



More in
Common



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



Starmer by numbers

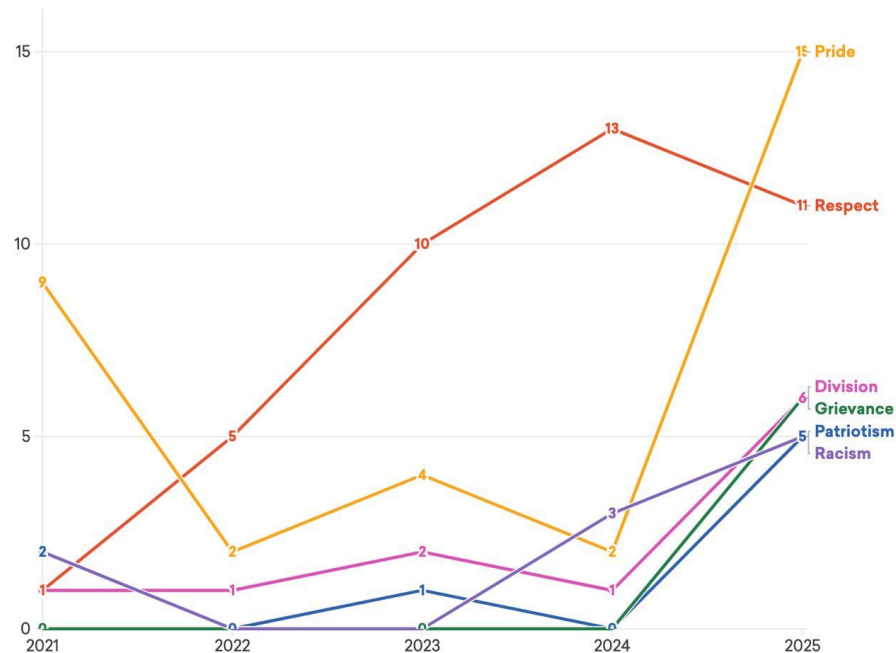
Pride as a central theme

Starmer has been underlining respect in his past two speeches and mentioned it **11** times today.

But this is now been overtaken by references to *pride*, which was mentioned **15** times.

Starmer also talked about racism and division more than he has done before, as well as the politics of grievance.

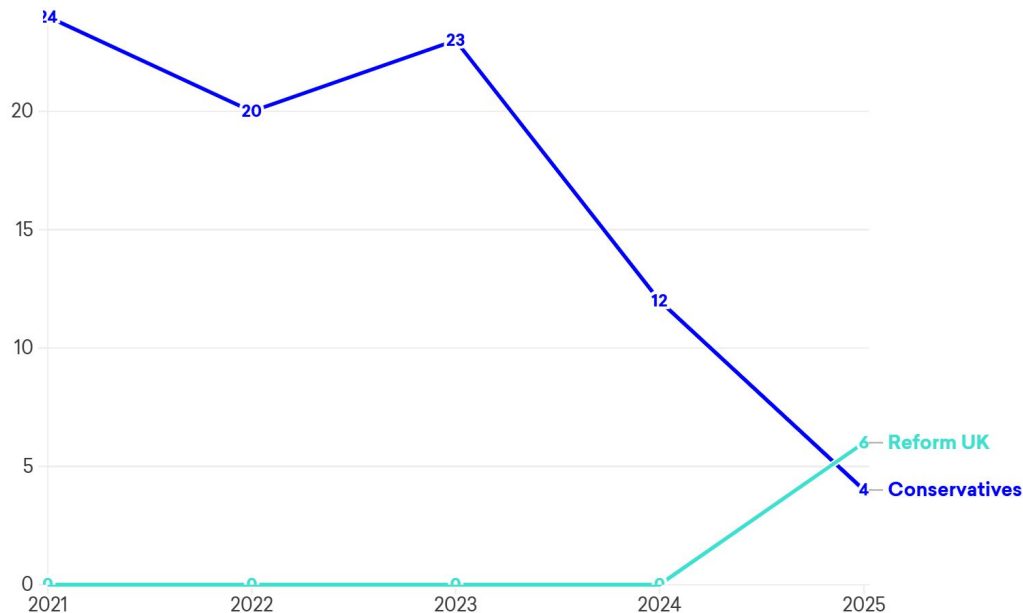
Mentions of key themes in Keir Starmer's speeches to Labour conference



Who is Labour's real opposition?

