

Progressive Activists

12 per cent of the population

A highly engaged and progressive group, uncompromising on the issues they care about and striving for global social justice.

"I got called woke the other day because I read the Guardian. Like, what does that even mean!?"

Abby, Hackney

"I just think in our society... it's one of the ways that we can affect changes by who we vote for or by corresponding with our MP... Personally I think it's important to keep up to date with what's going on."

Hannah, East Dulwich



Key words

Idealistic, radical, uncompromising, political, woke.

What they worry about

Global issues such as the war in Gaza or climate change, inequality in Britain, the power of billionaires, the rise of Reform UK, the rise of Donald Trump, Brexit, affordable housing, racial justice.

Where you might find them

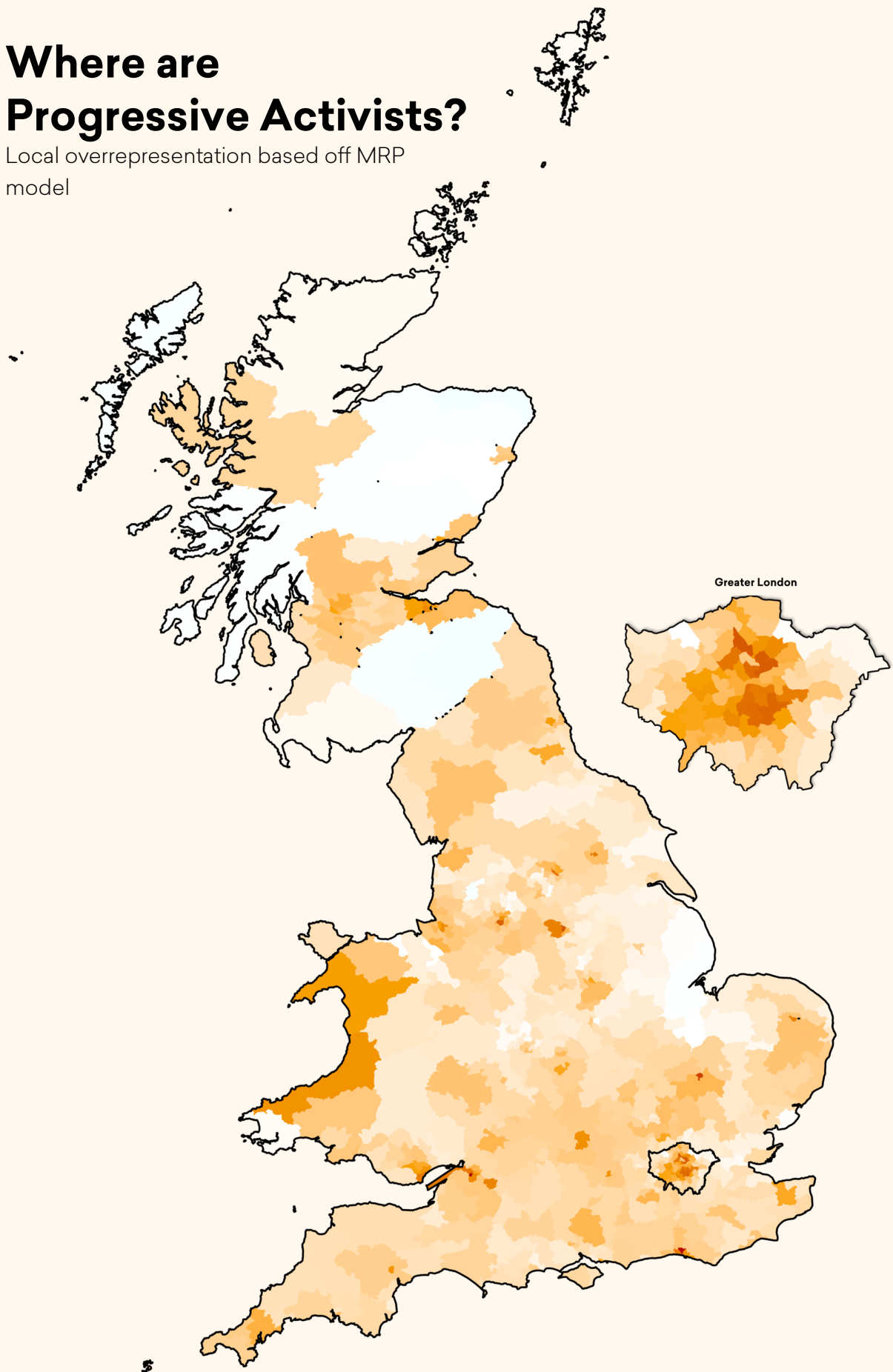
In university campuses and cities; in Labour and Green Party meetings; on Bluesky; in flatshares or living with their parents; in third sector workplaces; in constituencies such as Hackney South and Shoreditch, Edinburgh South and Bristol Central.

