



More in
Common

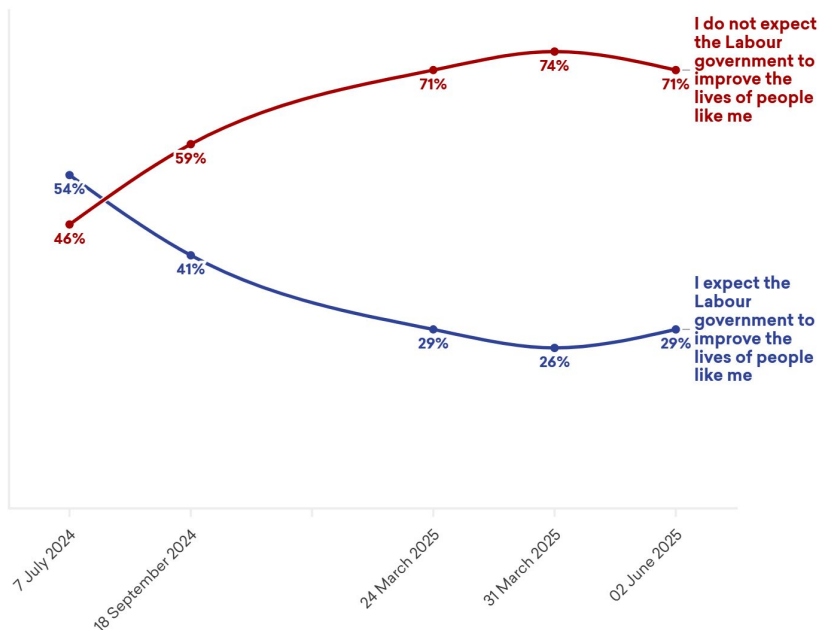
Britons and the Spending Review



The public mood

Low expectations for Labour...

Many Britons have lost trust in Labour's ability to improve their lives



A week before the spending review, only three in ten Britons expect the Labour Government to improve public finances.

Since the General Election, the net share of Britons who think Labour will improve the lives of people like them (compared to those who believe they will not) has collapsed from +8 per cent to - 43 per cent.

Though economic expectations of the government are low, they have recovered slightly from the aftermath of the Spring Statement. Britons are now slightly more likely to think the government will improve public services.

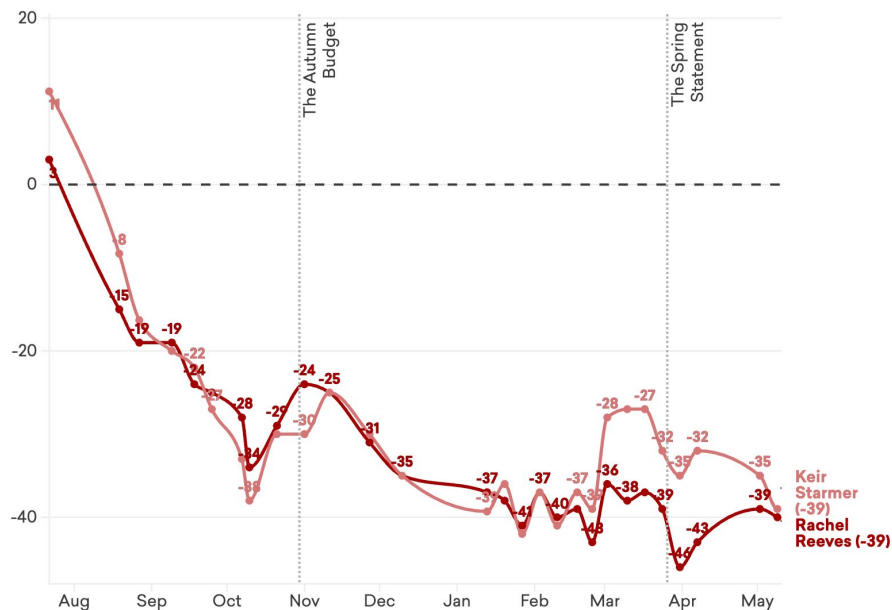
"We're heading towards extreme poverty, and you'll get people that are extremely rich, and all the middle classes in the middle will get knocked out - just hitting the likes of the older people with a few quid."

Angela, retired, Worthing

Unpopular leaders

Approval: Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer

Net approval rating



Source: More in Common • Proportion who think each person is doing a "somewhat good" or "very good" job, minus those who think they are doing a "somewhat bad" or "very bad" job
Last fieldwork: 6-9 June 2025

Both Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer go into this Spending Review announcement with very low approval ratings - just 14 per cent think Reeves is doing a good job and 19 per cent think Starmer is doing a good job.

Key takeaways

The Public Mood

Just 15 per cent of Britons think the decisions announced in the spending review will be good for the country. Only a third of Labour's 2024 voters say the spending review will be good for the country.

A quarter of Britons think we are returning to austerity, and a further 27 per cent think that Britain never left austerity. Just 22 per cent say that we are not returning to austerity.

Compared to October, when the Government released its first budget, public perceptions of public services and public finances have slightly improved but remain negative, views on the economy have not improved and remain very negative.

Only three in ten Britons expect the Labour Government to improve public finances. Additionally, since the General Election the proportion of Britons who think Labour will improve the lives of people like them has halved.

Government spending

The public are split on some of the biggest challenges the treasury faces in this spending review. There is an even split on whether the government should prioritise spending cuts on day-to-day spending or should instead cut capital spending, and on whether the government should abandon their fiscal rules. Both of these do not split clearly on party lines - making the political calculus even harder for the government.

On departmental spending: cuts to DCMS and FCDO would be the most popular among the public, while cuts to health, education and defence would be least popular.

Britons think the government could avoid public service cuts by tackling waste. Britons think that efficiencies could be found across a range of government departments.

Reform on the rise

The public now trusts Reform as much as Labour on the economy. Britons are as likely to say they trust Reform as Labour. In a head-to-head between Keir Starmer and Nigel Farage, the public is split.

Britons tend to think Reform poses a threat to the economy, but many think it's worth the risk.

Britons support Reform's economic policies, although Starmer's Truss attack erodes support. Britons support Reform's policies on tax and welfare. But a split-sample experiment shows that the comparison to the mini budget reduces support for their economic policies.

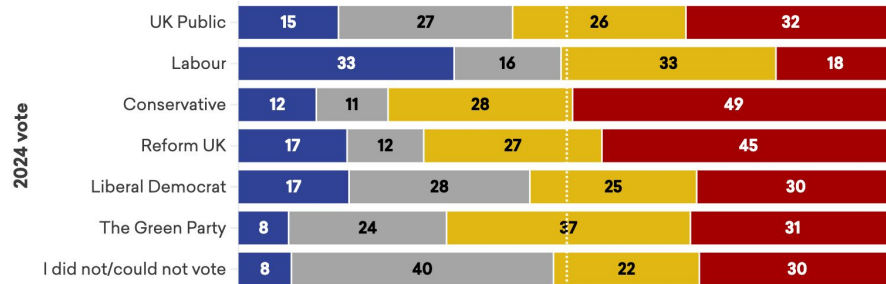
Cabinet divisions have cut through - Reform is now seen as the most united party (though this has fallen over the past week) Britons see Labour and Conservatives as divided.

