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Public oppose Government's 'employee-owners' scheme

A majority (63%) of people in Britain think that the government's proposal for owner-employee schemes is a bad idea, according to a YouGov poll.

The employee-owner schemes were announced by Chancellor George Osborne in his speech at the Conservative Party Conference. This change in employment law would enable employees to receive between £2,000 and £50,000 worth of shares in the company they work for, but in exchange they would lose many employment rights, such as protection against wrongful dismissal, rights to redundancy pay and rights to ask for flexible working.

A strong majority of those intending to vote for the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats were against the employee-owner proposal. Although a plurality of Conservatives also opposed the idea, more were in support of it than supporters of any other party.

- 46% of Tory supporters believe it is a bad idea to allow companies to offer owner-employees schemes, while 37% think it is a good idea.
- 79% of Labour Party voters were against the government proposal, while only 9% were in support.
- Amongst Liberal democrats, 64% were opposed to giving up employment rights in exchange for shares in the companies they work for, and 25% supported this.

"George Osborne is clearly trying to present an idea that strikes a balance by enabling employers to fire people more easily, while at the same time giving employees considerable benefits for giving up some of their rights. However, the public opposition to this proposal would indicate that the Chancellor has a considerable amount of work to do to convince people that this is a good idea," said Laurence Janata-Lipinski, Political Research Manager at YouGov.

The Government has said that owner-employee schemes will come into effect in April 2013.

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Notes to Editors:

Total sample size was 1,899 GB adults aged 19+. Fieldwork was undertaken 8th-9th October 2012. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

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