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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Trust in Putin Falls to 13-Year Low

By Reuters

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Vladimir Putin / Kremlin.ru

Public trust in President Vladimir Putin has fallen to its lowest level in 13 years, according to a Russian state pollster, a setback for the Kremlin which works hard to burnish Putin's image as a wise father-of-the-nation-style leader.

The poll, by the Public Opinion Research Centre, found that trust in Putin had fallen to 33.4 percent, its lowest level since 2006.

The results do not pose an immediate problem for Putin who won a landslide election victory and a new six-year mandate in March last year, but could embolden would-be successors to begin what is likely to be a long game of jostling for position.

Putin's overall approval rating, which is different from his trust rating, is still high at just over 60 percent.

His approval rating has slipped from its peak of nearly 90 percent amid dismay over falling

household incomes and unpopular government moves to raise the retirement age and hike value added tax.

Putin's trust rating hit a high of 71 percent in July 2015 after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea the previous year.

On the eve of last year's presidential election, it stood at 55.3 percent. Since then, public trust in him has dropped sharply, falling to 38.3 percent three months later, ending 2018 at 36.5 percent.

Putin remains far more trusted than any other politician in Russia however, the same poll showed.

The second and third most trusted politicians in the poll were Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov who received trust ratings of 13.7 percent and 9.3 percent respectively.

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