...even lower expectations for the Spending Review

Fewer than one in five Britons believe the Spending Review will be good for the country

The Chancellor is set to deliver a spending review, allocating budgets between Government departments for multiple years to come. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- The decisions announced in the spending review will be generally good for the country
- Don't know
- The decisions announced in the spending review will have little impact on the country
- The decisions announced in the spending review will be generally bad for the country



Only 15 per cent of the country say they expect the decisions announced in the spending review will benefit the country - including only a third of 2024 Labour voters.

The public are generally pessimistic about the Spending Review. Many say they expect it to have little impact (26 per cent) or even to damage the country (32 per cent). Conservative voters are particularly negative.

"The majority of governments with the spending review, they can just slip it under the rug. They can just tinker around with the numbers here and there and then kind of call it day because people aren't as aware of it."

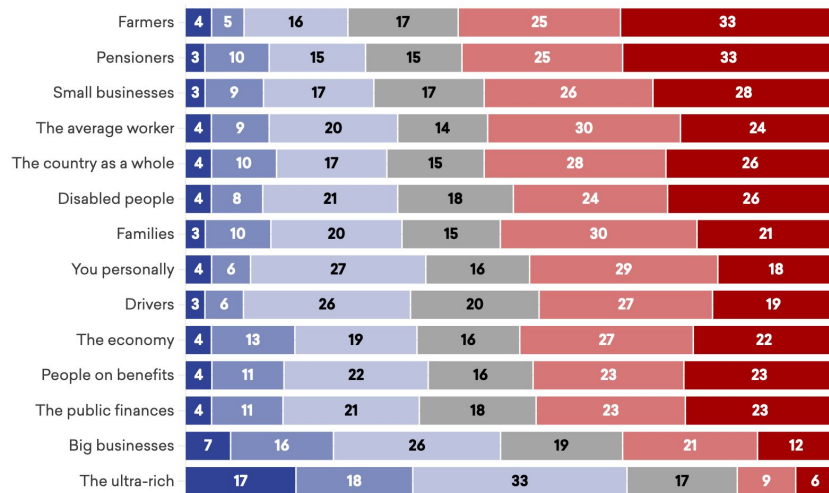
Florence, admin officer, Northampton

A Spending Review with no expected winners

Few groups are seen as potential winners from this Spending Review

At the upcoming Spending Review, the Chancellor will confirm the budget and funding each government department has for the next three years. From what you have seen or read about the Spending Review, do you think it will help or hurt the following?

● A very positive impact ● A somewhat positive impact ● Neither a positive nor negative impact ● Don't know
● A somewhat negative impact ● A very negative impact



The public believe that farmers, pensioners and small businesses are likely to get the worse deal from the spending review - a legacy of decisions from the Autumn budget.

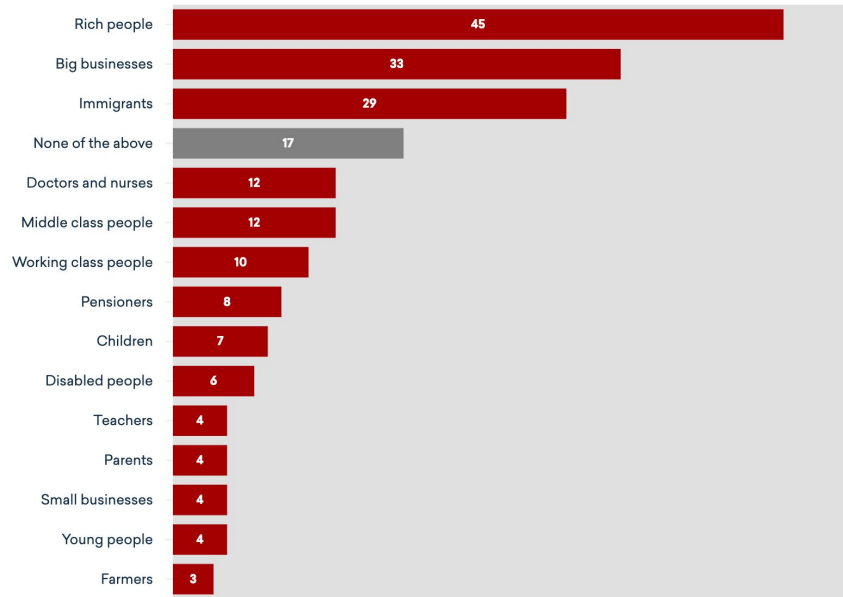
Brits have little faith that the spending review will be good for them personally - 47% expect the review to have a negative impact on their personal lives.

In contrast Brits are most likely to think that the spending review will have a positive impact on big businesses and the ultra-rich.

Risk that Labour prioritises the wrong groups of people

People think the government are prioritising rich people, big businesses, and immigrants

Who do you think the Government is currently protecting MOST when making their spending decisions?



Asked who the Government is trying to protect most in their spending decisions a similar pattern emerges.

The rich, big businesses and immigrants top the list of who the public think the Government is most trying to protect.

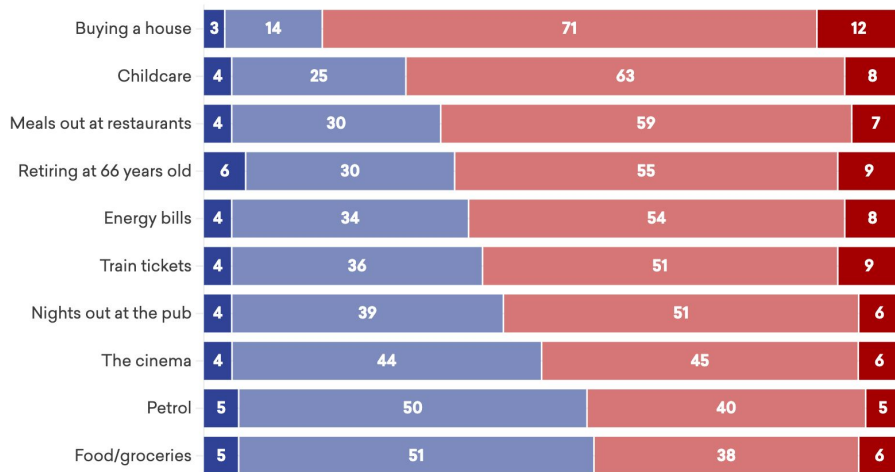
In contrast small businesses, the young and farmers round out the bottom of the list.

Cost of living still hitting hard

Most Britons now seem home ownership, childcare, and meals out as unaffordable

For each of the following, please indicate to what extent you think they are currently affordable in the UK:

● Affordable for everybody ● Affordable for most people ● Unaffordable for most people ● Unaffordable for everybody



One reason that the cost of living has proven so politically potent is that it has made what many see as ‘basic expectations of a good life’ feel unaffordable.

The public now tend to think that energy bills, nights out, trips to the cinema, meals out are not affordable for most people.

Home ownership and childcare are seen as the most unaffordable.

“The way we’re living now, it’s ridiculous. I’m getting up at my age still at half past four in the morning, going to work. I’ve got a mortgage and stuff on my own, but I don’t live now. I just survive. That’s how I feel. And I think, I know it sounds awful, but people are coming in where I work and they don’t work and they’re better off than me. So I think this is just not life anymore. So I think we do need a change.”

