The Public Will Never Stand For It. Or Maybe They Will: Attitudes to Job Sharing Parliamentarians

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Job shares – in which two or more people working on a part-time basis share the same full-time position – are an increasingly common form of employment. ACAS's 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey found that job sharing was available to 41% of employees, up from 31% in 1998 (ACAS 2004). A 2012 survey for the Department for the Business, Innovation & Skills found the figure had risen to 43% (Tipping, Chanfreau and Tait 2012, 51). They are disproportionately utilised by women who have child-care responsibilities – where they are available, some 14% of women with dependent children make use of job-sharing, compared to 9% of employees overall (Tipping et al, 2012, 65) –and are seen as a way of enabling women to remain in employment. Their advocates argue that job shares allow skilled individuals to remain in the workplace, making the most of their abilities, rather than opting to undertake other part-time work for which they may be over-qualified in order to spend time with their families. Some argue that employers benefit from two employees for the price of one, gaining access to the experience, skills and ideas of two individuals in return for one salary.

One group currently not able to job-share in the UK are elected politicians. Lorraine Mann sought to stand on a job-sharing basis for membership of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 only for the returning officer to reject her application and she lost her subsequent legal case (Belcher and Ross 2001). Since then job-sharing has begun increasingly to be advocated, as a means of diversifying the make-up of legislative bodies. Both gender campaigners and campaigners for disability rights see it as a means of diversifying the make-up of the House of Commons. Job-sharing is supported by groups such as the Fabian Women's Network, the Fawcett Society as well as Radar and Rethink. The idea was put forward in the Representation of the People (Members' Job Share) bill by John McDonnell MP in November 2012, although like most ten minute rule bills it failed to make it to the statute book. The issue was discussed by the Greens in 2010 and the Liberal Democrat policy working group on Political and Constitutional Reform has produced a policy paper for debate at the 2013 autumn conference which includes the recommendation that MPs should be allowed to stand as job share candidates. The idea is, therefore, circulating in political circles, if not yet ripe for immediate enactment.

Advocates of job sharing MPs argue that the move will 'open up the role of MP to a much wider group of people than at present'. As the Liberal Democrat supporters of the idea claim: 'Research shows that one of the main barriers to increasing women's participation in politics is perceived incompatibility with family life, while evidence from professions such as medicine, law and the senior civil service suggests that provision for part-time working significantly increases the talent pool of women progressing into senior roles'.[2] Opponents say the idea is a waste of money which threatens to undermine the chain of accountability between constituency and MP. David Nuttall MP, for example, described the idea as a 'plan to have a Parliament made up of Tweedledees and Tweedledums [which] would open up a constitutional can of worms' and 'a potentially dangerous attempt at constitutional meddling that would break the historical link between an MP and their constituency'.[3]

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[2] Liberal Democrat Political and Constitutional Reform. Consultation Paper 113 (http://www.libdems.org.uk/siteFiles/resources/docs/conference/2013-Spring/113%20-%20Political%20Reform.pdf).

[3] HC Debs, 20 November 2012, c. 475.

For the record and in the interests of disclosure: one of us is an advocate of job-sharing MPs, the other is more sceptical.[4] But what unites us is a complete lack of knowledge about what the public might think about this issue – and how they might respond to job share candidates to represent them. It is easy to see how the public might not be supporters: politicians are not popular anyway, and anything that creates more politicians, even part-time ones, might be thought to be on to a loser.[5] But equally there is plenty of evidence that the public want to see a more diverse House of Commons and do not think highly of the status quo (Cowley 2013), and job sharing is now sufficiently widespread in the UK in other professions that it might not be as objectionable in politics as it once was.

This paper therefore reports a series of different polling experiments we conducted, with the help of YouGov, to uncover the public's attitudes to job sharing MPs.

Levels of support

We began with two simple questions, one measuring whether people supported the idea in principle, the other whether they would be prepared to vote for a job share candidate.

> There has been some discussion recently about allowing candidates in parliamentary elections to stand in a 'job share' arrangement. This would mean two people from the same party sharing the workload, salary and expenses of one MP equally.
>
> Do you think this would be a good idea or a bad idea?

