



CORRUPTION IN THE UK PART ONE

NATIONAL OPINION SURVEY

Transparency International (TI) is the world's leading non-governmental anti-corruption organization. With more than 90 chapters worldwide, TI has extensive global expertise and understanding of corruption.

Transparency International UK is the UK chapter of TI. We raise awareness about corruption; advocate legal and regulatory reform at national and international levels; design practical tools for institutions, individuals and companies wishing to combat corruption; and act as a leading centre of anti-corruption expertise in the UK.

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Research Advisory Committee: John Drysdale (Chair); Professor Indira Carr; Professor John Hatchard; Dr Robin Hodess; Professor Alan Lawton; Professor Alyson Warhurst.

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INTRODUCTION

Transparency International works throughout the world to understand and combat corruption. Although much of our work is focussed on countries where corruption is endemic, it is clear that no country is immune from corruption. We define corruption as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' – an abuse that can take place in the public, private or other sectors, and may take different forms from country to country.

Transparency International UK has recently commissioned a major research project into corruption in the UK. We hope this will help us to understand the extent and nature of the problem – where it happens, in what form, and how prevalent it is. This will provide us with a well-informed basis for future policy proposals. We have engaged Professor Michael Macaulay, an anti-corruption expert from the Teesside University Business School, as the project's Lead Researcher.

The first output of this research is a national opinion survey. This was carried out by Gallup in July 2010 and the results are presented in this short report. It is not our intention to provide detailed interpretation of the data at this stage, as this will be done when, after completing other research and analysis, we launch our full report in summer 2011. However, we are releasing the results of the opinion survey on the United Nations International Anti-Corruption Day, as they give a fascinating glimpse of how the citizens of the United Kingdom view corruption in this country.

Two findings stand out:

- There is a strong perception of corruption among political parties and Parliament, allied with a lack of trust in the government to fight corruption.
- Although many people suspect that corruption may have taken place on particular occasions, and an overwhelming majority would like to report it, comparatively few people would know where to report it.

Key findings

- There is a clear trend that respondents perceive UK corruption as having increased. This is in line with previous Transparency International global surveys, which revealed that corruption was perceived to be on the rise in the UK.
 - » Respondents were strongly concerned that levels of corruption in the UK have increased in the last three years. 53.4% respondents believe that corruption has increased either a little or a lot; only 2.5% of respondents believe that corruption has decreased either a little or a lot.

- There is, however, a negligible level reported of bribe-paying. Approximately 59% of respondents claim they have never been affected by corruption in the UK, while around 42% of respondents do not perceive corruption as occurring in specific transactions - with a large number of don't knows in each case. Concerns about corruption appear to be directed towards particular institutions.
 - » 58.9% of respondents say they have never been affected by corruption in the UK; 27.9% don't know if they have been affected; and 13.7% say they have been affected.
 - » 41.8% replied no to the question 'Have you ever suspected that corruption has taken place in a specific occasion or transaction in this country?' 33% did suspect that corruption had taken place and 25.3% did not know.

- There is a clear mis-match between respondents' willingness to report corruption, and their knowledge of where to report it: 92.7% would like to report it, but only 30.1% would know where to report it. At the same time, the majority of people either does not trust anybody to fight corruption or does not know who to trust. It is therefore possible that corruption in the UK is going unreported.
 - » 34.1 % of respondents trust nobody to fight corruption and 19% don't know who to trust. Of the six specific institutions that respondents were given the media rated highest at 15.5%, and business (4.6%) lowest.

- Perhaps unsurprisingly, political parties, the arena of sport and Parliament are seen as potentially the most corrupt areas of UK life. There are low levels of trust in government leaders to fight corruption and just over a quarter believe the government is effective in fighting corruption. There is particular concern about party donors entering the House of Lords.
 - » Respondents were asked to suggest how corrupt they perceive specific sectors to be. Political parties are perceived as the most corrupt, followed by professional sport and Parliament.
 - » The education system, military and NHS are perceived as the least corrupt.
 - » Just over one quarter of respondents (25.9%) feel that the government is effective in tackling corruption. 48.1% do not think the government is effective, and 25.9% are unsure.