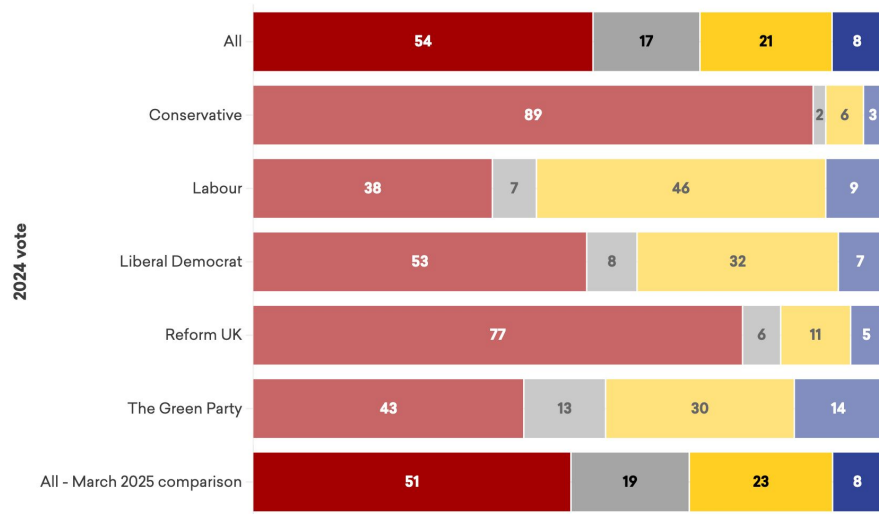
Vicky, Supermarket Assistant, Runcorn

Labour running out of excuses

A majority think Labour are spending too much time blaming the Conservatives

Which of the following comes closer to your view?

- The Labour Government is focusing too much on blaming the Conservatives for their failures in government
- Don't know
- The Labour Government is getting the balance right between holding the Conservative government to account for their failures in government and developing its own solutions
- The Labour Government isn't focusing enough on holding the Conservatives to account for their failures in government



The Labour Government have made much of the economic black hole they inherited from the Conservatives, however our polling suggests that blaming the economic legacy of the last Government is wearing thin with the public.

Overall 54 per cent of the public think the Government is focusing too much on blaming the Conservatives, up three points from March.

Majorities of Conservative, Reform and Liberal Democrat voters think there is too much blame on the Tories. Even four in ten Labour voters say the same.

The honesty test

Just a tenth of Britons think that Labour's economic plans are in line with what they promised



A clear majority of the public do not think that the Government's economic plans are in line with what Labour promised in opposition - and that figure which has increased since March.

Asked whether Labour has kept their promises, had to change them because of global circumstances or never intended to keep them - 56 per cent opt for the latter, a third say global circumstances have forced a change and just 11 per cent say they are in line with what they promised.

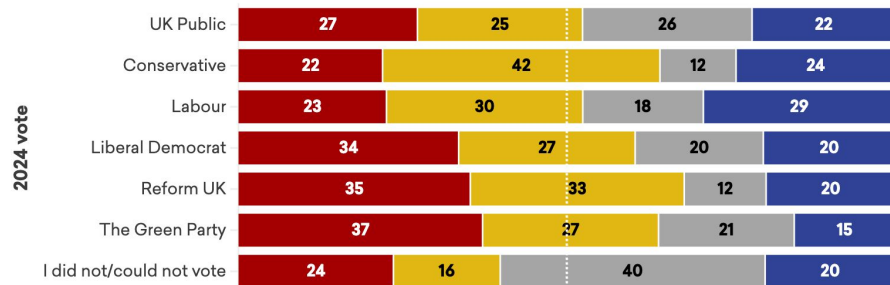
Phrased differently and asked if Labour's plans are only different because the Conservatives hid the extent of the Government's finances, only 30 per cent accept that explanation with 60 per cent saying Labour never intended to stick to its plans.

Most think the UK is in austerity

A majority of Britons believe the UK is either returning to, or never left, austerity, including two in three 2024 Conservative and Reform voters

Which of the following comes closest to your view when it comes to the Government policy of austerity?

● The British Government has never stopped implementing austerity ● Britain is returning back to austerity
● Don't know ● Britain is not returning back to austerity



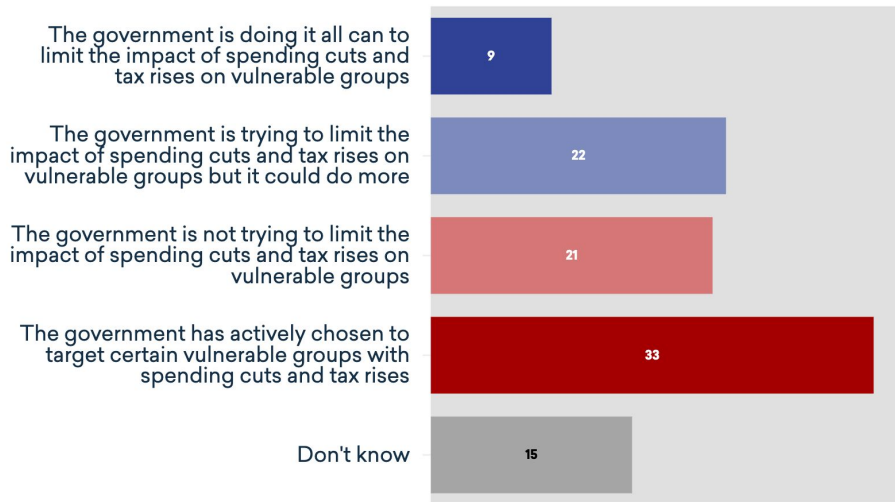
A majority (52 per cent) of Britons either believe that the UK is returning to austerity (25 per cent) or that the government never stopped implementing austere policies (27 per cent). Only one in five (22 per cent) believe the UK is not returning to austerity.

The public's views on this are similar to the aftermath of the Spring Statement, when 29 per cent of the public believed the country was returning to austerity, 25 per cent believed austerity had never ceased, and 20 per cent believed the UK was not returning to austerity.

Is Labour doing all it can?

Most Britons do not think the government is trying to limit the impact of spending cuts and tax rises on vulnerable groups

Which of the following comes closest to your view?



A key challenge for the Government is not just that it is trying to convince the public that tough choices are needed - but also that they are shielding the vulnerable as much as possible from the impact of those choices.

Only a third of the public think the Government is trying to limit the impact of spending cuts or tax rises on the most vulnerable groups.

In contrast 54 per cent think the Government is either deliberately targeting the vulnerable or isn't trying to limit the impact of cuts/tax rises on those groups.

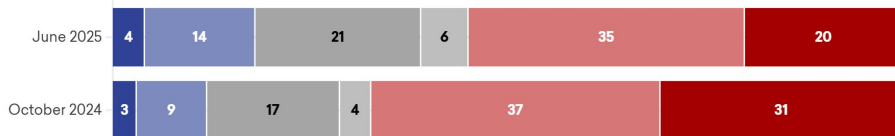
Are Britons beginning to see 'change'?