> There has been some discussion recently about allowing candidates in parliamentary elections to stand in a 'job share' arrangement. This would mean two people from the same party sharing the workload, salary and expenses of one MP equally.
>
> If this was allowed, do you think you would or would not be prepared to vote for two candidates in a job-share arrangement to be your MP?

We asked half of respondents in a survey the former question, half the latter. These questions tap into two separate issues - what do respondents think about the idea in principle and would they be willing to vote for a job share team – but as is clear from Table 1 the results were practically identical. For each question, just over a third of respondents were in favour of job sharing or said they would support job share candidates; just over a third took the opposing position; and around a quarter said that they did not know. Supporters of job sharing can draw on these data to argue that the public are not inherently

[4] For Campbell: see for example, R. Campbell and S. Childs, 'Job-Shares for MPs: A Step on the Way to Resolving a Major Problem', *Huffington Post*, 22 February 2012. Cowley's scepticism is not an especially principled objection but more that he thinks this will be of at best marginal gain and will be a distraction from more effective means of dealing with the issue.

[5] As David Nuttall put it during the debate on John McDonnell's bill: 'I think that most people want to see fewer politicians, not more' (HC Debs, 20 November 2012, c475).

hostile to the idea. Only a minority oppose or say they would not support a job sharing set of candidates. Opponents, however, can draw on these data to argue that there is sufficient hostility – with just under 40% of respondents saying that they would not support a job sharing arrangement – to make the idea electorally dangerous. In addition, there is clearly fairly widespread ambivalence and ignorance, given that a quarter did not have a view at all, although this figure is not noticeably higher than many surveys about political arguments.

Given that the results of the two questions are so similar, in what follows we utilised just the second of these two questions – since whether people would be willing to support candidates in a job share arrangement seemed to us to be inherently more important than their views on the idea in principle.

Table 1. General attitudes to job sharing MPs (%)

	Good	Bad	Don't know	N
Good or bad idea?	37	38	25	828
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Would you vote for?	37	37	26	827

Given the levels of don't knows in these findings, and the extent to which this is a nascent debate, we were interested in the extent to which we could generate different responses if we explained the justification for, or opposition to, job sharing. That job shares for MPs are advocated on a number of different bases gave us an opportunity to see if some of these arguments had more impact with the public than others. We therefore tried a series of alternate wordings (which we explain in the Appendix in more detail) to see which justifications, if any, made job sharing more attractive. Our justifications covered the promotion of disabled candidates, women candidates, those with local or professional roots, and those with children. In addition, in some cases – such as with women and disabled candidates – we provided additional explanatory text, adapted from campaigning websites. In other words, whilst we cannot claim to have covered every possible way that job-sharing could be advocated, we have tested key arguments, and in a variety of different ways.

Again, we utilised split-sample polls. Over a series of polls, every respondent got the following question, but with the justification text changing randomly. We list the various justification texts in full in the Appendix.

> There has been some discussion recently about allowing candidates in parliamentary elections to stand in a 'job share' arrangement. This would mean two people from the same party sharing the workload, salary and expenses of one MP equally. [*Argument for job-sharing*].
>
> If this was allowed, do you think you would or would not be prepared to vote for two candidates in a job-share arrangement to be your MP?

As is clear from Table 2, the result of explaining the argument for job shares was to raise the number of people who would support them, although not by a huge amount, and it does not hugely matter how you sell job sharing MPs. In each case, the levels of support we

found were higher with some explanation than with none – from the 37% with no explanation seen in Table 1 to between 42% and 48% when some justificatory material was presented – and in each case the percentage now saying that they would vote for a job share team out-numbered those who would not. There still remained around a third of so of the public who said that they would not support a job share candidate even when the justification for doing so was provided, and at least a fifth who remained undecided.

But it did not make a huge difference *which* explanatory material was provided. Whilst the gap between the percentage saying 'yes' and 'no' in Table 2 varies from five points (when it is justified on the basis of enabling candidates with expertise) to 17 points (for women with children), none of these are statistically significant differences. The shares for yes varied between 42 and 48%, and those for no between 31 and 37%, all within the margin of error.