Chandrashekhar Krishnan
Executive Director
Transparency International UK

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The analysis presented here has been undertaken by the Teesside University Business School on behalf of Transparency International UK.

1. SAMPLE

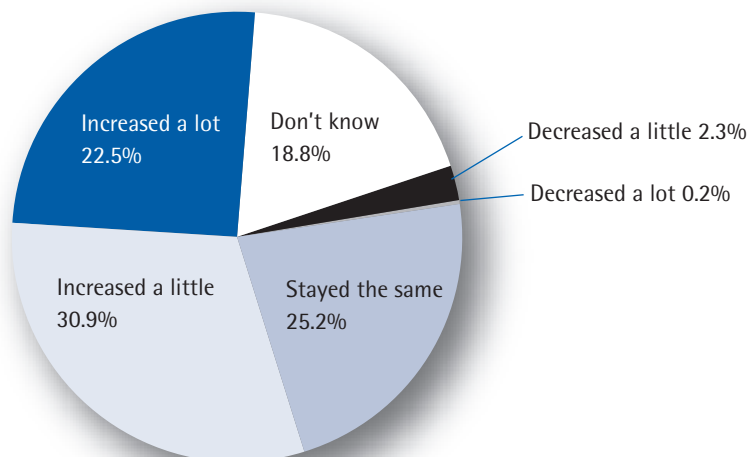
Transparency International commissioned Gallup to poll a random sample of 2014 respondents in England, Scotland and Wales from a wide range of backgrounds.

- 53% (n1065) of respondents are female and 47% (n949) male.
- 33% (n670) of respondents identified themselves as living in rural areas; 67% (n1344) identified themselves as living in urban areas.
- 17.5% (n352) of respondents are aged less than 30 years old; 37% (n746) aged 30-50; 24.9% (n501) aged 51-65; 20.6% (n415) aged 65 plus
- 86% of respondents are based in England; 8.7% in Scotland; and 5.3% in Wales.

2. THE PROBLEM OF INCREASING CORRUPTION IN THE UK

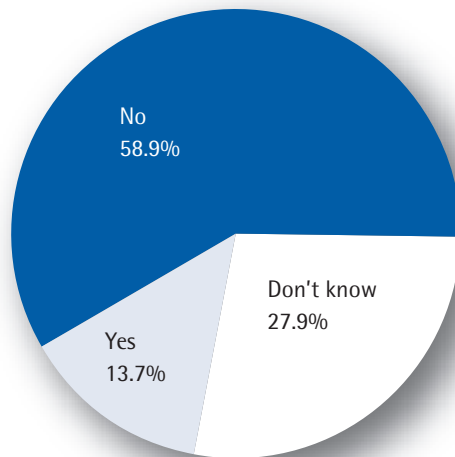
2.1 Respondents were strongly concerned that levels of corruption in the UK have increased in the last three years. 53.4% respondents believe that corruption has increased either a little or a lot; only 2.5% respondents believe that corruption has decreased either a little or a lot (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: To what extent do you think the level of corruption has changed in the past 3 years?



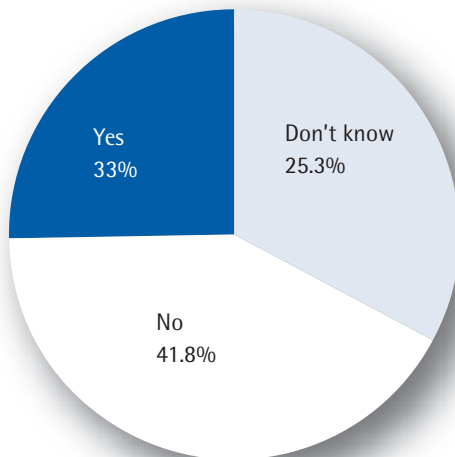
2.2 58.9% of respondents say they have never been affected by corruption in the UK; 27.9% don't know if they have been affected; and only 13.7% say they have been affected (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2: Have you ever been affected by corruption in the UK (%)?



2.3 41.8% do not suspect that corruption has occurred in the UK; 25.3% do not know; and 33% do suspect that corruption had taken place (see Figure 3).

