

YouGov Survey for LabOUR Commission

YouGov questioned 670 current Labour Party members and 704 former party members between June 1 and 6, 2006

Questions in bold were put to both current and former members; questions in light were put to current members only; questions in *italics* were put to lapsed members only

	Current members	Former members
	%	%
How would you describe your political position on the following scale?		
Very left-wing	6	5
Fairly left-wing	32	42
Slightly left-of-centre	42	31
Centre	12	8
Slightly right-of-centre	4	5
Fairly right-wing	1	3
Very right-wing	0	1
Don't know	3	4

Which, if any, of the following statements were the main reasons why you joined the Labour party? [Please choose no more than THREE of the statements that apply most strongly]

'I wanted to join like-minded people who shared my ideals and hopes'	58	53
'I am a socialist and I wanted to join a party that would put my aspirations into practice'	49	51
'I wanted to keep the Conservatives out'	41	40
'I am a trade unionist and joined the party which existed to protect and extend working people's rights'	19	19
'I was attracted to the party by the repeal of Clause 4 and other things which brought the party into the modern world'	15	10
'The party has usually been strong locally and I wanted to play a part in improving the quality of life in the area'	13	9
'Being in the Labour Party was something we did in my family'	12	9
'I have or had political ambitions and the Labour Party gives/ gave me a chance of realising them'	12	4
None of these	5	5

Have you ever voted for any party other than Labour at a general election? [Please tick all that apply]

Yes - Conservative	9	16
Yes – Liberal Democrat	18	42
Yes – some other party	12	21
No – I have never voted for another political party	69	36

	Current members	Former members
	%	%
Might you seriously consider voting for any party other than Labour at the NEXT general election, or might you consider not voting at all? [Please tick all that apply]		
Yes - Conservative	4	
Yes – Liberal Democrat	11	
Yes – some other party	11	
Yes – I might not vote at all	7	
No – I would not consider voting for another political party	74	

What party are you MOST likely to vote for at the next General Election?

Labour	36
Conservative	9
Liberal Democrat	18
Some other party	11
Not sure	24
Will not vote	3

Which, if any, of these other national organisations have you joined or do you subscribe or give donations to? [Please tick all that apply]

A third world charity, such as Oxfam, War on Want, Christian Aid, Live Aid or Make Poverty History	47	40
Amnesty	25	27
A 'green' movement such as Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth	22	27
Shelter	12	11
Child Poverty Action Group	10	8
Mind	5	6
League Against Cruel Sports	5	4
Charter 88	4	3
National Anti-Vivisection Society	1	3
Countryside Alliance	0	1
None of these	38	41

Turning now to policy-making in the Labour Party, Labour Party policies are developed formally through a series of policy forums from local level up to the National Policy Forum that recommends policies to the party conference. Which of the following, if any, have you ever taken part in? [Please tick all that apply]

A local policy forum attended by party members and possibly others	44
The annual, a national or a regional party conference	28
A regional policy forum attended by party members and possibly others	20
A meeting of the National Party Forum	4
None of these	47

Current members **Former members**
% **%**

Under the Labour Party constitution a special committee, with representatives of the cabinet, the party's national executive, trade unions and the National Policy Forum has the final say on the policies that go into the election manifesto. Who do you think really decides the policies that go into the Labour Party election manifesto?

The Prime Minister and his allies decide, with some input from the special committee	56	
The Prime Minister and his advisers decide on their own	19	
The special committee decides, with some input from the Prime Minister	16	
The special committee decides on its own	2	
Not sure	7	

Before the 1997 election, Labour's programme was submitted for approval to a ballot of all party members. In your view, should such a programme always be submitted to a similar poll of members in advance of a general election?

Yes, it should	55	
No, there is no need to go to the trouble and expense of doing this	38	
Don't know	7	

Turning now to Labour in government, in your view, thinking back over the years since 1997, has the Labour government stayed faithful to the fundamental values and aspirations of the party?