Table 2. Willing to support job-sharing MPs, with differing explanations (%)

Explanation for job-sharing	Yes	No	Don't know	N
Family/professional	48	32	20	667
Women and disabled	43	34	24	614
Women	45	36	20	618
Disabled	48	32	20	629
Disabled, with explanation	46	31	24	573
Women, with explanation	43	34	23	563
Expertise	42	37	22	569
Women with children	48	31	22	653
People with children	47	32	22	655
Local roots	42	35	23	612

For obvious reasons, we also wanted to test the strength of these pro-job share arguments up against the arguments made against job sharing MPs, which we summed up thus:

> Those who oppose the idea say it will lead to confusion with candidates taking different stances on issues and is bound to end up costing more.

We first tested this, on its own and without any countervailing positive argument, in the identical format to the pro-job sharing questions:

> There has been some discussion recently about allowing candidates in parliamentary elections to stand in a 'job share' arrangement. This would mean two people from the same party sharing the workload, salary and expenses of one MP equally. [*Argument against job-sharing*].
>
> If this was allowed, do you think you would or would not be prepared to vote for two candidates in a job-share arrangement to be your MP?

This produced a result almost the exact opposite to that seen with the pro- text. Shown the anti-job-share argument only 30% of respondents said that they would support a job share candidate, 47% said that they would not, and 23% said they didn't know. Showing the anti-

text thus produced a 17 point difference between those willing to support a job share team and those not willing to do so, exactly the same sized gap as the largest pro- gap in Table 2.

What matters most, of course, is when these two arguments are put up against each other. We tested three different pro- messages up against this anti- message, in this format:

> There has been some discussion recently about allowing candidates in parliamentary elections to stand in a 'job share' arrangement. This would mean two people from the same party sharing the workload, salary and expenses of one MP equally. [*Argument for job sharing*]. [*Argument against job sharing*].
>
> If this was allowed, do you think you would or would not be prepared to vote for two candidates in a job share arrangement to be your MP?

To ensure that we avoided word order effects, in each case we randomised the ordering, so that half of the each sample saw the pro- argument followed by the anti- argument; half saw the anti-argument followed by the pro- argument.

We tested three different pro-arguments, selected from those used in Table 2. The statistically insignificant differences in Table 2 meant that we could legitimately choose any of the arguments to test; we selected three of the more commonly made covering key pro-job share arguments – those of gender, disability and childcare:

> Campaigners for the rights of people with disabilities argue that the long hours and physical demands of MPs' work prevent some disabled people from standing as MPs. [*shown in the table below as disability*]
>
> Campaigners for gender equality argue that the long hours and 24 hour demands of MPs' work prevent some women from standing as MPs. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would give more women the opportunity to stand for Parliament. [*women*]
>
> Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as people with young children – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*children*]

We found no statistically significant question word ordering differences, and so here we report the overall findings only, for ease of presentation. As Table 3 shows, putting the various positive and negative arguments up against each other largely cancelled each other out. The only exception was the disability argument, where there was a seven point difference in favour of no, but even here the percentage saying yes (at 36%) is only one point different from our very first set of findings in Table 1. In the other two cases – women and people with children – the yes and the no findings are statistically insignificantly different. In other words, neither the pro- nor the anti- arguments trumps one another.[6]

[6] Disclosure: when we first tested this (25-26 March), the anti- argument appeared to trump the pro- argument (which, in this case, was the family/professional argument listed in

Table 3. Willing to support job-sharing MPs, with pro- and anti-arguments (%)

Explanation for job-sharing	Yes	No	Don't know	N
Disability	36	43	22	1915
Women	40	39	22	1920
Children	40	38	22	1620

We have tried accurately to capture the arguments put forward both for and against job-sharing. Obviously, some may quibble about the wording used above. We are, for example, aware that we have only tested one anti-argument, as opposed to ten pro-ones – but that is because the pro-argument is more diffuse, and (in our experience) the negative argument is more straight-forward and easy to understand, and thus relatively easy to capture in question wording. (There are some more constitutional arguments against job sharing, focussing on the procedures of the House of Commons, but fascinating as we find them, we were not convinced that they would be widely used in any debate). We are also aware that the wording of all the pro- arguments we have used is longer than the text used to put the counter-argument. We did consider extending its wording, but we felt we could only do so by padding or using unnecessary repetition.

