

# Audit of Political Engagement 16

The 2019 Report



The annual health check on public attitudes towards politics in Great Britain



# About the Audit

The Audit of Political Engagement (APE) is a time-series study providing an annual benchmark to measure political engagement in Great Britain. It gauges public opinion about politics and the political system, and more broadly the general health of our democracy. The study provides a snapshot of public perceptions of, and engagement with, politics at a given moment in time.

- The first Audit was published in 2004. This is therefore the 16<sup>th</sup> report in a series which now draws on 15 years of data.
- Each Audit report presents the findings from a face-to-face public opinion survey carried out on a representative quota sample of adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. This year's survey was conducted between 30 November and 12 December 2018 by Ipsos MORI.
- Six 'core indicator' questions are asked each year. These are supplemented by a range of thematic and topical questions, some of which are also asked each year and some of which are re-visited on two- or three-year cycles.
- The six 'core indicators' measure: certainty to vote; interest in politics; knowledge of politics; knowledge of the UK Parliament (asked consistently only since Audit 8); satisfaction with the system of governing; and people's sense of political efficacy – the extent to which becoming politically involved can change things.
- A demographic breakdown of this year's core indicator findings, data tables with the topline results for all questions in this year's survey, and details of the survey methodology can all be found at the end of this report.



# The three main themes in this year's Audit:

**1.**

Opinions of the system of governing are at their lowest point in the 15-year Audit series - worse now than in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal

**2.**

People are pessimistic about the country's problems and their possible solution, with sizeable numbers willing to entertain radical political changes

**3.**

Core indicators of political engagement remain stable but, beneath the surface, the strongest feelings of powerlessness and disengagement are intensifying

# The key findings from this year's Audit:

1.

2.

3.

## Opinions of the system of governing are at their lowest point in the 15-year Audit series - worse now than in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal

- 72% say the system of governing needs 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of improvement.
- The number of people who say the system needs 'a great deal' of improvement has risen eight points in a year, to 37%.
- Asked whether the problem is the system or the people, the largest group (38%) say 'both'.
- Britons have more confidence in the military and judges than in politicians to act in the public interest.
- Only 25% of the public have confidence in MPs' handling of Brexit.
- 50% say the main parties and politicians don't care about people like them.
- 75% say the main political parties are so divided within themselves that they cannot serve the best interests of the country.
- 34% still consider themselves a 'very' or 'fairly' strong supporter of a political party.

# The key findings from this year's Audit:

1.

2.

3.

## People are pessimistic about the country's problems and their possible solution, with sizeable numbers willing to entertain radical political changes

- Well over half the public are downbeat about the state of Britain – 56% think Britain is in decline, 63% think Britain's system of government is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful, and 66% think most big issues facing the country today don't have clear solutions.
- 54% say Britain needs a strong leader who is willing to break the rules.
- The public are evenly split between those who prefer politicians who make compromises with people they disagree with (48%) and those who prefer politicians who stick to their positions (45%). 66% think politicians should be able to say what's on their mind regardless of what anyone else thinks about their views.
- 42% think many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the government didn't have to worry so much about votes in Parliament.
- Marginally more people prefer experienced political parties and leaders who have been in power before (47%) to those with radical ideas for change who haven't been in power before (43%).
- 55% still think that big questions should be put to the public in referendums more often than today.

# The key findings from this year's Audit:

1.

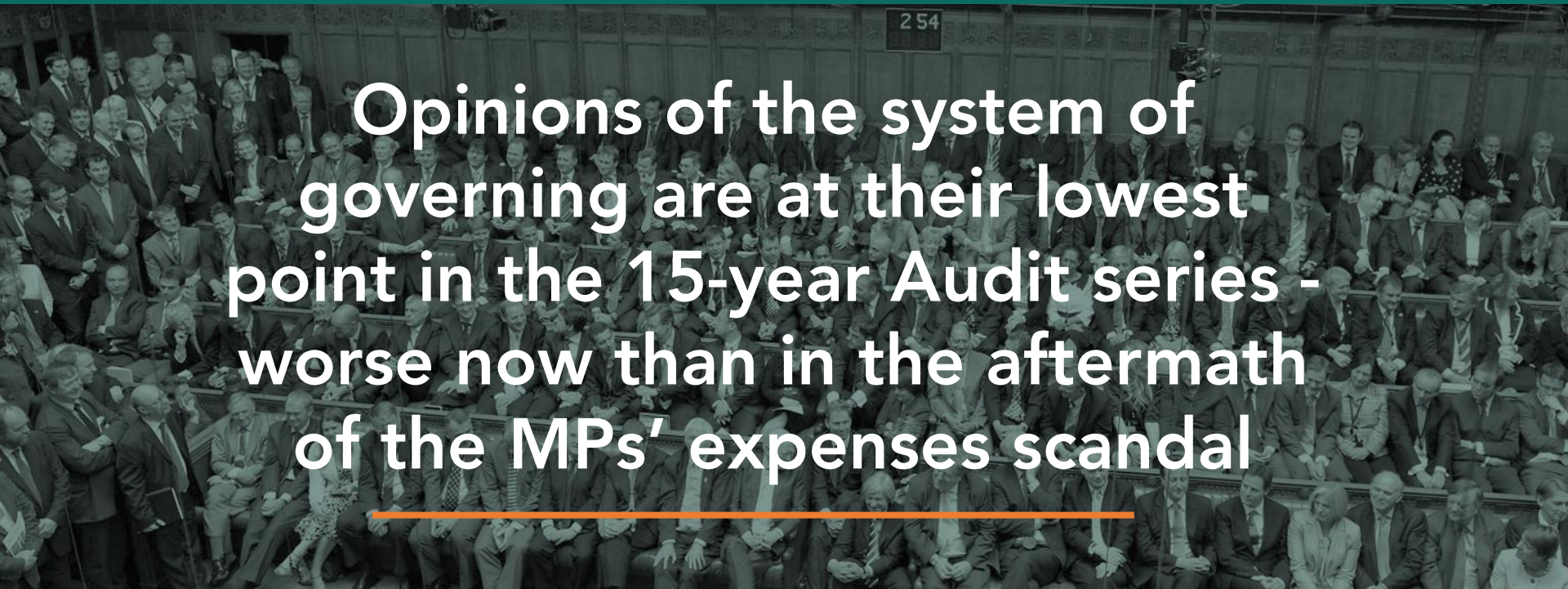
2.

3.

## Core indicators of political engagement remain stable but, beneath the surface, the strongest feelings of powerlessness and disengagement are intensifying

- Core indicators of certainty to vote, and interest in and knowledge of politics, remain stable at average or above-average levels.
- The number who 'strongly disagree' that political involvement can change the way the UK is run (18%) has hit a 15-year high.
- Of 13 political activities, the number of people saying they would be prepared to do 'none' is up 10 points in a year to 22%.
- 47% feel they have no influence at all over national decision-making – a new high for the Audit series.
- 32% say they do not want to be involved 'at all' in local decision-making, a rise of 10 points in a year.
- Compared to last year, more people say that they are not at all interested in politics and know nothing about it.
- 30% of people say they never discuss government and politics.
- 53% say they have not done any form of online political activity in the last year.
- 61% say they would be certain to vote in an immediate general election.

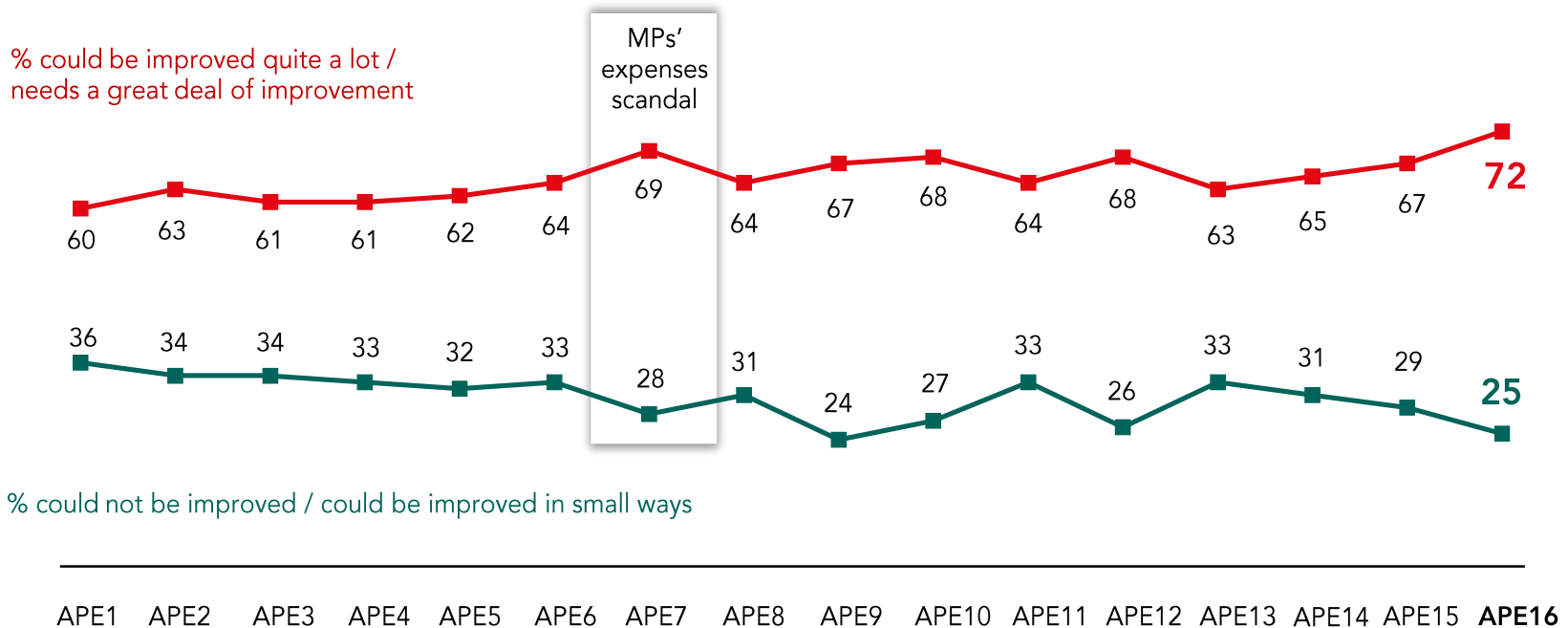
1.



Opinions of the system of governing are at their lowest point in the 15-year Audit series - worse now than in the aftermath of the MPs' expenses scandal

# 72% say the system of governing needs 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of improvement

This measure has risen by five points in the last year and now stands at its highest level in the Audit series, up by 12 points since the first Audit in 2004. The previous high point was in Audit 7, published in 2010 in the aftermath of the financial crisis and the MPs' expenses scandal, when the figure reached 69%.

