

Jury Team – Policy Document

Chapter A - Introduction

Background

The Jury Team was founded to work together for the people that the politicians forgot. It intends to “open up and clean up” politics. Its candidates are united by the Proposals described below.

The Jury Team will ensure that the electorate have the ultimate power and that Parliament and Government are both run for the benefit of the country and not for those who work in these organisations. We need to give back to people their pride in their country and its institutions and to let them become the ultimate jury.

Proposals

The Jury Team has four sets of proposals to achieve the necessary practical and political reform:

- **Championing policies supported by the electorate but rejected by the traditional parties**
- **Reforming our democracy to change the people’s relationship with the state**
- **Strengthening Parliament**
- **Improving the running of government**

Championing Policies

The political class have become out of touch with the electorate. As a result of vested interests and electoral cowardice, the current party system does not deliver the policies that people want. Using its own review substantiated by a series of YouGov opinion polls, the Jury Team has researched the issues where the political class and the public have clearly different views, where the traditional political parties are afraid of having a proper debate about subjects which many people find troubling, or where political posturing leads to uncertainty or worse. The Jury Team will legislate for the following policies and then have an authorising referendum before they become law:

- 1. Holding a referendum on the status of the UK within the EU**
- 2. Limiting government borrowing to 10% of expenditure**
- 3. Protecting bank customer deposits from casino banking**
- 4. Limiting benefits to 80% of the after tax minimum wage**
- 5. Sentencing violent criminals to “army style” punishment**
- 6. Limiting UK troops in Afghanistan to the NATO average**
- 7. Requiring private medical insurance for non-EU citizens**
- 8. Establishing 10 year residence requirement for UK Citizenship**
- 9. Allowing state schools to opt out from local authority control**
- 10. Requiring stores to let customers leave excess packaging**

Democratic Reform

The Jury Team has pulled together and reviewed the various ideas for Democratic Reform which have been suggested by charities, think-tanks and parliamentary and government bodies over the last twenty years. It has incorporated these into a series of Proposals in each area which will make the political system more responsive and give back the balance of power to the electorate:

- 11. Setting up an English Parliament**
- 12. Holding a referendum on the status of Scotland within the UK**
- 13. Giving Welsh Assembly similar powers to Scottish Parliament**
- 14. Reducing the number of MPs by a third (from 650 to 433)**
- 15. Changing Commons elections to proportional representation**
- 16. Requiring referendums on petition by 5% of the electorate**
- 17. Introducing “no-fault” compensation for public bodies**

Strengthening Parliament

The third set of Jury Team Proposals is designed to encourage more MPs with experience of the world outside the “Westminster Village” into the House of Commons by providing the opportunity for proper debate, rather than being “lobby fodder”, in the same way as is achieved by the non-party crossbench members of the House of Lords. The expenses scandal has accelerated the idea of a new style of politician going into Parliament.

- 18. MPs to be free to vote in line with their best judgment**
- 19. MPs to be paid according to civil service pay scales**
- 20. MPs to serve for only three full terms of five years**
- 21. Elected Representatives (Prevention of Deception) Act**
- 22. Independent Politicians Complaints Commission**
- 23. Cap donations to political parties**
- 24. Members of Select Committees to be elected by MPs**
- 25. Gold-plating of EU directives to be stopped**
- 26. General elections to take place every five years**

Improving the Running of Government

The fourth set of Proposals will give back to the House of Commons its right to choose the Prime Minister rather than having that choice based on a narrow party political system. This will change the focus of future general elections from being based on little-read national party manifestos and shallow promises being marketed for floating voters to the priority being for each constituency to elect the best person to represent their views and contribute to the election of the head of the government.

- 27. The House of Commons to elect the Prime Minister**
- 28. PM to appoint junior ministers jointly with Cabinet Ministers**
- 29. Departments to be run by a Board**
- 30. Government statistics published by independent body**

All Jury Team candidates to be an MP will endorse all of these Proposals as described in this document. However on all other issues they will be able to vote in line with their best judgment. Other new legislation will therefore only become law if a majority of such independent people support it after proper scrutiny, with a referendum to endorse the proposal if required.