Attitudes towards public services and finances have become slightly more positive since October

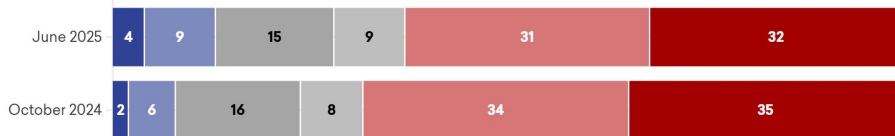
For each of the following, would you say they are in a good or bad state at the moment?

● Very good ● Somewhat good ● Neither good nor bad ● Don't know ● Somewhat bad ● Very bad

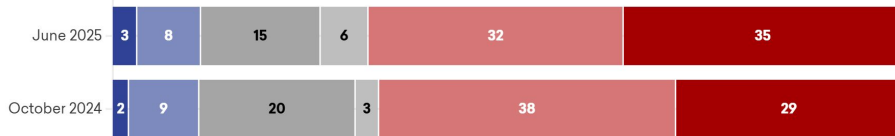
UK public services



The Government's finances



The British economy



Compared with October - on the eve of the Autumn Budget - Britons' perceptions of public services have improved somewhat: 55 per cent say they are in a 'somewhat' or 'very' bad state, compared to 68 per cent in October.

Similarly, Britons are 8-points less likely to say that government finances are in a bad state.

However, broader perceptions of the economy have not improved: two-thirds (67 per cent) still think the UK economy is in a bad state.

"My mum was saying that she felt like - she's had a few appointments recently. She said she felt like she got seen much quicker by a specialist than she has in the past. So I wonder if there is a bit more going into that and that it is beginning to filter through. But I think probably the NHS is so underfunded, isn't it really?"

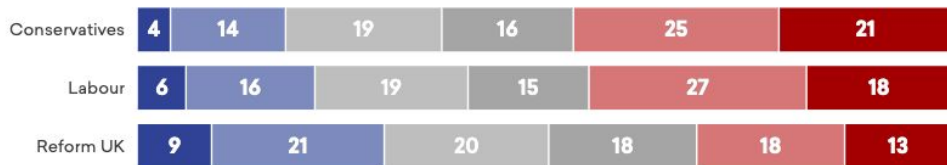
Kat, therapist, Northampton

Labour seen as less unified, Reform more so

Britons see Reform as more united than Labour or the Conservatives

How united or divided do you think the following political parties are?

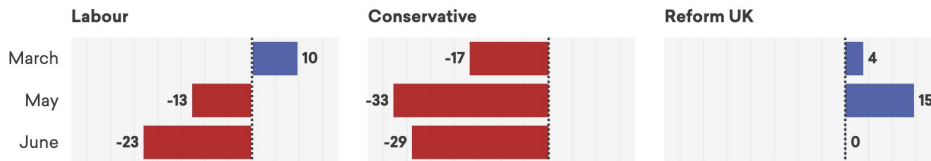
Very united Somewhat united Neither divided nor united Don't know
Somewhat divided Very divided



Reform UK are no longer seen as united

How united or divided do you think the following political parties are?

Net united (proportion who think each party is united, minus those who see them as divided)



It seems that cabinet divisions in the run-up to the spending review have cut through.

Labour and the Conservatives are now seen as less unified than the start of March (-23 per cent net change, and -16 per cent net change respectively), and Reform more unified (+11 per cent net change).

This comes amid increasingly public disagreements over welfare policies in the Government (which may worsen as meatier spending decisions come out over the coming fortnight), and rumours of a leadership challenge to Kemi Badenoch on the horizon.

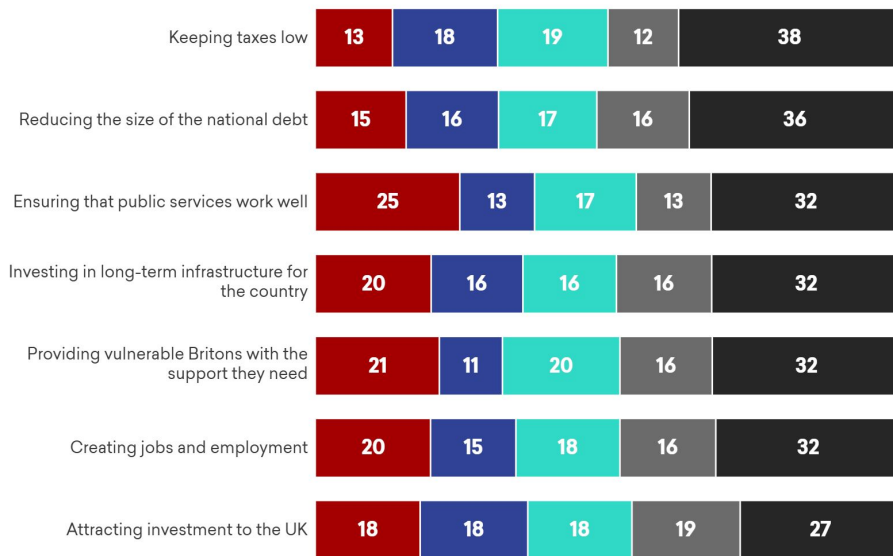
While Reform are seen as the most united the number who see them as united has fallen over the past week.

Low trust across the board

Trust to manage the economy is low for all the main parties

Which party do you trust the most on each of the following issues?

● Labour ● Conservatives ● Reform ● Don't know ● None of them



Source: More in Common • June 2025

Britons have lost trust in any and all politicians on the economy.

This isn't just a problem for Labour: when asked who they trust on a range of economic issues - from taxes to attracting investment - Britons most often choose 'none of the above'.

Labour still hoods a lead on public services, with 25 per cent saying they trust Labour most to ensure services work well.

But that lead doesn't extend to other economic issues: just 13 per cent trust Labour to keep taxes low, and only 15 per cent trust them to reduce the national debt - both issues where Reform is now narrowly more trusted.

"I think the problem we've got at the moment is we haven't got really any strong party or leadership in any of the parties really. And then that is just creating a sense of voting for the lesser of two evils, and that there isn't really anyone that can actually grab the country and drag it out of the mud."
Piers, programmer, Worcester

In their own words: Britons and the state of the economy

More in Common conducted a focus group with eight Labour voters from seats won by Labour in the General Election. Most had since switched to another party - some to Reform, some to the Liberal Democrats, and some to the Conservatives.

While some acknowledged Labour's difficult fiscal inheritance, and felt that they needed more time, all agreed that economic change was desperately needed. Some had already begun to run out of patience.

"Wherever you look around, there's no hope. The youngsters are suffering, they're working and they can't even afford their rent without living off the bank of mom and dad. Nowadays, you're retired but you're worrying about your adult children that can't afford to pay their way no matter how hard they're working. It's all a mess."

Angela, retired, Worthing

"They have to make difficult choices, but I think some of the things that they've done have been kind of pinpointed against the people that are worse off."

Kat, therapist, Northampton

"I mean, Keir Starmer hasn't tanked the economy in the way that Liz Truss did."

Florence, admin officer,
Northampton

"I don't think they've been given enough time to actually implement anything or put out any of the fires that they have to put out. I think it would be a 10 year plus process to kind of heal the long-term damage that's been caused over time."