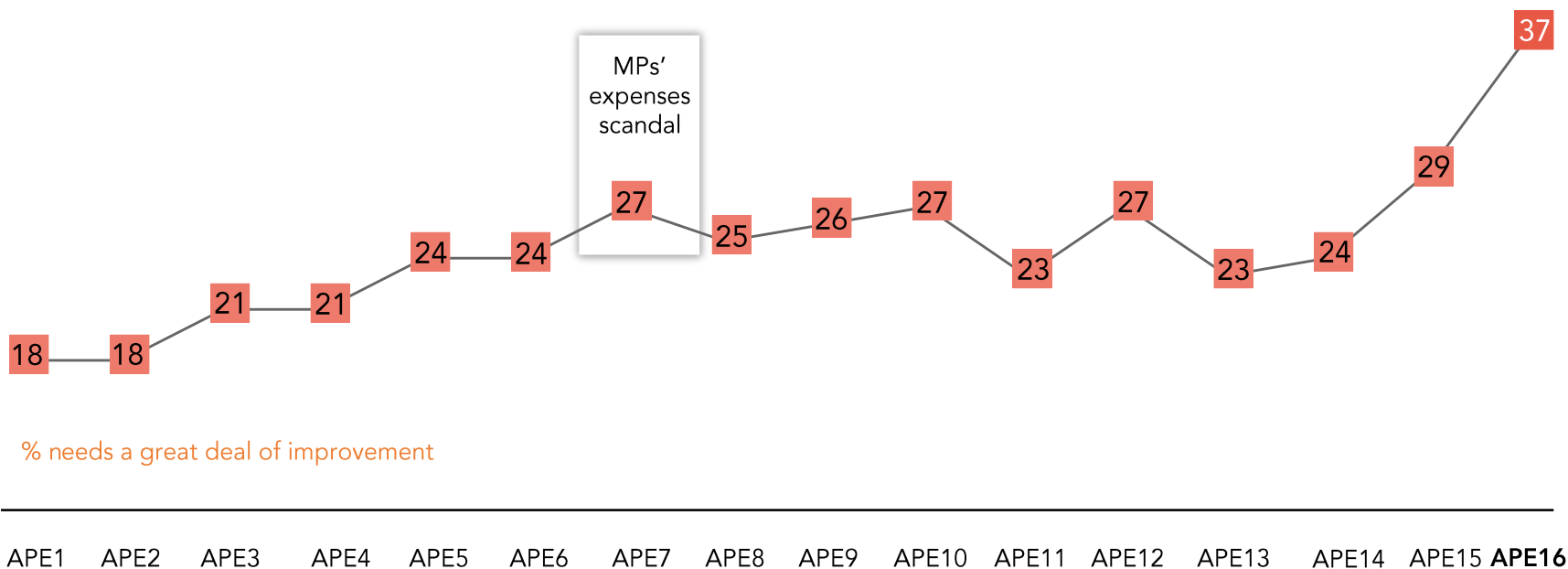


Q. Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain?



# The number of people who say the system needs 'a great deal' of improvement has risen eight points in a year

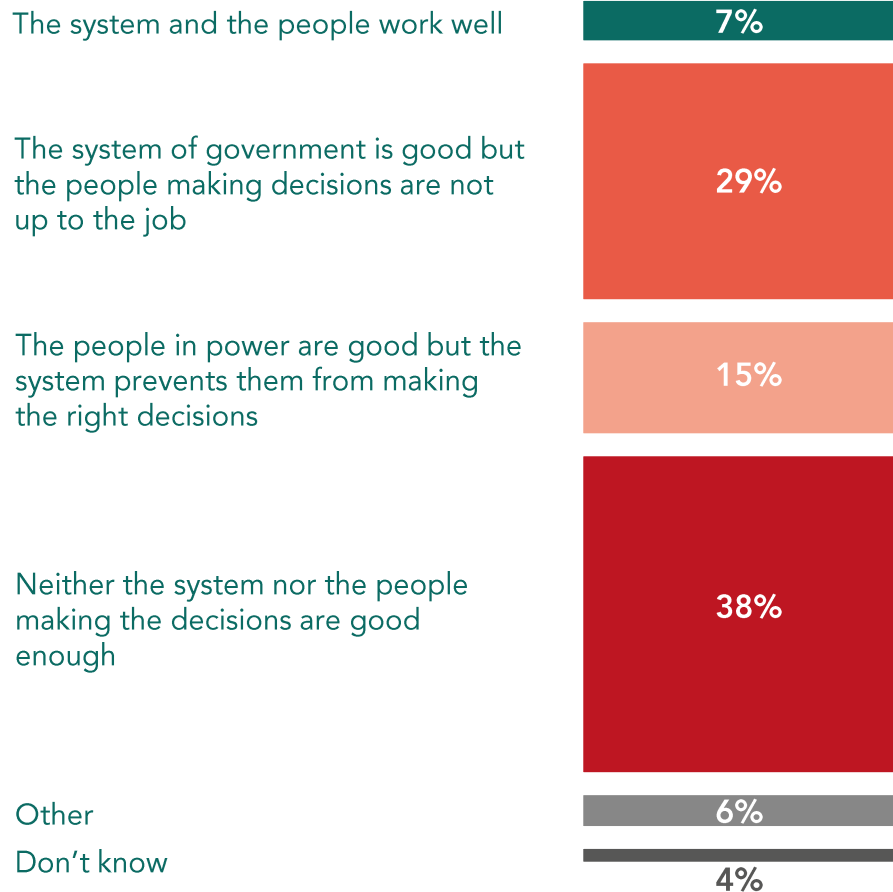
This measure stands 19 points higher than it did in the first Audit, published in 2004, and 10 points higher than it did in Audit 7, published in 2010 after the MPs' expenses scandal.



% needs a great deal of improvement

Q. Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain?

# Asked whether the problem is the system or the people, the largest group (38%) say 'both'



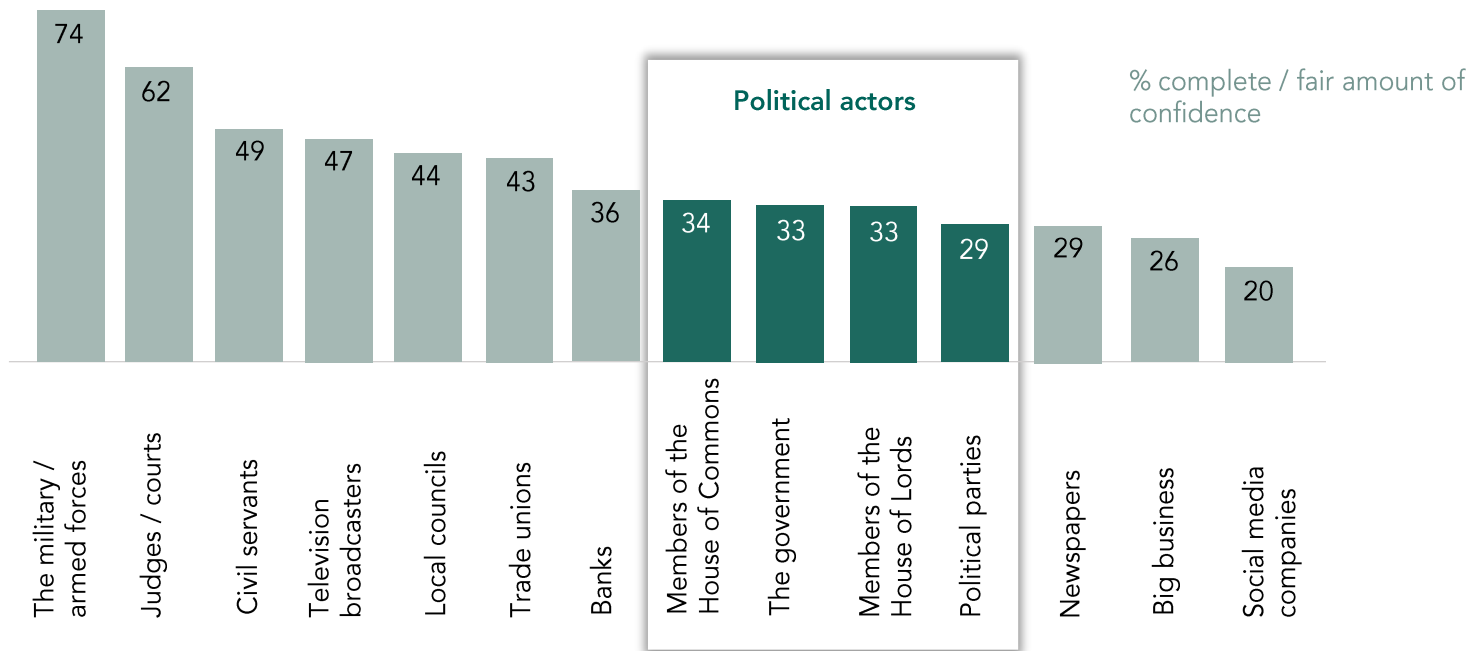
A larger group says the problem is the people (29%) than the system (15%). Only 7% think both the system and the people work well.

*Q. Which of the following best describes your opinion of the system of government and the people in decision-making positions in Britain these days?*

# Britons have more confidence in the military and judges

## than in politicians to act in the public interest

Civil servants, television broadcasters and trade unions command greater public confidence than do politicians. Those who voted 'remain' in the EU referendum are more likely than those who voted 'leave' to have confidence in judges, civil servants and Peers in the House of Lords. However, there is no difference in the confidence levels of 'remainers' and 'leavers' about the elected elements of Britain's political system – the government, MPs and political parties.

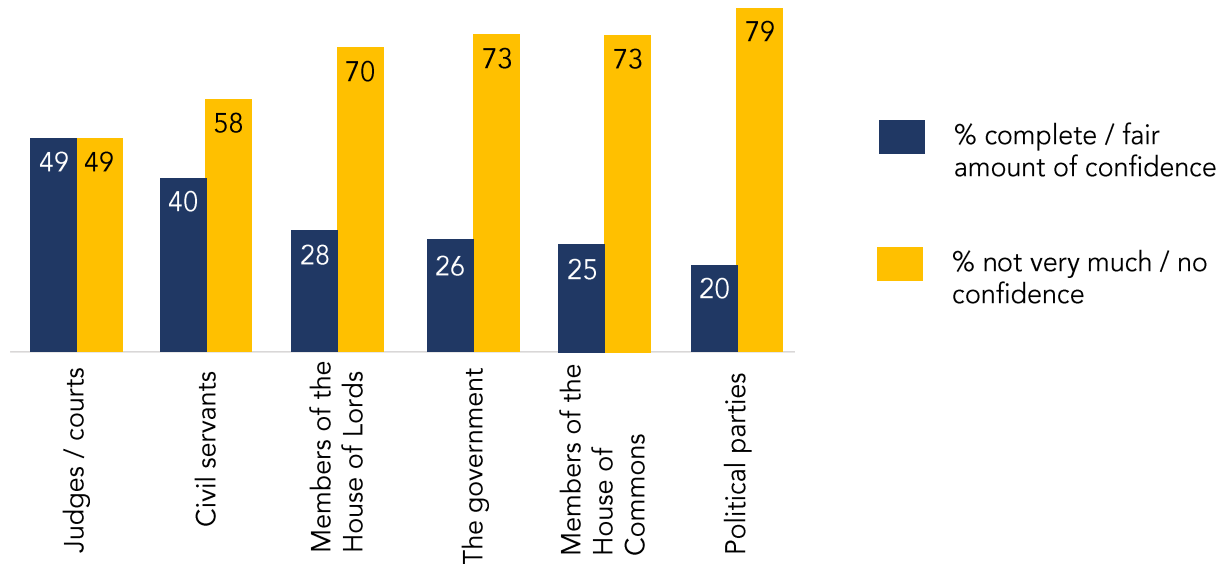


Q. How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public?

# Only 25% of the public have confidence in MPs' handling

## of Brexit

The public have most confidence in judges (49%) and civil servants (40%) when it comes to handling Brexit. But only one in five people (20%) have confidence in political parties' handling of the issue.



People were also asked whether these groups' and institutions' handling of Brexit had given them more or less confidence in these groups and institutions to act in the public's best interest. 60% said they had less confidence in political parties, 60% in the government and 57% in MPs as a result of their handling of Brexit. Confidence had been driven down the least in civil servants (41%) and judges (35%) as a result of their handling of Brexit.

*Q. How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following when handling the issue of Britain's exit from the European Union?*

# 50% say the main parties and politicians don't care

## about people like them

And 75% say the main political parties are so divided within themselves that they cannot serve the best interests of the country. Nevertheless, 43% of young people (18-24s) say they have confidence in the political parties to act in the public's best interest, over ten points higher than in any other age group.