These thirty Jury Team Proposals may be summarised in the diagram on the following page:

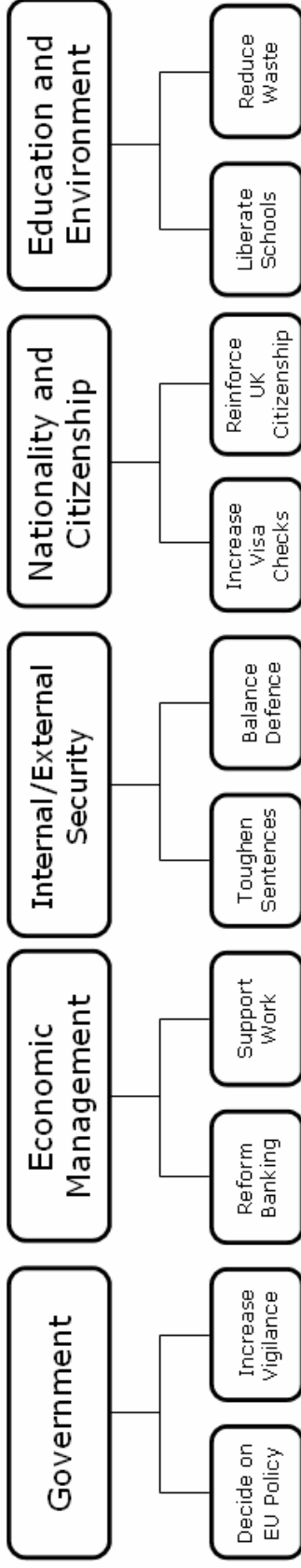
Vision

**Working Together
For The People That Politicians Forgot**

Method

A campaign in the 2010 general election to let the people decide on the much needed practical and political reform

Key Policy Areas



Core Policies – Legislation and Referendums on:

1. Establish legislation for withdrawing from EU but retaining trade links
2. Limit state borrowing to 10% of spending
3. Protect bank customer deposits from casino banking
4. Relate maximum benefit payments to 80% of minimum wage
5. Introduce "army style" punishment for violent criminals
6. Keep UK troop numbers in Afghanistan at no more than NATO average
7. Require non-EU citizens to have private health insurance
8. UK citizenship to need 10 years residence plus English/economic qualification
9. Allow state schools to opt out of local authority control
10. Super-markets to have to take back excessive packaging

Democratic Reform – To be confirmed by Referendums

11. Set up an English Parliament for English matters
12. Clarify the status of Scotland within the UK
13. Give the Welsh Assembly equivalent powers to the Scottish Parliament
14. Reduce the number of MPs by a third
15. Proportional representation for the House of Commons
16. Referendums if requested by 5% of the electorate
17. Introduce "no-fault" compensation in order to reduce the "health and safety" culture in public bodies

Strengthen Parliament

18. MPs more independent of government
19. MPs' pay/expenses based on civil service practice
20. MPs limited to 15 years in the Commons
21. Deception by MPs made illegal
22. Set up Politicians Complaints Commission
23. Cap political donations
24. MPs to elect Select Committees
25. Stop gold-plating of EU laws
26. General elections every five years

Improve Government

27. Prime Minister chosen by House of Commons
28. Less reshuffling of Ministers
29. Departments run by a Board
30. Government statistics made independent

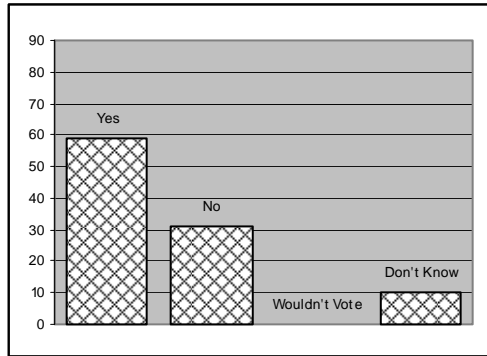
Championing Policies

The Jury Team therefore pledges that in the first three years of the next Parliament it will pass legislation and then hold an authorising referendum on each of the following issues.