How they get their news

High engagement with the news: from notifications from multiple news apps (likely The Guardian and the BBC), independent digital news outlets such as Novara, directly from political commentators on social media such as Owen Jones, from podcasts such as *The News Agents* or *Pod Save the UK*.

Where are Progressive Activists?

Local overrepresentation based off MRP
model



Source: More in Common, June 2025

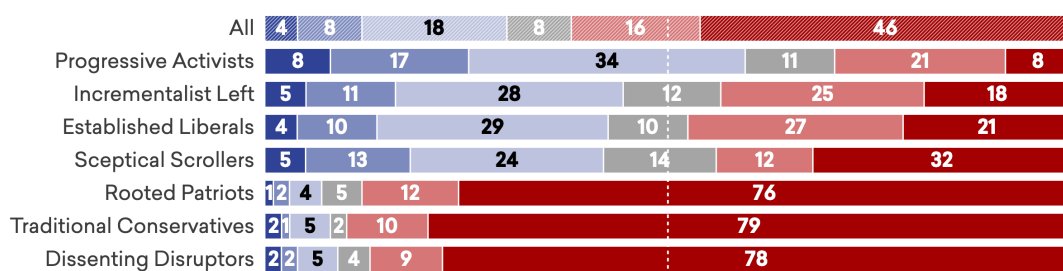
Progressive Activists are politically engaged and motivated by the pursuit of social justice. They have traditionally left-wing economic views and want the government to play a greater role in redistributing wealth. They are also by far the most likely to hold what other segments might call ‘woke’ perspectives on social issues.

Progressive Activists are often ideological outliers, particularly in their views on social and cultural issues. For example, they are the only segment where the majority say that levels of migration should either be increased or kept the same.

Figure 62 | Attitudes to immigration by segment

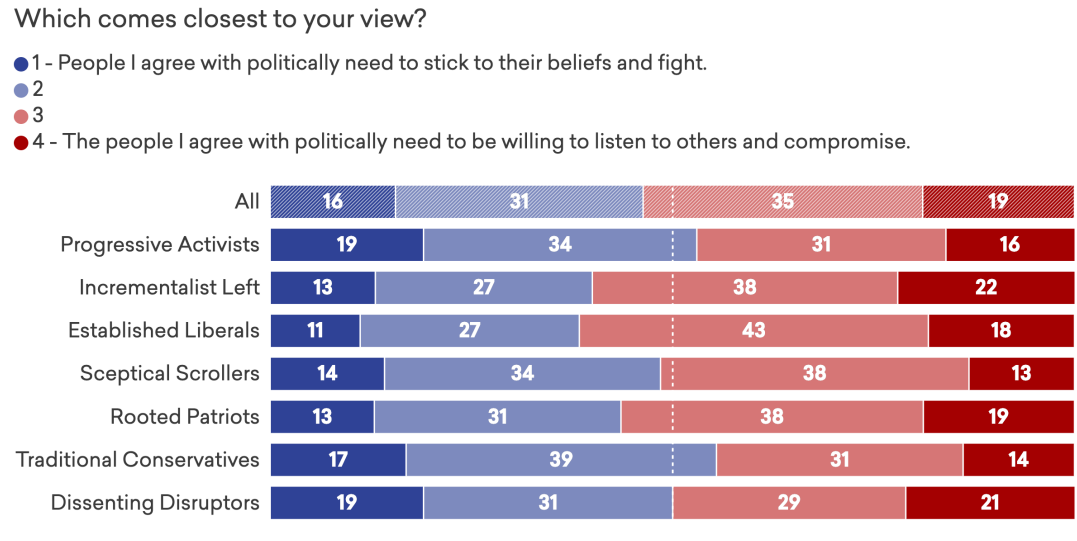
Thinking about the number of immigrants the UK Government accepts into the country each year, which of the following comes closer to your view?