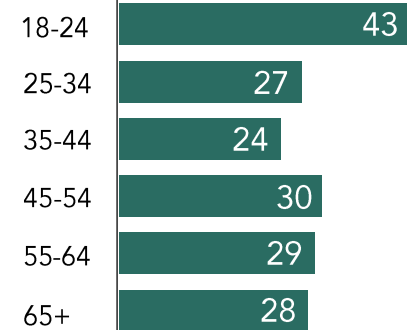
Say the main parties and politicians don't care about people like me



Say the main political parties are so divided within themselves that they cannot serve the best interests of the country

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements....

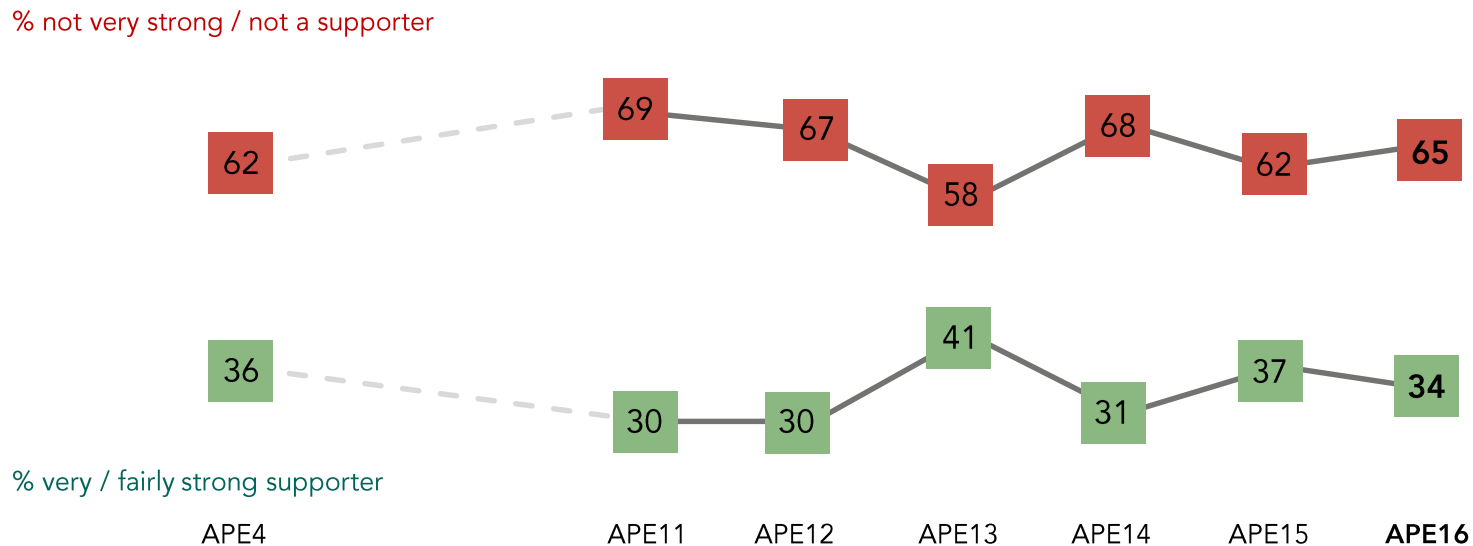
% complete / fair amount of confidence by age group



Q. How much confidence, if any, do you have in political parties to act in the best interests of the public?

# 34% still consider themselves a 'very' or 'fairly' strong supporter of a political party

This measure varies notably by socio-economic group. 45% of those in the AB group say that they are a 'very' or 'fairly' strong supporter of a party, while 78% in the C2 group and 72% in the DE group say that they are a supporter of a party only weakly or not at all.



Q. Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong, not very strong, or not a supporter at all of any political party?

## 2.

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People are pessimistic about the country's problems and their possible solution, with sizeable numbers willing to entertain radical political changes

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# Well over half the public are downbeat about the state

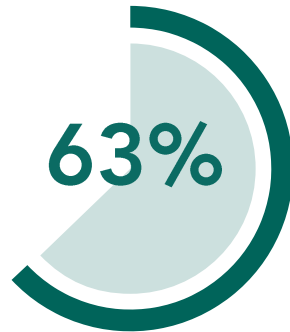
## of Britain



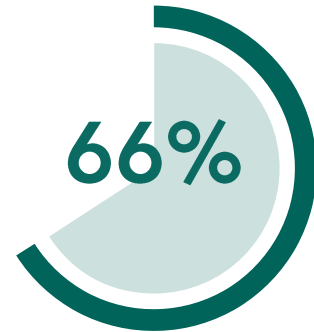
Think Britain is in decline



Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements....



Think Britain's system of government is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful



Think most big issues facing the country today don't have clear solutions



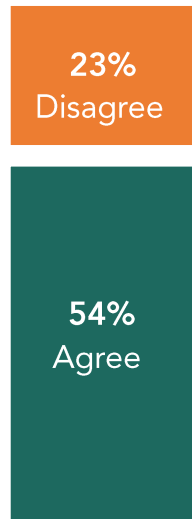
Q. I am going to show you pairs of statements. Even if neither is exactly right, please tell me where the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views...



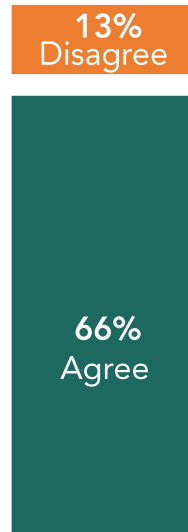
# 54% say Britain needs a strong leader who is willing to break the rules

Two-thirds of the public (66%) think our politicians should be able to say what's on their minds, regardless of what anyone else thinks about their views. The public are evenly split between those who prefer politicians who make compromises with people they disagree with (48%) and those who prefer politicians who stick to their positions (45%).

Britain needs a strong leader willing to break the rules



Politicians should be able to say what's on their minds regardless of what anyone else thinks about their views



I prefer politicians who stick to their positions

I prefer politicians who make compromises with people they disagree with

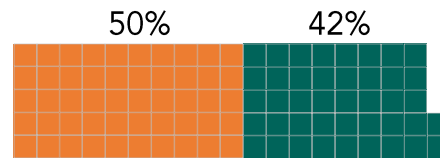
Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements....

Q. I am going to show you pairs of statements. Even if neither is exactly right, please tell me where the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views...

# 42% think it would be better if the government didn't have to worry so much about parliamentary votes when tackling the country's problems

But 50% think it would be risky to give the government more power to deal directly with these problems.

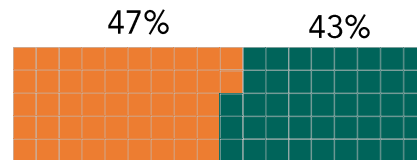
It would be risky to give the government more power to deal directly with many of the country's problems



Many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the government didn't have to worry so much about votes in Parliament

Marginally more people prefer experienced parties and leaders (47%) to those with radical ideas for change who have not been in power before (43%).

At a time like the present, we should stick with political parties and leaders who have been in power before

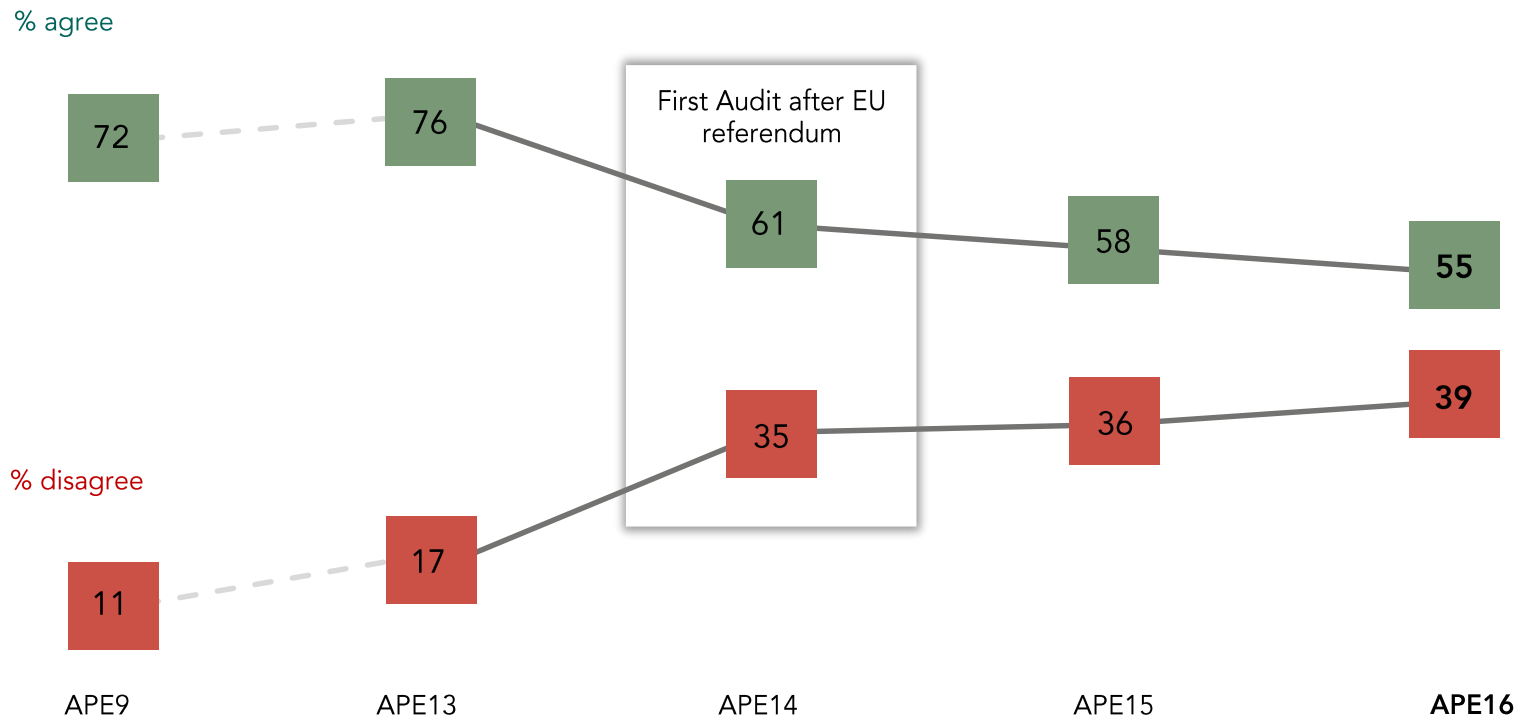


We should consider electing parties or leaders with radical ideas for change who haven't been in power before

*Q. I am going to show you pairs of statements. Even if neither is exactly right, please tell me where the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views.*

# 55% still think that big questions should be put to the public in referendums more often than today

This is slightly down from last year's 58%. Support for greater use of this form of decision-making has continued to decline from the high of 76% recorded before the 2016 EU membership referendum.



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree that important questions should be determined by referendums more often than today?

