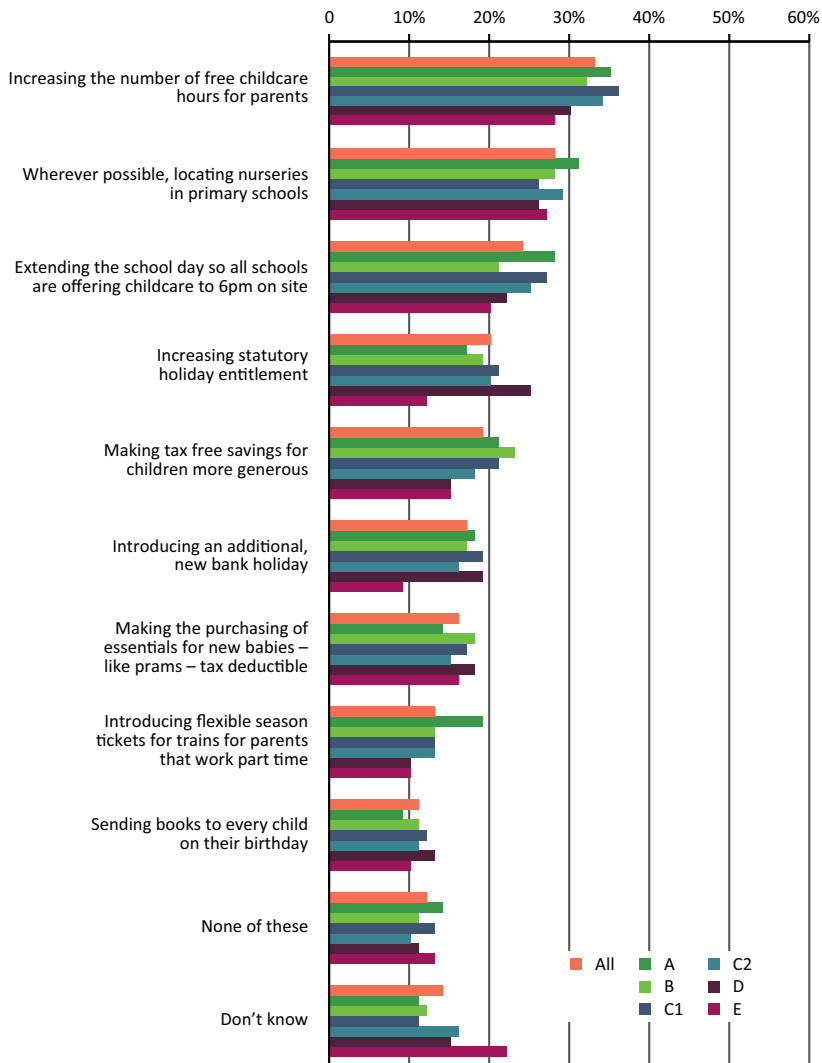
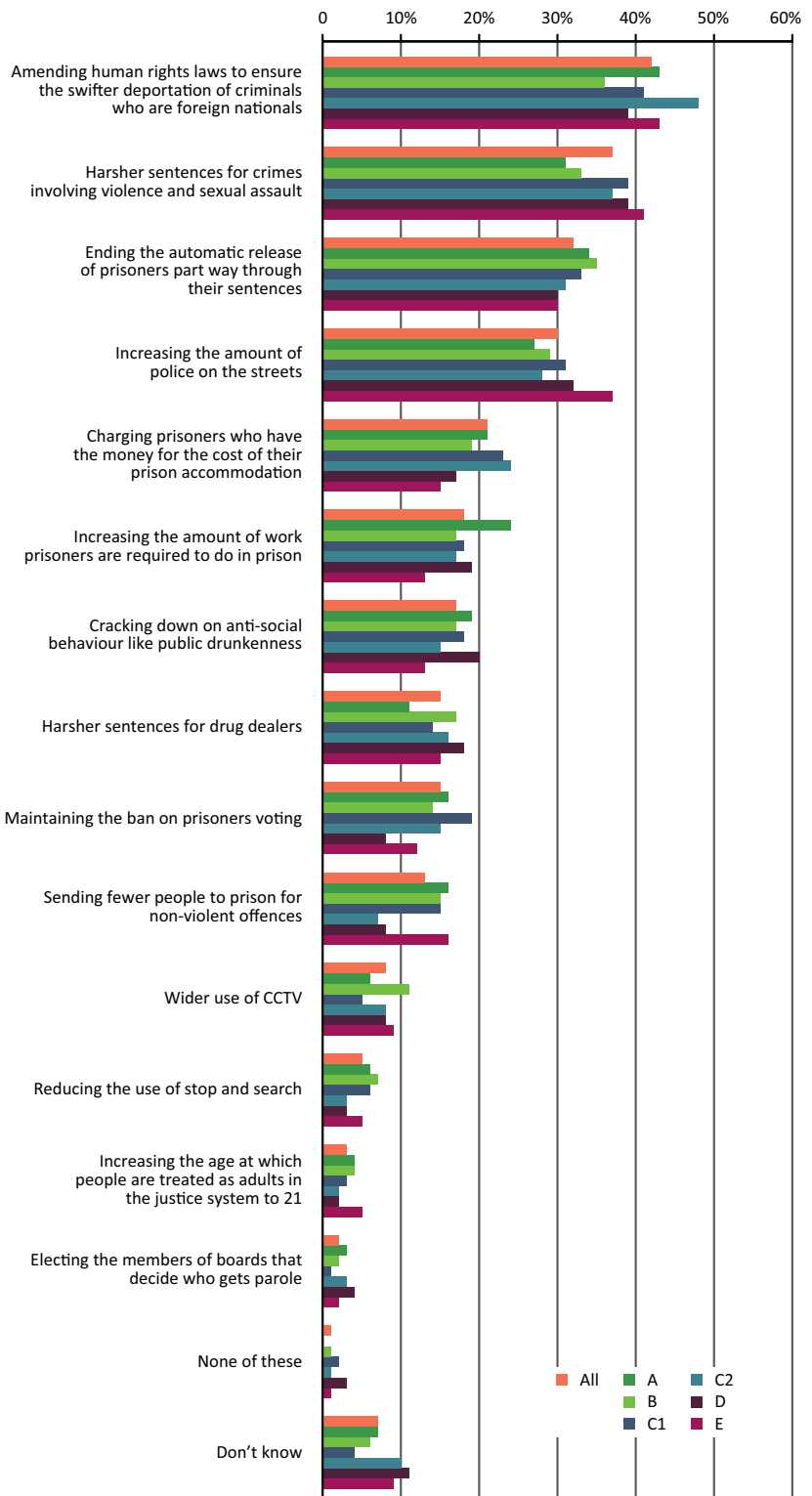


