



More in
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TRANSPARENCY
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Monday, 29 September



16:30 to 17:30



Nova Scotia

Who Pays, Who Decides? Big Money in British Politics



**John
Johnston (Chair)**

Politico



**Ed
Hodgson**

More in
Common



**Liam
Byrne MP**

Chair, Business and Trade
Committee



**Duncan
Hames**

Transparency
International UK

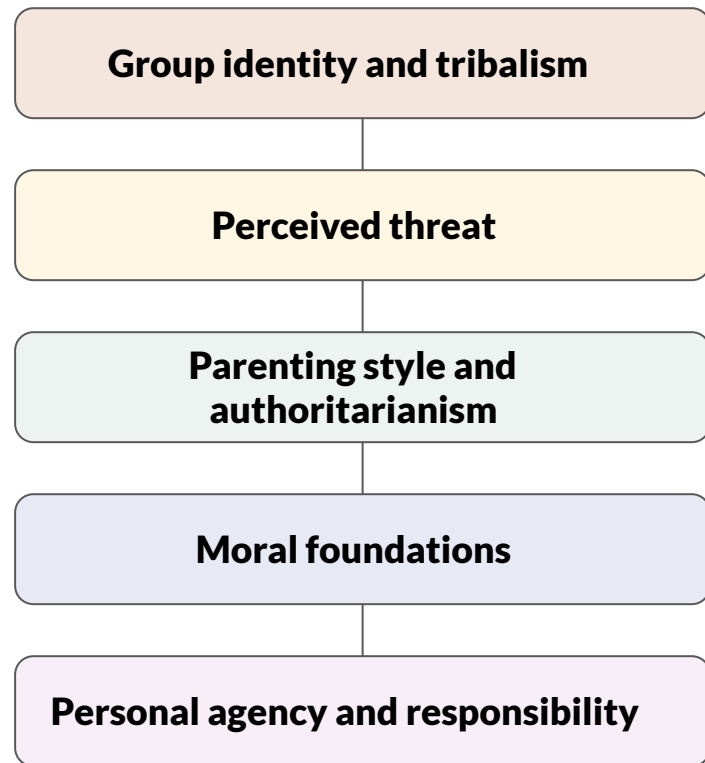


**Susan
Hawley**

Spotlight on
Corruption

Our unique lens - The British Seven Segments

- The 'British Seven' segments were formulated in our 'Shattered Britain' report, published in 2025
- They are created entirely from questions around areas of core beliefs, drawn from social psychology: group identity and tribalism, perceived threat, parenting style and authoritarianism, moral foundations, personal agency and responsibility
- No demographic information (race, class, or gender) is used for the segmentation, though the segments created by this process often have demographic differences
- Segmentation shows that values and beliefs are powerful in influencing how individuals form opinions about issues and their behaviour. Often, the segments are more predictive of beliefs than any other metric



Progressive Activists



Incrementalist Left



Established Liberals



Sceptical Scrollers



Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



...an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

...a group that leans left and trusts institutions, often stepping back from the news and avoiding politically fraught debates

... a prosperous group that is confident in institutions, values expertise, and believes the system broadly works

...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

...a patriotic group that feels overlooked by elites and wants leaders with common sense to protect local identity

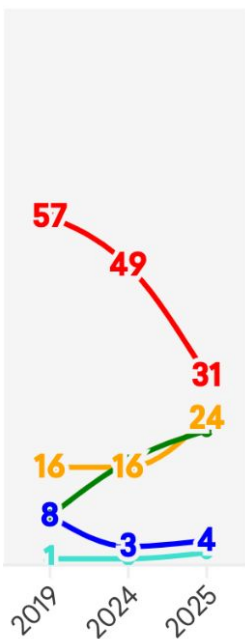
... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

How would the seven segments vote?