# 3.

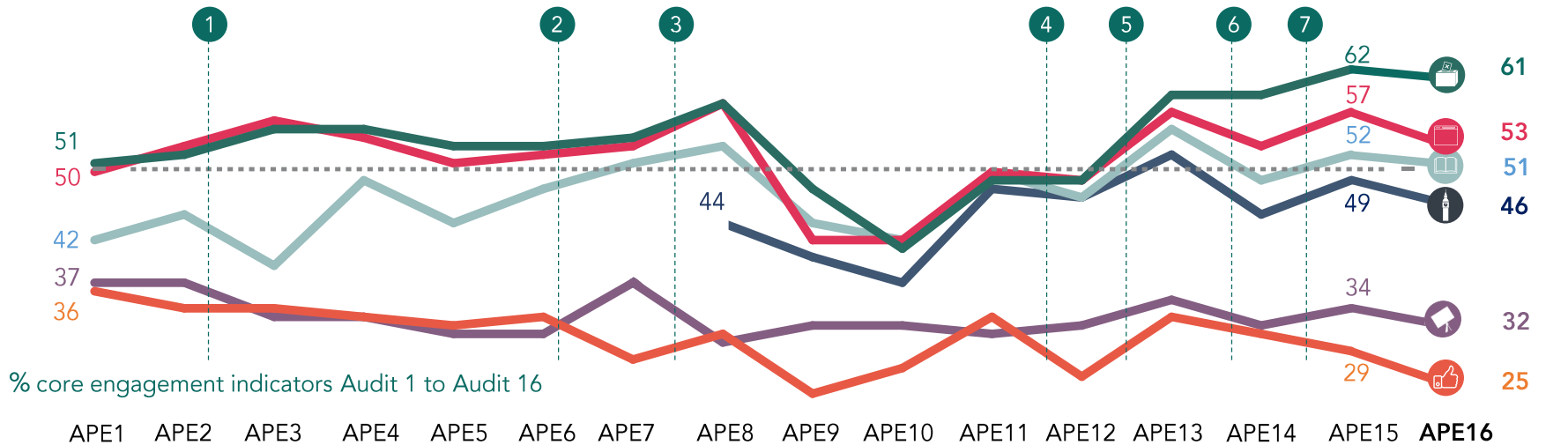
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Core indicators of political engagement remain stable but, beneath the surface, the strongest feelings of powerlessness and disengagement are intensifying

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# Core indicators of certainty to vote, and interest in and knowledge of politics, remain stable

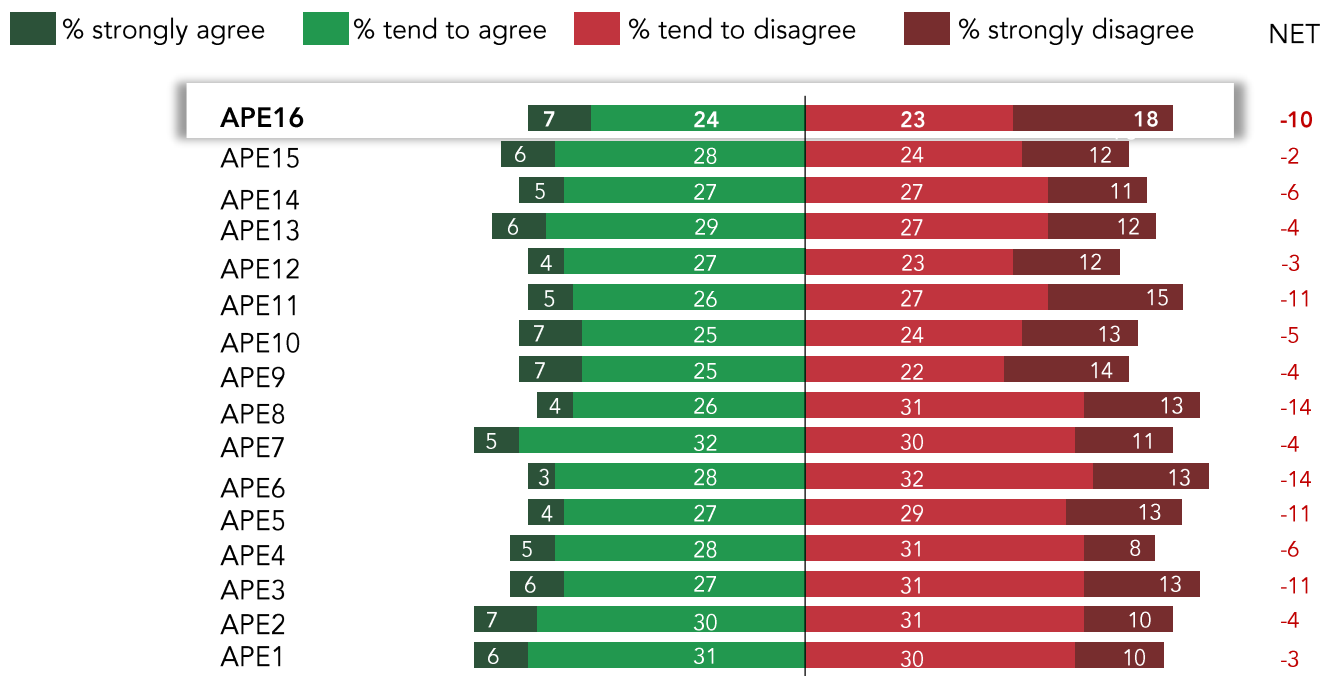
This Audit generally dispels the notion that the public are apathetic about politics. People's certainty to vote, and their interest in and knowledge of politics, have been broadly stable since Audit 13, and this year's results are again at the higher end of the spectrum. The public's sense of political efficacy – the extent to which they believe becoming politically involved can change things – has remained broadly stable over the life of the Audit. But the measure of satisfaction with the system of governing is on a long-term downward trend.



- 1 2005 UK general election
- 5 2015 UK general election
- Certainty to vote
- 2 2009 MPs' expenses scandal
- 6 2016 UK EU membership referendum
- Interest in politics
- 3 2010 UK general election
- 7 2017 UK general election
- Knowledge of politics
- 4 2014 Scottish independence referendum
- Knowledge of Parliament (asked only since Audit 8)
- Efficacy
- Satisfaction

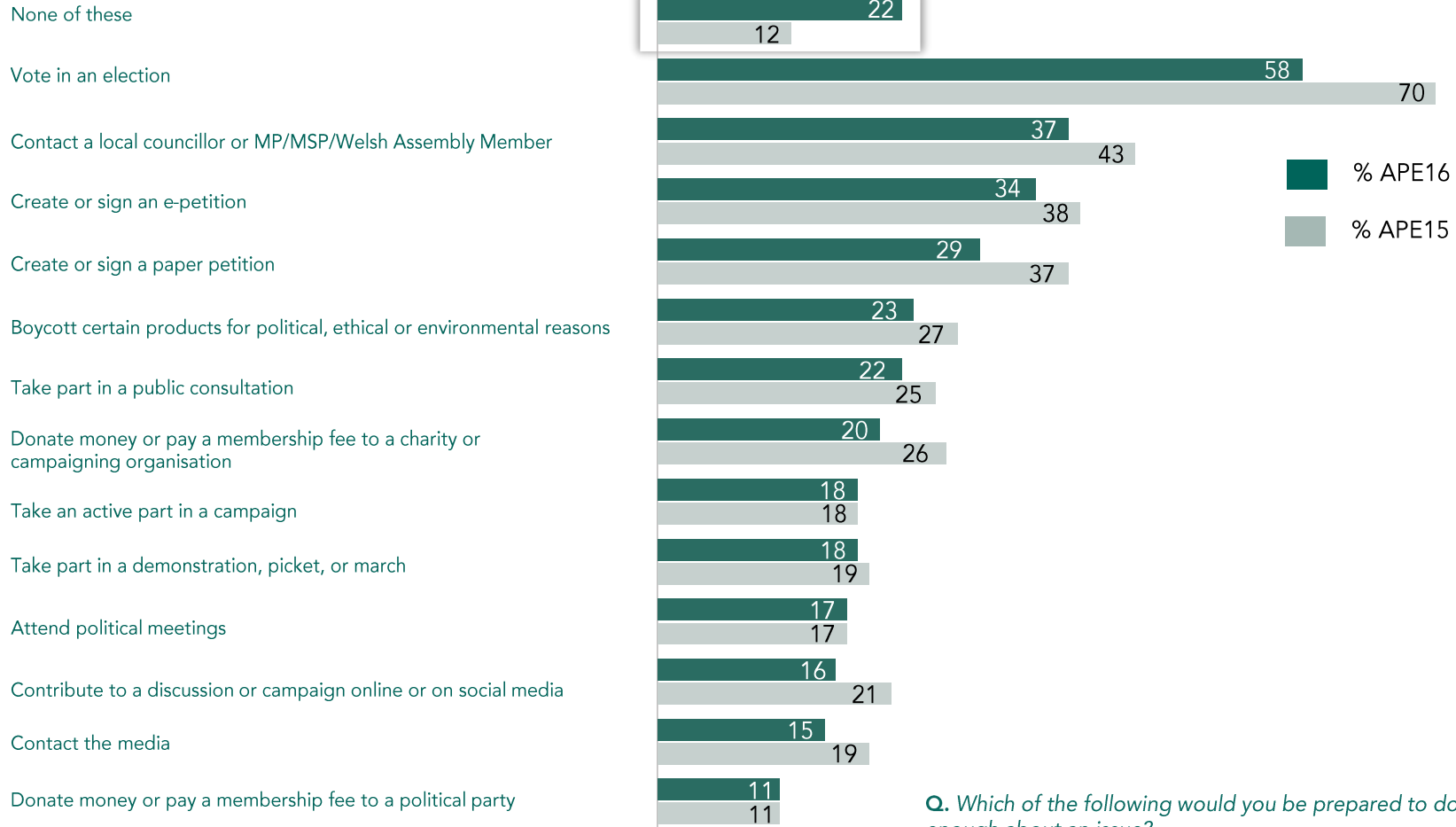
# The number who 'strongly disagree' that political involvement can change the way the UK is run has hit a 15-year high

This measure, of the number of people who feel most powerless, has jumped 6 points in a year to 18%, the highest level in the history of the Audit. Only three in ten people feel that getting involved in politics really can change the way the UK is run.



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the UK is run

# Of 13 political activities, the number of people saying they would be prepared to do 'none' is up 10 points in a year

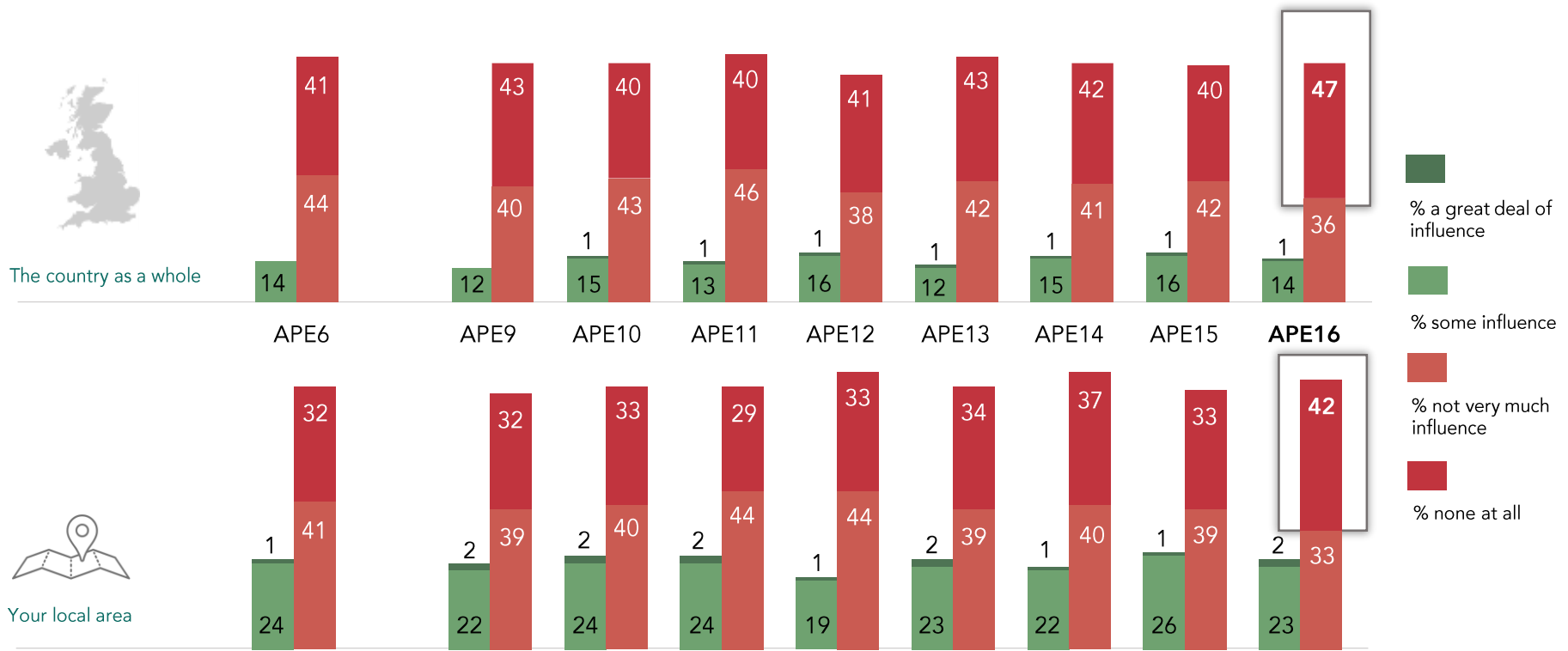


Q. Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue?