Figure 20: Thinking about potential policies on law and order a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)



Female versus male concerns on issues

As with the questions on values, C1/C2 women display significant differences to men on issues-based questions. These differences should be taken particularly seriously by the Conservatives, who, as we have seen, have a potentially serious problem with C1/C2 women in provincial England.

Men rank their top issues as controlling immigration; keeping the cost of living down; and improving the health system. C1/C2 women share these concerns in order, but they care more about controlling immigration than men, and substantially more than men about keeping the cost of living down and improving the quality of the health service.

Further down the priority list, we see some interest differences emerge. C1/C2 women are significantly more likely than men (23 per cent for women, compared to 17 per cent for men) to name keeping the country safe as one of their top priorities. Men are much more likely to care about taking back powers from the EU and much more likely to care about boosting economic growth (16 per cent of men care about economic growth, compared to just 7 per cent of women).

In the more detailed questions on specific policy areas, there were some other interesting differences between C1/C2 men and women. Women are much more enthusiastic about freezing energy bills than men (34 per cent name this as a priority compared to 22 per cent of men). Women are also even keener than men to restrict health tourism and to introduce stricter discipline in schools.

“Women are also even keener than men to restrict health tourism and to introduce stricter discipline in schools”

Women are more interested in extending free childcare, but they are also more interested in amending human rights laws to deport foreign criminals more swiftly and much more interested in increasing prison sentences for the most serious criminals.

These again reflect women's more intense commitment to the values of family and fairness particularly. Women support policies that they believe will enable them to help protect their families from harm and to help them bring up their children better; they also support policies that they believe will make the country fairer.

The Conservatives' recent problem with female voters – or, more accurately, with C1/C2 female voters – will not be addressed by softening their stance on harder-edged issues. Women are more interested in the health service and childcare than men, and they are less interested in the EU. But, on many of the hardest-edged issues, such as health tourism and many crime and justice policies, they take a much tougher position than men.

Figure 21: Which issues are most important to you and your family? (Marginals)

