



Trust and Confidence in Members of Parliament compared with local councillors, lawyers, journalists and others such as those working in the Ambulance Service, the Fire Service and the Police

The issue:

In July 2013, following a number of controversies impacting Parliament and parliamentarians (e.g. a leaked GCSB report, a ministerial inquiry into Novopay, and SkyCity's extension deal) we conducted a poll to measure the level of trust and confidence that New Zealanders had in their parliamentary representatives compared with a range of other professions and occupations.

Almost two years on, we decided to repeat this poll, by including the question in our regular monthly omnibus survey. Each omnibus survey is completed by telephone survey and involves a nationally representative sample of n=500 New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over.

The poll question:

The following question was asked:

Now I would like to ask you about what your opinion is about a number of occupations that often feature in the news. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means 'no trust and confidence' and 10 means 'full trust and confidence,' how would you rate your trust and confidence in the following:

- *Members of Parliament*
- *Local council members*
- *School teachers*
- *Doctors and nurses*
- *Lawyers*
- *Journalists*
- *People who work for the government*
- *The Police*
- *The Fire Service*
- *The Ambulance Service*

Key results:

The graph overleaf shows the level of trust and confidence respondents have in the various professions and occupations, with a column for each of 2013 and 2015. Respondents were considered to have trust and confidence in each profession/occupation, if they rated it between seven and 10 on the scale.

As can be seen from the graph, the professions/occupations fall into **two** groups; a group who were relatively highly rated in terms of trust and confidence (i.e. 75 percent or more), and a group who were relatively poorly rated (i.e. less than 50 percent).



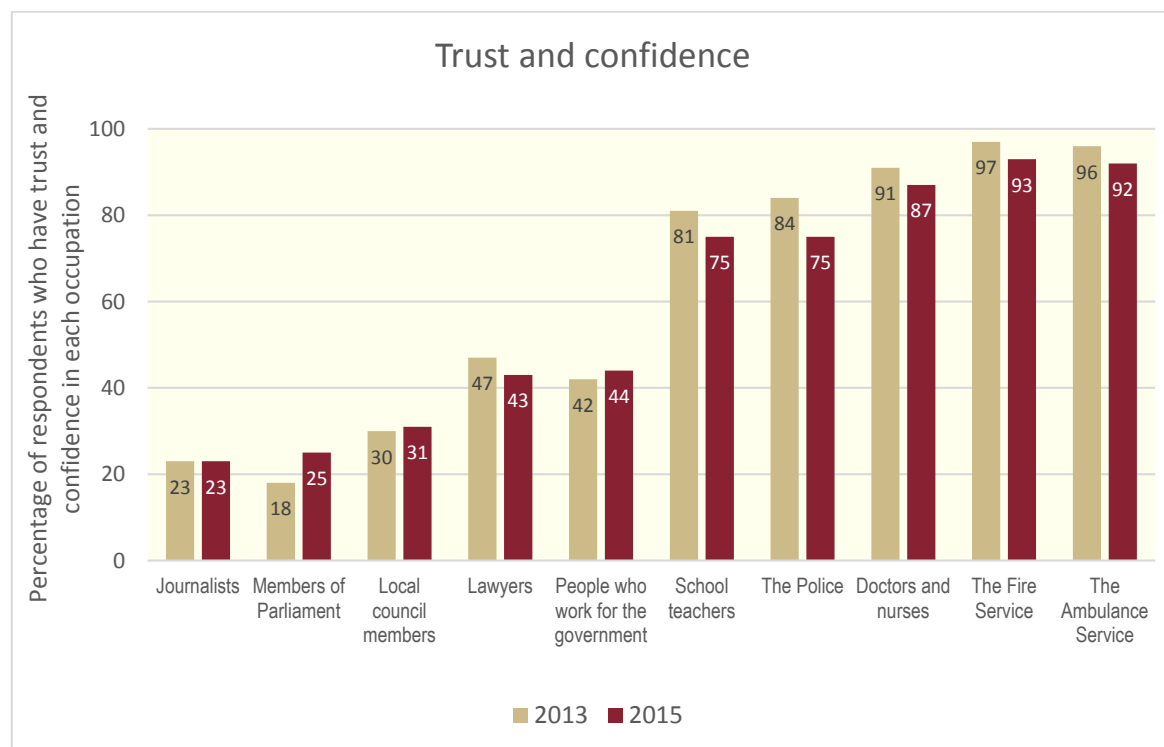
More specifically, the levels of trust and confidence range from a low of 23 percent for journalists and 25 percent for Members of Parliament, to 93 percent for the Fire Service.