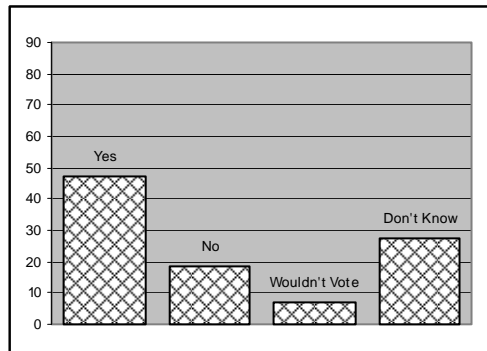
The following graphs show the percentage level of support for the policy as shown in YouGov polls commissioned by the Jury Team (see Appendix 1 for the timing, sampling and results of these YouGov polls).

Government

Holding a referendum to clarify the status of the UK in the EU.

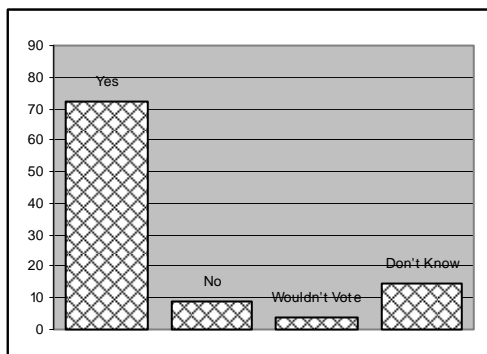


Limiting the amount of borrowing the government can set out in its Budget each year to no more than 10% of its total expenditure.

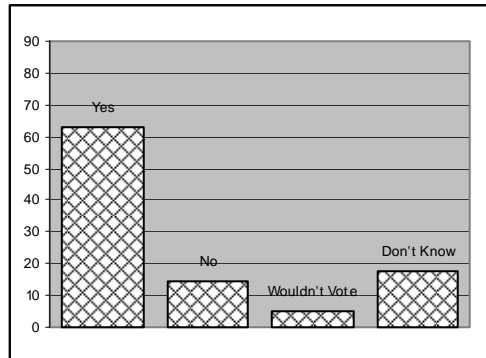


Economic Management

Preventing banks that are benefiting from government guarantees from using depositors' funds to support their own market trading.

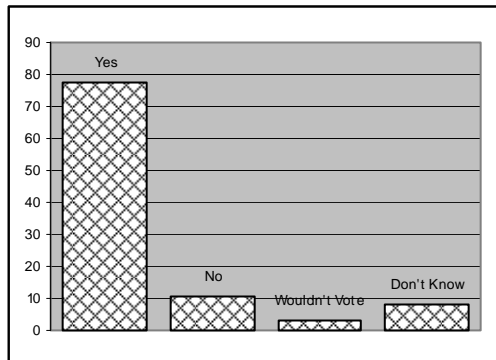


Limiting the total amount that an able-bodied working-age claimant with no children can receive in tax credits and social security, including housing benefit, to 80% of the after tax minimum wage

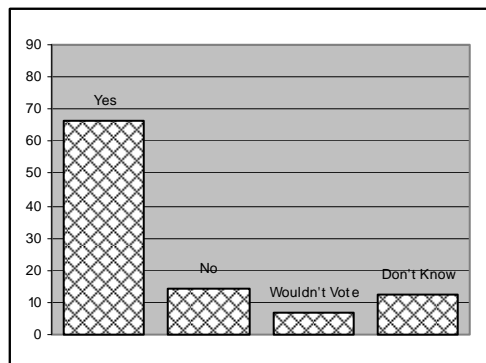


Internal/External Security

Giving courts the ability to sentence violent criminals to "army style" punishment and training courses.

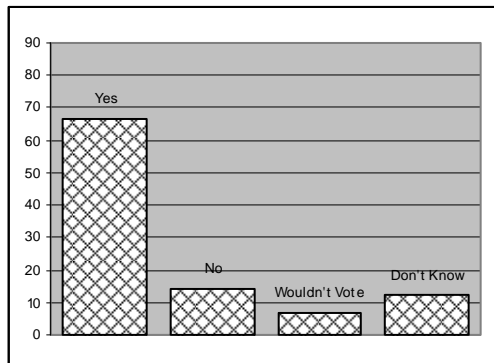


Limiting the number of British troops sent to Afghanistan to the average number sent by other NATO countries (relative to their population).