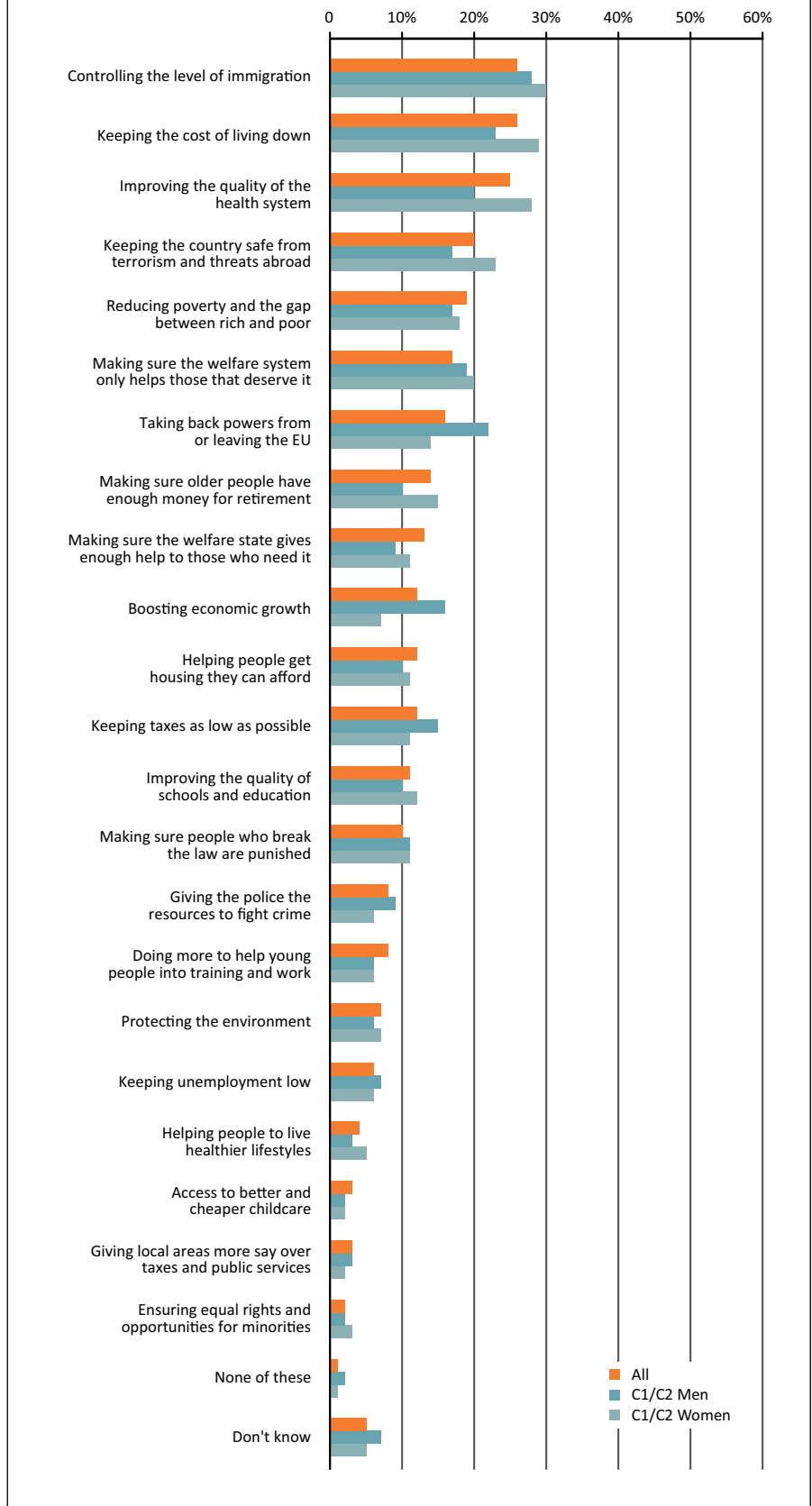


Figure 22: Thinking about potential policies a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

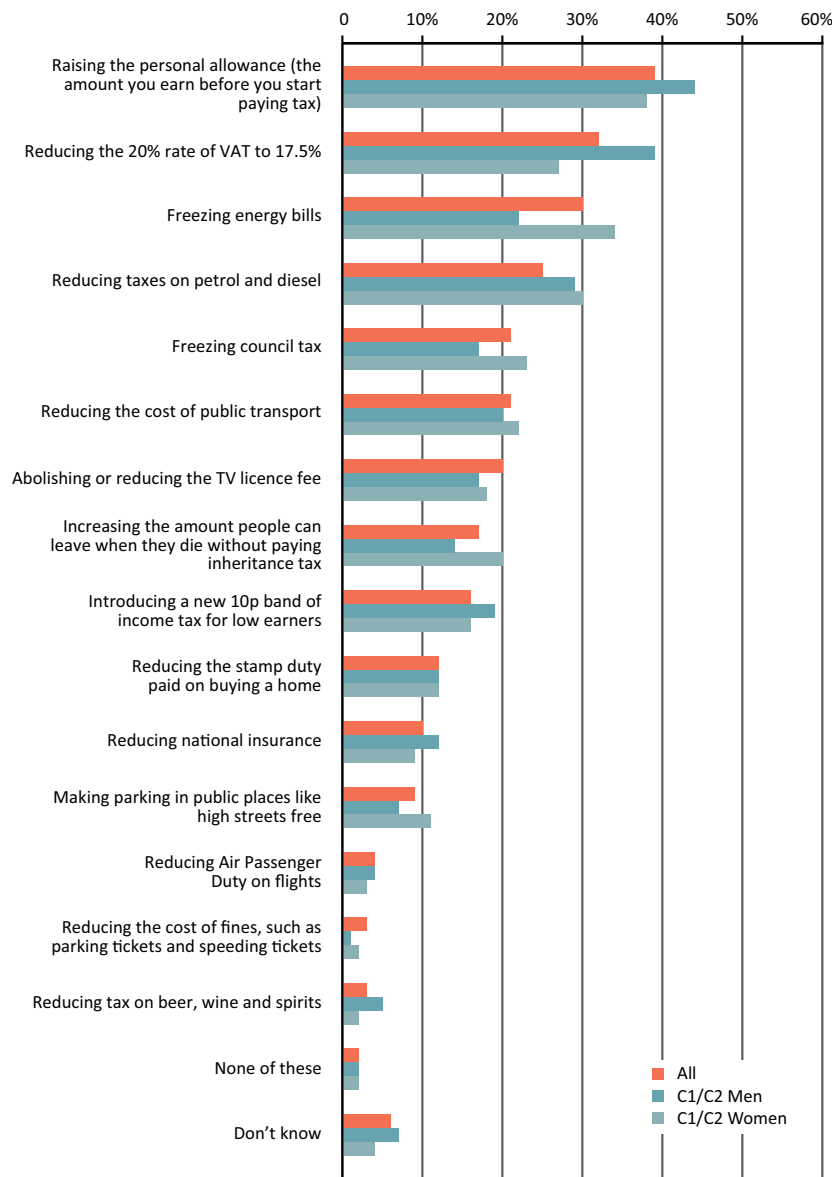


Figure 23: Thinking about potential policies on healthcare a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