Keir Starmer mentioned the Conservatives just twice in this year's speech. Instead, it was clear from both the language and the subject matter that Reform is now the party that Labour will be attacking the most.

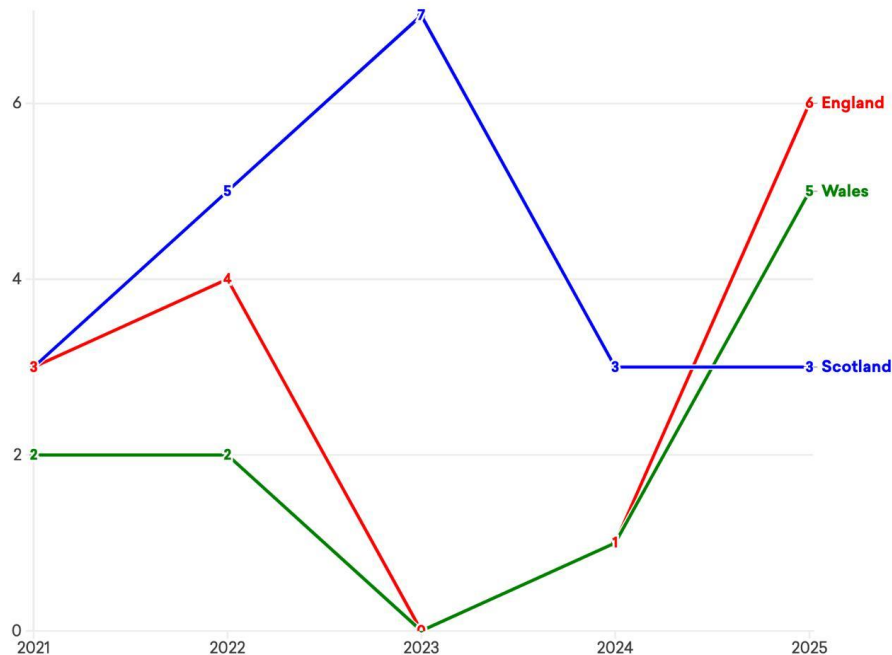
Mentions of other parties in Keir Starmer's speeches to Labour conference



The nations

Looking at the mentions of the British nations, it is clear that Labour is worried about the threat in Welsh Senedd elections next year - with the Prime Minister mentioning Wales in his speech today more than he ever has done before.

Mentions of key themes in Keir Starmer's speeches to Labour conference





Electoral coalition

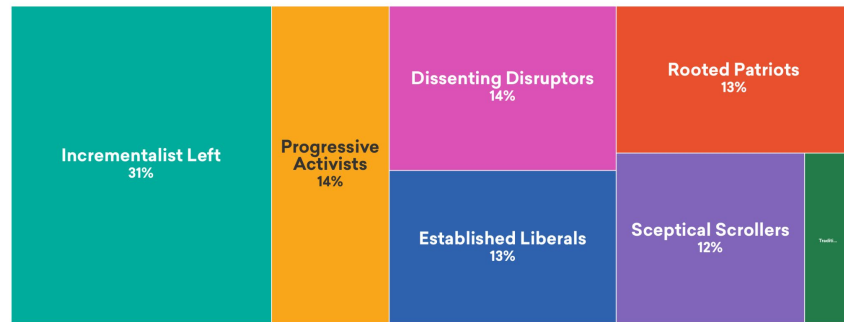
Labour's narrowing electoral coalition

Labour's 2024 landslide was helped by the **diversification of the party's base**- the party increased its support **among six segments** between 2019 and 2024, allowing it to win more constituencies in a wider array of places.