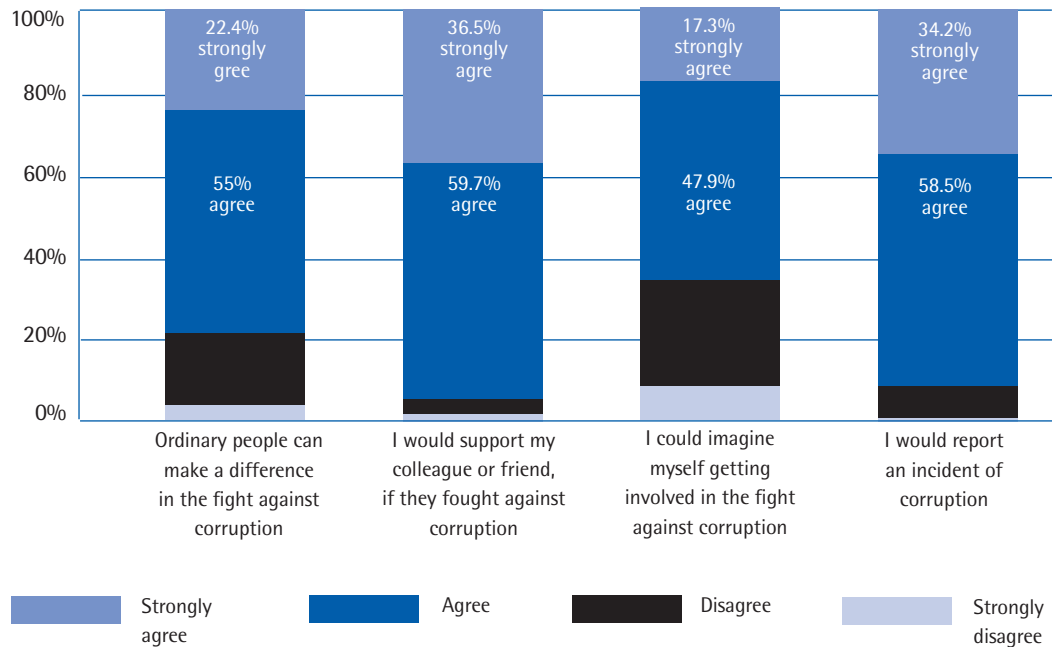
Figure 3: Have you ever suspected that corruption has taken place in a specific occasion or transaction in this country (%)?



2.4 In terms of those affected by corruption, only 1.7% respondents reported paying a bribe, which in the context of the survey methodology is not a statistically significant figure. It may therefore be concluded that actual bribe-paying in the UK is negligible. However, it is possible that people's experiences of corruption are more widespread than bribe-paying and include other activities that fall under a general definition of 'corruption'.

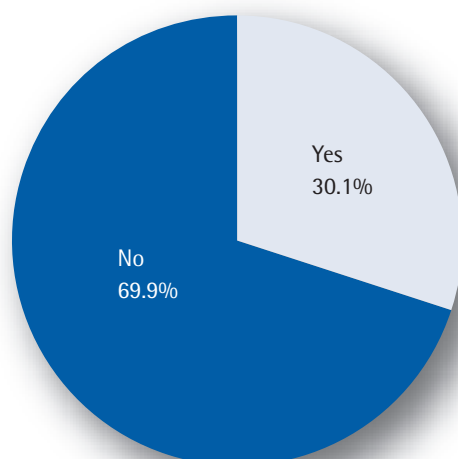
2.5 Respondents overwhelmingly support the fight against corruption (see Figure 4 below). 96.2% would support a colleague or friend whereas 92.7% would report an incident of corruption if they discovered one.

Figure 4: Fighting corruption



2.6 Despite their enthusiasm, however, only 30.1% would know where to report an incident of corruption (see Figure 5 below). This is an interesting finding in light of the fact that reporting mechanisms are so divergent and take into account law enforcement agencies along with organisational whistle-blowing procedures. It will remain to be seen if the new Bribery Act focuses people's attention on the reporting of corruption.