Piers, programmer, Worcester

"If I could see a tangible difference in things that are improving, if there was better support for young people, the youth centres weren't closing and things like that. If they said to me, actually you need to pay 50p more tax - if I can see it and go, actually do you know what? This feels better (...) If we could feel like we were going up a slope rather than down it, I'd be happy to contribute to the society I live in."

Tom, retail manager, Litchfield



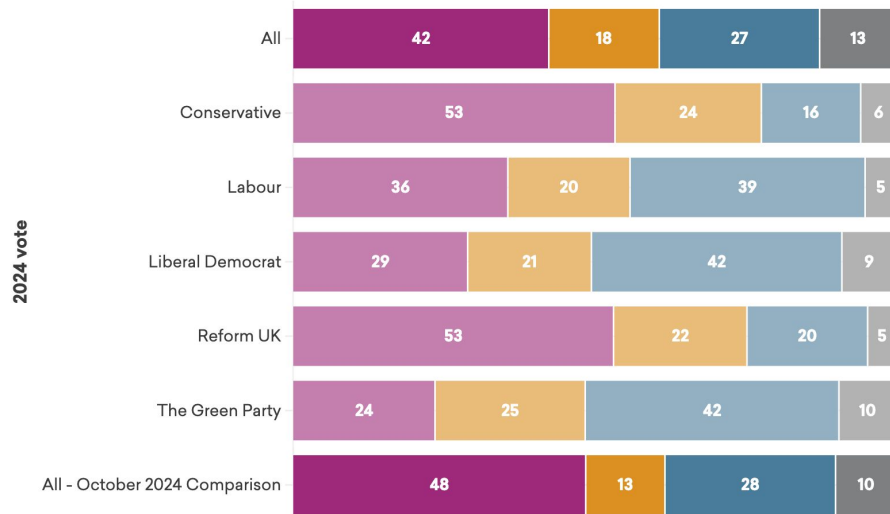
Policy priorities

Limited appetite for tax and spend

Public tends to prioritise avoiding tax rises over investing in public services

Which of the following should be more of a priority for the Chancellor?

● Avoiding further tax rises ● Reducing the budget deficit ● Investing in public services ● Don't know



The public tend to think the Chancellor's priority should be to avoid further tax rises - over reducing the deficit and investing in public services.

However there are major differences between voter groups, Liberal Democrat, Green and Labour voters are more likely to say public service investment should be the priority.

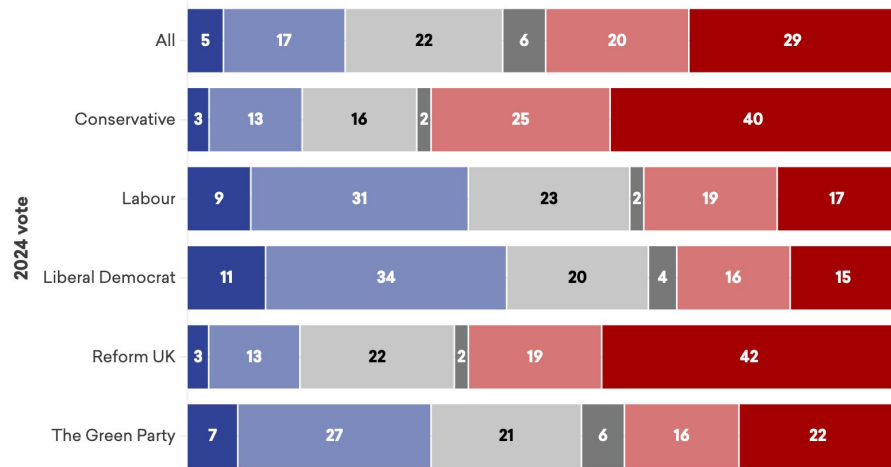
Since the Autumn budget the proportion who say reducing the deficit should be the priority has increased by five points.

Low support for higher taxes

Half (49%) of Britons oppose tax rises to increase public sector spending

To what extent would you support or oppose the government increasing the amount of tax you pay to help fund increased investment in public services?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



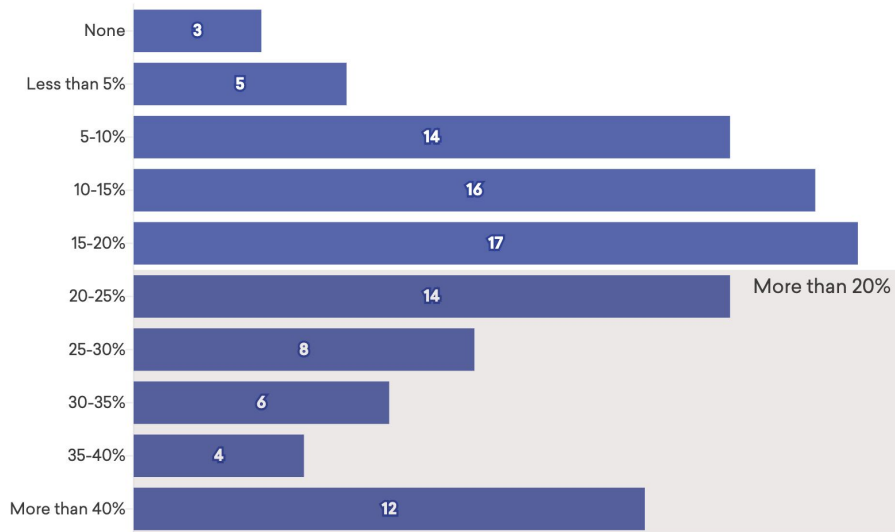
Asked a straight question about whether they would support paying more tax to pay for increased investment in services - Brits tend to say no. 49 per cent would not support the Government raising their taxes, while 22 per cent would support a rise.

Again there are clear partisan splits, Labour and Liberal Democrat voters are more likely to say they would pay higher taxes.

Many see cutting waste as low hanging fruit for the Government

44% of Britons think we can cut government spending by more than a fifth without affecting the economy

How much government spending do you think is waste, that could be cut without reducing the quality of public services or damaging the economy in the UK?



However we know from previous polling that most people do not accept that there is a binary between tax rises or spending cuts.

Over half of the public think that over 15 per cent of public spending could be cut as waste, without having an impact on the quality of public services or damaging the economy in the UK.

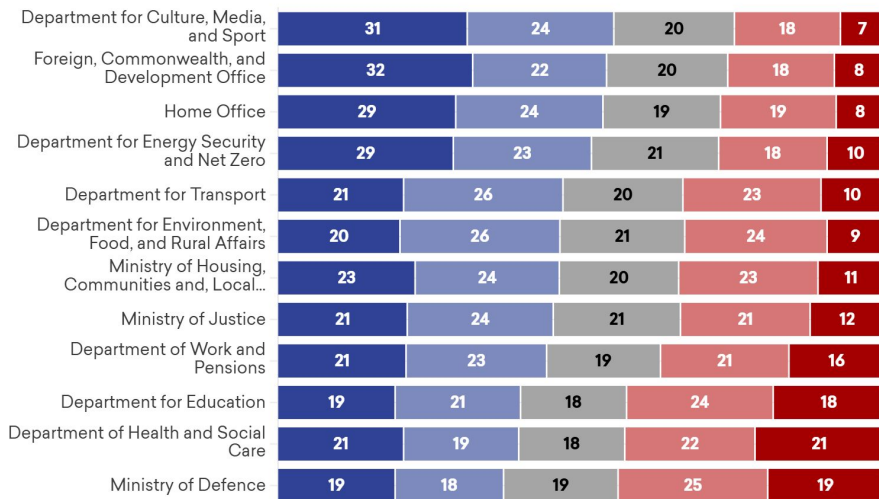
44 per cent of the public think that one fifth of all spending could be cut as waste without economic damage or affecting public services.