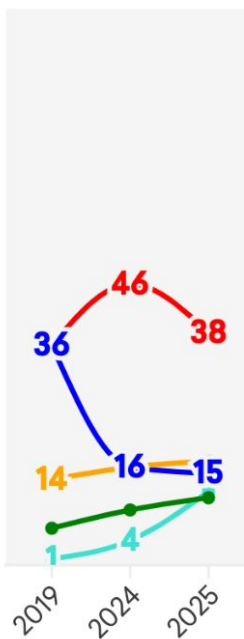
Progressive Activists

"Corbynites"



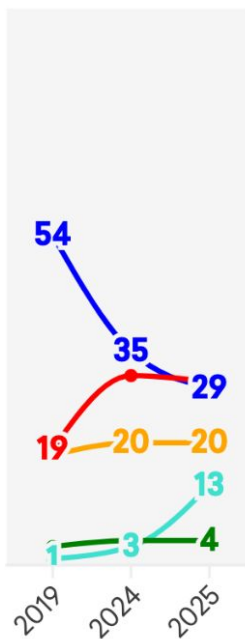
Incrementalist Left

"Social democrats"



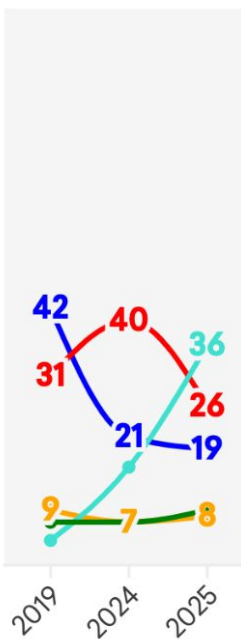
Established Liberals

"Blue Wall"



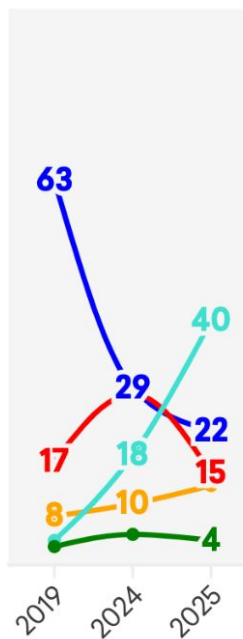
Sceptical Scrollers

"Online Disengaged"



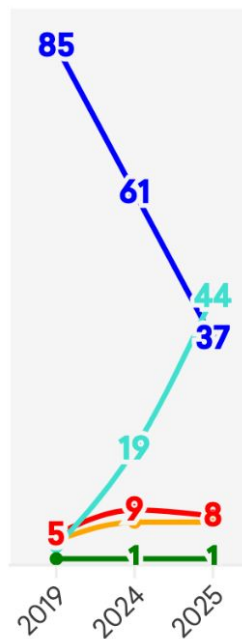
Rooted Patriots

"Red Wall"



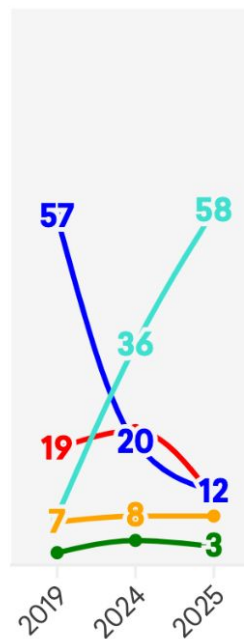
Traditional Conservatives

"Shire Tory"



Dissenting Disruptors

"Populist Right"



Labour's 2024 coalition



The crisis of trust in British politics

A crisis of trust in national institutions

87% of the public have either not very much trust in politicians or none at all. The political class - from councillors to MPs - is seen as self-serving and out of touch.

Fewer than 1 in 5 would trust any of the main party leaders to watch their bag for them.

This lack of trust is intrinsically linked to a feeling of disrespect, with the most distrusting feeling major institutions- from the NHS to the judiciary- do not respect people 'like them'.

"I just don't think anyone that is in politics has got any understanding of the normal person on the street. I mean, it's been said many times, when politicians are asked how much is a loaf of bread, how much is a pint of milk? They answer because they've probably been prepped to answer and they've probably Googled it before they come on air or on the radio or whatever, but in reality they haven't got a clue".