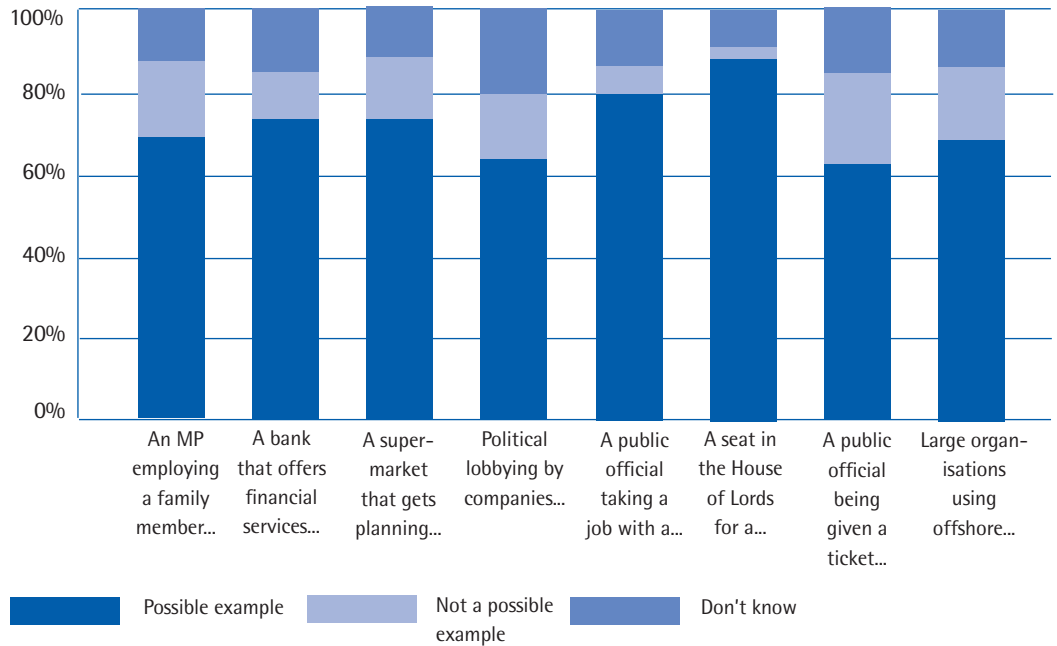
Figure 5: Would you know to whom you should report corruption?



3 AREAS OF CONCERN FOR UK CORRUPTION

3.1 Respondents were offered a variety of scenarios that are periodically cited in the media and anecdotally as examples of potential corruption and asked to comment on the possibility that each could entail some corrupt activities. As Figure 6 (below) demonstrates, each of these scenarios was regarded as an example of potentially corrupt behaviour.

Figure 6: To what extent do you think might the following scenarios be possible examples of corruption?



3.2 Placing these in order from the most to least likely possible examples of corruption we find the following concerns (Table 1):

Table 1: What is the potential for corruption in the following examples?

		Possible example	Not a possible example
1	A seat in the House of Lords for a businessman who has made large donations to a political party	86.4%	4.7%
2	A public official taking a job with a company that s/he was previously responsible for regulating	79.9%	7.2%
3	A bank that offers financial services to a rich dictator from a poor country	74.7%	10.2%
4	A supermarket that gets planning permission where others have failed	74.2%	13.5%
5	Large organisations using offshore tax arrangements	69.4%	16.3%
6	An MP employing a family member in his/her office	67.3%	19.8%
7	Political lobbying by companies	63.7%	16.2%
8	A public official being given a ticket to a private box at a major sporting event	62.7%	21.9%

3.3 Respondents were also asked to suggest how corrupt they perceive specific sectors to be, using a score of 1 (not at all corrupt) to 5 (extremely corrupt). Aggregating scores 4 and 5 we find that political parties are perceived as the most corrupt, followed by professional sport and Parliament.

3.4 The education system, military and NHS are perceived as the least corrupt. The full results can be seen in Table 2 (below) which ranks sectors according to the % of respondents scoring 4 or 5 in each case.