Who is most likely to support?

The responses to job-sharing candidates were not, however, uniform across the population. We discovered clear differences by age, by party supported, and by the sex of the respondent.[7]

Table 4 shows the responses to our three questions about potential support for job-sharing candidates, broken down by the age of respondents. Those aged 60 or more were significantly more opposed to job-sharing MPs; in all three cases, we found a majority of those over 60 saying that they would not support job-sharing candidates. The most positive group were those aged 25-39 – those most to benefit from a job-share arrangement themselves or to know someone who does. In all three cases, there were more of the 25-39 age group saying they would support a job-share team than not, the only age group of which that was true.

Table 2). However, we had not randomised the order in which pro- and anti- arguments were displayed, and so the negative wording was the last thing all respondents saw. Moreover, the N involved (721) was noticeably smaller than our three later surveys (which between them involved almost 5,500 respondents). For this reason, we give greater credence to the data given in Table 3.

[7] We also found working class (C2DE) respondents slightly less willing to support a job-sharing set of candidates (and more likely to say that they did not know), than middle class (ABC1) respondents, but not by a statistically significant amount.

Table 4. Willing to support job-sharing MPs, with pro- and anti-arguments, by age (%)

Explanation for job-sharing	Yes	No	Don't know	N
Disability				
18-24	33	38	29	232
25-39	42	29	29	488
40-59	36	47	17	655
60+	32	52	16	540
Women				
18-24	41	35	25	232
25-39	44	28	28	490
40-59	42	36	22	657
60+	32	53	15	541
Children				
18-24	47	26	27	196
25-39	45	26	29	413
40-59	43	38	20	554
60+	30	52	18	457

We also found striking differences by party supported. As Table 5 shows, Conservative supporting respondents were much more hostile to the idea (for all three questions, the plurality response from Conservatives was no, and the gap between the yes and no proportions was never less than seven percentage points, rising to 26 for the disability experiment) than were Labour supporters (for all three questions, their plurality response was yes, and the gap varied between 5 and 18 points). Liberal Democrat respondents were the most in favour (a majority saying yes in two cases), and UKIP supporters the most hostile (a majority saying no in all three cases). These differences are perhaps not that surprising, but they do have important political implications. Introducing job share candidates would therefore be more electorally risky for the Conservatives (or UKIP), even if they were to consider it. Conversely, however, the idea is less of an electoral headache for Labour and the Liberal Democrats than the overall findings might indicate.[8]

[8] Because the N became too low, we excluded from the table any parties with fewer than 100 respondents in any survey. But the results were much as might be expected. Green-supporting respondents were overwhelmingly in favour, those favouring the BNP overwhelmingly opposed. Supporters of the SNP and Plaid split, although slightly more negatively than respondents as a whole, with the plurality response for the single candidate in every case.

Table 5. Willing to support job-sharing MPs, with pro- and anti-arguments, by party (%)

Explanation for job-sharing	Yes	No	Don't know	N
Disability				
Con	30	56	15	457
Lab	43	38	20	614
LD	45	43	13	157
UKIP	29	61	11	151
Women				
Con	38	45	17	480
Lab	46	35	18	581
LD	58	30	12	145
UKIP	31	51	18	185
Children				
Con	33	49	18	415
Lab	48	30	21	476
LD	64	27	9	104
UKIP	29	56	16	151

The breakdown by sex, reported in Table 6, is equally striking. For all three questions women were more in support than not; for all three questions, men were more opposed than not.[9] Whilst women are more in favour of seeing an increased number of women in the House of Commons than are men (Cowley 2013) it is rare to see such a high level of support amongst women for schemes to facilitate such an increase. Job-sharing is therefore a rare thing: a measure to increase female representation which engenders female support. Unfortunately, the data lacked any variable indicating the disability of respondents, and so we were unable to test whether similar positive reactions were found amongst the disabled for measures to increase their representation.

Table 6. Willing to support job sharing MPs, with pro- and anti-arguments, by sex

	Yes	No	Don't know	N
Disability				
Men	30	52	18	931
Women	41	34	25	984
Women				
Men	35	45	20	933
Women	44	32	24	987
Kids				
Men	36	46	18	787
Women	44	30	26	833

[9] We also found the same with all ten of the wording experiments reported in Table 2; in each case, women were more positive than men.