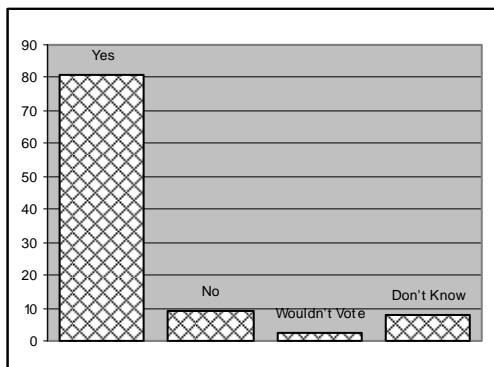


Nationality and Citizenship

Making private medical insurance a requirement for all non-EU citizens obtaining visas for more than three months.

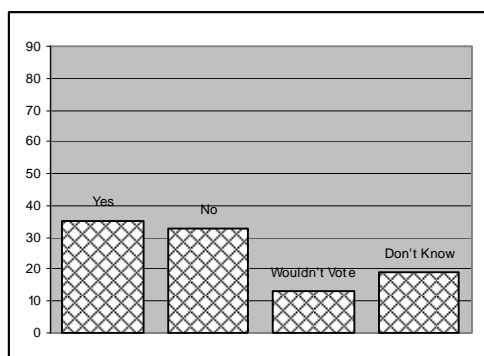


Increasing to 10 years (from the current 3 or 5) the minimum time that adult immigrants must live in the UK before getting UK Citizenship, with Citizenship only being granted if they are not convicted of any indictable crime or in receipt of social security for 10 years and can meet the GCSE standards expected of 16 year old pupils (this chart shows those who do not want UK Citizen applicants to have any criminal convictions).

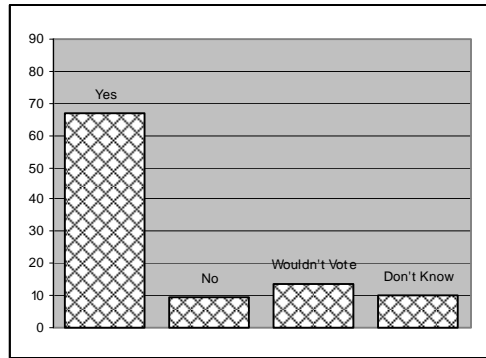


Education and Environment

Allowing state schools to opt out of local authority control but remain state funded if a majority of parents at the school agree (these results include Scotland where, unlike England and Wales, the electorate does not want such a change).

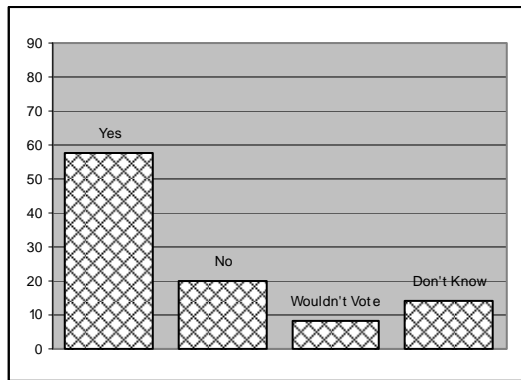


Requiring supermarkets and other large stores (exceeding 3,000 square feet) to provide facilities for customers to leave in store any excess packaging they have bought.



Democratic Reform

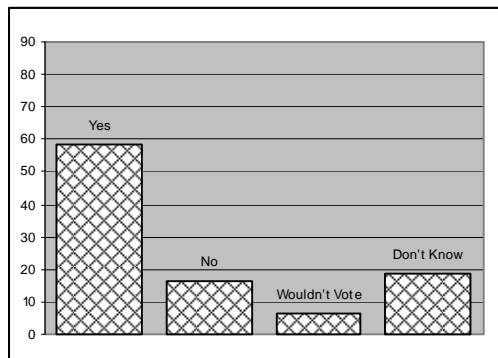
Setting up an English Parliament to decide matters that relate solely to England (English electorate).