Yes, completely	6	1
Yes, mostly	44	15
Only to some extent	32	30
No, not much	12	24
No, not at all	5	29
Not sure	1	1

	Current members %	Former members %
In your view, which six of the following have been the government's most important achievements since 1997? [Please tick up to SIX]		
Running a strong economy with low unemployment, inflation and interest rates	78	62
Helping poorer families, through the minimum wage and tax credits	77	53
Reducing average waiting times for hospital operations	50	34
Improving standards of education at state schools	43	18
Increasing the overseas aid budget and leading international efforts to help Africa	38	29
Setting up 'Sure Start' centres for young children	30	18
Expelling most hereditary peers from the House of Lords	30	30
Bringing devolution to Scotland, Wales and London	29	23
Passing the Freedom of Information and Human Rights Acts	28	30
Allowing same-sex couples to be 'married' in civil partnerships	26	28
Banning tobacco advertising, and passing a law to ban smoking in offices, bars and restaurants	25	35
Banning fox-hunting	24	29
Free television licences for people over 75, and winter fuel payment for people over 60	20	27
Introducing the 'new deal' for school leavers	19	10
Extending the rights for parental leave when a baby is born	17	19
Helping to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq	15	12
Reducing crime levels	15	7
None of these	1	5

And which six of the following have been Labour's worst policy mistakes since 1997? [Again, please tick up to SIX]

Taking part in the invasion of Iraq	52	65
Being subservient to a rightwing US President in foreign policies	49	63
Relying too heavily on privatisation in public provision	46	49
Refusing to increase the rates of income tax paid by people earning more than £100,000 a year	36	40
Introducing, and then increasing, tuition fees for higher education	32	42
Using the terrorist 'threat' to curb civil liberties	29	41
Failing so far to restore the link between the state retirement pension and earnings	27	30
Failing to take effective steps to avert climate change	26	25
Failing to control immigration effectively	24	33
Imposing badly thought-out 'reforms' on the health service	24	34
Imposing badly thought-out 'reforms' on state schools	23	26
Failing to introduce Europe's single currency to Britain	22	18
Imposing a 'stealth tax' on pension funds in Labour's first Budget	17	24
Failing to reduce violent crime	17	25
Keeping Britain's nuclear weapons	12	12
Banning fox-hunting	5	8
Banning tobacco advertising, and passing a law to ban smoking in offices, bars and restaurants	3	5
None of these	6	1

Current members	Former members
%	%

(to those who have left the party since 1997)

For which, if any, of the following reasons did you decide to leave the Labour party? [Please tick up to FOUR]

General disillusion with the overall performance of the Labour government	34
General disillusion with the party's inability to assert party policies and ideals on the Labour government	24
The subservience to a right-wing US President in foreign policies	19
The resort to privatisation in public investment and services	18
The government's failure to carry through the Labour party's agreed policies	17
Authoritarian policies that curb civil liberties	15
The decision to invade Iraq was the major reason	13
The decision to invade Iraq was one of various reasons	13
The introduction and subsequent increase in tuition fees for higher education	12
The failure to control immigration and asylum effectively	11
Being subservient to a right-wing US President in foreign policies	11
Badly thought-out 'reforms' in state schools	10
The refusal to tax the incomes of high earners more heavily	10
Badly thought-out 'reforms' in the health service	9
The failure to restore the link between the state retirement pension and earnings	6
The failure to reduce violent crime	6
The failure to take effective steps to avert climate change	4
The failure to introduce Europe's single currency to Britain	2
The continuing retention of Britain's nuclear weapons	2
None of these	25

To all lapsed members

Are you likely to consider re-joining the Labour party in the next 2 to 5 years?

