

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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50% of public think Andrew Mitchell's 'plebs' row shows that Tory MPs see themselves as better than ordinary people

A YouGov poll reveals that 60% of the public believe that Andrew Mitchell's outburst 'showed his true feelings', and 50% think his behaviour and attitudes reflect those of other Conservative MPs.

Last month Tory Chief Whip Andrew Mitchell was involved in a row with police stationed outside Downing Street, in which he is alleged to have called the on duty officers "plebs". He apologised for swearing at the police, but has denied calling them plebs. An earlier YouGov poll found that 69% of Britons thought Mr Mitchell was not being honest about this, and over half (52%) thought he should resign.

The results of the latest YouGov poll show that 60% of the public believe Mr Mitchell's alleged comment reflects his view that he is better than ordinary people, while only 28% think he simply lost his temper and said things he didn't really mean.

- 48% of Conservative supporters say Mr Mitchell just lost his temper, while 42% believe the outburst showed his true feelings.
- 19% of those intending to vote Labour think it was no more than a rude outburst, but 74% say the row exposed his real beliefs.
- 34% of Liberal Democrats think Mr Mitchell lost his temper and said things he didn't mean, and 58% believe the outburst shows that he believes he is superior.

Asked if Mr Mitchell's alleged "plebs" comment reflects the attitudes of others in his party, 50% of respondents say Conservative MPs see themselves as better than ordinary people, while 34% said Mr Mitchell is an exception and probably not typical of his party. On this question, public opinion was deeply divided along party lines.

- Only 15% of Tory voters thought other Conservative MPs would behave this way, while 74% say Mr Mitchell is not typical of his party's MPs.
- Amongst Labour supporters, 78% say most Tory MPs probably feel the same way about ordinary people as Mr Mitchell, and only 12% think he is an exception.
- Meanwhile, 49% of Liberal Democrats think other Tory MPs would behave this way, and 30% say Mr Mitchell's behaviour does not reflect the views of other MPs in his party.

As to whether the row has changed the public's views of the Conservative Party, only 17% say it has made them see the Tories as less in touch with ordinary people, but 52% say they already thought the Conservatives were out of touch and still do. Meanwhile, 18% say they did not think the Tories were out of touch before and still don't.

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Notes to Editors:

Total sample size was 1,710 aged 18+. Fieldwork was undertaken 30th September – 1st October. The survey was carried out online. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

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