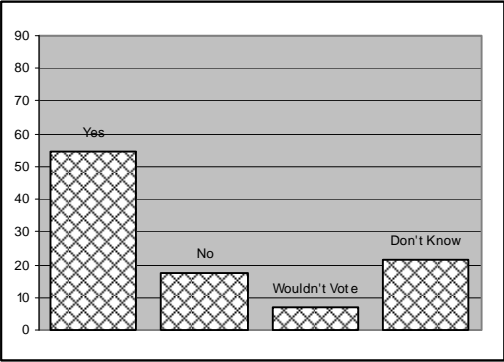
Holding a referendum to clarify the status of Scotland within the United Kingdom (Scottish electorate).

Giving the Welsh Assembly equivalent powers to the Scottish Parliament (Welsh electorate).

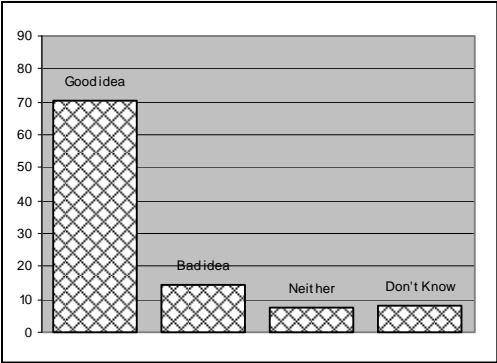
Reducing the number of MPs by a third (from 650 to 433).



Changing the voting system for election to the House of Commons to direct proportional representation (i.e. where seats are awarded in direct proportion to the total votes cast in the country as a whole).



Requiring referendums to be held on any issue, including the recall of an MP, if there is a petition with signatures from 5% of the electorate (a Citizens' Initiative).



Encouraging public organisations not to make health and safety decisions because they fear they may be sued by introducing a "no-fault" compensation scheme for all victims and requiring a successful court claim to demonstrate that the organisation acted recklessly.

Strengthening the Westminster Parliament

1. *MPs should be free to vote in line with their best judgment and should not be sanctioned for disobeying any party whips on issues not in their party manifesto.*
2. *MPs, ministers and their political staff should be paid according to civil service pay scales, should have any expenses approved only in line with established civil service guidelines and must act according to the Nolan Principles that apply to all public bodies.*
3. *MPs should normally serve for no more than three full terms of five years.*
4. *The “Elected Representatives (Prevention of Deception) Bill” should become law to make it illegal for elected representatives to publish false or misleading statements.*
5. *An Independent Politicians Complaints Commission, modeled on the Independent Police Complaints Commission, with its Board appointed by a panel of designated charitable or professional bodies, should be established to investigate accusations about national and local politicians, basing its judgments on the Nolan Principles that apply to all public bodies.*
6. *The Hayden Phillips Report recommendations on capping donations to political parties which receive government funding should be accepted and enforced.*
7. *Members of Select Committees, which hold the executive to account, should be elected by all MPs and not appointed by party whips and should scrutinise all departmental proposals for legislation.*
8. *No European directive should be enacted or enforced by secondary legislation in a stricter way (“gold-plating”) than is the practice in any other European country deemed compliant for that directive by the European Commission.*
9. *General elections should take place every five years unless a resolution of the House of Commons decides otherwise to reduce this period.*

Improving the Running of Government

1. *After each future general election the House of Commons will meet to elect by secret ballot a person who will be recommended to the monarch to be Prime Minister*
2. *The Prime Minister will then appoint the senior minister to run each department who will in turn agree with the Prime Minister the appointment of the junior ministers for that department and will have to agree to their being moved elsewhere*
3. *Departments should be run by a Board chaired by the senior departmental minister and attended by the other ministers but on which at least half of the directors will be appointed by a panel of designated charitable or professional bodies and other stakeholders relevant to producer and consumer interests in that sector.*
4. *All Government statistics should be published by an independent body whose Board is appointed by a panel of designated charitable or professional bodies and other stakeholders associated with the collection and use of statistics.*

Rachel Sylvester wrote in The Times in December 2009: *“The next election will be won by the party that presents a convincing case for a better future rather than one that boasts about its achievements in the past”*. The Liberal Democrat Leader, Nick Clegg, stated in January 2010: *“This year’s general election is likely to be the most open and unpredictable in a generation.”*

The Jury Team will rise to this opportunity by giving the British people a real choice.

“A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.”

~ Jawaharlal Nehru

Politics with the People

Politics by the People

Politics for the People