# 47% feel they have no influence at all over national

# decision-making – a new high for the Audit series

At the local level, the number of those feeling they have no influence at all (42%) is also an Audit record. At the national and local levels, the numbers of those feeling they have no influence at all have jumped by seven and nine points in a year, respectively. This intensification of the strongest feelings of powerlessness has occurred even as the overall measures of people's sense of influence, which include those who feel less strongly, are unchanged since last year.

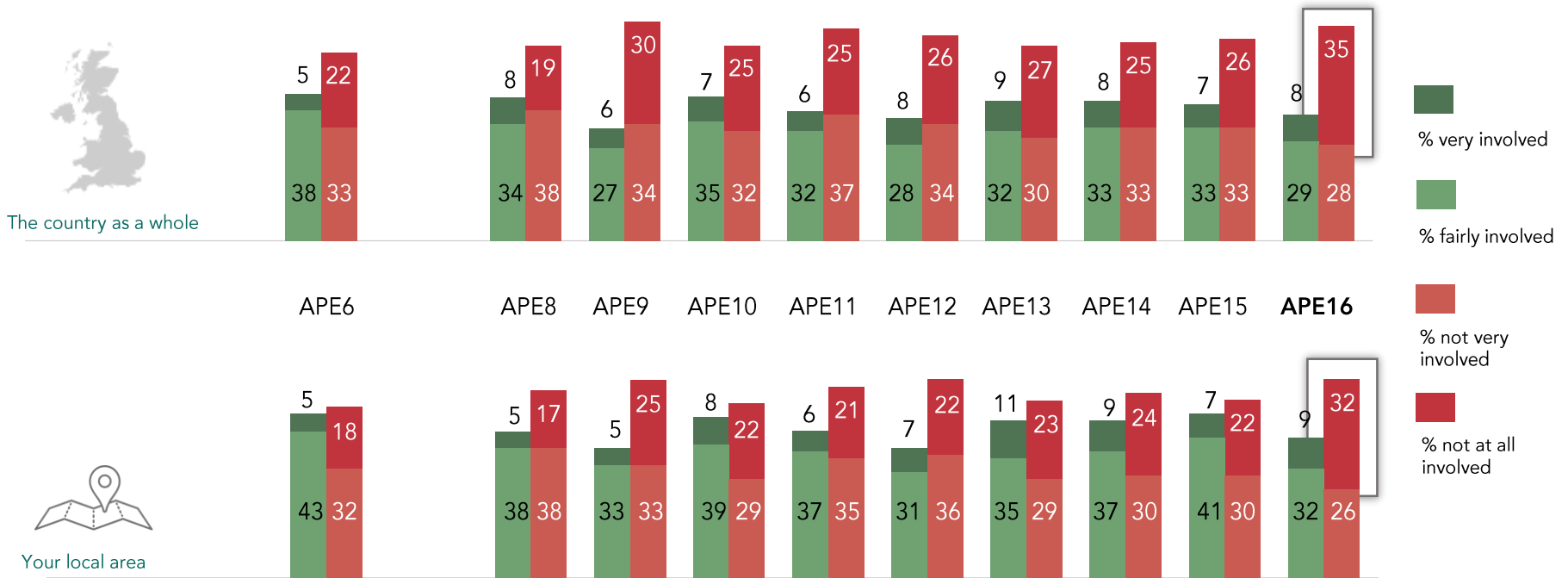


Q. How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in ...your local area /...the country as a whole



# 32% say they do not want to be involved 'at all' in local decision-making, a rise of 10 points in a year

With respect to national decision-making, the number saying they do not want to be involved 'at all' is up by nine points in a year, to 35%. These are the highest levels of disengagement measured on these indicators in the Audit series. The numbers saying that they would like to be 'fairly involved' in decision-making have declined by nine points for the local level and four for the national; both are among the weakest results for these indicators since these questions were first asked in Audit 6, published in 2009.



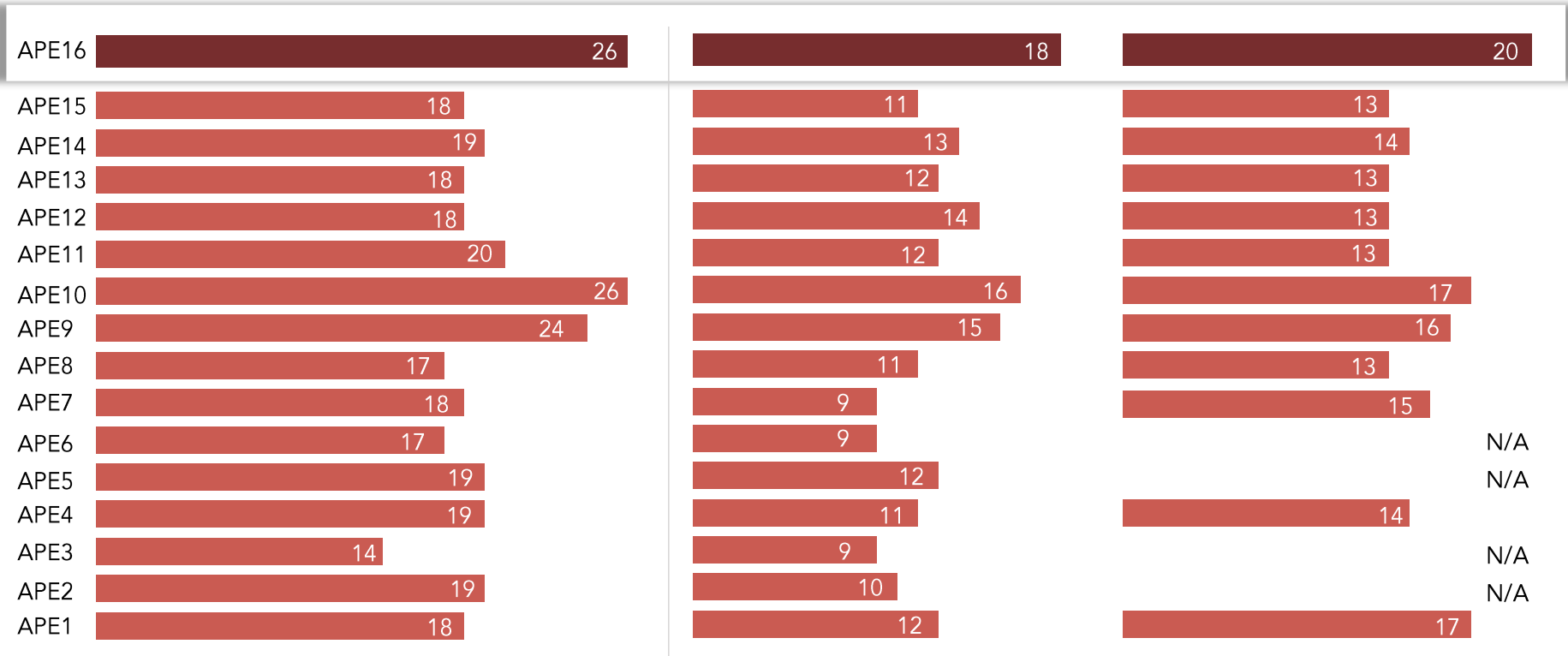
Q. To what extent, if at all, would you like to be involved in decision making in ...your local area /...the country as a whole

# Compared to last year, more people say that they are not at all interested in politics and know nothing about it

% saying they are not at all interested in politics

% saying they know nothing at all about politics

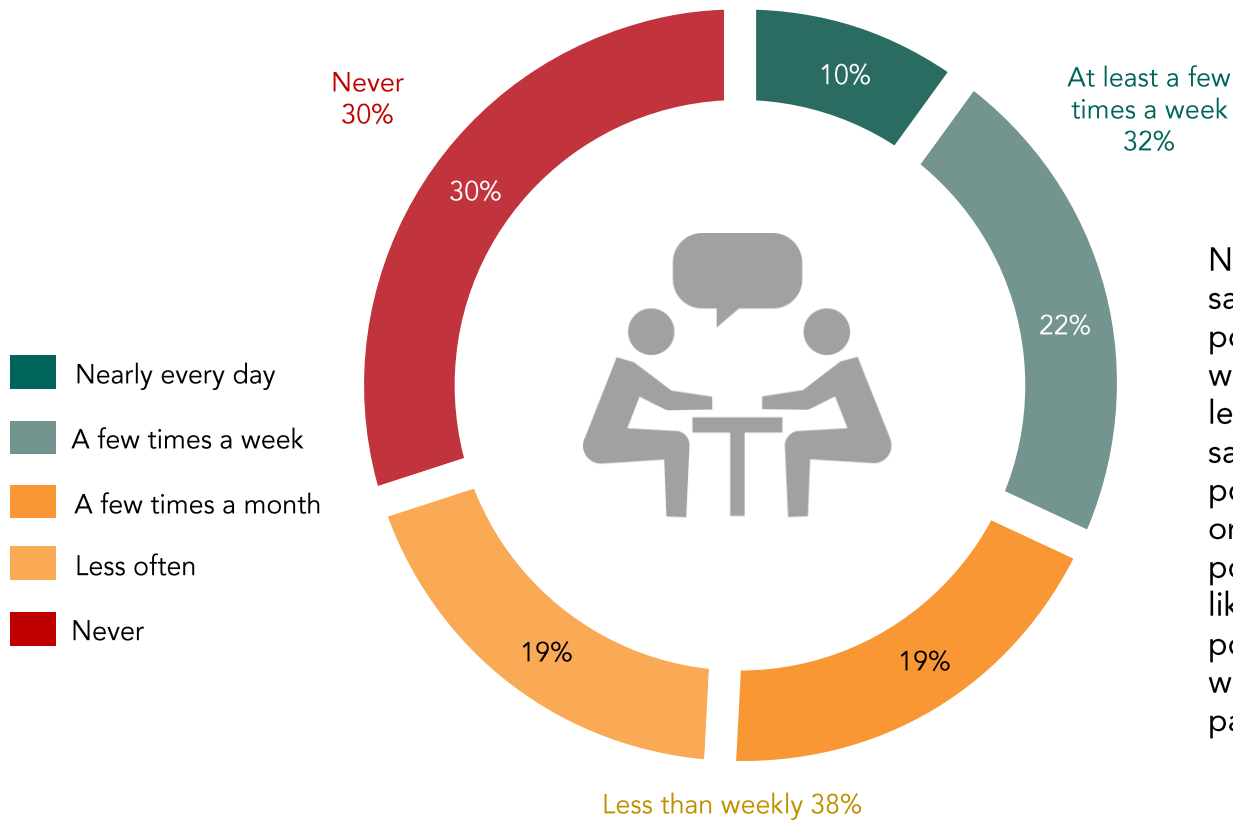
% saying they know nothing at all about UK Parliament