Hidden levers: wasteful spending

Britons think waste could be cut across most government departments

For each of the following departments, please indicate whether you think they could or could not find spending efficiencies:

● 1 - This department could find spending efficiencies ● 2 ● 3
● 4 - This department would not be able to find spending efficiencies



That perception of waste challenge comes further into view looking at individual departments. The public think that most department budgets could be cut by targeting inefficiencies.

In particular, majorities think that spending efficiencies could be found in the DCMS, Foreign Office and Home Office.

However they are less likely to think that the MoD would be able to find efficiencies.

"There's a lot of really inefficient bureaucracy. There's lots of different departments and roles that kind of overlap and obstruct one another. (...) the public sector is riddled with redundant jobs or two jobs that basically do the same thing."

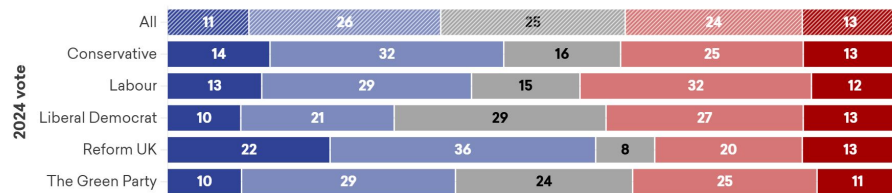
Piers, programmer, Worcester

Britain is divided over the economy

Britons are divided on the balance between day-to-day spending and capital investment

If the government had to make cuts in spending, where would you rather those cuts be...

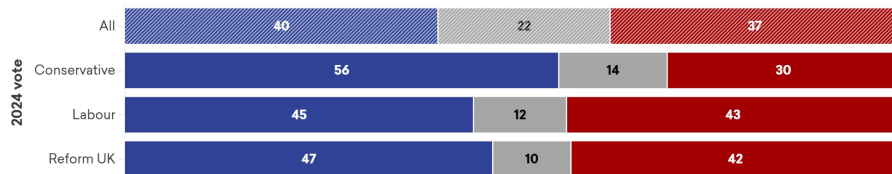
- Entirely on day-to-day spending (e.g. public sector pay)
- More on day-to-day spending (e.g. public sector pay)
- Don't know
- More on long-term projects (e.g. new infrastructure projects such as roads, rail or energy projects)
- Entirely on long-term projects (e.g. new infrastructure projects such as roads, rail or energy projects)



The public is split on the importance of the fiscal rules

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- It is more important that the Government sticks to the fiscal rules they committed to, even if it means spending less on public services
- Don't know
- It is more important that the Government invests in public services, even if it means breaking the fiscal rules they committed to



On some fundamental questions of public spending, the public is split down the middle - leaving no clear public opinion path for the Chancellor.

Britons are divided on whether the government should prioritise capital spending or day-to-day costs. Similarly, the public disagree on whether the fiscal rules are important.

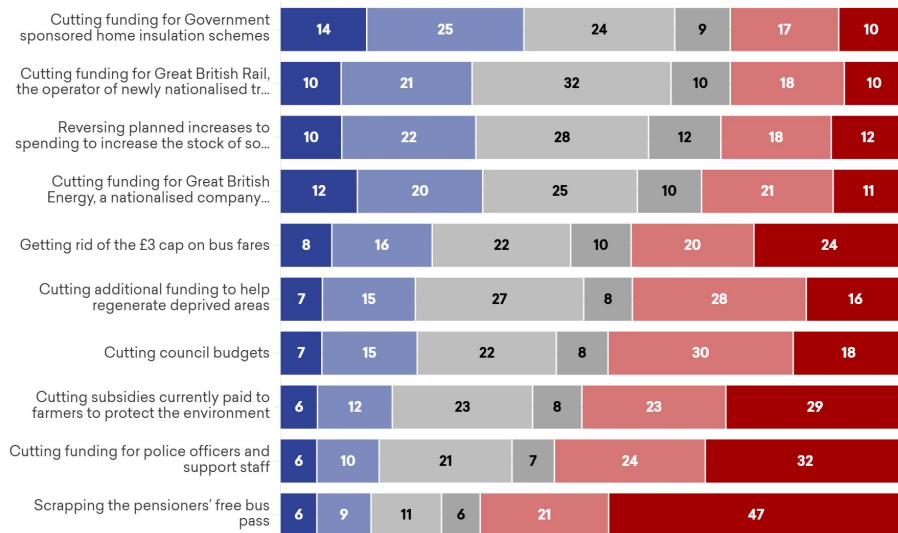
On both of these issues, public opinion does not split clearly on party lines - making the political calculus even harder for the government.

Which cuts would Britons be willing to see?

Which cuts would Britons support?

If the Government had to make cuts to day-to-day spending, how far would you support or oppose each of the following policies:

● Strongly support
 ● Somewhat support
 ● Neither support nor oppose
 ● Don't know
 ● Somewhat oppose
 ● Strongly oppose



We tested a variety of potential ways that the government could save money.

Following reports that the government is considering cutting the £3 cap on bus fares, More in Common found that Britons would oppose this by a margin of 44 per cent to 24 per cent.

The reported plan to cut farm subsidies is even more unpopular, and would be opposed by 52 per cent of Britons, while only 18 per cent would support it.

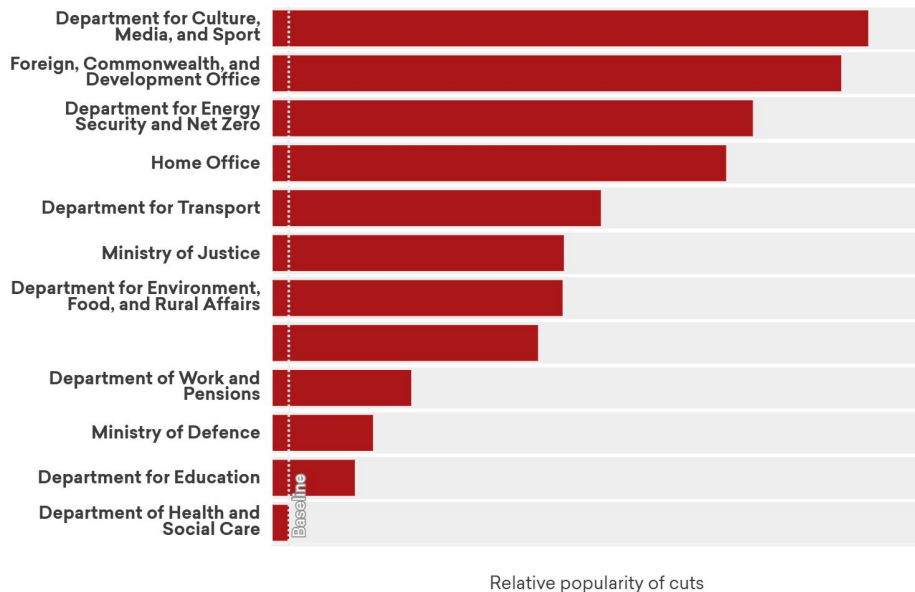
On the other hand, proposed cuts to housing insulation schemes were the most popular of the list, supported by 39 per cent and opposed by 27 per cent. Though Lib Dem and Green voters are opposed.

