

YouGov / IPPR Survey

Sample Size: 2199 GB Adults
Fieldwork: 6th - 7th April 2011

Below is a list of electoral systems that are used in various countries to elect politicians, for each one please say whether you have heard of it and whether you understand broadly how it works

First Past the Post (FPTP)

Have heard of and have a broad idea of how it works
Have heard of, but am not sure how it works
Have never heard of

Alternative Vote (AV)

Have heard of and have a broad idea of how it works
Have heard of, but am not sure how it works
Have never heard of

Single transferable vote (STV)

Have heard of and have a broad idea of how it works
Have heard of, but am not sure how it works
Have never heard of

Additional Member System (AMS)

Have heard of and have a broad idea of how it works
Have heard of, but am not sure how it works
Have never heard of

Party list

Have heard of and have a broad idea of how it works
Have heard of, but am not sure how it works
Have never heard of

Which of these views comes closest to your own?

One political party comes close to reflecting my views and values; I am strongly opposed to all of the others'
One political party comes close to reflecting my views and values, but I also have some sympathy with the outlook of
No political party is anything like perfect: two or more have some good points but also some weaknesses'
I feel little support or sympathy for any of the political parties'
Don't know

Which of these do you think is more democratic?

For each MP to secure support from at least half of all local voters, so that they are seen to represent a majority of voters locally
For each MP to have more support locally than any other candidate, even if they don't reach the 50% mark
Don't know

Which of these would you prefer?

A voting system in which extremist parties have a good chance of winning seats in a general or local election if they have the support of around one-third of local voters
A voting system which makes it very hard for extremist parties to win seats in a general or local election unless they have majority local support
Don't know

Which of these would you prefer?

A voting system which encourages parties to have clear and distinct policies, and not to compromise
A voting system which encourages parties to reach out to voters as widely as possible, and to compromise when necessary
Don't know

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A referendum is to be held next month on changing the electoral system from first-past-the-post (FPTP) to the Alternative Vote (AV).

At the moment, under first-past-the-post (FPTP), voters select ONE candidate with an 'x', and the candidate with the most votes wins.

It has been suggested that this system should be replaced by the Alternative Vote (AV). Voters would RANK a number of candidates from a list – '1' for their first choice, '2' for their second choice and so on.

How easy or difficult would you personally find it to vote in this way?

Very difficult
Fairly difficult
Fairly easy
Very easy
Don't know

Under AV, you would have the chance of stating your second choice, third choice and so on. But, if you wanted, you could give your first choice and not give any others. If the next election is fought under AV, do you think you would...

Not vote at all
Vote, but give only my first preference
Vote and give at least my 1st and 2nd preferences
Not sure

In an AV election, the '1st' preference votes are counted first. If a candidate wins more than half of the '1st' votes, a winner is declared. If not, the least popular candidates are eliminated from the contest, and their supporters' subsequent preferences counted and shared accordingly between the remaining candidates. This process continues until one of the candidate's secures a majority of the vote (50%+) and is declared the winner.

Do you think this is...

More democratic than the present system, because it means that the eventual winner has more popular support in some form than any other candidate
Less democratic than the present system because the candidate with the most first preferences may sometimes lose once a range of voters' preferences are taken into consideration
Don't know

Some people have suggested that, under AV, when voters' first choice candidate has been eliminated, and their later choices come into play, these second and subsequent choices should count for only half a vote each. Others have disagreed, saying that one person's vote should always have the same value. If Britain adopts AV, do you think each voters' second and later preferences, if they need to be counted, should ...

Count as a full vote, as currently proposed
Count as half a vote each
Don't know

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If there was a general election tomorrow using the Alternative Vote, how would you vote?

Please complete the following questions as if you were voting in a general election tomorrow, but rank the parties in your order of preference: Put 1 for your most preferred party, then 2 for your second best party, 3 for your third choice, etc.

Please number as MANY or as FEW choices as you wish. If you would not vote, or do not know how you would vote, tick the boxes below.

AV First Preference

Options for the SNP AND Plaid Cymru only shown to respondents from Scotland and Wales respectively

Con
Lab
Lib Dem
SNP
PCY
UKIP
Green
BNP
Won't Vote
Don't Know

Suppose the candidate who is elected MP is your second or third choice candidate. Would you...

Be contented because it would mean my MP is someone about whom I feel reasonably positive
Be discontented because the candidate I really wanted to win was not elected
Not sure

In the past have you ever engaged in 'tactical voting' in a general election - that is, voted for a party not because you liked it, or its candidate, best, but because you felt that your favourite party could not win in your area?

Yes, I have voted for my second choice party/candidate at least once
No, I have always voted for my favourite party/candidate
Don't know / I have never voted

Do you agree or disagree with these statements:

"There would be less 'tactical voting' under AV, because people could give the party/candidate they like best their first preference, knowing that their second preference will count if their favourite candidate has only a little support."

Agree strongly
Tend to agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Tend to disagree
Disagree strongly
Don't know

"I would be more likely to vote in an election held under AV because I would be able to express my preference for more than one party/candidate"

Agree strongly
Tend to agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Tend to disagree
Disagree strongly
Don't know

The question for the coming referendum reads as follows:

At present, the UK uses the "first past the post" system to elect MPs to the House of Commons. Should the "alternative vote" system be used instead?

How do you intend voting on May 5?

Yes
No
Would not vote
Don't know