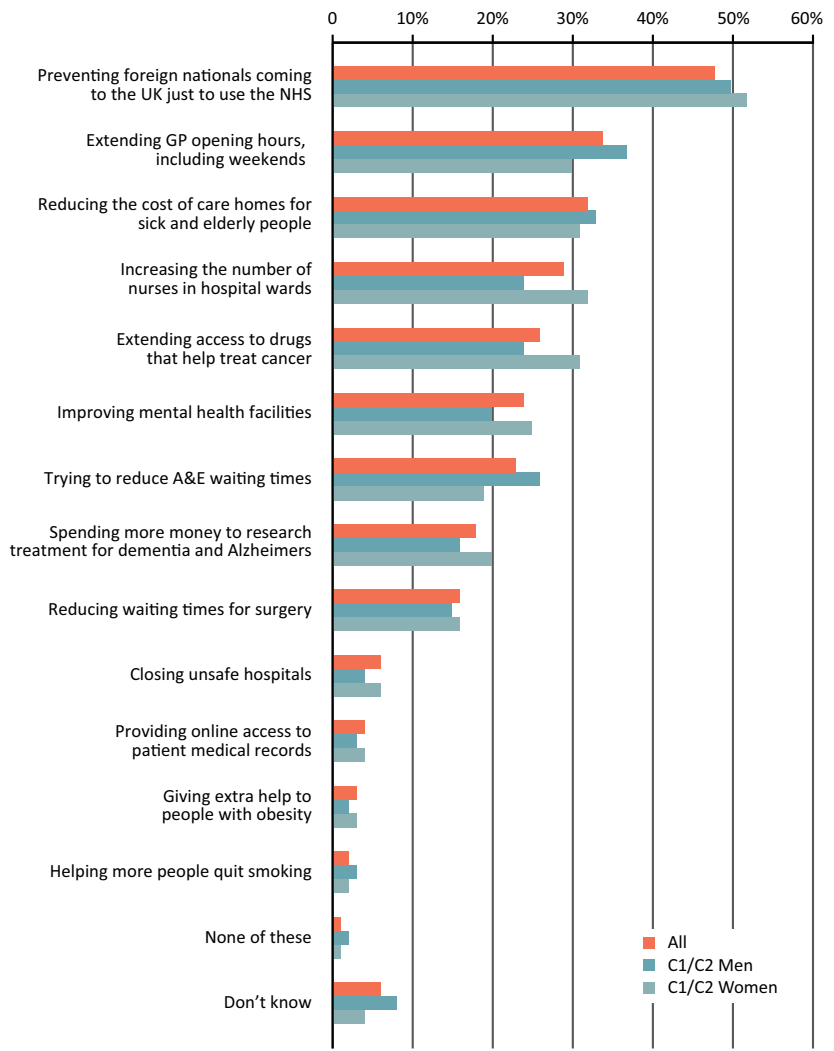


Figure 24: Thinking about potential policies on education a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? Please tick up to three (Marginals)