Job share candidates

That, then, is how the public *say* they would react to job-share candidates. But we were also interested in whether we could test how they might react when presented with would-be candidates offering themselves in a job-share partnership.

To do this, we employed a survey experiment using hypothetical candidate biographies (explained more in the Appendix), similar to that we have used in other research (Campbell and Cowley Forthcoming-a; Campbell and Cowley Forthcoming-b). We divided respondents into three randomly selected groups. All participants were shown two short descriptions of hypothetical election candidates, and asked to choose which they would prefer to have as their MP, as well as how they perceived the candidates on a series of traits – approachability, experience, and effectiveness. In each case, one of the biographies was of a single candidate, the other was a job share pairing. There were three candidate descriptions used in the biographies: 'Julie', 'Gemma' and 'Lucy'. (We used women candidates, on the basis that one of the arguments made by advocates of job sharing MPs is that it might help women enter Westminster).

We split the sample into three. Group one saw Julie as the single candidate, with Lucy and Gemma as the job share candidates. Group two compared Gemma as the single candidate and Lucy and Julie as the job share candidates. And group three were shown Lucy as the single candidate and Julie and Gemma as the job share. Within each of these three groups, we then split the sample yet again, alternating the order of the job-share candidates to avoid any candidate order effects. This made six groups in all, each asked four questions. In the event, we found almost no candidate order effects, and so for simplicity of presentation we report here the responses from the three main groups, rather than the six sub-groups.[10]

We asked:

> Without knowing which party they stand for, if you could choose, which of them do you think would be:
>
> | | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | More approachable as an MP: | A | Neither | B |
> | More experienced as an MP: | A | Neither | B |
> | More effective as an MP: | A | Neither | B |
> | Which would you prefer as your MP: | A | Neither | B |

Table 4 shows the results – which can be summarised as a fairly significant and overwhelming null effect. Respondents were able to view these hypothetical candidates differently from one another – the differences between the findings for Groups one, two

[10] We found only one case where the sub-samples responded statistically significantly differently: for some reason when asking about the experience of the candidates, 'Lucy and Gemma' were seen as more experienced than 'Julie', whereas 'Gemma and Lucy' were less experienced than Julie (significant at the 0.05 level).

and three are statistically significant – but the differences were *not* caused by whether or not the candidates were putting themselves forward as a job share.

In terms of approachability, for example, participants did not react either negatively or positively to the job share candidates. The single candidate had a small advantage in groups one and three, but a clear disadvantage in group two. In terms of experience (where, in general, respondents found it harder to distinguish between the candidates, with a higher number of Don't Know responses), the single candidate was seen as more experienced in groups one and two, but with the job share candidates seen as more experienced in group three – and we saw the same pattern for the perceived effectiveness of the candidates. When it came to the overall preferred candidate – perhaps the most important of all the questions – the job share was preferred in group two and three, with the single candidate preferred in group one. In all cases, there was at least a quarter the public who chose Neither option.

In other words, there was no sustained advantage or disadvantage for the job share candidates. Sometimes they were more popular, sometimes they were less popular. There was no evidence of an anti-job share effect. Nor was there any evidence of any potential benefit. The nature of the candidates themselves proved much more significant than the fact that they were or were not offering themselves up either individually or as a pair.[11]

The candidate experiments also produced similar findings in terms of the groups to be most supportive of, or opposed to, job-sharing candidates. For simplicity of presentation, we report here just the overall preference variable, and exclude those selecting Neither option, and to avoid our number of cases becoming too small, we just report two dichotomous variables.

[11] The findings also appear to support other research of ours in terms of the attractiveness of 'local' candidates Campbell, Rosie, and Philip Cowley. Forthcoming-b. "What voters want: reactions to candidate characteristics in a survey experiment." *Political Studies*. When she stood alone, the candidate born and brought up in the constituency (that is, Julie) was the choice of 40% of respondents; that was better than the candidate who 'lives in' the constituency (Gemma, 36%) which in turn beats the candidate who lives two miles outside the constituency (Lucy, 29%). We cannot be certain that this is what is driving the candidate effects in this experiment. There could be other factors that make Julie the most attractive, Lucy the least (Julie's biography, for example, is the longest, whereas Lucy's is the shortest). But this certainly fits with our other research which has found that candidates born in the constituency trump those who just live there, and that voters penalise candidates who live outside the constituency.