- Government should significantly increase the numbers
- Government should slightly increase the numbers
- Government should keep the number the same
- Don't know
- Government should slightly reduce the numbers
- Government should significantly reduce the numbers



Coupled with outlier views, Progressive Activists express less willingness to compromise on political views than other segments. Along with Traditional Conservatives, they are the segment most likely to say that people they agree with need to stick to their beliefs and fight, rather than listen to others and compromise.

Figure 63 | Attitudes to compromise by segment



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Alongside this heightened resistance to compromise, Progressive Activists' attitudes to debate is shaped by distinct views on free speech. While all segments value the principle of freedom of expression, Progressive Activists are more likely to prioritise protection from hate speech and harmful language – especially for marginalised groups. They are one of few segments where a majority believe that limiting speech to prevent harm is more important than protecting speech at all costs.

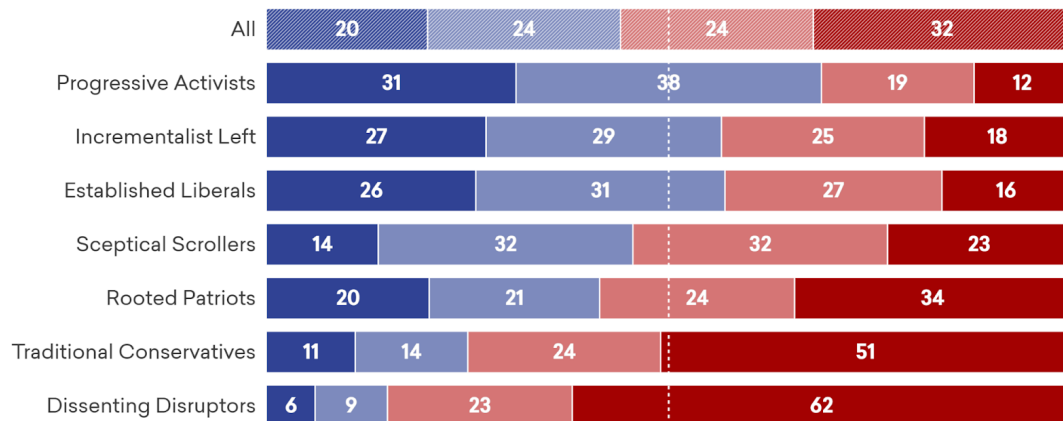
People should have the right to use any language, but then also any consequence of using that language, they shouldn't be able to throw their hands up and say, well that's anti-free speech. No, you have the right to say it. If the consequence is you lose your job or someone assaults you, or I don't know, maybe you get kicked out of your family, those are consequences that you have to deal with. But your free speech is still intact.

Ebenezer, Progressive Activist, East Dulwich

Figure 64 | Attitudes to personal offence by segment

Which comes closer to your view?

- 1 - People are right to be more sensitive and aware of offensive language and actions.
- 2
- 3
- 4 - People are too easily offended nowadays.



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Progressive Activists are much less zero-sum in their thinking about minority rights compared to other groups. On issues such as diversity and inclusion, Progressive Activists are the group least likely to say that increasing opportunities for minority groups makes things less fair for others. They are also much less likely to place an emphasis on individual responsibility and agency compared to other segments and are much more likely to argue that circumstance and societal structures determine people's outcomes in life.

