

## Claimants vow to topple Coalition

28 January 2015

*"I am so disheartened, ill and worn down by them, but I will vote if it is with my last breath to get this Coalition out!"*

Survey respondent

Claimants are angry – not cowed - and they are planning to turn out in huge numbers to vote in May.

That's the message from almost 6,000 readers who responded to the Benefits and Work General Election Survey, conducted over the last fortnight.

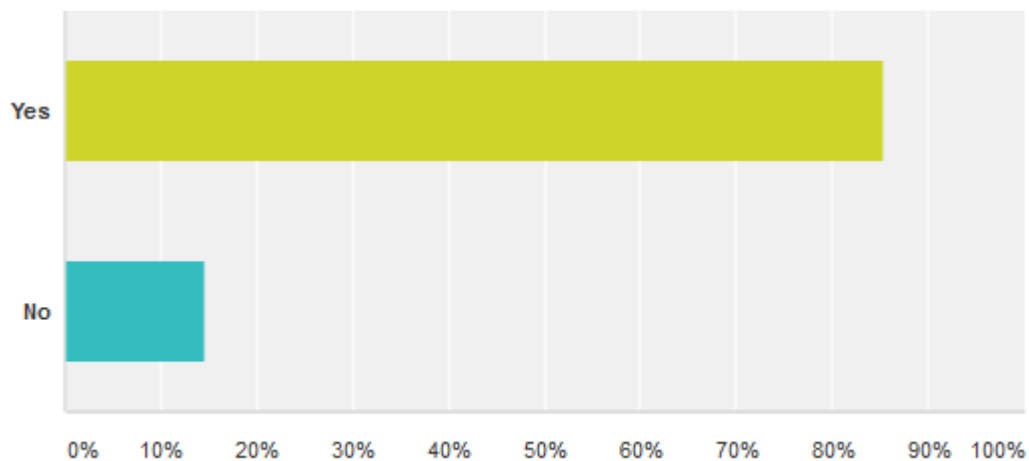
A staggering 84% of respondents said their lives had been made worse or much worse by the Coalition. 14% had seen no difference whilst fewer than 2% said it had been made better or much better.

You can read in detail what they had to say about life under the Coalition in ["I'm scared" – what the Coalition have done to 84% of sick and disabled claimants](#).

But it's what our readers had to say about their voting intentions that should have politicians breathing frantically into brown paper bags.

## Did you vote at the last general election in 2010?

Answered: 5,756 Skipped: 34

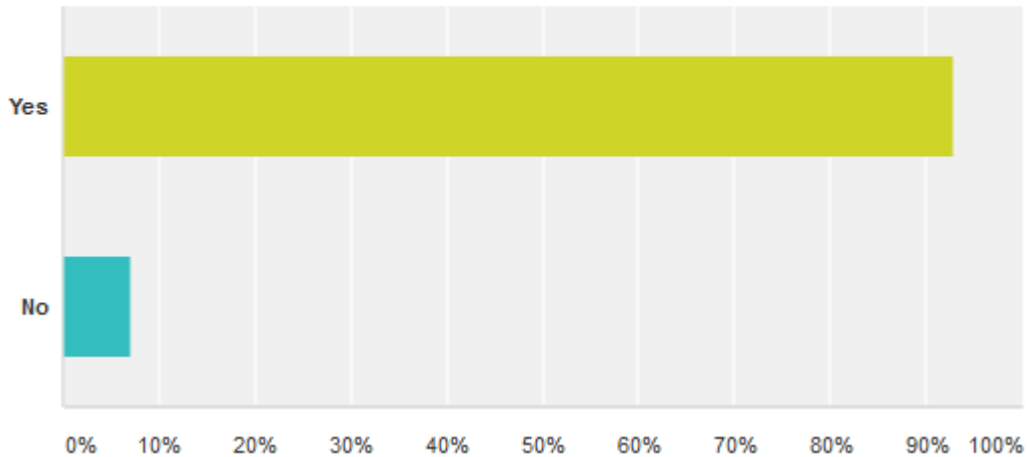


No fewer than 85% voted at the 2010 election.

And an extraordinary 93% of respondents plan on voting at the next election, an increase of 8%.

## Will you vote at the upcoming general election in May?

Answered: 5,756 Skipped: 34



Although we didn't ask, many told us who they intend to vote for as well. Below are a selection of the many thousands of responses we received.

### **I'll never vote Tory/Lib Dem again**

Perhaps politicians and the tabloids sometimes forget that it's not only Labour voters who get sick, become disabled or lose their jobs. When it happens to a Conservative supporter it can come as a bit of a shock.