Q. How interested would you say you are in politics?

Q. How much, if anything, do you feel you know about...

# 30% of people say they never discuss government and politics

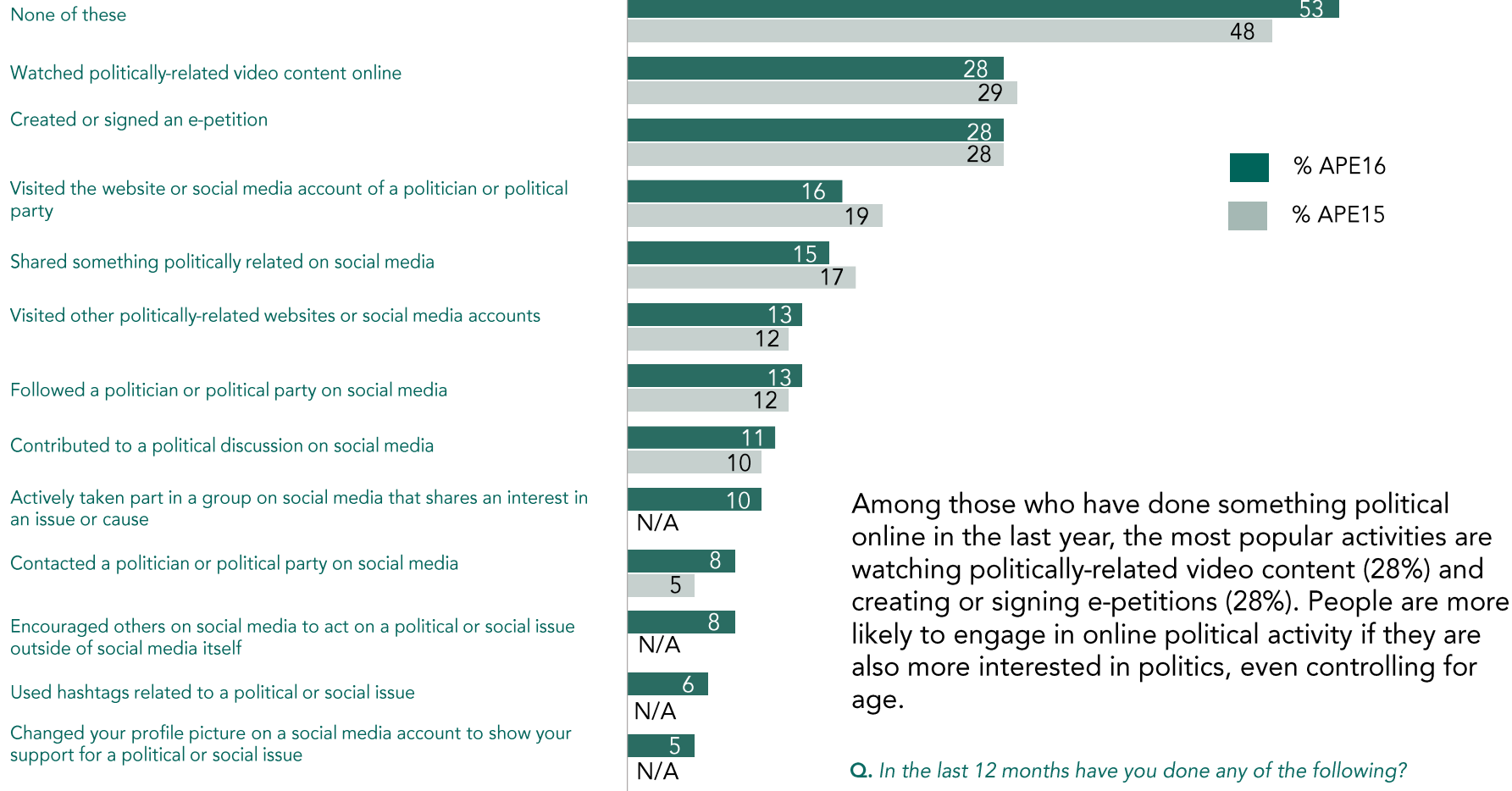


Nearly a third of people (32%) say they discuss government and politics at least a few times a week, with 38% saying they do so less frequently. Only one in ten say they discuss government and politics nearly every day. 'Strong' or 'fairly strong' supporters of a political party are over twice as likely to discuss government and politics at least a few times a week as those who support a party only weakly or not at all.

Q. Now, thinking about the people you talk with, whether in person, over the phone or on social media, how often, if at all, do you discuss government and politics with others?

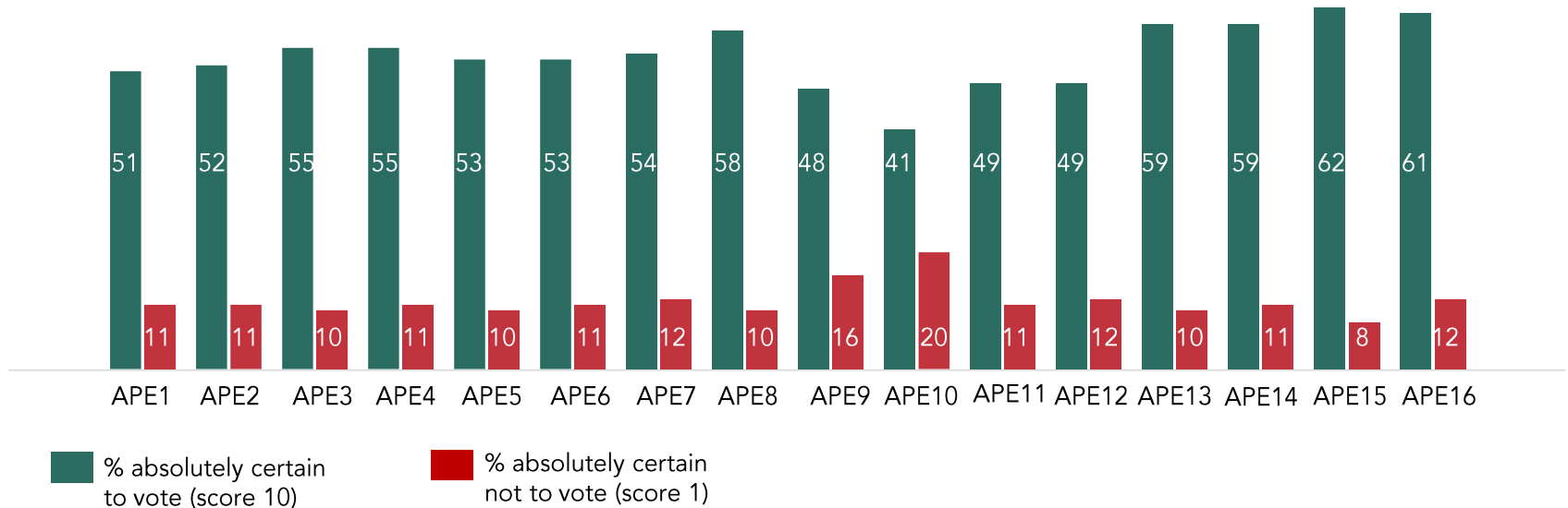
# 53% say they have not done any form of online political activity in the last year

## activity in the last year



# 61% say they would be certain to vote in an immediate general election

This core indicator has remained fairly stable in recent years and remains high in the context of the Audit series, notwithstanding the public's intensifying feelings of powerlessness and dissatisfaction with the system of governing. 47% of 18-24s and 45% of 25-34s say they would be certain to vote, still lower than in older age groups.






Q. How likely would you be to vote in an immediate general election, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote, and 1 means that you would be absolutely certain not to vote?






# Core indicators: demographic breakdown

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# Core indicators: demographic breakdown



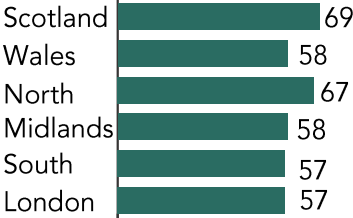

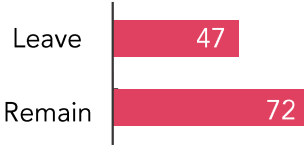


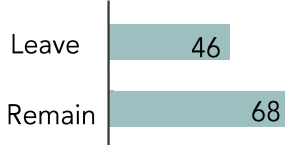
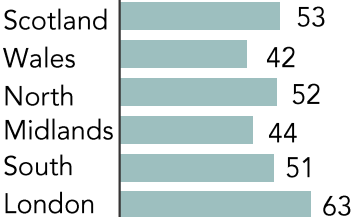
	Gender	Age	Social class	Ethnicity
 <p><b>% certainty to vote</b> (absolutely certain to vote (score 10))</p>	<p>Male 62</p> <p>Female 60</p>	<p>18-24 47</p> <p>25-34 45</p> <p>35-44 55</p> <p>45-54 70</p> <p>55-64 70</p> <p>65+ 71</p>	<p>AB 75</p> <p>C1 59</p> <p>C2 61</p> <p>DE 48</p>	<p>White 63</p> <p>BME 48</p>
 <p><b>% interest in politics</b> (very / fairly interested)</p>	<p>Male 57</p> <p>Female 49</p>	<p>18-24 50</p> <p>25-34 49</p> <p>35-44 51</p> <p>45-54 61</p> <p>55-64 58</p> <p>65+ 50</p>	<p>AB 78</p> <p>C1 59</p> <p>C2 35</p> <p>DE 34</p>	<p>White 54</p> <p>BME 43</p>
 <p><b>% knowledge of politics</b> (great deal / fair amount)</p>	<p>Male 59</p> <p>Female 43</p>	<p>18-24 44</p> <p>25-34 50</p> <p>35-44 52</p> <p>45-54 60</p> <p>55-64 58</p> <p>65+ 41</p>	<p>AB 79</p> <p>C1 56</p> <p>C2 32</p> <p>DE 29</p>	<p>White 51</p> <p>BME 49</p>

# Core indicators: demographic breakdown


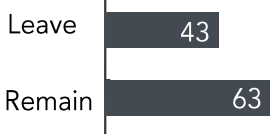
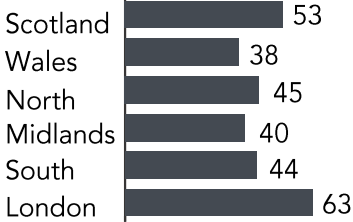