There are no significant differences in the levels of trust and confidence when measured by age group, gender, region and income.

However, compared to 2013, trust and confidence in Members of Parliament has **increased**, with 25 percent of respondents now saying they have trust and confidence in MP's (up from 18 percent in 2013). As a result, MP's have moved up one place and are now the second-lowest ranking of all the occupations measured (after journalists at 23 percent).

Furthermore, since 2013, trust and confidence has **decreased** at a statistically significant level for five occupations: doctors and nurses (87 percent in 2015, down from 91 percent in 2013), the Police (75 percent, down from 84 percent), school teachers (75 percent, down from 81 percent), the Fire Service (93 percent, down from 97 percent), and the Ambulance Service (92 percent, down from 96 percent). Despite the decreases, these are still the five occupations ranking the highest in terms of trust and confidence.

Figure 1: Trust and confidence in professions/occupations



Comment:

“These results reflect little major change in rankings between the two years; not that we would expect to see much change in this regard. However, what is interesting is the slight improvement in trust and confidence for MPs. We will be keen to see if this is sustained”, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatellis.



The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone from 7-27 May 2015. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/-5.1% (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of the general population of New Zealand. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organisation, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

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Table 1: Trust and confidence in occupations, by age group

	Total	18-34 years	35-54 years	55 years and over
Unweighted base =	500	61	165	274
	%	%	%	%
Journalists	23	20	24	25
Members of Parliament	25	29	27	20
Local council members	31	33	32	30
Lawyers	43	42	41	45
People who work for the government	44	39	45	48
School teachers	75	74	75	75
The Police	75	67	80	77
Doctors and nurses	87	87	86	87
The Ambulance Service	92	93	91	93
The Fire Service	93	92	92	95

Table 2: Trust and confidence in occupations, by gender

	Total	Male	Female
Unweighted base =	500	250	250
	%	%	%
Journalists	23	21	25
Members of Parliament	25	23	27
Local council members	31	31	32
Lawyers	43	39	47
People who work for the government	44	44	45
School teachers	75	76	74
The Police	75	73	78
Doctors and nurses	87	85	88
The Ambulance Service	92	92	93
The Fire Service	93	91	95

Table 3: Trust and confidence in occupations, by income

	Total	Under \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	\$80,000 and over	Don't know/refused
Unweighted base =	500	158	151	141	50
	%	%	%	%	%
Journalists	23	25	25	20	19
Members of Parliament	25	23	23	32	19
Local council members	31	33	37	27	22
Lawyers	43	46	40	48	25
People who work for the government	44	43	47	47	31
School teachers	75	79	76	73	63
The Police	75	76	77	76	68
Doctors and nurses	87	85	89	89	78
The Ambulance Service	92	89	94	96	85
The Fire Service	93	91	96	96	76



Table 4: Trust and confidence in occupations, by region

	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
Unweighted base =	500	230	110	160
	%	%	%	%
Journalists	23	25	20	21
Members of Parliament	25	25	30	21
Local council members	31	30	34	31
Lawyers	43	42	40	46
People who work for the government	44	45	45	44
School teachers	75	74	73	78
The Police	75	73	75	80
Doctors and nurses	87	86	87	88
The Ambulance Service	92	91	89	96
The Fire Service	93	94	89	94