- Isabelle, Dissenting Disruptor, Dudley

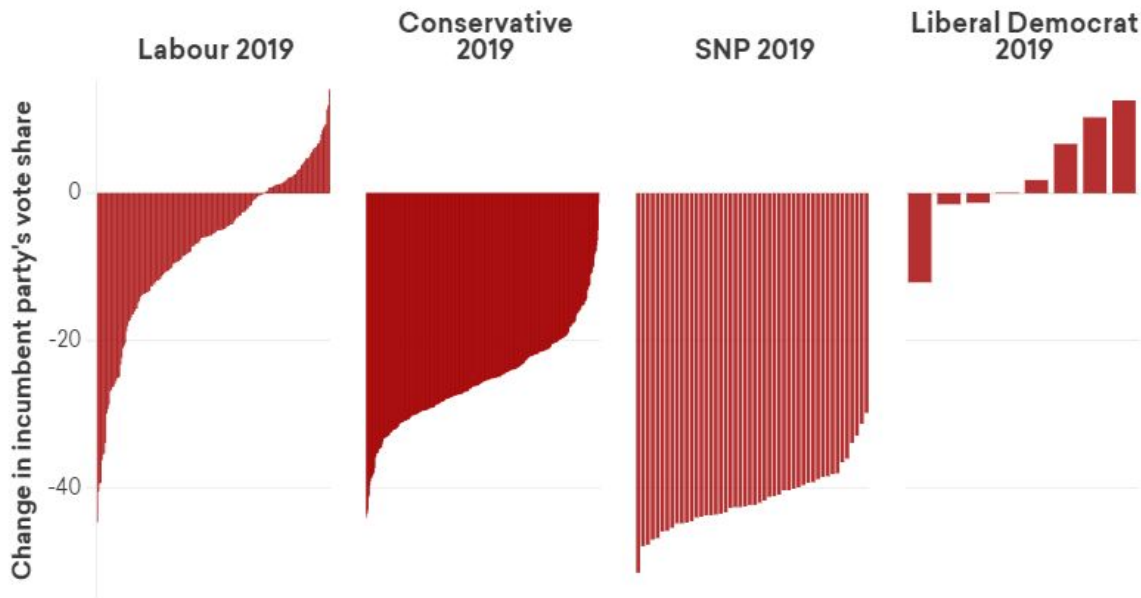
How much trust do you have in the following?

Showing net trust (% who said they trust 'A great deal' or 'Quite a lot' minus % who said 'Not very much' or 'Not at all')



Disillusionment

Incumbent parties lost vote share in the vast majority of UK constituencies in 2024



“A pox on all your houses”.

Our conversations with voters revealed a deep unhappiness with politicians of every party.

Across the country, incumbent parties lost votes in the 2024 General Election - including in traditionally safe Labour seats.

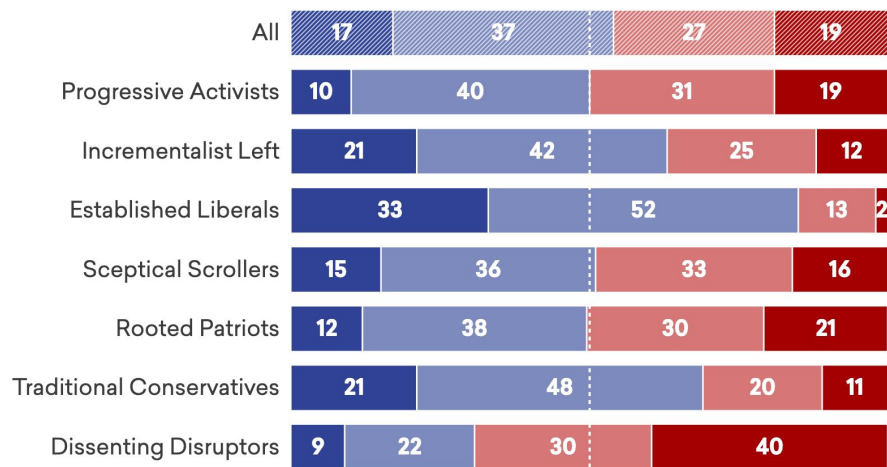
This rejection of incumbent politicians reflects a dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Half the public think democracy isn't working

46 per cent of Britons think Britain is not a genuine democracy

Which comes closest to your view?