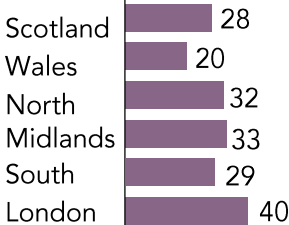

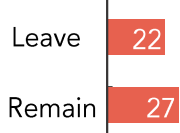
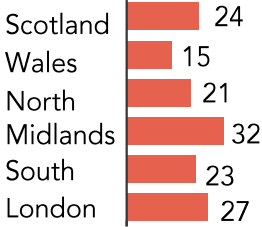
	Gender	Age	Social class	Ethnicity
 <p>% knowledge of Parliament (great deal / fair amount)</p>	<p>Male 52</p> <p>Female 41</p>	<p>18-24 41</p> <p>25-34 39</p> <p>35-44 54</p> <p>45-54 51</p> <p>55-64 53</p> <p>65+ 41</p>	<p>AB 74</p> <p>C1 49</p> <p>C2 31</p> <p>DE 25</p>	<p>White 46</p> <p>BME 45</p>
 <p>% feel getting involved is effective (agree)</p>	<p>Male 34</p> <p>Female 29</p>	<p>18-24 35</p> <p>25-34 36</p> <p>35-44 30</p> <p>45-54 33</p> <p>55-64 30</p> <p>65+ 27</p>	<p>AB 38</p> <p>C1 35</p> <p>C2 21</p> <p>DE 29</p>	<p>White 31</p> <p>BME 40</p>
 <p>% satisfaction with present system of governing (cannot be improved / can be improved slightly)</p>	<p>Male 29</p> <p>Female 22</p>	<p>18-24 23</p> <p>25-34 20</p> <p>35-44 33</p> <p>45-54 28</p> <p>55-64 20</p> <p>65+ 25</p>	<p>AB 36</p> <p>C1 23</p> <p>C2 23</p> <p>DE 17</p>	<p>White 24</p> <p>BME 31</p>



# Core indicators: demographic breakdown

	Brexit vote	Nations and regions																
 <p><b>% certainty to vote</b> (absolutely certain to vote (score 10))</p>	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Leave</td> <td>64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remain</td> <td>80</td> </tr> </table>	Leave	64	Remain	80	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Scotland</td> <td>69</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Midlands</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>London</td> <td>57</td> </tr> </table>	Scotland	69	Wales	58	North	67	Midlands	58	South	57	London	57
Leave	64																	
Remain	80																	
Scotland	69																	
Wales	58																	
North	67																	
Midlands	58																	
South	57																	
London	57																	
 <p><b>% interest in politics</b> (very/fairly interested)</p>	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Leave</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Remain</td> <td>72</td> </tr> </table>	Leave	47	Remain	72	 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Scotland</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wales</td> <td>49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North</td> <td>59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Midlands</td> <td>42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>London</td> <td>62</td> </tr> </table>	Scotland	56	Wales	49	North	59	Midlands	42	South	54	London	62
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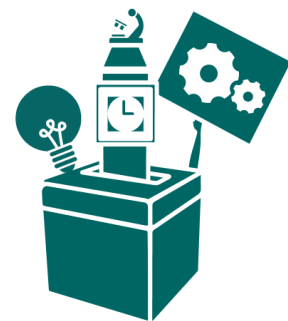
# Core indicators: demographic breakdown

	Brexit vote	Nations and regions
 <p>% knowledge of Parliament (great deal / fair amount)</p>	 <p>Leave 43 Remain 63</p>	 <p>Scotland 53 Wales 38 North 45 Midlands 40 South 44 London 63</p>
 <p>% feel getting involved is effective (agree)</p>	 <p>Leave 30 Remain 36</p>	 <p>Scotland 28 Wales 20 North 32 Midlands 33 South 29 London 40</p>
 <p>% satisfaction with present system of governing (cannot be improved / can be improved slightly)</p>	 <p>Leave 22 Remain 27</p>	 <p>Scotland 24 Wales 15 North 21 Midlands 32 South 23 London 27</p>

# Methodology

This 16th Audit report is based on a public opinion survey conducted by Ipsos MORI with a representative quota sample of 1,198 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain. The research was carried out face-to-face in people's homes as part of Ipsos MORI's omnibus survey between 30 November and 12 December 2018.

- Booster samples were included to make comparisons between England, Scotland and Wales, and between the white and BME populations, more statistically reliable. A total of 180 BME, 189 Scottish and 86 Welsh interviews were held.
- All results are subject to sampling tolerances. This means that not all differences are statistically significant. The people in the survey are only samples of the 'total' population of Great Britain, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody in Britain had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, the variation between the sample results and the true values can be predicted from the knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which this prediction can be made is usually 95% - that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The Audit sample size has a margin of up to +/- 3.6% at the 95% confidence level. (This allows for the 'design effect': because the data is weighted, the effective sample size is smaller than the real sample size.) So if 50% of people give a particular response we can be sure (19 times out of 20) that the actual figure would be between 46.4% and 53.6%.
- Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this may be due to computer rounding or because multiple answers were permitted for a question. Some graphs and tables may also not add up to 100% if 'don't knows' or refused responses have not been included. Data have been analysed by rounding weighted counts of responses to the nearest whole number before calculating percentages. As a result there may in some cases be a difference of one percentage point between findings reported here and those in previous Audit studies.



# Weighting

As in previous Audit waves, the data has been weighted to match the population profile by Ipsos MORI. These weights are regularly updated to incorporate the most recent national data. We used similar weights to those used last year in APE 15, but with updated figures where available.

As the Audit is a tracking study, targets are updated to reflect population change where necessary but the changes in the weighting scheme are kept to a minimum to allow for longitudinal comparability. However, elements of the sample design (the inclusion of boosters) and other factors sometimes necessitate adding extra controls to prevent biases arising in the figures.

Weight	Source
(1) Age by sex	Office of National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates 2015
(2) Work status by sex	Labour Force Survey Quarterly Supplement, Dec 2016- February 2017
(3) Social grade	National Readership Survey January 2016-December 2016
(4) Region	Office of National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates 2015
(5) Car in household	Census 2011
(6) Ethnic group	Census 2011
(7) Tenure	National Readership Survey January 2016-December 2016
(8) Education attainment	Census 2011

# Topline findings

- An asterisk (\*) indicates a finding of less than 0.5% but greater than zero.
- A dash (-) indicates that nobody chose a response.
- N/A indicates that the question was asked but the particular response option was not included that year.

Q1		How likely would you be to vote in an immediate General Election, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 means you would be absolutely certain to vote, and 1 means that you would be absolutely certain not to vote?															
		APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE	APE
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
10		51	52	55	55	53	53	54	58	48	41	49	49	59	59	62	61
9		6	6	7	6	4	5	6	4	4	4	6	4	4	4	5	6
8		8	8	7	7	7	8	7	7	5	7	7	6	7	6	6	4
7		5	5	7	6	5	6	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4
6		3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	5	4	5	4	2	3	2
5		7	7	6	5	8	7	7	6	8	9	8	8	5	7	8	5
4		2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
3		2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	2	2	2	2
2		2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
1		11	11	10	11	10	11	12	10	16	20	11	12	10	11	8	12
Refused		0	0	0	1	*	*	*	*	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	-
Don't know		2	1	1	0	3	2	2	2	3	*	2	3	2	1	2	2



Q2	In the last 12 months have you done any of the following to influence decisions, laws or policies?						
	APE 10 %	APE 11 %	APE 12 %	APE 13 %	APE 14 %	APE 15 %	APE 16 %
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation	20	20	13	24	19	23	17
Voted in an election	27	18	27	47	57	65	34
Created or signed a paper petition	8	16	9	8	11	10	8
Created or signed an e-petition	9	14	14	18	23	24	22
Contacted a local councillor or MP/MSP/Welsh Assembly Member	8	12	12	12	11	12	12
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	6	10	9	11	10	10	11
Taken an active part in a campaign	2	7	4	6	5	5	5
Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	3	6	7	10	9	10	10
Taken part in a public consultation	4	6	5	7	6	6	5
Contacted the media	2	3	3	4	3	4	3
Attended political meetings	2	3	3	5	3	3	3
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	1	2	3	5	5	5	5
Taken part in a demonstration, picket, or march	1	2	3	4	3	4	4
None of these	50	52	55	39	31	25	39
Don't know	0	*	1	1	*	*	*

## Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue?

	APE 10 %	APE 11 %	APE 12 %	APE 13 %	APE 14 %	APE 15 %	APE 16 %
Contact a local councillor or MP/MSP/Welsh Assembly Member	41	51	33	52	42	43	37
Vote in an election	42	46	35	55	61	70	58
Create or sign a paper petition	34	43	29	35	34	37	29
Create or sign an e-petition	25	31	23	34	36	38	34
Boycott certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	14	25	15	24	25	27	23
Contact the media	16	22	17	20	17	19	15
Take an active part in a campaign	14	22	15	21	19	18	18
Donate money or pay a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation	17	21	14	22	22	26	20
Take part in a public consultation	14	21	16	22	22	25	22
Take part in a demonstration, picket, or march	10	16	14	16	17	19	18
Attend political meetings	10	15	15	15	17	17	17
Contribute to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	8	14	14	19	19	21	16
Donate money or pay a membership fee to a political party	5	7	8	10	11	11	11
None of these	22	20	29	19	18	12	22
Don't know	N/A	1	3	1	1	1	*

**Q4** How interested would you say you are in politics?

		Very interested	Fairly interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested	Don't know	Very /fairly interested	Not very/not at all	Net interested
APE 1	%	11	39	32	18	*	50	50	0
APE 2	%	13	40	28	19	*	53	47	+6
APE 3	%	13	43	30	14	*	56	43	+13
APE 4	%	13	41	27	19	*	54	46	+8
APE 5	%	13	38	28	19	1	51	47	+4
APE 6	%	12	40	30	17	*	52	47	+5
APE 7	%	14	39	29	18	1	53	47	+6
APE 8	%	16	42	26	17	*	58	43	+15
APE 9	%	8	34	33	24	1	42	57	-15
APE 10	%	10	32	32	26	*	42	58	-16
APE 11	%	11	39	31	20	*	50	51	-1
APE 12	%	12	36	33	18	1	49	51	-2
APE 13	%	18	39	25	18	*	57	43	+14
APE 14	%	17	36	27	19	0	53	47	+7
APE 15	%	16	41	25	18	0	57	43	+14
<b>APE 16</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>+6</b>





**Q5** How much, if anything, do you feel you know about...

		A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Nothing at all	Don't know	A great deal/fair amount	Not very much/not at all
<b>...Politics?</b>								
APE 1	%	3	39	45	12	1	42	57
APE 2	%	4	41	44	10	*	45	54
APE 3	%	4	35	51	9	*	39	60
APE 4	%	6	43	40	11	*	49	51
APE 5	%	4	40	43	12	*	44	55
APE 6	%	5	43	42	9	1	48	51
APE 7	%	6	45	40	9	*	51	49
APE 8	%	7	46	36	11	*	53	47
APE 9	%	4	40	41	15	1	44	56
APE 10	%	4	38	42	16	*	42	58
APE 11	%	6	44	38	12	*	50	50
APE 12	%	5	42	39	14	1	47	53
APE 13	%	8	47	32	12	*	55	44
APE 14	%	8	41	38	13	*	49	50
APE 15	%	9	43	37	11	*	52	48
<b>APE 16</b>	%	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>	-	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>...The UK Parliament?</b>								
APE 1*	%	3	30	50	17	1	33	67
APE 4*	%	4	34	46	14	1	38	60
APE 7*	%	4	33	47	15	1	37	62
APE 8	%	5	39	43	13	*	44	56
APE 9	%	4	36	43	16	1	40	59
APE 10	%	4	33	45	17	*	37	62
APE 11	%	5	43	39	13	*	48	52
APE 12	%	6	41	39	13	1	47	52
APE 13	%	8	44	34	13	*	52	47
APE 14	%	7	38	41	14	*	45	55
APE 15	%	7	43	38	13	*	49	51
<b>APE 16</b>	%	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>20</b>	-	<b>46</b>	<b>54</b>



Core indicator:  
knowledge of politics



Core indicator:  
knowledge of Parliament

\*Asked as 'The Westminster Parliament'; comparisons with later waves should therefore be seen as indicative.