Turning to their moral foundations, Progressive Activists place less emphasis on Authority and Purity than other segments - and so tend to have less respect for social hierarchies and rules, and are less interested in upholding established social norms.

While they are outliers on some issues, Progressive Activists are not alien from the rest of the country. They share many of the same instincts on social issues, even if not to the same degree, with the Incrementalist Left and Established Liberal segments. Likewise, their approach to political disagreement and compromise in many cases is similar to the Dissenting Disruptors (even if those two segments end up on polar opposites on social issues such as immigration) and share their assessment that the system is rigged. While they are far apart from Traditional Conservatives on many issues, they share with this segment high levels of trust in experts, the value of liberty and convictions on a host of issues ranging from the need to protect nature or to stand up for Ukraine.

In addition to their unique worldviews, Progressive Activists are also the most politically engaged segment. Two thirds of them rank their political engagement at seven or more out of ten, compared to 49 per cent of the country as a whole.

Progressive Activists tend to read and watch a lot of news. While they are less likely to read print newspapers or watch broadcast television news, they are much more likely than the rest of the country to get their news through YouTube, podcasts, news websites, and social media. For those Progressive Activists who do not pay attention to the news, they are more likely to say this is due to exhaustion compared to other segments whose disengagement is driven by a lack of confidence in politics and politicians.

I just think in our society... it's one of the ways that we can affect changes by who we vote for or by corresponding with our MP... Personally I think it's important to keep up to date with what's going on.

Hannah, Progressive Activist, East Dulwich

Progressive Activists are also the only segment significantly more likely than not to say they enjoy talking about politics, or debating politics with their friends. This makes them among the most frequent posters of political content on social media.

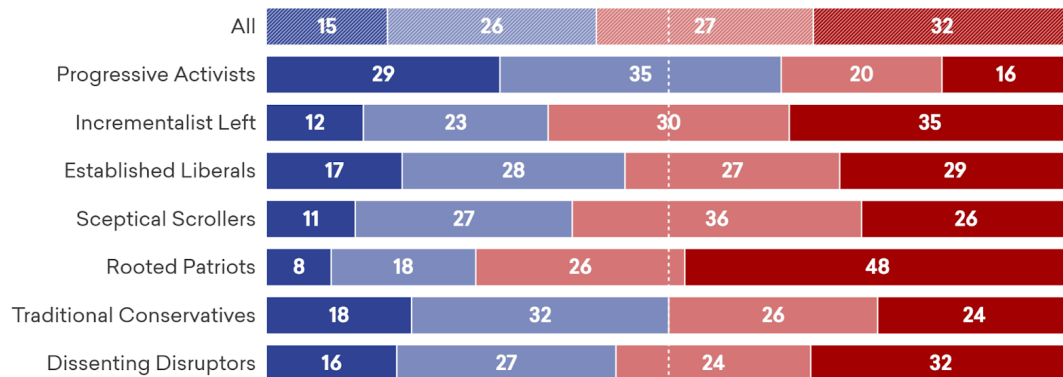
Sometimes it can be negative even though it's informative because I've been told that I'm spreading negativity... Some people just, I think they don't want to hear it... So I try to limit what I post even though I feel quite strongly about stuff like Palestine and stuff.

Maddie, Progressive Activist, East Dulwich

Figure 65 | The segments which enjoy talking about politics

I'm the sort of person who...

- 1 - Quite likes debating political issues with my friends.
- 2
- 3
- 4 - Prefers to avoid talking about politics.



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Progressive Activists are more globally oriented in their outlook and concerns than any other segment. For example, they have shown sustained interest and activism around the war in Gaza and are more likely than other segments to list the war in Ukraine among their top priorities. Climate change is also a core concern and one that many Progressive Activists see not just as an environmental issue but a moral and generational one.