- 1 - Britain's system of government is a genuine democracy
- 2
- 3
- 4 - Britain's system of government is not a genuine democracy



Nearly half of the public say that British democracy isn't working - that view is highest among "Red Wall" Loyal Nationals and lowest among "Blue Wall" Established Liberals. In large part, this is driven by a sense that democracy has neglected people like them and their communities.

"I kind of become quite disillusioned with it all and kind of going from quite steadfast opinion that we should always vote.... Women fought for the vote. Well, as awful as it sounds, what's the point? It's awful that, isn't it?" Francis, Lifeguard, Bury

Public think Britain is broken

In a word, how would you describe the UK today?



People's everyday experience is that too much of life has become a struggle and that Britain - from our public services to our high streets - feels broken. That backdrop has created a sense of national gloom that politicians haven't managed to shift and, in some cases, have reinforced.

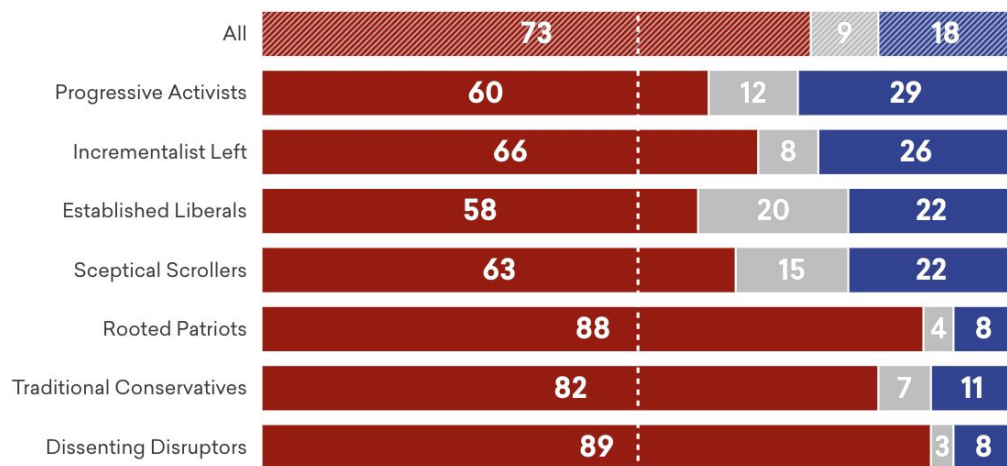
"I know they want to be seen to be tough but do things gradually, do positive things first. Give the country a positive feel. He's come out and he said, I'm not here to be Mr. Popular, why not? Why not try and be popular? Get off on the right foot. It seemed a really strange thing to say. I'm tough. Look at me. People have had a rough few years. How about a bit of positivity I thought." Kevin, Birmingham

Most think politicians not up to the challenge

Most Britons think the Government does not have things under control


Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- The Government does not have things under control
- Don't know
- The Government has things under control



Over three in five say that our politicians are not capable of tackling the challenges our country faces - a view held across all our segments. For many, this is because they think politicians simply don't get it or understand what is happening in the communities they are supposed to represent.

"I'm not sure the politicians have got an absolute Scooby about anyone that works hard actually. I'd welcome any of them to come and do a 12-hour shift with me. That actually turns into a 15-hour shift. I think Chaz is being generous with them lasting two nights. I think they probably last about four hours." Lorraine, Ambulance Worker, Croydon