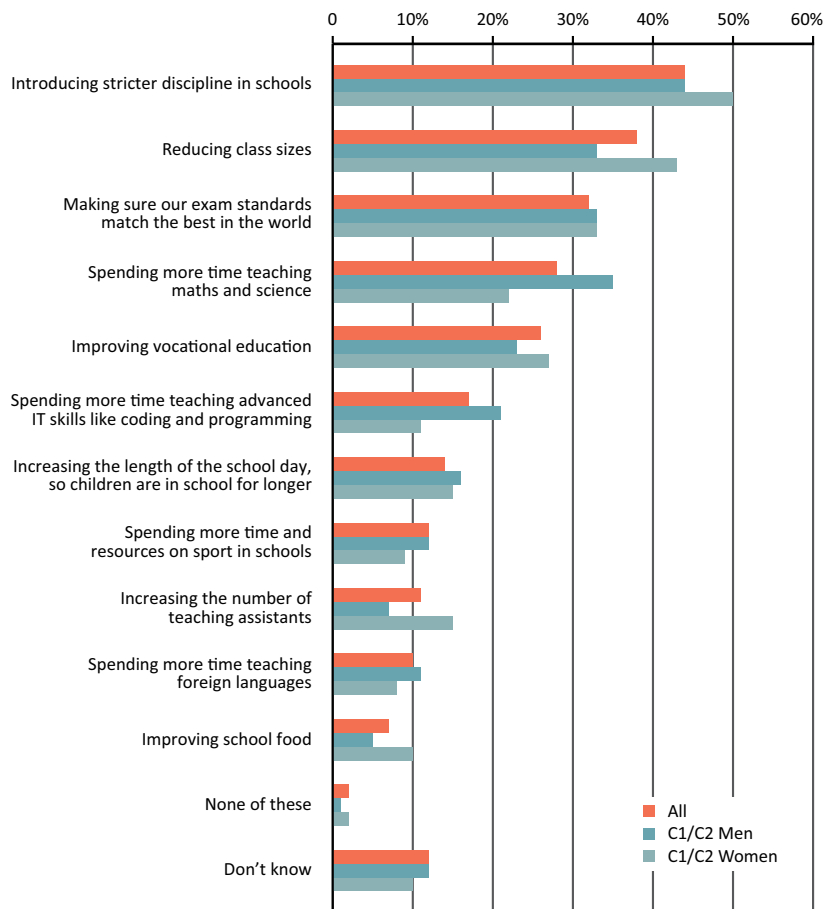
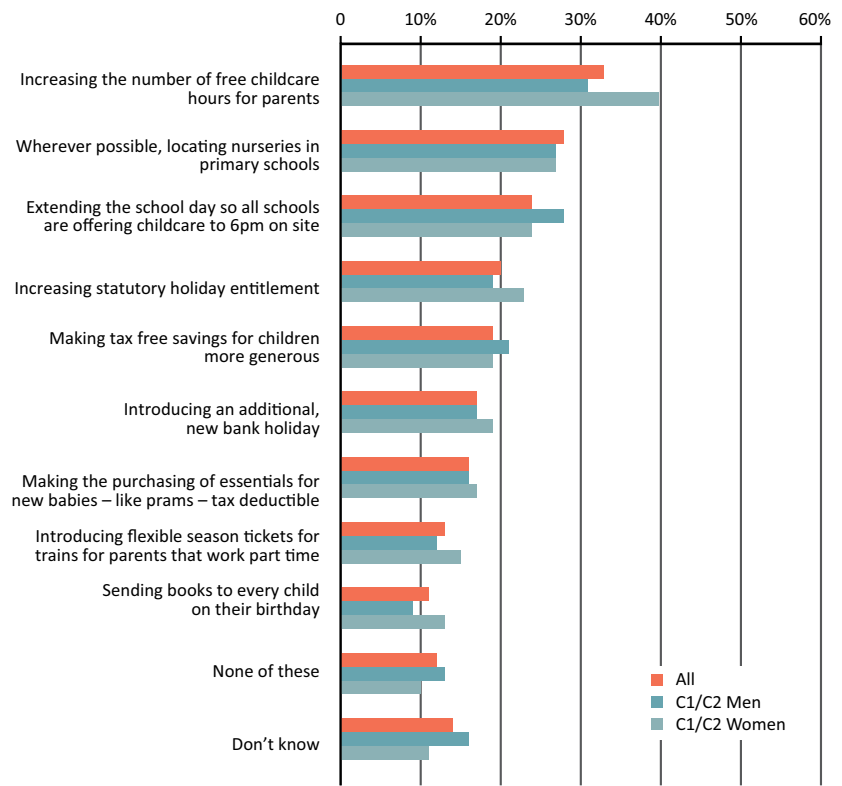
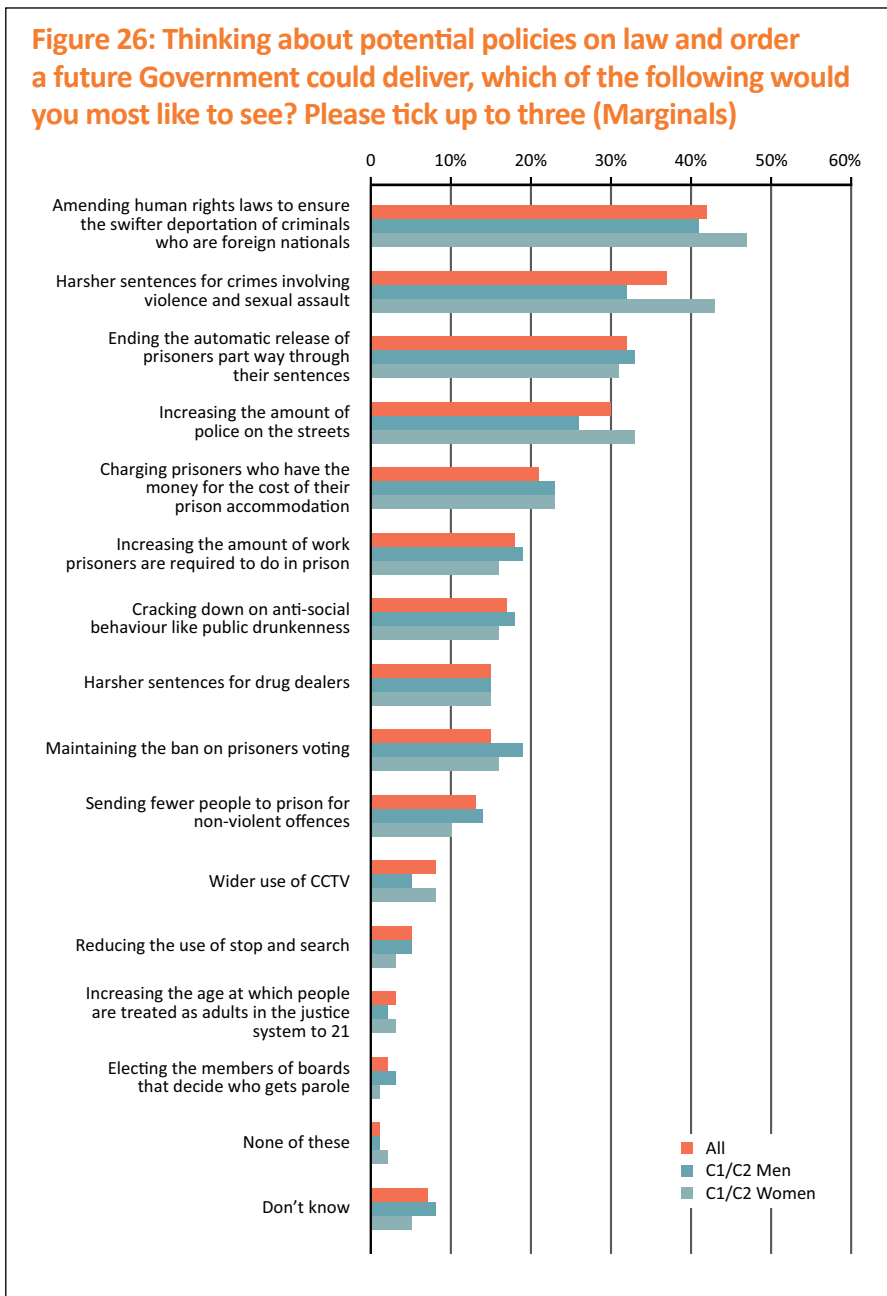


