

YouGov Survey Results

Taxes and the public services

Prepared for The Daily Telegraph

Sample Size: 2074

Fieldwork: 04-05 December 2003

	%
Please indicate which of these you regard as taxes. (Please tick all that apply)	
Customs and excise duties on alcohol and tobacco	93
Stamp duty on the purchase of houses	92
Vehicle Excise Duty	92
Death duties	87
National Insurance contributions	70
London's congestion charge	62
The BBC's licence fee	55
None of these	0

Taking all forms of taxation into account, do you think we in Britain pay on average higher taxes than people in other European countries like France and Germany, lower taxes, or about the same amount?

We in Britain pay higher taxes	67
We pay lower taxes	11
We pay about the same overall level of taxes	13
Don't know	9

Again taking all forms of taxation into account, roughly how much of your total annual income do you think you give back to the government in the form of taxes?

Less than 10%	4
10 to 19%	6
20 to 29%	15
30 to 39%	27
40 to 49%	18
50 to 59%	11
60 to 69%	7
70 to 79%	2
80 to 89%	1
90% or more	0
Don't know	11

How confident are you that you got that proportion roughly right?

Very confident	4
Fairly confident	52
Not very confident	37
Not at all confident	4
Don't know	3

Still taking all forms of taxation into account, do you think you personally pay too much in taxes every year, or too little or about the right amount?

Too much	69
About the right amount	22
Too little	2
Don't know	7

From what you know, would you describe the British tax system as being on the whole fair or unfair?

Fair	21
Unfair	70
Don't know	10

Do you think rich people pay too much in taxes, too little or about the right amount?		
	Too much	11
	About the right amount	25
	Too little	57
	Don't know	7

Do you think people on middle incomes pay too much in taxes, too little or about the right amount?		
	Too much	48
	About the right amount	41
	Too little	5
	Don't know	6

Do you think poor people pay too much in taxes, too little or about the right amount?		
	Too much	69
	About the right amount	22
	Too little	4
	Don't know	5

Do you think that most of the money the government raises in taxes is well spent, or do you think a considerable proportion of it is wasted?		
	Money is mostly well spent	15
	Much of the money is wasted	79
	Don't know	6

It is generally agreed that at least some taxpayers' money is wasted. Please indicate on which of the following you think a good deal of money is wasted. (Please tick all that apply)		
	Incompetent management	83
	Too much reporting and form-filling	83
	Too much duplication, with different agencies doing the same thing	79
	Too many managers	77
	Too much government regulation	68
	Too high salaries for public-sector professionals such as teachers, doctors and nurses	11
	Too high wages for public-sector manual workers such as school cleaners and hospital porters	5
	None of these	0
	Don't know	2

People have different views about whether it is more important to reduce taxes or keep up government spending. Which of these statements comes closest to your own view?		
	Taxes should be cut, even if it means some reduction in government services such as health, education and welfare	22
	Things should be left as they are	23
	Government services such as health, education and welfare should be extended, even if it means some increase in taxes	35
	Don't know	20

If taxes were increased in order to extend public services, do you think most of the additional money would be well spent or would much of it be wasted?		
	Extra money would mostly be well spent	12
	Much of the extra money would be wasted	79
	Don't know	8

Would you support or oppose a policy which required you personally to pay higher taxes in order to increase spending on public services, such as health, education and welfare?		
	Support	27
	Oppose	57
	Don't know	17

Since the Labour Government was elected in 1997, do you think the proportion of national income taken by the government in taxes has...

Gone up a lot	45
Gone up a little	37
Stayed about the same	9
Gone down a little	2
Gone down a lot	0
Don't know	7

Suppose a Conservative Government had been in power since 1997. Do you think the proportion of national income taken by the government in taxes would have...

Gone up a lot	29
Gone up a little	36
Stayed about the same	18
Gone down a little	6
Gone down a lot	1
Don't know	10

If Labour is re-elected at the next general election, do you think taxes will...