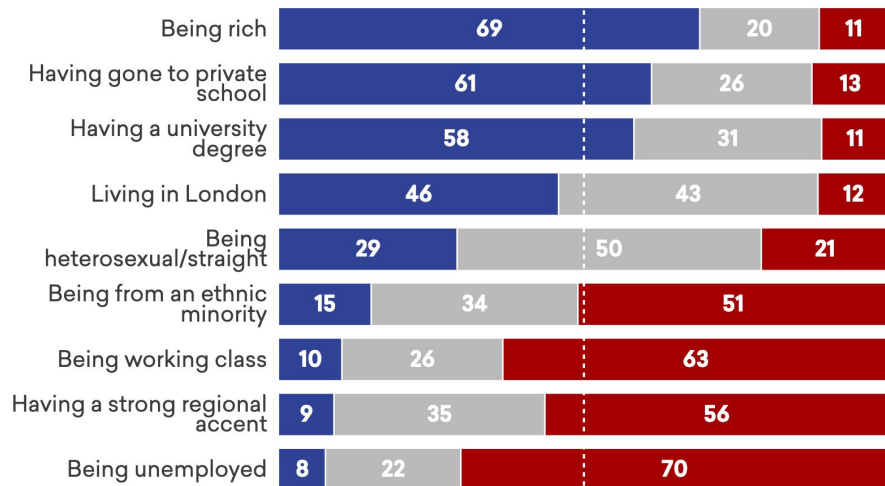


Attitudes to corruption and big money in politics

People think rich people are taken more seriously by politicians

For each of the following attributes please say whether you think it means it is likely that people in positions of power or authority take you more seriously, less seriously or makes no difference:

- More seriously
- Makes no difference
- Less seriously



The public overwhelmingly think that rich people are taken more seriously by politicians - with 69 per cent saying this is the case.

In contrast, just 10 per cent think that working class people are taken more seriously by politicians.

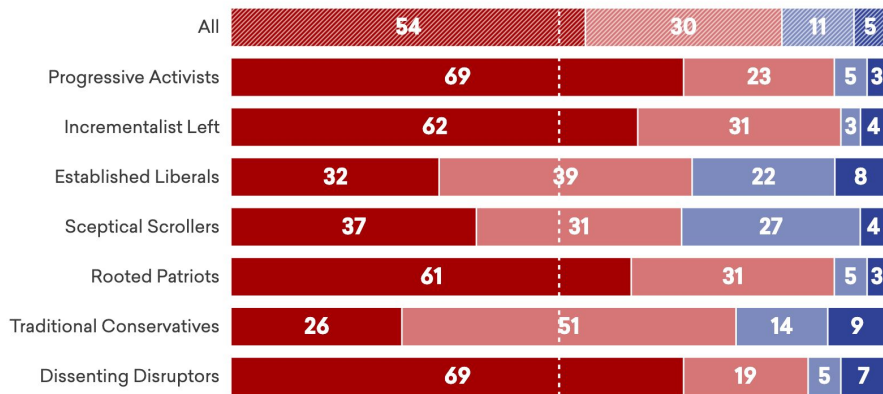
More in Common's previous research has found that this perceived lack of respect and unfairness is driving people to be distrusting of politicians more generally.

84% think wealthy people push their agendas in politics

Every segment of British society thinks that wealthy individuals use political donations to influence the government to further their own personal interests

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- 1- Wealthy individuals use political donations to influence the government to further their own personal interests.
- 2-
- 3-
- 4- Wealthy individuals do not use political donations to influence the government to further their own personal interests.



There is a widespread view in Britain that wealthy individuals use money and donations to push their influence in politics.

This is not a left-right divide either: Progressive Activists and Dissenting Disruptors (the two groups most attracted to nontraditional political parties) are the most likely to strongly hold this view.

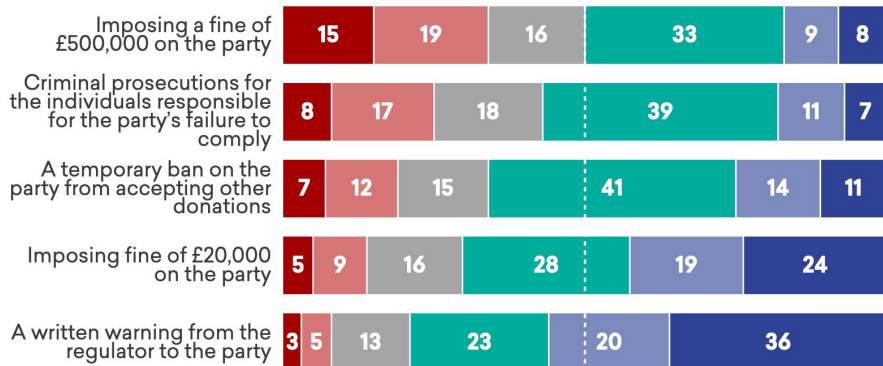
Support for strong punishments for breaches of electoral law

The public are accepting of heavy-handed punishments for breaching electoral regulations

Currently, political parties are legally only allowed to accept donations from individuals who are British citizens or businesses/organisations who are registered in the UK. They must publicly declare donations above a certain financial threshold to the Electoral Commission.