What is clear is that no cut has majority support, in the way that many have majority opposition.

Which departments to cut?

MaxDiff analysis of preferences between departments for spending cuts

If the Government were to make spending cuts, in which of the following departments' budgets would you most and least like to see cut?



Cuts to DCMS and the FCDO would be most popular.

More in Common used MaxDiff analysis to test public preferences on departmental budget cuts. The most popular choices for cuts were the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), followed by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO).

Cuts to health and social care were the least popular, followed by education and defence.

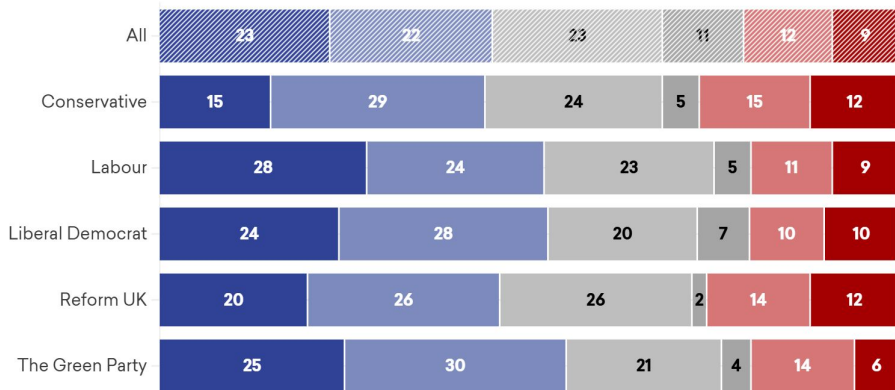
Britons back a u-turn on PIP

Across politics, Britons tend to support a reversal of PIP cuts

It has been suggested that the Government may reverse their previously announced cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIPs), a form of disability benefit. Would you support or oppose the Government reversing their cuts to PIPs?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know
● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

2024 vote



A plurality of Britons - and a majority of Labour voters - want to see a reversal of the government's changes to eligibility for PIP.

Britons are more than twice as likely to support than oppose a reversal of changes to disability-related benefits:

45 per cent of Britons would support a reversal, while only 21 per cent would oppose it.

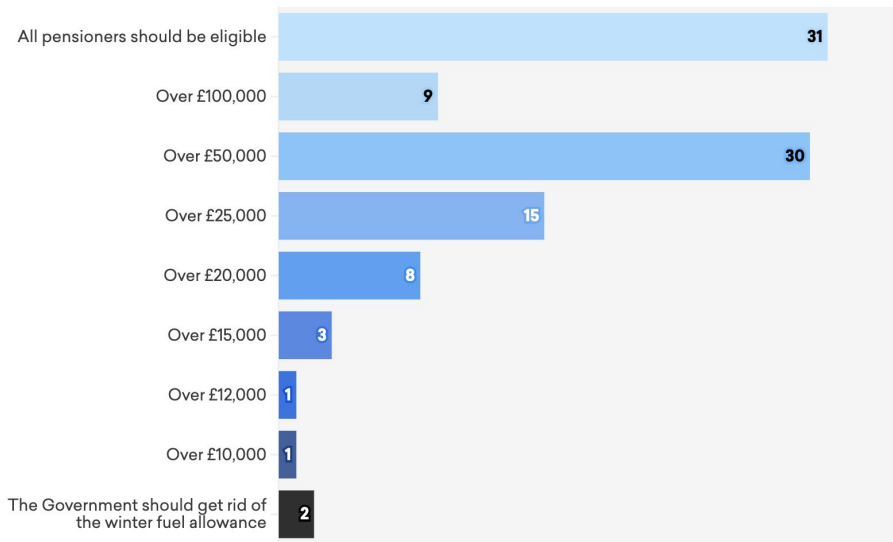
Every voter group is more likely to support than oppose a reversal. But among Labour voters, a majority (52 per cent) want to see the u-turn, while only 20 per cent would oppose it.

"And then it started going for me a little bit downhill with the winter fuel payments and then it just kind of spiralled and then it was, now they've obviously done, there are lots of the immigration stances and then the PIP payments as well."
Florence, admin officer, Northampton

WFA threshold

Most Britons think the income cutoff for winter fuel payments should be £50,000 or higher

At what level of annual income do you think a pensioner should **stop** being eligible for the winter fuel allowance?



With the Chancellor's announcement that the threshold for winter fuel allowance will rise to £35,000, what do the public think?

When asked a majority of the public felt there should be no limit on eligibility or it should be above £50,000.

That said given there was no option for £35,000 it's reasonable to assume a chunk of the public would be between £25,000 and £35,000.



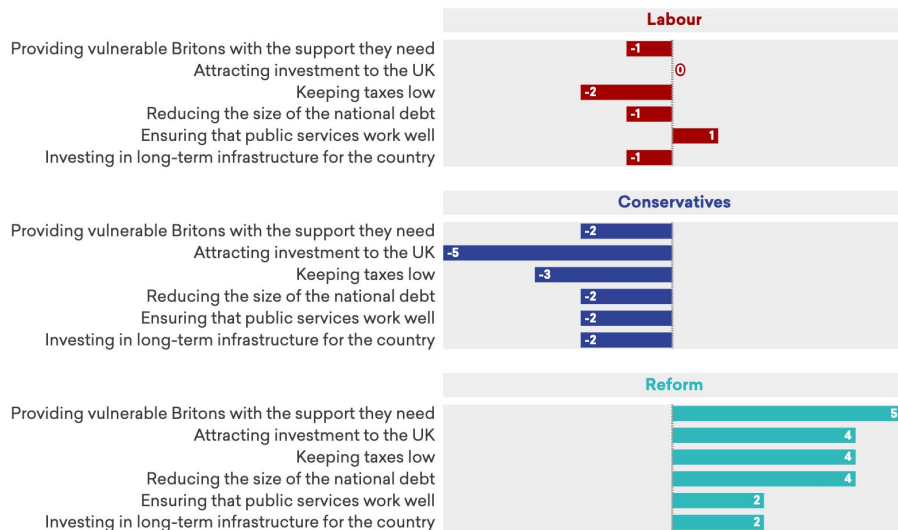
Reformonomics

Reform is gaining the public's trust

Reform has gained economic trust, at the expense of Labour and the Conservatives

Which party do you trust more on each of the following issues?

Change in trust since March 2025



Since March, the share of Britons who trust Reform more than the other parties on key economic issues has grown, at the expense of both Labour and the Conservatives.

Reform is encroaching on some of the main parties' most important economic attributes: Britons now trust Reform almost as much as Labour to provide support for vulnerable people (20 per cent vs 21 per cent).

