



NEWS RELEASE

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Half of the public are likely to change their vote after examining the parties' policies, finds new data released by Vote for Policies

New data published today finds that 50% of people polled on the Vote for Policies website say they are likely to vote for a different party as a result of using the site. A further 63% say they are surprised to discover which party's policies they support.

The website allows users to compare policies on topics like education or the economy, without knowing which party they belong to. 133,000 surveys have been completed since its launch on February 19th 2015. 1,111 users completed the poll on which today's findings are based.

These findings, and the impact of voting websites on our political system, will be discussed tonight at a free public debate organised by Vote for Policies, in partnership with the [University of London's Birkbeck Institute for Social Research](#). Speakers include John Curtice, Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde and President of the British Polling Council, and Dr Rosie Campbell, Reader in Politics at Birkbeck and author of *Gender and the Vote in Britain*. The discussion will be chaired by Emran Mian, Director of the independent think tank, the Social Market Foundation.

Vote for Policies is one of a growing number of Voter Advice Applications (VAAs) which allow people to assess which political party matches their views most closely. In 2005 there were two VAAs available in the UK, this year seven are up and running. The number of people using VAAs in the UK is rising steadily, with approximately two million users in 2010, but has yet to reach the proportions of other European countries.

Research shows that in the most recent national elections in Switzerland, Finland and the Netherlands between 30 and 40 percent of voters consulted a VAA before casting their vote. The sites are also popular in Germany, with seven million users in 2009, and in Denmark.

Matt Chocqueel-Mangan, founder of Vote for Policies, said;

"Before I set up Vote for Policies, I had no interest in politics and didn't know what each party was offering. Most people don't have time to trawl through manifestos, so I created a website that lets people compare policies, in the parties' own words, without knowing who they belong to.

"I hope the site will let people see beyond spin and personality, and encourage them to vote with a better understanding of the policies on offer."

Laura Perry, one of the 900 people who crowd-funded Vote for Policies, said;

"There's a generation of people like me who are interested in politics and want to be well-informed, but need help deciding how to vote. Vote for Policies is perfect for them. It's a serious alternative to more trivial vote matching quizzes online.

"I believe Vote for Policies can engage people who are disillusioned with politics, helping them make up their minds based on the policies rather than anything else."

John Curtice, Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde and President of the British Polling Council, said;

“I’m looking forward to tonight’s debate on whether the Internet can change the way we think about voting, and encourage more focus on policies.

“I’ll be arguing that it is reasonable for voters to take into account who they think can govern effectively as well as who they think has the best policies, and that voter advice applications that focus solely on policies will not necessarily enable voters to vote more effectively.”

Vote for Policies has also launched a new data site, giving academics and journalists free access to breakdowns of their survey data. It shows analysis of surveys by constituency, and data on which parties are polling best in each policy area. These results are updated in real time.

As of Thursday 19th March, with 133,000 surveys completed, the Green Party were third on environment but leading on foreign policy, and UKIP a strong second on education (after the Liberal Democrats), but fifth on immigration.

For further information or to request an interview please contact the Campaign Manager, Alana Avery alana@voteforpolicies.org.uk / 0754 291 5809 / 0207 164 6215

Notes to editors

1. [Vote for Policies](#) is an independent, non-partisan website where users compare policies on topics such as education or the economy without knowing which party they belong to. The policies come direct from the political parties, written in their own words. In 2010 over 580,000 individuals used the site. Vote for Policies is crowd-funded by over 900 individuals and received match funding from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.
2. Every user of the Vote for Policies website is invited to give feedback after completing their policy comparison. Today’s figures are based on 1,111 respondents. The survey questions and answers are listed below.
3. The Vote for Policies data site is available [here](#). At the moment it allows you to see results for all constituencies and further data will be added shortly.
4. [Policies or personality: Can the internet change our voting habits?](#) is a free public debate on 24th March 2015 at Birkbeck, University of London. Emran Mian; John Curtice; Laura Perry; Dr Rosie Campbell; and Sunny Hundal will debate the issue, with questions from the audience.
5. For further information on the use of Voter Advice Applications see [Voting Advice Applications in Europe - The State of the Art](#) by Lorella Cedroni & Diego Garzia, and [Voting Advice Applications](#) by Kamila Varadinová.

Polling questions	
As a result of using Vote for Policies, how likely are you to vote for a different party than before?	Regarding the parties whose policies you selected on the Vote for Policies survey, what was your reaction?
Very likely to vote for a different party: 21%	Quite surprised 40%
Quite likely to vote for a different party 29%	Very surprised 13%
Not likely to vote for a different party 48%	Totally shocked 9%
	Not surprised 38%