What [climate protestors] are trying to do is actually try and make climate change a less drastic issue... And people think, oh, being delayed from work for 45 minutes, an hour, whatever is that major inconvenience. But at the end of the day we do only have one planet.

Ebenezer, Progressive Activist, East Dulwich

These values feed into a distinctive and often critical view of Britain's past and present on the world stage. Progressive Activists are the least likely of any segment to say they are proud to be British. Many express a deep discomfort with traditional symbols of national pride and they are the most likely to say they feel ashamed of Britain's colonial history and involvement in empire. Where other segments tend to say that Britain is taken advantage of on the world stage, Progressive Activists are unique in being more likely to think that Britain takes advantage of other countries.

Trust in politicians is low among Progressive Activists, but their distrust does not extend to all civic institutions. Unlike more populist or disengaged groups, their cynicism tends to be

directed towards elected representatives and mainstream party politics, not at the institutional framework of democracy itself. They retain relatively high levels of trust in institutions such as the judiciary and public service broadcasters. They are also the segment most likely to place faith in experts and specialist knowledge – along with the Established Liberals, Progressive Activists are the most likely to say that experts understand complex issues better than the general public.

Demographically, this group is younger and more likely than others to be university educated. Progressive Activists are the segment which is most similar to the population as a whole in its ethnic make up; around 15 per cent non-white, making it less ethnically diverse than other segments which skew younger and more urban. This segment is also much more secular than others, with just under 70 per cent saying they have no religion. They are half as likely as the wider population to identify as Christian.

Many of them are in fairly well paid graduate jobs, but they are among the least likely to own their own home and the most likely to be in student debt. This means Progressive Activists tend to be a high-income but lower-wealth segment. Over a quarter of Progressive Activists rent privately - the highest of any segment - and they are also the most likely to be living with flatmates. They are among the most likely to say they are struggling financially and among the least satisfied with their financial situation.

In 2019, this group overwhelmingly voted for Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party and were inspired by his platform. However, they have swung away from the Labour Party in years since - partly as they perceive the party has moved to the right. They now make up almost half (47 per cent) of Green Party supporters, despite representing just 12 per cent of the country.

Sam

Sam lives in Cardiff where he works at the university, sharing a house with other junior academics. Sam's idealism often clashes with the compromises of daily life; he abandoned vegetarianism after years of trying, frustrated that individual lifestyle changes feel meaningless against the scale of global problems that keep him awake at night. And while he tries to keep his flying down, this year he has had to fly twice - to an academic conference and for a personal holiday. Lately, the war in Gaza has consumed much of his emotional energy. He finds himself scrolling through footage and testimonials that leave him feeling both helpless and outraged that Britain is not doing more.

Sam voted Labour in the last election with hope that felt misplaced within weeks, watching Starmer's Government make decisions that felt like betrayals of things he thought they stood for. Now he channels his disillusionment into sharing content on social media and attending local Extinction Rebellion meetings, finding more authentic politics in grassroots movements than in Westminster.

Sam oscillates between moments of genuine optimism—when he sees students organising or communities coming together—and periods of despair about whether any of it makes a difference in a world that seems to be burning while politicians offer platitudes.

Sam starts each morning reading his Guardian notifications, and then listens to yesterday's *The News Agents* or *Pod Save America* during his cycle to work, and finds himself deep in Bluesky threads late into the evening. He has had to delete news apps twice this year when the constant stream of crises left him unable to sleep, only to reinstall them days later, feeling a responsibility to keep himself informed.

Sam's conversations with his housemates often stretch into the night, ranging from university politics to climate tipping points to the latest government betrayal. While he enjoys these exchanges with like-minded people, he sometimes envies friends who can watch Netflix without feeling guilty about switching off from the world's problems. He has also lost some friends from home over disagreements about politics. His parents worry about his intensity, suggesting he is "too invested" in politics, advice that strikes him as emblematic of the generational divide that allows injustice to persist unchallenged.