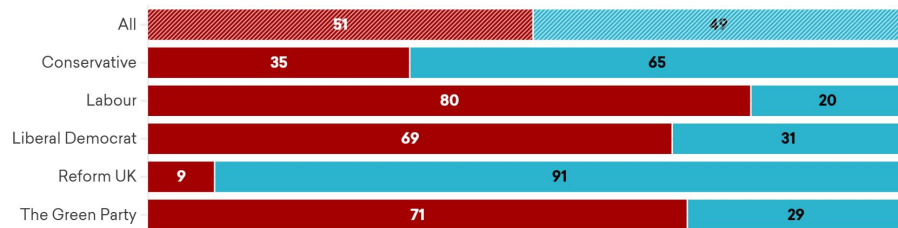
On tax, Reform has now overtaken the Conservatives: 19 per cent trust Reform most to keep taxes low, compared to 18 per cent for the Conservatives.

Starmer and Farage are tied on the economy

Starmer and Farage are tied on the economy

Which of the following do you trust most to handle the economy?

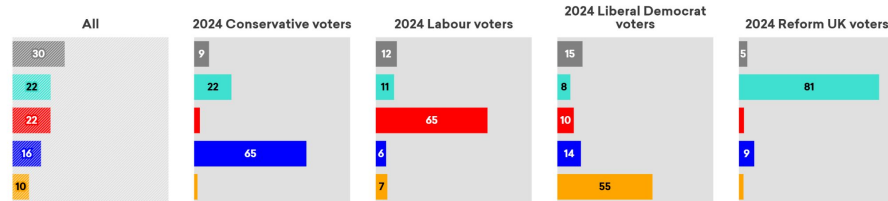
● Keir Starmer ● Nigel Farage



Britons trust Reform as much as Labour on the economy

Which of the following do you trust most to handle the economy?

● Don't know ● Reform UK ● Labour ● Conservative ● Liberal Democrats



Reform is now challenging both main parties on the economy.

In a head-to-head between the Prime Minister and the leader of Reform, 51 per cent of the public say they trust Starmer more on the economy, while 49 per cent choose Farage.

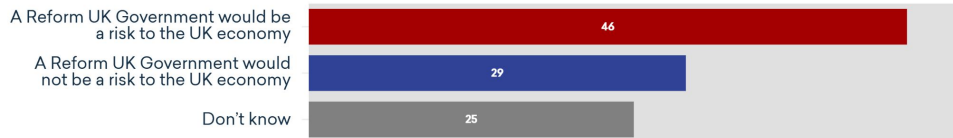
22 per cent of Britons trust Reform more than any other party on the economy - the same proportion as selected Labour, and higher than the 16 per cent who chose the Conservatives. Particularly concerning for the Conservative Party is the fact that a fifth of their own voters trust Reform most on the economy.

However, this reflects a broader sense of economic mistrust: 'don't know' wins with 30 per cent of the public unable to choose between the four main parties.

Reform UK: a risk many are willing to take

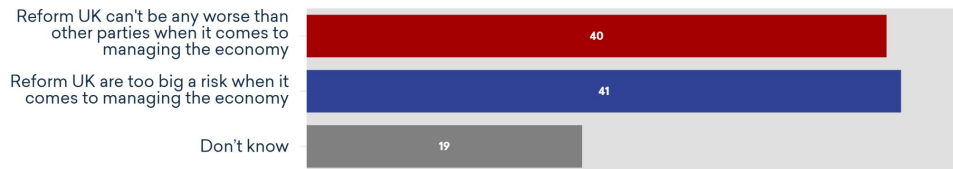
Britons tend to think a Reform government would be a risk to the economy

Which comes closer to your view?



But many think they'd be worth the risk

Which comes closer to your view?



More in Common • 30 May - 2 June 2025

While Reform has gained some credibility, the public still tend to view the party as an economic liability: 46 per cent say that Reform UK would be a risk to the economy, compared to 29 per cent who disagree.

However, the public are divided on whether this is a risk they are willing to take: 40 per cent say that Reform can't be worse than the other parties when it comes to managing the economy, while 41 per cent think they pose too big a risk.

It's clear that Reform's gains are driven by a declining trust in other parties' economic competence and a willingness to 'roll the dice' rather than a widespread trust in Reform.

"I would take a country under labour, however bad it may be, over the car crash that would be Reform. So I don't care how good their economic propositions are, it's just not worth it to me."

Florence, admin officer, Northampton

"I've got quite a few friends that are now talking about voting for Reform, which I find quite shocking, but I think there isn't a huge choice, is there really at the moment?"

Kat, therapist, Northampton

Strong support for Reform's economic agenda - but doubts remain

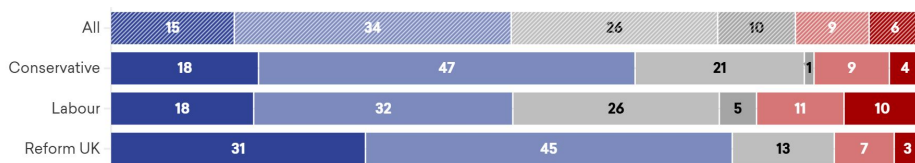
Britons tend to support Reform's economic policies, but the Liz Truss comparison damages support

Reform UK recently proposed a set of economic policies including:

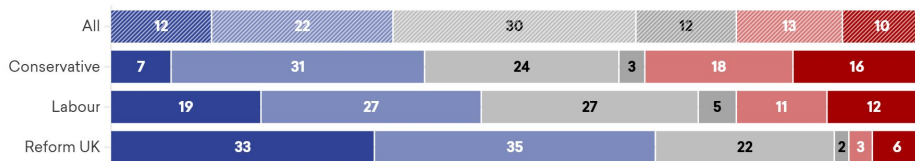
- Reversing cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance
- Scrapping the two child limit on benefit payments
- Giving married couples a tax break
- An aim of increasing the income tax threshold

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Don't know ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

To what extent do you support or oppose this set of policies?



The Labour Party has argued that these policies involve unfunded spending and would have a similar effect on the British economy as Liz Truss' economic policies did. To what extent do you support or oppose this set of policies?



Reform has clearly found an economic policy agenda that appeals to Britons across the divide: among Conservative, Labour and Reform voters, majorities support the policies announced by Nigel Farage in recent weeks.

However, there remain concerns about whether these policies could actually be delivered, and the Prime Minister's comparison to the mini budget has potential to damage Reform.

Using a split-sample experiment, More in Common found that including Starmer's argument that compared Reform's policies to the mini-budget of 2022 eroded support net support for the policies by 20 points - with the biggest drop in support among 2024 Conservative voters.

"It's great to promise all these things and they look great as slogans on paper, but as labour said, the coppers aren't there. It's pure and simple."

Dave, teacher, Stroud

"I was going to say, the two child benefit cap shocked me actually. I think that should been a labour policy (...) even staunch Labour voters would start turning their heads."

Richard, IT manager, Hastings

Methodology

Polling

Fieldwork: 30 May - 2 June 2025

N = 2,016 GB adults (excludes Northern Ireland)

Fieldwork: 6 June - 9 June 2025

N = 2,073 GB adults (excludes Northern Ireland)

Respondents have been weighted according to age/sex interlocked, 2024 General Election vote, ethnicity, and education level.

Focus group

More in Common spoke to a group of 8 Labour voters in seats across the country that Labour won at the General Election.