Figure 25: Thinking about potential policies that might help families that a future Government could deliver, which of the following would you most like to see? (Marginals)





Public versus private sector workers

The differences between C1/C2 public and private sector workers are similar to those that exist between C1/C2 men and women. That is to say that they are significant, but they do not point to the Conservatives' (whose lead is slightly lower amongst these public sector voters) needing to create an entirely different strategy to the one that we suggest will work best for them here.

C1/C2 public sector workers in the marginals care significantly less about personal financial issues. For example, they care less about keeping the cost of living down, less about raising the personal allowance and less about cutting VAT. They also care more about those issues typically associated with the Labour Party's commitment to the public sector – for example, they are more fired up about the need to reduce the cost of care homes and they want to reduce class sizes. However, they are much

tougher than private sector workers on immigration and terrorism, they are even tougher (albeit by a percentage point) on dealing with health tourism, and they are even more likely to take a harder line on sentencing for serious crimes and on parole.

It seems reasonable to assume that their tougher line on these issues comes from the fact that these are the issues that they see in their everyday lives. For example, they are more likely to have to personally deal with the effects of immigration in their jobs and to experience violence and the effects of it. They work on the sharp end.

The Just About Managing classes on the most contentious issues

YouGov's Profiles tool allows us to go into detail on C1 and C2 voters' views on the most contentious and controversial issues. These issues are effectively values-based questions, as they tend to cut across party political lines; they are not part of the national political conversation.

As this research project has shown throughout, voters are a long, long way from libertarian, small-government values. 47 per cent of C1/C2 voters in our marginals sample oppose abortion, compared to 28 per cent who support it (with the rest saying do not know). C1/C2 voters also support capital punishment by 62 per cent to 33 per cent; they support Government intervention in the free market by 69 per cent to 19 per cent and 58 per cent say they want powerful Government compared to 17 per cent who say they want individual freedom; furthermore, they support greater internet regulation by 49 per cent to 15 per cent; they support the nationalisation of utilities by 60 per cent to 17 per cent and railway nationalisation by 57 per cent to 20 per cent; they support greater oversight of the media by 48 per cent to 12 per cent; and 54 per cent believe that the top rate of tax should be 50p or more compared to 17 per cent that believe the top rate of tax should be 40p or less.

However, reflecting modern concepts of fairness no doubt, these voters take a more liberal line on a number of what are typically thought of (wrongly, as it turns out) contentious issues. For example, they support euthanasia by 83 per cent to 11 per cent; they support gay marriage by 69 per cent to 19 per cent.

Appealing to those Just About Managing

There is no hiding the fact that policy priorities of those Just About Managing, including women and many public sector workers, in these crucial swing seats have little in common with many in Westminster, who would consider them to be old fashioned, occasionally parochial, and often illiberal. This is a value judgement that people will make for themselves.

What is clear, however, is that because their policy priorities reflect their values of family and fairness, they are extremely unlikely to change any time soon. And because they are not going to change any time soon, the parties can either take some of them up or consciously choose policies that they know to be less popular.

6

Reaching England's C1/C2 Voters

The dominance of earned media

There is no real tradition in British politics of direct communications to voters. Clearly, it does take place to some extent, particularly around elections, but it is not on anything like the scale of American elections. British political parties cannot advertise on TV, which removes the single most powerful way of reaching voters and there is not the same culture of direct mail as there is in the US. This is changing as parties start to flood the internet with political messaging, but British campaigns still rely overwhelmingly on earned media through the newspapers and TV.

“British political parties cannot advertise on TV, which removes the single most powerful way of reaching voters and there is not the same culture of direct mail as there is in the US”

How best should the parties reach their target audience of C1/C2 voters in provincial England? To find out, we used YouGov's Profiles database. This allows us to look in detail at the media habits of the country at large, and of C1/C2 voters in particular.

C1/C2 voters in marginal seats have at least some interest in politics. 8.5 per cent describe themselves as a political obsessive; 45.6 per cent say they follow politics closely; 37.5 per cent have a minor interest in politics; and 8.4 per cent say they have little or no interest. The parties clearly do have an opportunity to cut through to these crucial voters, but they need an extremely clear idea of the best channels open to them.

The continuing power of TV news

The main source of news for C1/C2 voters – and indeed voters as a whole – is television. 39 per cent said TV was their main source, followed by printed copies of newspapers (12 per cent), radio (10 per cent), news websites not associated with newspapers (8 per cent), a newspaper website (8 per cent), a news app on a mobile or tablet (7 per cent), and social network websites (5 per cent). C1 and C2 voters were more likely to say they mainly got their news from the TV than A and B voters (36.9 per cent and 34.3 per cent), but less likely than D and E voters (44.4 per cent and 48.5 per cent).