## Q6

## Which of these statements best describes your opinion on the present system of governing Britain?

	APE 1	APE 2	APE 3	APE 4	APE 5	APE 6	APE 7	APE 8	APE 9	APE 10	APE 11	APE 12	APE 13	APE 14	APE 15	APE 16
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Works extremely well and could not be improved	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	3	1	2	3	2	2
Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well	34	32	33	31	30	31	27	30	22	25	30	25	31	29	27	23
Could be improved quite a lot	42	45	41	40	38	40	42	39	41	41	41	41	40	41	38	35
Needs a great deal of improvement	18	18	21	21	24	24	27	25	26	27	23	27	23	24	29	37
Don't know	4	3	4	6	6	3	4	5	10	6	3	6	4	3	4	3
<i>Could not be improved / improved in small ways</i>	36	34	34	33	32	33	28	31	24	27	33	26	33	31	29	25
<i>Could be improved quite a lot / a great deal</i>	60	63	61	61	62	64	69	64	67	68	64	68	63	65	67	72



Q7

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the UK is run.

		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Agree	Disagree
APE 1	%	6	31	20	30	10	4	37	40
APE 2	%	7	30	20	31	10	2	37	41
APE 3	%	6	27	20	31	13	3	33	44
APE 4	%	5	28	24	31	8	4	33	39
APE 5	%	4	27	23	29	13	3	31	42
APE 6	%	3	28	22	32	13	2	31	45
APE 7	%	5	32	19	30	11	4	37	41
APE 8	%	4	26	23	31	13	3	30	44
APE 9	%	7	25	28	22	14	5	32	36
APE 10	%	7	25	29	24	13	2	32	37
APE 11	%	5	26	27	27	15	2	31	42
APE 12	%	4	27	29	23	12	5	32	35
APE 13	%	6	29	24	27	12	2	35	39
APE 14	%	5	27	28	27	11	1	32	38
APE 15	%	6	28	29	24	12	1	34	36
<b>APE 16</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>42</b>



Q8

To what extent do you agree or disagree that: Important questions should be determined by referendums more often than today?

	APE 9	APE 13	APE 14	APE 15	APE 16
	%	%	%	%	%
Strongly agree	33	33	25	20	23
Partly agree	39	42	36	38	33
Partly disagree	7	11	20	20	17
Strongly disagree	3	6	14	16	22
Not sure what a referendum is (spontaneous response)	7	2	1	1	2
Don't know	10	6	4	5	4
Agree	72	76	61	58	55
Disagree	11	17	35	36	39

Q9

Would you call yourself a very strong, fairly strong, not very strong, or not a supporter at all of any political party?

	Very strong	Fairly strong	Not very strong	Not a supporter	Don't know	Refused	Strong supporter	Weak supporter
APE 4 %	6	30	38	24	1	*	36	62
APE 11 %	7	23	36	33	*	*	30	69
APE 12 %	8	22	35	32	2	1	30	67
APE 13 %	8	33	33	25	1	0	41	58
APE 14 %	7	24	37	31	*	0	31	68
APE 15 %	8	30	34	28	1	0	37	62
APE 16 %	9	25	32	33	1	-	34	65

**Q10** How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in...

			A great deal	Some	Not very much	None at all	Don't know	A great deal/some	Not very much/not at all
...your local area?	APE 6	%	1	24	41	32	2	25	73
	APE 9	%	2	22	39	32	5	24	72
	APE 10	%	2	24	40	33	2	25	73
	APE 11	%	2	24	44	29	1	26	73
	APE 12	%	1	19	44	33	4	20	76
	APE 13	%	2	23	39	34	2	25	73
	APE 14	%	1	22	40	37	1	23	76
	APE 15	%	1	26	39	33	1	27	72
	<b>APE 16</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>74</b>
...the country as a whole?	APE 6	%	*	14	44	41	1	14	85
	APE 9	%	*	12	40	43	5	13	82
	APE 10	%	1	15	43	40	2	16	82
	APE 11	%	1	13	46	40	1	14	85
	APE 12	%	1	16	38	41	4	17	79
	APE 13	%	1	12	42	43	1	13	86
	APE 14	%	1	15	41	42	*	16	83
	APE 15	%	1	16	42	40	1	16	82
	<b>APE 16</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>83</b>

Q11		To what extent, if at all, would you <u>like</u> to be involved in decision making in...						
		Very involved	Fairly involved	Not very involved	Not at all involved	Don't know	Very/fairly involved	Not very involved/ not involved at all
...your local area?	APE 6 %	5	43	32	18	2	48	50
	APE 8 %	5	38	38	17	2	43	55
	APE 9 %	5	33	33	25	4	38	58
	APE 10 %	8	39	29	22	1	48	51
	APE 11 %	6	37	35	21	1	42	57
	APE 12 %	7	31	36	22	4	38	58
	APE 13 %	11	35	29	23	1	46	53
	APE 14 %	9	37	30	24	*	46	53
	APE 15 %	7	41	30	22	1	48	51
	<b>APE 16 %</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>58</b>
...the country as a whole?	APE 6 %	5	38	33	22	2	43	55
	APE 8 %	8	34	38	19	2	41	57
	APE 9 %	6	27	34	30	3	33	63
	APE 10 %	7	35	32	25	2	42	57
	APE 11 %	6	32	37	25	1	37	62
	APE 12 %	8	28	34	26	4	37	60
	APE 13 %	9	32	30	27	1	42	57
	APE 14 %	8	33	33	25	*	41	58
	APE 15 %	7	33	33	26	1	40	59
	<b>APE 16 %</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>62</b>

**Q12 In the last 12 months have you done any of the following?**

	APE	APE
	15	16
	%	%
Visited the website or social media account of a politician or political party	19	16
Visited other politically related websites or social media accounts	12	13
Watched politically related video content online (e.g., Facebook Live, YouTube)	29	28
Contacted a politician or political party on social media	5	8
Followed a politician or political party on social media	12	13
Contributed to a political discussion on social media	10	11
Shared something politically related on social media, such as news story, article or your own political statement	17	15
Created or signed an e-petition	28	28
Actively taken part in a group on social media that shares an interest in an issue or cause	N/A	10
Changed your profile picture on a social media account to show your support for a political or social issue	N/A	5
Used hashtags related to a political or social issue	N/A	6
Encouraged others on social media to act on a political or social issue outside of social media itself e.g. in person/telephone campaigning, protest etc.	N/A	8
None of these	48	53
Don't know	*	*

Q13

Now, thinking about the people you talk with, whether in person, over the phone or on social media, how often, if at all, do you discuss government and politics with others?

	APE 16 %
Nearly every day	10
A few times a week	22
A few times a month	19
Less often	19
Never	30
Don't know	*
Refused	-

Q14

Which of the following best describes your opinion of the system of government and the people in decision-making positions in Britain these days?

	APE 16 %
The system and the people work well	7
The system of government is good but the people making decisions are not up to the job	29
The people in power are good but the system prevents them from making the right decisions	15
Neither the system nor the people making the decisions are good enough	38
Other	6
Don't know	4



Q15

How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following to act in the best interests of the public?

		Complete confidence	A fair amount of confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence at all	Don't know	Refused	Complete/ fair amount of confidence	Not very much/no confidence
The military/ armed forces	%	32	42	15	10	1	-	74	25
Banks	%	6	30	34	29	1	-	36	63
Judges/ courts	%	14	48	23	13	1	-	62	37
Big business	%	3	23	40	32	2	-	26	72
Newspapers	%	3	25	39	31	1	-	29	70
Television broadcasters e.g. the BBC, ITV, etc	%	6	40	33	19	1	-	47	52
The Government	%	4	29	35	31	1	-	33	66
Political parties	%	3	26	44	26	1	-	29	70
Members of the House of Commons (MPs)	%	4	30	38	28	1	-	34	66
Members of the House of Lords (Peers)	%	4	29	34	31	2	-	33	65
Civil servants	%	7	42	33	16	2	-	49	49
Trade unions	%	7	36	35	20	2	-	43	54
Social media companies	%	3	17	34	44	2	-	20	78
Local government (councils)	%	6	38	35	20	1	-	44	55
Scottish Government	%	17	32	19	31	-	-	50	50
<i>Base: 189 Scottish 18+</i>									
Welsh Assembly	%	2	26	35	28	8	-	28	64
<i>Base: 86 Welsh 18+</i>									

**Q16a-d** I am going to show you pairs of statements, even if neither is exactly right, please tell me where the **FIRST** statement or the **SECOND** statement comes closer to your own views.

		APE 16 %
Q16a	I prefer politicians who make compromises with people they disagree with	48
	I prefer politicians who stick to their positions	45
	Neither	3
	Don't know	4
Q16b	There are clear solutions to most big issues facing the country today	29
	Most big issues facing the country today don't have clear solutions	66
	Neither	2
	Don't know	3
Q16c	Many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the government didn't have to worry so much about votes in Parliament	42
	It would be risky to give the government more power to deal directly with many of the country's problems	50
	Neither	3
	Don't know	5
Q16d	We should consider electing parties or leaders with radical ideas for change who haven't been in power before	43
	At a time like the present, we should stick with political parties and leaders who have been in power before	47
	Neither	5
	Don't know	4

Q17		To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements....								
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Refused	Agree	Disagree
Britain is in decline	%	24	32	23	14	7	*	-	56	21
Britain's system of government is rigged to advantage the rich and powerful	%	32	31	21	11	6	*	-	63	16
The main parties and politicians don't care about people like me	%	20	30	29	16	5	*	-	50	21
Politicians should be able to say what's on their minds regardless of what anyone else thinks about their views	%	30	37	20	8	5	*	-	66	13
Britain needs a strong leader willing to break the rules	%	27	27	23	15	7	*	-	54	23
The main political parties are so divided within themselves that they cannot serve the best interests of the country	%	41	35	16	5	3	*	-	75	8

**Q18** How much confidence, if any, do you have in each of the following when handling the issue of Britain's exit from the European Union?

		Complete confidence	A fair amount of confidence	Not very much confidence	No confidence at all	Don't know	Refused	Complete/ fair amount of confidence	Not very much/no confidence
The Government	%	3	23	37	36	1	-	26	73
Political parties	%	1	18	47	32	1	-	20	79
Members of the House of Commons (MPs)	%	2	23	44	30	1	-	25	73
Members of the House of Lords (Peers)	%	2	26	40	30	2	-	28	70
Judges/ courts	%	10	39	30	18	3	-	49	49
Civil servants	%	5	35	38	20	2	-	40	58
Scottish Government <i>Base: 189 Scottish 18+</i>	%	13	28	30	28	1	-	41	58
Welsh Assembly <i>Base: 86 Welsh 18+</i>	%	1	23	36	30	9	-	24	67

Q19

And when thinking about how each of the following has handled Britain's exit from the European Union, has this given you more or less confidence in them to act in the public's best interest more generally?

		Given me much more confidence	Given me a little more confidence	Makes no difference	Given me a little less confidence	Given me a lot less confidence	Don't know	Refused	Much more/ little more confidence	A lot less/ little less confidence
The Government	%	2	10	27	26	34	1	-	13	60
Political parties	%	1	8	29	29	32	1	-	9	60
Members of the House of Commons (MPs)	%	1	10	30	26	31	1	-	11	57
Members of the House of Lords (Peers)	%	1	13	35	23	27	2	-	14	50
Judges/ courts	%	3	15	45	19	16	2	-	18	35
Civil servants	%	1	14	43	22	18	2	-	15	41
Scottish Government <i>Base: 189 Scottish 18+</i>	%	11	12	33	19	25	1	-	22	44
Welsh Assembly <i>Base: 86 Welsh 18+</i>	%	-	11	48	19	19	3	-	11	38

# Audit of Political Engagement 16

## The 2019 Report

This report was produced by Joel Blackwell, Brigid Fowler and Ruth Fox with assistance from Lawrence Mackay and Luke Boga Mitchell.

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