Yes	7
No	58
Maybe	26
Don't know	9

	Current members %	Former members %
<i>All who would/ might consider rejoining the Party</i>		
<i>What will have to happen before you are ready to re-join the party? [Please tick up to FOUR options]</i>		
The Labour party will regenerate its commitment to the party's aspirations and ideals		49
The government will become more independent of the United States in foreign policy		36
Tony Blair will stand down as Prime Minister and party leader		35
The government will retreat from its emphasis on privatisation		32
The government will adopt more redistributive taxation policies		22
The Conservatives under David Cameron will look like winning the next general election		17
The government will deal more effectively with immigration and asylum		12
The government will commit itself more fully to the European Union		12
The Labour party will begin to give its members a fuller role in its affairs		12
The government will consult public service workers about any further reforms that affect their own service		12
The government and party will turn their back on sleaze		11
The link between the state pension and earnings will have been restored		9
The government will take real measures to avert climate change		8
The government will take measures to deal effectively with violent crime		6
The government's plans to combat world poverty will show tangible results		5
John Prescott will cease to be Deputy Prime Minister		5
The government will decide not update its nuclear arsenal		1
Something else		16

Do you think the United States and Britain were right or wrong to take military action against Iraq in 2003?

Yes, they were right	37	21
No, they were wrong	53	73
Don't know	10	6

For many Labour members, the government's decision to take part in the invasion of Iraq was a major crisis. How close would you say that you came to leaving the party over the war?

Very close	17
Quite close	8
A bit close	12
Not at all close	58
Does not apply – was not a member at this time	5

To all who were very/ quite close to leaving

Why did you decide to remain in the party? [Please tick all that apply]

To campaign for the kind of party I believe in	46
Because I don't like the alternatives	41
Out of loyalty	24
Because other government policies matter more	24
I haven't got round to leaving yet	12
I would miss being in the party	7

	Current members	Former members
	%	%
Other	7	

To all

How much influence do you think each of the following **SHOULD**
HAVE on the policies of the current Labour Government?

Trade Unions

A great deal of influence	11	10
Some influence	63	61
Not much influence	20	20
No influence at all	4	8
Don't know	1	1

Local party members

A great deal of influence	48	44
Some influence	48	49
Not much influence	4	4
No influence at all	0	1
Don't know	1	1

Backbench Labour MPs

A great deal of influence	44	46
Some influence	51	46
Not much influence	5	6
No influence at all	0	1
Don't know	1	1

The civil service

A great deal of influence	2	3
Some influence	15	17
Not much influence	32	32
No influence at all	50	47
Don't know	1	2

Wealthy donors to the party

A great deal of influence	1	1
Some influence	8	4
Not much influence	28	18
No influence at all	62	75
Don't know	1	1

	Current members %	Former members %
And how much influence do you think each of the following ACTUALLY DOES HAVE on the on the policies of the current Labour Government?		
Trade Unions		
A great deal of influence	6	5
Some influence	49	33
Not much influence	38	47
No influence at all	5	14
Don't know	1	2
Local party members		
A great deal of influence	1	1
Some influence	24	15
Not much influence	51	49
No influence at all	23	33
Don't know	1	2
Backbench Labour MPs		
A great deal of influence	8	6
Some influence	50	37
Not much influence	37	46
No influence at all	4	10
Don't know	1	2
The civil service		
A great deal of influence	17	16
Some influence	47	47
Not much influence	20	22
No influence at all	11	10
Don't know	5	5
Wealthy donors to the party		
A great deal of influence	25	52
Some influence	50	37
Not much influence	16	6
No influence at all	6	2
Don't know	3	3