Table 7: Job sharing candidates (%)

Group		Approachable	Experienced	Effective	Preferred candidate
1) Julie v Gemma & Lucy (N=598)	Single candidate	41	32	38	40
	Job-share candidate	33	28	33	35
	Neither	26	40	29	25
	Preference for single candidate	+8	+4	+5	+5
2) Gemma v Julie & Lucy (N=(643)	Single candidate	32	31	43	36
	Job-share candidate	45	29	32	39
	Neither	24	40	26	25
	Preference for single candidate	-13	+2	+11	-3
3) Lucy v Julie & Gemma (N=629)	Single candidate	36	16	26	29
	Job-share candidate	33	41	41	41
	Neither	31	44	33	30
	Preference for single candidate	+3	-25	-15	-12

Table 8 shows the responses by party supported. Because of issues with sample size, here we report just the Labour and Conservative respondents. As expected, Labour supporters were more willing to back the job-share candidate than Conservatives. In every case, they preferred the job-sharing team, and by more than did Conservative supporters.

We see the same pattern repeated when we break the findings down by sex in Table 9. Women respondents preferred the job share candidates in every case. Men plumped for the single candidate in two cases, and only preferred the job share when confronted with the choice of poor Lucy as their single candidate.[12]

[12] The data for women (of whatever party) in Table 9 are almost identical to those of Labour supporters (of whichever sex) in Table 10

Table 8. Job-sharing candidates, by party (%)

	Conservative				Labour			
	Single candidate	Job share candidate	Preference for single candidate	N	Single candidate	Job share candidate	Preference for single candidate	N
1) Julie v Gemma & Lucy	57	27	+30	126	35	39	-4	221
2) Gemma v Julie & Lucy	37	40	-3	160	32	43	-11	183
3) Lucy v Julie & Gemma	31	44	-13	160	27	41	-14	173

Table 9. Job-sharing candidates, by sex (%)

	Men				Women			
	Single candidate	Job share candidate	Preference for single candidate		Single candidate	Job share candidate	Preference for single candidate	
1) Julie v Gemma & Lucy	45	32	+13	278	35	39	-4	320
2) Gemma v Julie & Lucy	40	35	+5	325	31	43	-12	318
3) Lucy v Julie & Gemma	30	41	-11	307	27	41	-14	323

Conclusion

The debate about the composition of the House of Commons is one of the hardy perennials of British politics. The debate about using job-shares to do so is a much more recent one. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, we found that there are still relatively large proportions of the public who do not have a view on the subject. Insofar as they do have views, the public are divided. There is no great support for the introduction of job-sharing candidates but nor is there any overwhelming opposition. Explaining the case for job-sharing does increase its support slightly, but none of the ten arguments we tested had especially strong impact. The counter argument – that this will be confusing and will cost more – has some impact but is also not a killer argument. When the various pro- and anti- arguments are made together, they appear largely to cancel each other out. Opposition is greatest amongst men, Conservative or UKIP voters, and those over 60. Support is greatest amongst women, Labour or Liberal Democrat voters, and younger respondents, especially those of an age most likely to be taking advantage of job-shares themselves.

Both the conventional survey questions and the survey experiments indicate that there are voters who will not back a job-share set of candidates, and so it would be an unwise party – of whatever party colour – that adopted job share teams in marginal, must-win, constituencies. But the good news for those advocating job shares for MPs is that is that when confronted with job-sharing candidates most of the public appear to make judgements on the basis of the candidates offered, rather than automatically rejecting job share set-ups out of hand. There is, though, equally no evidence that the public automatically responds particularly warmly to job-shares either. The idea that the public will react positively to job-shares – on the basis that they get two candidates for the price of one – does not seem to hold up.

Nothing in anything we have revealed therefore should give those advocating job shares much encouragement, but neither should it discourage them too much.

