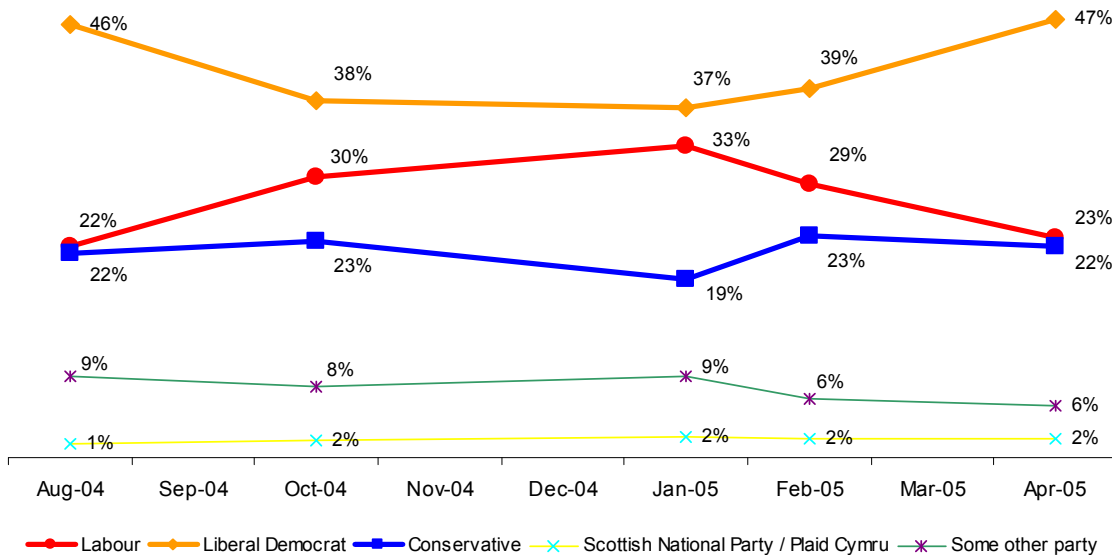


## Massive student swing to Liberal Democrats

It looks like the Lib Dem £100,000 fighting fund for students paid off. Almost half of students say that they will be voting for Charles Kennedy's party, according to a new survey.

In a poll conducted by Opinionpanel Research, 47% planned to vote for the Liberal Democrats. Almost three-quarters (72%) of students said that they were likely to vote in the general election.

**How would you vote if there were a general election tomorrow? April 22nd-25th 2005**



•Excludes those unlikely to vote, and those saying 'Don't know' and 'Would not vote'.

## Summary Report April 2005

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In the last Opinionpanel survey, conducted in February, the party had a 39% share. Since then, they have gained support at the expense of Labour, who dropped from 29% to only 23% in the latest figures. This puts Labour only one percentage point ahead of the Conservatives.

Although Labour was seen as having the best policies on the issue that mattered most to students (Health service; 50%), and even though Blair was seen as the best Prime Minister by 38% compared with Charles Kennedy by 23%, the Liberal Democrats still took the largest share.

After the health service, the most important issues for students were Taxation and public services and Higher education with 45% each.

Labour were also considered to have the best health policies – 39% of students thought so. Students thought the Liberal Democrats had the best policies on higher education and taxation (both 33%).

The survey, by Opinionpanel Research, asked a sample of 1,020 students which party they currently supported. Surveys were also conducted in August and October 2004, and in January, February and April of this year.

The Liberal Democrats reached their lowest point in January when they dipped to a low of 37%. In the same month, Labour recorded their highest level of support – a third (33%) of students pledged their support for the party.

Labour's controversial terror laws and hard line on immigration since February may have cost them some of the student vote.

## Summary Report April 2005

Regardless of which party they supported, 76% of students expected Labour to win. Only 9% of Lib Dem supporters believed their party would win.

### **Methodology**

Study based on 1020 on-line interviews with students in their first to third years of study at 100 UK Higher Education Institutions. The fieldwork took place between 22nd April and 25th April 2005. Post-research, the panel was weighted according to the national pattern for gender, year of study and university type as defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record 2002/3.