*"For the first time in my life I do not know who to vote for. After what Ian Duncan Smith put me through I cannot ever vote Tory again, but it is hard making a new choice."*

*"Vote this coalition out. I voted conservative for all my life. Never again. I don't trust a word that comes out of their mouths, especially the DWP and Employment ministers."*

*"I would prefer the Downing Street cat to get elected rather than the Conservatives, and, I like many voted for them in the last election."*

*"Our family would never vote for a tory government ever again!"*

*"I am in a Tory marginal. They've lost three votes in this household. I am not convinced that Labour - the only likely alternative - are likely to do anything better. The Bedroom Tax does not apply to me but as a result of its impact on disabled people I will not be voting Tory again. Neither will I vote for the Lib Dems who did not have the backbone to stop it. I will be voting tactically in the hope that this Government will fall and take IDS with them."*

And then there are all those people who voted Lib Dem in the expectation that they would pursue left of centre policies . . .

*"I feel that my vote last time was not how I wanted it to be. I voted Liberal Democrats to keep conservative from ruining the country, I certainly didn't expect my vote to be added to the conservatives."*

*"Lib Dems stole my vote."*

Finally, there are Tory and Lib Dem supporters who initially thought that a coalition might be rather a good idea.

*"I had high hopes for the Coalition (I have always voted for one of the Parties in question); however, I won't be voting for either of them in the next election. Massively disappointed."*

*"The only good thing to come out of the coalition is that I am now aware of how spineless and what liars both parties are. I will never vote for either of them again."*

### **I'm voting Labour, reluctantly**

We weren't surprised by the number of respondents who volunteered the information that they would be voting Labour. But what came across very strongly indeed was the almost universal lack of enthusiasm for doing so. Most sick and disabled people expect Labour to be bad, just not as bad as the Conservatives.

*"Vote tactically; even if that does mean the Labour Party, whom I do not particularly wish to endorse."*

*"Vote Labour. They can be no worse than the coalition."*

*"This coalition has been the most heartless and uncaring in living memory. Whether things will massively improve under Ed Miliband is debateable, but at least some of the Labour MPs do care."*

*"Have to get these out, Labour might not be much better but sure can't be worse."*

*"We have to get the Tories out and at least with Labour it won't be quite as bad."*

*"Russell Brand speaks the truth about the corrupt political system which needs destroying and recreating in another form. Not sure it's a good idea not to vote though ...we could end up with the nightmare scenario of permanent Tory rule...with a heavy heart I will vote Labour."*

*"Life under this Gov has been very hard to the poorest section of our people, but be under no illusion, life under Labour won't be a great deal better, but anything better is good."*

*"Labour slightly more likely to look after claimants."*

*"Vote strategically. Anything which gets the Conservatives out of sole or coalition power. Don't vote Lib Dem they sold out. Labour are far from perfect. But only alternative viable party who stand any chance of beating Tories. Working class and the vulnerable stand a chance if Labour regain power."*

*"I'm no fan of Labour's timid approach but since only Labour can beat the Tories and since they are more likely to listen, vote Labour where it will secure a Labour victory and vote for any other progressive party where it will keep the Tory out even if Labour can't win the seat."*

*"Because at least Labour have promised to abolish the sickening bedroom tax, whether or not they adhere to this promise is yet to be seen, as we know the politicians don't stick to what they promise."*

*"For the past 5 years my wife and I have been at the mercy of a government that has none. So Labour are the only credible party, they are for the common people but still they need to have more working class people as MPs not public school boys."*

*"It's got to be better under Labour they are fairer and have more compassion and will abolish the illegal bedroom tax."*

*"Voting is the only way to bring about a much needed change. Hundreds if not thousands will not survive another 5 years of the Tories. Many people I know will be voting UKIP but my strong views are that a UKIP vote is a vote for the Tories. We must vote Labour."*

### **I'm voting Green with hope**

By contrast to Labour voters, those who say they are voting green tend to be much more positive about their choice – even if it runs the risk of splitting the anti-conservative vote and putting the Tories in power.

*"I have been a Labour supporter all my life but no longer. If we have a Green candidate in our constituency I will vote Green. If not I suppose it will have to be Labour."*

*"Vote green, even if they don't get a majority, they do at least support what labour used to stand for."*

*"I am voting Green Party if there is a candidate as they are the only party that shows any compassion for a fairer society."*

*"I will probably feel upset whatever the outcome, but I'd feel more miserable if I didn't even have a say. I think we should all give the Greens a try now."*

*"I'm proud to say I'm voting Green, again. Their policies, when people take the time to read them, are very, very good. And they support the little fish in the big ocean - us."*

*"Vote for the Greens, if you really don't know who else to vote for... we've tried everyone else. Even Labour now are too right-wing and don't represent the low-paid working class person."*

*"At least make a protest vote to give hope for others. Vote green!"*

*"It matters to vote to make other parties, e.g. Green Party stronger. I will not vote Tory or Labour, both behave disgusting towards disabled people, but will vote for alternative."*

### **I'm voting SNP/Plaid because they are for claimants**

In Scotland, there seems to be a real feeling that the SNP can be trusted to oppose some of the worst attacks on claimants in a way that people no longer trust Labour. The same appears to be true of Plaid.