Appendix: Survey details

This paper draws on a series of different questions, all run for the authors by YouGov as part of internet surveys. All the respondents were drawn from the YouGov Plc UK panel of some 350,000+ adults who have agreed to take part in such surveys. All figures have been weighted to be representative of all UK adults (aged 18+), using YouGov's standard weighting.

The data in Table 1 comes from two questions asked on 25-25 March 2013. Half of respondents, chosen randomly, were shown the first question; half the second.

The various pro-job-share wordings listed in Table 2 are as follows:

1. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people who care about making a difference in politics to do so at the same time as maintaining family relationships and/or professional expertise. [*reported in Table 2 as family/professional*]
2. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as women and the disabled – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*women and disabled*]
3. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as women – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*women*]
4. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as the disabled – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*disabled*]
5. Campaigners for the rights of people with disabilities argue that the long hours and physical demands of MPs' work prevent some disabled people from standing as MPs. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would give more disabled people the opportunity to stand for Parliament. [*disabled, with explanation*]
6. Campaigners for gender equality argue that the long hours and 24 hour demands of MPs' work prevent some women from standing as MPs. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would give more women the opportunity to stand for Parliament. [*women, with explanation*]
7. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say the long hours and 24 hour demands of MPs' work prevent people standing who want to maintain expertise in another area, such as running a small business or working as a GP and so it would give more people with experience of the real world the opportunity to stand for Parliament. [*expertise*]
8. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as women with young children – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*women, young children*]
9. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow people from currently under-represented groups – such as people with young children – who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*people, young children*]
10. Those who advocate allowing MPs to job-share say it would allow more people with local roots who want to remain active in their area and who care about making a difference in politics to become MPs. [*local roots*]

The data for text 1 comes from a survey conducted on 25-26 March 2013. This question option was shown to a third of respondents (chosen randomly). The other two-thirds of respondents were shown either the anti-job share text alone (N=659, as reported on p. 5) or a combination of the two (N=721), as reported in note 5). The data for texts 2-4 comes from a question asked on 12-13 June 2013 (the sample split into three randomly, each being shown one of the texts); options 5-7 from a question asked on 16-17 June 2013 (ditto); and options 8-10 from question asked on 17-18 June 2013 (ditto). The Ns are as reported in Table 2.

The data reported in Table 3 come from three questions asked in July 2013. The first tested reaction to the 'disability' text; the second tested reaction to the 'women' text; the third tested reaction to the 'children' text. In each case, half the sample (chosen randomly) saw the pro argument first, followed by the anti-argument; the other half saw them reversed. Ns are as reported in the Table.

The candidates' experiment reported in Table 4 draws on a survey conducted on 12-13 March 2013. Total N=1871. Respondents were split, randomly, into six sub-samples. The first sub-sample saw this text:

A. *Julie Burns is 48 years old, and was born and brought up in your area, before going to university to study for a degree in Physics. After university Julie trained as an accountant, and set up a company ten years ago; it now employs seven people. Julie is an avid hockey fan, and a keen player in her youth; she is now a passionate advocate for sporting facilities for young people. Julie also has interests in the health service and pensions, and is married with three children.*
B. *Gemma Mountford and Lucy Edwards are offering themselves up as a job-share team to be your MP. They will share responsibilities for being an MP, and each will only take 50% of the salary and expenses. Gemma is 45 years old; she lives in the constituency and studied business at university. She is a solicitor and runs a busy practice. Gemma is concerned about youth unemployment and is a trustee of a charity that supports apprenticeships. Gemma is also concerned about the environment and education. Her husband works in computing and they have two children. Lucy is 42 years old; she lives two miles outside the constituency and left school when she was 18. Lucy works in Human Resources. Her husband works for the police and they have one son in a local school. Her political interests include employment, transport, and foreign policy.*

We then alternated the order of the candidates, both between A and B, and also within B. Sub-sample 1 saw Julie v Gemma/Lucy (as above); sub-sample 2 saw Julie v Lucy/Gemma. Sub-sample 3 saw Gemma v Julie/Lucy; sub-sample 4 saw Gemma v Lucy /Julie. Sub-sample 5 saw Lucy v Julie/Gemma; sub-sample 6 saw Lucy v and Julie/Gemma.

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