Regarding general “live” TV viewing, 18 per cent of C1/C2 marginal seat voters watch 6 to 10 hours a week. 17 per cent watch 1 to 5 hours a week; 12 per cent watch 16 to 20 hours a week; and 12 per cent watch 11 to 15 hours a week.

By contrast, 35 per cent watch between 1 to 5 hours of on demand TV a week; 20 per cent watch 6 to 10 hours; 13 per cent watch less than an hour per week.

For this demographic, the most popular TV news programmes were the regional news and weather, the BBC News at 6, BBC news generally, ITV news generally, BBC News at 10, and ITV News at 10.

The role of newspapers

For those that work in politics, the newspapers take up a disproportionate amount of time to deal with and their stories have a disproportionately large impact on Westminster debate. While TV is overwhelmingly important to the public, newspapers and their websites still matter, as the figures above show.

Profiles shows that for C1/C2 voters in key marginals, The Sun is the most popular newspaper, with 24 per cent saying they read it. This is followed by The Mirror (17 per cent) and the Daily Mail (14 per cent). 22 per cent said they did not read a daily newspaper. The Sun was more popular still amongst D and E voters (31.4 per cent and 27.9 per cent respectively read The Sun), while for A and B voters, the Daily Mail is most popular. For voters in London and the Home Counties, the free papers also play a large role. 20 per cent said they read the Metro always or quite often, with 17 per cent saying the same for the Evening Standard.

Looking at the newspapers' websites gives a different picture. Asked which newspaper websites they had visited in the last 30 days and they said: 46 per cent did not look at newspaper websites; 21 per cent read the Daily Mail online; 14 per cent said the Guardian online; 10 per cent the Daily Telegraph online; 9 per cent The Sun online; and 8 per cent the Daily Mirror. The Daily Mail was even more popular amongst A and B voters, but less popular amongst D and E voters.

These voters do read the serious sections of the newspapers. 62 per cent said they read the domestic news; 44 per cent European news; 35 per cent foreign news; and 29 per cent money news. The comment and editorial sections of the websites were, unsurprisingly, not very well read. Just 20 per cent of these voters said they read these sections.

The rise of the internet

As the data above shows, the role of the web in providing news to voters is becoming more prominent and this trend is only likely to continue. 80 per cent of these C1/C2 voters say they go on the internet "several times a day", 12 per cent say once a day, and just 3 per cent say 4–6 days a week. Furthermore, 50 per cent say they rely on the internet and 38 per cent say they "could not manage without it."

And they are using the internet for a range of activities that was not true before. While 88 per cent use it for email and 81 per cent use it for internet browsing, 60 per cent use it for social networks, 25 per cent for uploading images and video for social networks, and 20 per cent for downloading games, movies, TV shows etc.

Facebook remains overwhelmingly the most used social network for these voters, with 70 per cent using it "in the last thirty days". 26 per cent used Twitter; 11 per cent LinkedIn; 10 per cent Instagram; 9 per cent Google +; 9 per cent Snapchat; 6 per cent Pinterest; and 3 per cent Tumblr.

The enduring influence of radio

These English voters still listen to radio regularly. Just under a third of the population (32 per cent) say they listen to radio between 1 and 5 hours a week. 17 per cent say they listen for under an hour, while 14 per cent listen between 6 and 10 hours a week.

Profiles has data on what radio shows C1 and C2 voters “like” or “really like”. On this measure, 63 per cent of people liked or really liked the PM Programme on BBC Radio 4. Others included: The World Tonight (56 per cent); Today Programme (55 per cent); Money Box (54 per cent); Any Questions (51 per cent); The World at One (49 per cent); Women’s Hour (46 per cent); Any Answers (45 per cent); and the Week in Westminster (39 per cent).

7

Conclusion: Connecting with those Just About Managing

A middle class up for grabs

This Parliament ought to see a major political war between the parties to appeal to provincial English C1/C2 voters. Securing workable Parliamentary majorities depends on securing their support. As we have seen, these voters make up the majority of most marginal seats and they are politically open-minded and always have been.

While the Conservatives won these voters in a big way in 2015, the outcome was not guaranteed: C1/C2 voters have voted differently and could do so again. As we have seen throughout this document, no party has secured the loyalty of these voters for the long-term. This should be the parties' key electoral aspiration for this Parliament.

When you look at the key problems associated with the two parties in the minds of those in the Just About Managing classes, they are essentially the polar opposites of each other. Labour are perceived to be on the side of those on low pay and benefits and the Conservatives are often perceived to be on the side of those at the top. Both parties are beginning to talk about them. Labour's leadership election has focused on the party's gradual detachment from "Middle England". The Conservatives are starting to develop a "one nation" concept to show that they are committed to ensuring prosperity for the country as a whole. However, as this research has shown, both need to undertake a significant shift to secure C1/C2 support.

The myth of the "centrist" voter

Reconnecting with the Just About Managing classes requires that the parties accept all voters, and C1/C2 voters particularly, for what they are, not what they would like to be. They also need to accept the simple truth that C1/C2 voters are the parties' biggest target audience.