Go up a lot	42
Go up a little	40
Stay about the same	13
Go down a little	0
Go down a lot	0
Don't know	5

If the Conservatives are elected at the next general election, do you think taxes will...

Go up a lot	26
Go up a little	34
Stay about the same	19
Go down a little	12
Go down a lot	1
Don't know	8

If the Conservatives are elected at the next general election, do you think they will spend taxpayers' money more efficiently than Labour does now, less efficiently, or would the election of a Conservative Government not make much difference?

Conservatives would spend more efficiently than Labour	29
Conservatives would spend less efficiently	21
It would not make much difference	45
Don't know	5

If the Conservatives committed themselves at the next election to cutting taxes, would this make you more inclined to vote Conservative, less inclined, or would it not make much difference?

More inclined to vote Conservative	27
Less inclined	11
Not make much difference	58
Don't know	4

If any specific taxes have to be increased, which of the following do you think should be put up? (Please tick all that apply)

Income tax on people earning more than £100,000 a year	79
Stamp duty on the purchase of large houses	46
Duties on alcohol and tobacco	44
The standard rate of income tax	7
Value-Added tax (VAT)	3
None of these	7
Don't know	3

**If any specific taxes could be reduced, which of the following do you think should be cut?
(Please tick all that apply)**

Income tax on people with below-average earnings	72
Value-Added Tax (VAT)	49
Standard rate of income tax	43
Inheritance tax	38
Stamp duty on the purchase of houses and flats	38
None of these	1
Don't know	3

Suppose the Government had enough money to do three of the following. Which THREE would you most like it to do?

Spend £3 billion a year more on the National Health Service	51
Reduce levels of council tax by 20%	49
Increase the basic state retirement pension by £5 a week	39
Reduce petrol duty by 12p a litre	33
Spend £3 billion a year more on schools, nurseries and facilities for young children	28
Spend £3 billion a year more to expand and re-equip the police	20
Give Britain's universities an extra £2 billion a year, and scrap its plans to increase student fees	20
Spend £3 billion a year more to improve roads and public transport	19
Reduce the standard rate of VAT by 1%, from 17.5% to 16.5%	17
Reduce the basic rate of income tax by 1p in the pound	16
Don't know	2

Should there be tax relief on people paying for each of the following?

Private health insurance...

Should be tax relief	46
Should not	44
Don't know	10

Private education...

Should be tax relief	25
Should not	68
Don't know	7

Private care for the elderly...

Should be tax relief	76
Should not	17
Don't know	7

It is widely believed that there will be a big 'hole' in public finances in the next few years. In order to plug that hole, which one of these do you think it would be the best course of action for the Chancellor?

Raise taxes	16
Increase government borrowing	9
Cut planned increases in government spending	56
Don't know	18

More generally, would you say that you and your family feel more financially secure than you felt six or seven years ago, less secure, or do you feel much the same way now as you did then?

More secure	19
Less secure	49
Much the same	28
Don't know	3

If you have children under the age of 21, do you think that when they grow up they will be more financially secure than they are now, or less secure, or will their financial position be much the same as yours?

Will be more secure	6
Will be less secure	21
Much the same	10
Don't have any children under 21	59
Don't know	5

How worried are you at the moment about you and your family's financial situation?

Very worried	10
Fairly worried	43
Not very worried	39
Not at all worried	7
Don't know	1

Please indicate which of the following you are worried about. (Please tick all that apply)

Not having an adequate pension when you retire	75
Having to pay for nursing and other care in old age	52
Not being able to pay off your mortgage	33
Being made redundant	32
Value of your investments falling	27
Value of your investments not increasing as much as you had expected	24
Value of your home falling	22
Having to support your children for longer than you had expected	22
Value of your home not increasing as much as you had expected	11
None of these	5
Don't know	1

How do you think the financial situation of your household will change over the next 12 months?

Get a lot better	2
Get a little better	19
Stay the same	41
Get a little worse	30
Get a lot worse	5
Don't know	3