*"I shall vote SNP as I live in Scotland and they do not want the DLA to change to PIP Labour admit that they will still implement welfare cutbacks so they are useless but preferable to Tories. I will be voting SNP."*

*"I intend to vote SNP as they have tried to help by subsidising the bedroom tax and are against austerity cuts. Labour are no longer a socialist party, MPs voted with the Tories for further cuts."*

*"Tories are out to crucify you if you have a disability. I'm voting SNP, as a Scot I can testify been stabbed in back for voting to stay in union but gain fictional extra devolution."*

*"It matters for me in Scotland to vote SNP as they genuinely oppose the cuts and may hold the balance of power. Voters in the rest of the country may benefit from voting tactically to get rid of the Tories ."*

*"I live in wales which biases my choice of which party to vote for. So if i was talking to someone who also lived in wales i would tell them that Plaid Cymru have the most disability friendly policies of all political parties in the UK. I realise that Plaid if they came to power in Wales would not have the capacity to control benefits however they may be able to in future as devolutionary powers increase."*

*"I will vote for Plaid Cymru in Wales. I am not concerned with England. I don't think it is worth voting there."*

### **I'm voting UKIP in spite of the press**

In spite of continued negative publicity and the strong indication that some UKIP candidates despise claimants, there is no shortage of sick and disabled claimants willing to give UKIP a try.

*"Vote for UKIP- this will blow out the old tired parties that just want to save money by bullying the disabled. UKIP is largely an unknown at the moment, but they will probably leave the disabled alone- at least for a few years."*

*"I detest this government and would like to see UKIP have a chance."*

*"I will be voting UKIP as I don't believe in David Cameron and I don't feel that being in the EU is helping this country."*

*"The only hope is UKIP so we need to vote to get their influence into government, or at least to have a big influence as part of a coalition."*

*"Vote ukip. Hoping they will be better than others."*

*"To my dismay I have always voted Conservative. In the next election and future elections UKIP will have my vote."*

*"Vote UKIP who are the only ones that understand the people's needs , do not vote for the self-serving 3 main parties or this will just continue to make the rich richer and the poor poorer."*

*"I feel that the last Labour government with its Stealth Taxes and general lies have completely lost my support for ever. The Conservative's did not do what they promised - so how can I trust them. It's time for a new party, may be UKIP could do a better job."*

### **I'm voting for anyone who can keep the Coalition parties out**

For many respondents it really is a question of voting for anyone at all, so long as the result is that the Coalition parties are forced from power.

*"I am so disheartened, ill and worn down by them, but I will vote if it is with my last breath to get this Coalition out!"*

*"I'm 47 and never voted before having had the feeling my vote didn't matter but with the way the sick and disabled have been treated by this coalition i will certainly be voting to try and make sure they don't stay in power*

*"I don't care who gets in at the next election as long as the conservatives no longer have any power over the running of this country. Nobody could do as bad a job as them, and over the years the considerable damage they have done to this country is horrendous."*

*"It matters very much that you make a point of voting. Any fellow claimants must vote to try and keep the Conservatives and Lib Dems out. Things will only get worse if they get in power again. Please take time out to vote!!!"*

*"I fear for my life and for this country if the Tories are elected again.*

*"We don't have the power to work miracles, but we do have the power to get the Tories out. It's not that I think any other party will be a magic solution, but we know that things can only get worse with them in power."*

*"Life under the coalition ? You haven't got one! Upcoming election? Never before, have I been so interested/petrified of a certain party getting another 5 years and destroying our country even more!"*

*"We must vote in our thousands, our tens of thousands. It's the only chance we have of getting rid of this cruel and vindictive Coalition."*

### **It's my duty to vote**

On the subject of whether to vote or not, many respondents stressed their view that if you don't vote you have no right to complain and that you are letting down all those who fought so hard for the right to vote.

There was also a strong view that if claimants are seen to be active voters then politicians will start to take notice of them.