Too many pundits and advisers have allowed their own views on politics and their own prejudices to cloud their judgement on campaigning. While some might find these types of middle class values and priorities unsophisticated or even occasionally unpleasant, parties that want to win have to embrace them enthusiastically or accept that they would sooner lose "in the right way" than win.

Research shows clearly that all voters – including C1/C2 voters and, in many cases in the marginal seats of provincial England, especially C1/C2 women – take what you might call a right-wing line on crime, immigration and welfare reform, and

they take what you might call a left-wing approach to NHS funding and structure, private sector involvement in public services and the utilities, and taxation on the rich and big businesses.

Whatever they are, the public generally, including the Just About Managing classes, are not “centrists” in the genuine sense of the term. They do not take a moderate line on any of the big issues. They take a clear line, policy by policy, which is either left-leaning or right-leaning. The parties will have to make up their own minds about how they deal with this reality – for example, Labour might feel squeamish about toughening up on crime – but this is where the public are.

The Conservatives’ “women problem” (not forgetting the public sector)

Just as the parties (and pundits) need to accept C1/C2 voters for what they are, they need to do the same with C1/C2 women. There is a widespread assumption that women favour a “softer” brand of politics, and that they are primarily interested in stereotypically “female” issues. Our research shows this not to be the case.

C1/C2 women are more likely to name “family” and “fairness” (“family” particularly) as being defining values than men. But while that means they are more likely to name the health service, the cost of living and childcare as being policy priorities, as we have seen they are more likely to be concerned about keeping the country safe from terrorism and threats abroad, they are more hostile to so-called health tourism, they want tougher discipline in schools and they are mostly tougher on crime.

The Conservatives have a potentially serious problem with C1/C2 women in the marginal seats of provincial England. Addressing this problem requires a careful understanding of the values of family and fairness and what they mean when they are translated into policy. A commitment to family, for these C1/C2 women, clearly means keeping their family safe, for example, rather than simply keeping them healthy. Similarly, a commitment to fairness clearly means making sure only those that have a right to access the NHS should do so.

Our research also shows that, with caveats, C1/C2 public sector workers in the marginals are also emphatically *not* looking for a “softer” brand of politics. It is clear – as you would expect – that public sector workers take their work seriously and believe in its value. They support those policies that seek to strengthen and protect services. It therefore makes no sense for any party that wants to attract these workers’ votes to pointlessly criticise the public sector and to question its usefulness.

However, C1/C2 public sector workers in these crucial marginals share the same values as private sector workers and many of the same policy priorities. The Conservatives’ in seeking to attract more C1/C2 public sector workers should follow the strategy that we have laid out here.

Voters’ consistent worldview

At one level the public’s political outlook seems contradictory. How can people combine both traditionally left and right wing views? That is simple. The public are not driven by party politics first and foremost – or the ideologies loosely associated with the main parties. Rather, as we have seen in this research, voters

are driven by values – above all, family, fairness, hard work and decency. The issues they are interested in and the policies they want to see derive from these values.

Boiled down, those in the Just About Managing classes want to provide the best that they can for their families and they want to live in a society where hard work is rewarded and laziness and rule breaking are punished. They are not libertarians and while they do not trust politicians they want Government to help them get ahead and to stop them falling into difficulties in the bad times.

What drives the Just About Managing classes into a rage is their sense that people are rewarded for laziness and for aggressively playing the system. They hate to see people claiming welfare when they should be working. They hate to see criminals go unpunished and the inability of politicians to take necessary action to keep the country and society at whole safe, for example by removing criminals that have no moral right to stay in the country.

While these C1/C2 voters say they vote mainly with the fortunes of their family in mind, a very significant proportion say they vote mainly with society in mind, and their policy choices strongly suggest that they are “values voters”.

Campaigning for the Just About Managing classes

Much of politics depends on communications and campaigning. Voters want to know that politicians are on their side, that they have similar values that drive them and, frankly, that they have similar opponents. Politicians only have so much time to communicate – there is only so much space in the media, the politicians themselves have limited time, and the public do not have the time to process politics in the same way those in Westminster do.

In short, politicians need to publicly prioritise the interests, values, and lifestyles of C1 and C2 families. The language they choose needs to explicitly focus on family, fairness, hard work and decency and they need to make it clear they want to create a country where these values are rewarded – and a country where those that reject these values will not get ahead and will be punished where appropriate.

Long-term and short-term action

As parties consider their next steps, they will inevitably be thinking about both the long and short-term measures they need to take to change the political landscape. Some of these will focus on trying to affect cultural and institutional change with a twenty-year view ahead. For example, Conservatives are rightly worried about their weaknesses within academia. They also worry about their weakness in the inner cities and in the North of England and Scotland. Some in the Labour Party are worried about their inability to sustain support within the business community or to pick up more votes in the South East of England.

Any serious political strategist needs to consider how best to deal with longstanding challenges and major developing changes that can be anticipated (for example, demographic changes). The parties and their wider associated political movements need to consider the seeds of economic and cultural change that can be planted now and the coalitions they can build in areas of weakness so that they can hopefully reap the benefits in years to come.

But party politics – electoral politics – clearly cannot wait years to see progress. Political parties will be fighting a full-scale General Election again in just five years time and they will need to have their campaign in good working order

within two or three years from now. Furthermore, the parties will have to contest local elections, national elections in Scotland and Wales, European elections, and Mayoral elections. The parties need to take action now and to see progress very soon.