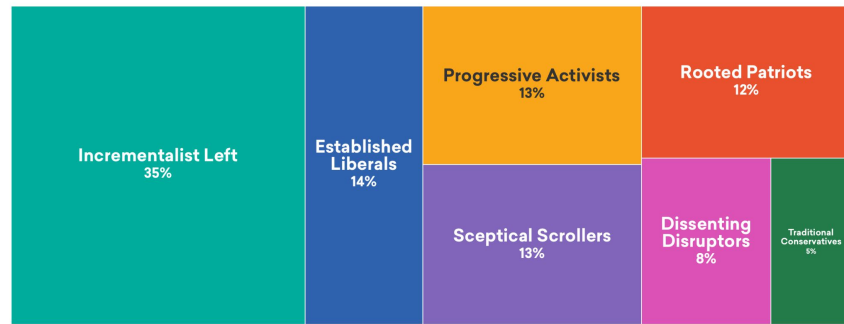
Yet **37 per cent** of those who voted Labour in 2024 now say they would not do so again, with the party losing votes across the political spectrum.

As a result, Labour's voter base has shrunk to its core. While the Incrementalist Left and Established Liberals made up **45 per cent** of Labour's 2024 base, they make up around **49 per cent** of the party's current support.

Labour's 2024 voter base by segment



Labour's current voter base by segment

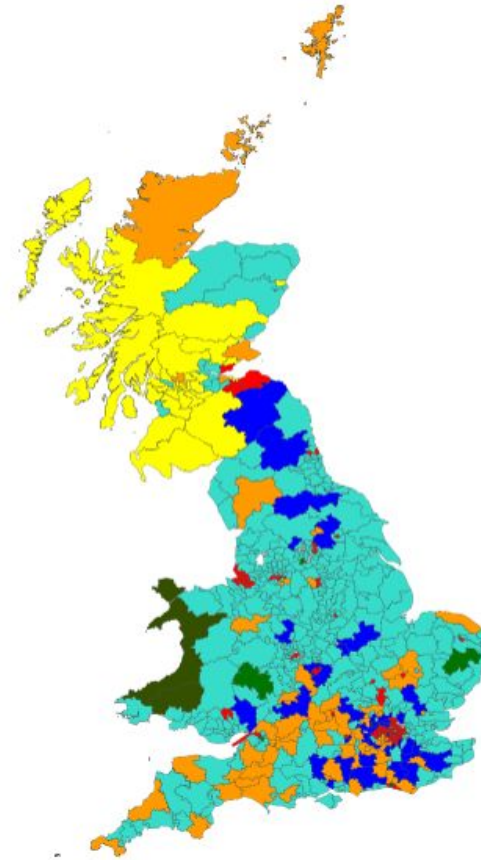


Current polling shows Reform on course to take power

More in Common's new MRP projects a Reform UK majority if a general election were held today. Labour is projected to hold onto just 90 of its seats - predominantly in urban centres like London, and university towns. Labour is projected to come second in 226 seats, of which 106 are marginal.

	Seat count
Labour	90
Reform	373
Conservative	41
Lib Dem	69
SNP	34
Other	14
Green	6
PC	4

Winner: Reform UK Liberal Democrat Scottish National Party (SNP) Labour
Other The Green Party Plaid Cymru Conservative





Change

The desire for change has grown

Britons increasingly think it's time for change

● It's time for change ● We need to stick with the plan

Which of the following comes closest to how you are feeling about the next General Election?

June 2024

73

27

Thinking about how the country is being run at the moment, which of the following comes closest to your view?

September 2025

77

23



Source: More in Common, September 2025

“We need some hope for the country, for the normal working class person that what we are doing is actually counting for something.”

Vanessa, PA, Stevenage

Just fifteen months after electing the Labour Government with a mandate for change, Britons are now more likely to believe that it's time for change than they were immediately before going to the polls.

Three quarters (77 per cent) believe “it's time for change”, a rise of three points since Rishi Sunak was in power.