*"I don't know whether voting will do any good. But if I don't use my vote how can I complain about the people who are in power?"*

*"Generations that came before us fought hard for the right to vote, they were our ancestors, and like them we need to stand up for ourselves, and make our voices heard, or the powerful will find it easier to trample all over us."*

*"We have to vote no matter what to show the government how we feel about their behaviour toward pensioners like myself who are disabled and ill. We are not scroungers most of us have worked since aged 15."*

*"Benefit claimants should organise politically instead of not voting. Statistically we are among the groups less likely to vote. We have to fight to achieve our aims whether they are fairer benefits or just removing the stigma."*

*"Politicians reward the sections of the electorate who vote, that is why older people get more generous giveaways. The young who don't vote are ignored by the government."*

*"People have to vote. It is totally ridiculous to say "your vote does not count". Five more years of this shit and how many more people will die for the sake of Ian Duncan Smith and the rich of this country. People have to vote."*

*"You can't make a difference if you don't vote. The government already think we are nobodies, don't agree with them, make your voice heard."*

*"There are people in the world who would give anything to vote and are prevented from doing so by their own leaders. You should vote even if it's for a smaller party that you don't think can win."*

*"They' are not all the same. Different political parties or groups will impact differently on our lives."*

*"It is worth voting for two reasons, the first and more obvious and immediate is that if we get the Tories in again things will get very much worse for us - and that's a lot worse than state it will be. Secondly, once politicians see we are able to represent a large and united block of voters they will be much less inclined to undertake the vicious attacks that has been current Con-Dem policies. We could even become somewhat akin to the retired block of voters; untouchable, for the electoral fear of its consequences."*

*"I normally vote, but last election i did not because I was so disillusioned. This year I will return to voting Why? Because it is a way to protest against the main parties, to show that I am not happy with their politics."*

*"If this coalition has made a negative effect on your life or the life of someone close, you should vote and have your say otherwise stop complaining, its your fault they got in last time. Come on let's show them we will not be pushed around, have your say, use your vote."*

*"Because we are a marginal and every vote not cast is a vote for the Conservatives, and we cannot afford for them to win again."*

### **I'm not voting because . . .**

Not everyone who responded said they would vote – a small minority will not do so. For some, it is the perception – in spite of the massive difference in spending plans – that there is no discernible difference between the parties.

Others simply have no belief in party politics as a force for change

Perhaps more worryingly, some respondents either didn't realise they could have a postal vote, can't get to a post box even if they had one or have tried to get a postal vote and failed. The need for online voting has never been more urgent.

*"Cause I cannot get there. I'm nearly 61 and struggling.*

*"As I'm disabled can't get to a post box as they closed it. Can't vote on the internet."*

*"Do not leave house."*

*"Too ill to get to polling station and i have applied for a postal vote 7 times but never received one.*

*"Not registered, disabled and housebound."*

*"It's too hard to get there and I can't make a decision as to who would help me get disability best.*

*"Mobility problems and disillusioned with politics."*

*"I do not trust any of the political parties, none of them represent my interests or that of the class of which I am a part."*

*"There will be no change to the disabled."*

*"Makes no changes to my life. All parties are going to make life hell on earth for disabled claimants."*

*"No party can be described as 'pro-disabled'.*

*"Because they are all the same nothing changes."*

*"Makes no difference who we vote for nothing will change their ways towards disabled people and benefits."*

*"I don't think either Labour or Conservative are for Disabled people."*

*"You can't put a cigarette paper between the mainstream political parties."*

*"When it comes to welfare policy you can't get a fag paper between either labour or the tories."*

*"Because for the first time in my life as a Labour voter, I don't know exactly what they stand for anymore and doubt they will change the welfare bill or represent the working class anymore. Ed Milliband and Clegg and Cameron are all millionaire public school Oxbridge white men so I have lost heart."*

*"They are all the same."*

*"They are all as bad as each other."*

*"The Tory and Labour Parties are as bad as each other, I won't vote UKIP as a protest vote because I'd be afraid that they would win and not be capable of running the country. This will be the very 1st time I haven't voted in 41 years ."*

*"I live in a safe tory seat, so I don't see the point in voting."*

### **Lessons**

This was a self-selecting group of people. It represents those who feel most strongly about the issue of voting. It may not be a representative sample of the views of all claimants.

But there are lessons that politicians should, nonetheless, take from this poll.

One is that any assumption that claimants have been beaten into weary despair and will not turn out on May 7th is almost certainly wrong – many feel that their lives depend on voting.

So, if the pollsters have not factored in enough working age claimants views, then there may be some surprises in store.



Another lesson is primarily for Labour.

It is evident that many claimants intend to vote for Labour because they believe that is the only way of preventing the Tories being the largest party. But it is just as clear that most are doing so with enormous reluctance, on the grounds that Labour are marginally the lesser of two evils.

And some just cannot bring themselves to vote for a party that still treats them with such palpable disdain.

If Labour continues to take claimants votes for granted in the mistaken belief that they have nowhere else to go, it could very easily cost them the keys to No 10.

The bizarre reality is that all three major parties choose to ignore the voting potential of millions of working age claimants.

Yet, as we demonstrate once again, this time in graphic detail with [dozens of bar charts](#), claimants' votes can make a massive difference to the outcome of the general election.

And if our survey is anything to go by, they are going to do just that.

**You can read and comment on this article online at:**

[www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/news/2995-claimants-vow-to-topple-coalition](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/news/2995-claimants-vow-to-topple-coalition)