Please indicate whether you think the following punishments are appropriate or not appropriate if these rules are broken.

● Far too harsh ● Slightly too harsh ● Don't know ● About right
● Slightly too lenient ● Far too lenient



The public tend to support strong sanctions on those who break political donation regulations, including criminal prosecutions for those responsible for compliance failures and temporary bans on donations to parties who break the rules.

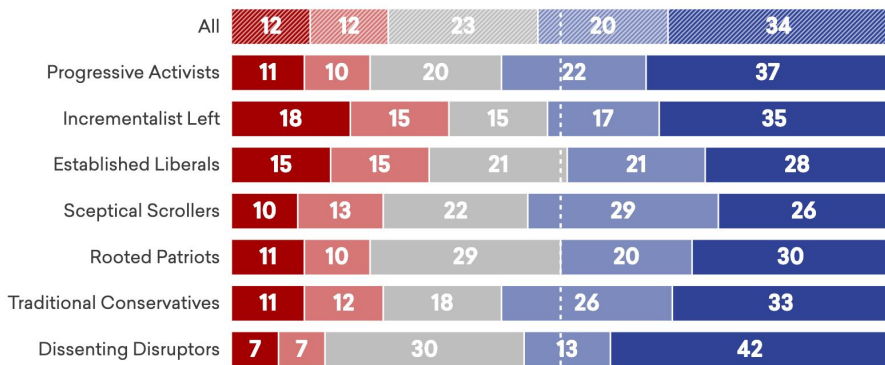
17 per cent of people think that a £500,000 fine does not go far enough. Meanwhile, only 25 per cent think that criminal prosecutions would be too harsh for the individual's responsible for compliance failures.

Who should set election regulations?

The public think non-elected beaucrats should handle electoral regulations

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- 1 - Elected Government Ministers should be able to influence the design and enforcement of election regulations as they are our democratic representatives.
- 2
- Don't know
- 3
- 4 - Only the non-elected and independent Electoral Commission should be able to influence the design of election regulations, as this means party members can't decide how their parties are regulated or policed.



The public do not want government ministers policing themselves on election regulations. Across every segment (except Established Liberals who are more trusting of politicians) a majority of people think election regulations should be set by the Electoral Commission.

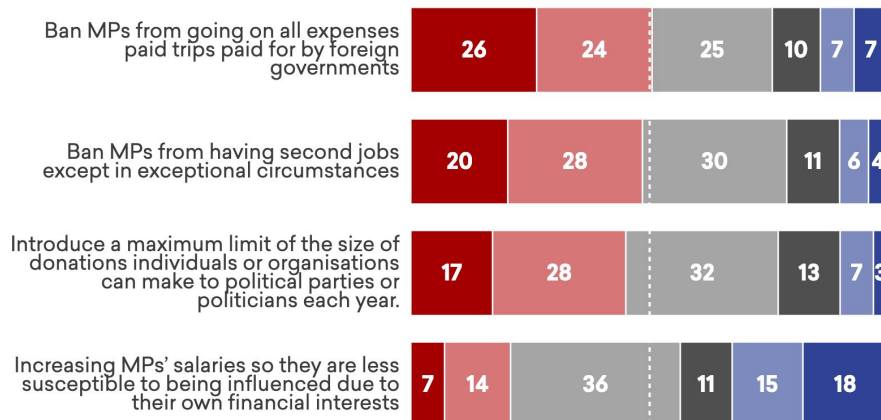
This reflects a wider sense from focus groups that too often politicians who self-police adopt a 'one-rule for them, another rule for us' mantra.

Tighter rules to increase trust in politics

Which policies would help increase trust in politics?

Please indicate how your trust in politics would be impacted, if at all, if the government or those in power made the following changes.

My trust in politics would...



Distrust in politicians runs deep, and there is no simple fix by introducing new rules and regulations.