	Current members %	Former members %
Governing the UK is a very complex business, subject to a wide variety of conflicting pressures and events. Which of these two alternatives comes closest to your view on how a Labour Prime Minister and ministers should act?		
Make policies and take decisions in accordance with the Labour Party's policies and general principles?	57	49
Make policies and take decisions in the light of the values and wishes of the country as a whole?	39	46
Not sure	5	5
Which of the three following statements most closely resembles your view on how the current government's most important policies are made?		
'By the Prime Minister and his advisers in Downing Street'	46	60
'By the Prime Minister and the ministers most closely involved'	28	15
'By the Prime Minister and cabinet after receiving advice from civil servants'	21	18
Not sure	5	6
Labour MPs play an important part in supporting a Labour government in Parliament. But sometimes the government can introduce legislation or do things that vary from the policy of the Labour Party. Do you think that the duty of Labour MPs in such circumstances is...?		
To support government legislation or actions with their votes	8	3
To negotiate firmly with government ministers to secure the best possible compromise before finally voting with the government	61	44
To vote for the government's legislation or actions only if they are fully in line with the party's policy, even if that means the government might be defeated	28	47
Don't know	3	6
Important or contentious issues can arise for the government which cannot normally be considered through the party's policy making process. Which, if any, of the following should carry the greatest influence with backbench Labour MPs when they decide how to vote in the House of Commons on these occasions? [Please tick up to TWO]		
The MP's own conscience and beliefs	53	53
The views of party members in the MP's own constituency	40	29
The views of voters in the MP's own constituency	35	56
Decisions of the party conference and Labour's national executive committee	23	18
Ministers' speeches and statements	19	10
Don't know	3	4

The national executive committee is the party's governing body between meetings of the party's annual conference. Which of these statements comes closest to your view when Labour is in government?

	Current members %	Former members %
The NEC has a vital political role, making policy, scrutinising Government decisions and challenging ministers when they depart from party policy'	20	23
'The NEC's role when Labour is in government is mainly practical. It should make sure that the party has the finances, members and organisation to fight elections effectively'	27	24
'The NEC's role is mainly practical, but making policy and holding ministers to account is a necessary part of building the party's strength on the ground'	43	34
Don't know	10	20

What would you say, on balance, better describes the party leadership's view on the role of members in developing and making policy?

It values the contribution that members make to the party's policies and campaigns	29	8
It does not trust members sufficiently to involve them fully in party decision and policy making.	64	81
Don't know	8	11

The central party has recently launched a registered supporters' network of people who do not pay party membership subscriptions. How do you view this initiative?

As a good way of drawing people into the party	51	37
As a precedent that might undermine the point of membership	32	37
Not sure	17	26

How much say should the non-paying supporters have in the party's affairs? [Please tick all that you think non-paying supporters should be able to do]

Participate in party policy making?	25
Share in deciding party policy?	11
Take part in choosing parliamentary or council candidates?	9
Vote in elections for the party leader and deputy leader?	9
None of these	54
Don't know	10

	Current members %	Former members %
The Prime Minister has said that he will not lead Labour into the next general election, and that he wishes for an orderly hand-over to his successor. When do you think that he should resign?		
Before the 2006 party conference this autumn?	37	54
Before the 2007 party conference?	34	23
Before the 2008 party conference?	11	7
Between the 2008 conference and the next election?	13	8
Don't know	5	9

No election for Labour Party leader/ deputy leader has taken place since Labour returned to power in 1997. Provisions exist for such an election in the Rule Book involving nomination, minimum numbers of Labour MPs and card votes at Party Conference. Which of the two following statements comes closer to your view?

'Any attempt to force through a leadership contest while Labour is the governing party would be inappropriate and damaging'	55	33
'It is important for the democratic integrity of the party that there are contested elections for the leader and deputy leader at least once in every Parliament'	31	51
Don't know	14	16

Tony Blair has said he will stand down as party leader during the course of the current Parliament. The next leadership contest will take place either when Mr Blair decides when to stand down, or when at least 72 Labour MPs exercise their right under Labour party rules to insist on a contest by nominating a candidate of their choosing. Who do you think should decide the timing of the next leadership contest?

Mr Blair choosing when to stand down	66	40
Labour MPs deciding when to insist on a contest	27	50
Don't know	8	10