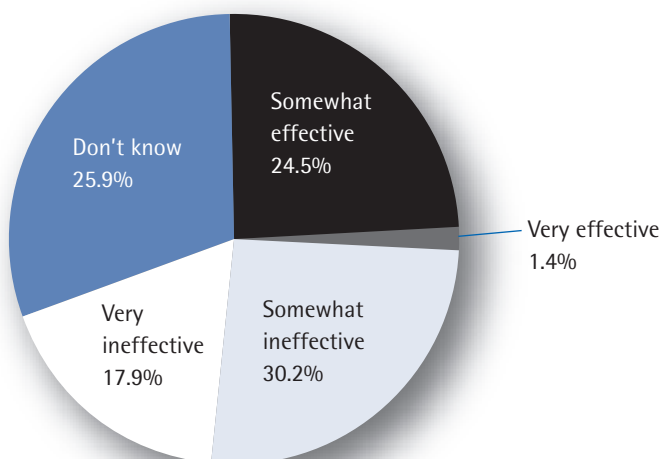
Table 2: Perceptions of corruption in specific sectors

Rank	Sector	%	Rank	Sector	%
1	Political Parties	65.5	9	Prison services	28.2
2	Professional sport	56.9	=10	Religious bodies	28.1
3	Parliament	55.7	=10	Police	28.1
4	Local government	47.4	12	NGOs	19.5
5	Business/Private sector	43.8	13	Judiciary	19.3
6	Public officials/Civil servants	41.3	14	NHS	14.4
7	Immigration services	40.8	15	Military	13.3
8	Media	39.8	16	Education system	10.8

4 TACKLING CORRUPTION

4.1 Just over one quarter of respondents (25.9%) feel that the government is effective in tackling corruption (see Figure 7 below). 48.1% do not think the government is effective, and 25.9% are unsure.

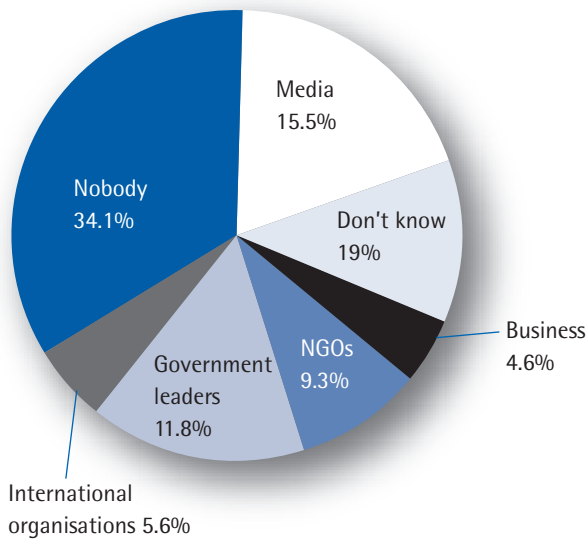
Figure 7: To what extent do you think the government is effective in tackling corruption?



4.2 Furthermore it has also been established [Figure 3 above] that nearly 70% of respondents do not know to whom they would report an act of corruption so it may well be that the majority of respondents do not perceive it is even the government's responsibility for tackling corruption.

4.3 As Figure 8 (below) shows, 53.1% of respondents either trust nobody to fight corruption (34.1%) or don't know who to trust (19%). Of the six specific institutions that respondents were given the media rated highest at 15.5%, and business (4.6%) lowest.

Figure 8: Who do you trust the most to fight corruption in this country?



5. CONCLUSIONS

- **There is a clear trend that respondents perceive corruption in the UK as having increased.** Despite this, when compared to equivalent surveys in other countries, the UK appears to be less prone to corruption than many other countries, but with pockets of great concern about particular institutions. There is a negligible level reported of bribe-paying. Approximately 59% of respondents claim they have never been affected by corruption in the UK, with a large number of 'don't knows'.
- **There is a mis-match between respondents' willingness to report corruption, and their knowledge of where to report it:** 92% would like to report it, but only 30% would know where to report it. At the same time, **the majority of people either does not trust anybody to fight corruption or does not know who to trust.**
- Perhaps unsurprisingly **political parties, the arena of sport and Parliament** are seen as potentially **the most corrupt areas of UK life.** There are **low levels of trust in government leaders to fight corruption** and only a quarter believe the government is effective in fighting corruption. There is **particular concern about party donors entering the House of Lords.**



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