That said, banning MPs from all-expenses-paid trips abroad would increase trust in politics for half the country, and 48 per cent of the country say they would trust politics more if MPs were banned from second jobs.

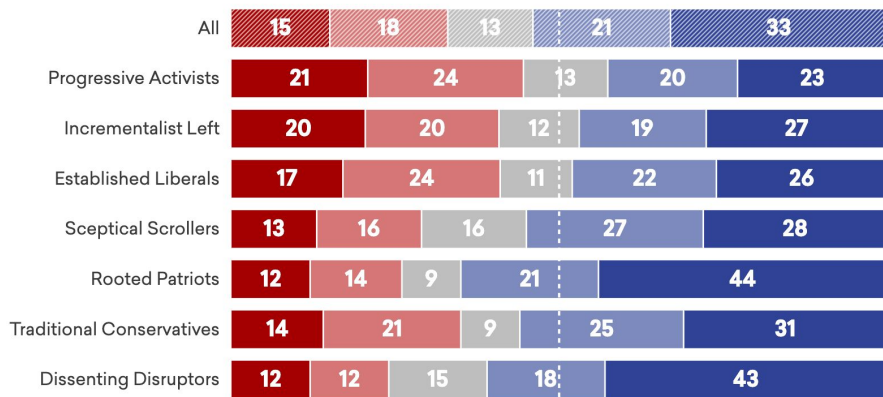
Increasing MP's pay to make them less susceptible to corruption is unpopular - in fact a third say that this would *decrease* their trust in politics.

Most people think funding for political parties should be cut

Most Britons think Government funding for political parties should be cut

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

- 1- Government funding for Britain's political parties should be increased so that they are less reliant, and potentially influenced, by large donors.
- 2-
- Don't know
- 3-
- 4- Government funding for Britain's political parties should be decreased to save public money



Any proposals that see politicians and political parties receiving more money are unlikely to prove popular.

The public are considerably more likely to think that public funding to political parties should be cut rather than raised, even if public funding reduced their need to rely on private donations that could buy influence.

Increasing transparency in political financing: opportunities and challenges

Opportunity:

The deep distrust in politicians and the widespread belief that party political financing needs reform create strong public support for tighter rules, transparency and limits on big money in politics.

Challenge:

Proposals involving more public funding for politicians or political parties are deeply unpopular and risk further undermining public trust, rather than helping to rebuild it.



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Tomorrow...



What the Public Thinks: What's next for UK Aid?

 Tuesday, 30 September

 09:00 to 10:00

 Sherwood Arena Room,
Secure Zone, ACC Liverpool



Sophie Stowers (Chair)
More in Common



Luke Tryl
More in Common



Baroness Chapman
Minister of State for Development



Dr Jeevun Sandher MP
Member, Treasury Select Committee



Moazzam Malik
Save the Children



David Hudson
Development Engagement Lab



Things can only get hotter: Is ambition on climate and nature a route for electoral success?

 Tuesday, 30 September

 12:15 to 13:15

 Sherwood Arena Room,
Secure Zone, ACC



Fiona Harvey (Chair)
The Guardian



Luke Tryl
More in Common



Toby Perkins MP
Chair of Environmental Audit Committee



Luke Murphy MP
Member of Energy & Net Zero Committee



Angela Francis
WWF UK



The Heat Is On: Powering Up Britain's Home Energy Transition

 Tuesday, 30 September

 10:00 to 11:00

 Nova Scotia



Charlie Cooper (Chair)
Politico



Ed Hodgson
More in Common



Tom Collins MP
MP for Worcester



Caroline Bragg
ADE



Jane Dawson
Electrical Contractors' Association



James Nash MP
MP for Rushcliffe



Richard Hauxwell-Baldwin
MCS Foundation



What do we think of the speech? Expert analysis of the Prime Minister's speech

 Tuesday, 30 September

 17:30 to 18:30

 Sherwood Arena Room,
Secure Zone, ACC



Luke Tryl
More in Common



Marc Stears
UCL Policy Lab



Josie Rourke
Writer & Playwright



Tom Baldwin
Author & Journalist



Rachel Sylvester
The Observer