For most Britons, slow, incremental progress no longer feels tenable: 55 per cent of Britons believe that the country needs “fast, radical change”, compared to a third (34 per cent) who want “smaller, more gradual change”.

Overshadowed by scandal and unpopular spending decisions

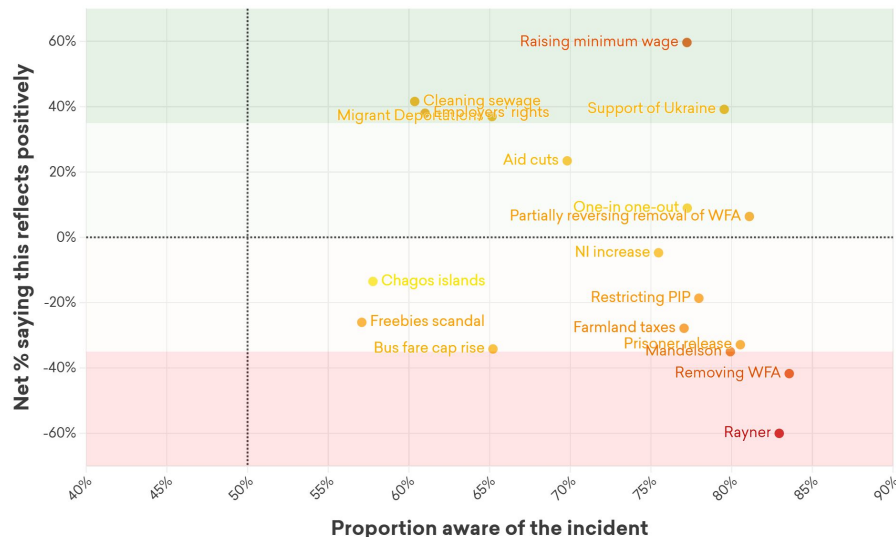
Labour's failures have cut through more than its achievements, with recent scandals overshadowing the most popular policies.

There are high levels of public awareness of the three most negative incidents: more than three quarters of Britons have heard of the Peter Mandelson scandal, Angela Rayner's resignation and proposed changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance.

Meanwhile, more popular policies - such as changes to workers' rights and dealing with sewage - are less widely known.

Rayner and Mandelson departures among the most politically damaging moments of the government

Lighter colours indicate greater ambivalence (more people expressing neither a negative nor positive view of the event)



What voters wanted to hear

Last week, More in Common asked a focus group of 2024 Labour voters in Stevenage what they wanted to hear from the Prime Minister's speech.

Many told us they wanted to hear a commitment to radical change, saying we need a "clean sheet". Yet across the group, there was a clear lack of trust - many said there was nothing Keir Starmer said would compensate for a lack of delivery.

"To me, words without action is just a dream. So for me, there's nothing he can say. Let's see, what are you going to do about it? You're really great. You best fix it."

Chanel, Operations manager, Stevenage

"I don't think there's anything they can say that would change it for me."

Carly, pub manager,
Stevenage

Most segments say Labour can fix things- so long as it changes strategy

Thinking about the Labour government fixing the country, which of the following comes closest to your view...

- They can fix things by seeing through their current plans
- They can fix things with a slight change of approach
- They can fix things with a significant change of approach
- Don't know
- They can't fix things

All	12	13	32	12	31
Progressive Activists	15	19	36	8	22
Incrementalist Left	13	19	37	16	15
Established Liberals	20	14	31	14	20
Sceptical Scrollers	16	12	28	16	27
Rooted Patriots	12	12	35	10	31
Traditional Conservatives	8	8	29	4	51
Dissenting Disruptors	6	7	30	9	48

"So I just want somebody to almost just put a clean sheet on everything in some ways, and start to put faith back into people, not make us feel so demoralised."

We need some hope for the country, for the normal working class person that what we are doing is actually counting for something. All this work that we do day-in, day-out is actually going to work towards something that's going to benefit our kids - because they're the ones going to be left with it all with the mess if we don't sort it out."

Vanessa, PA, Stevenage



Starmer

The Prime Minister's approval has sunk

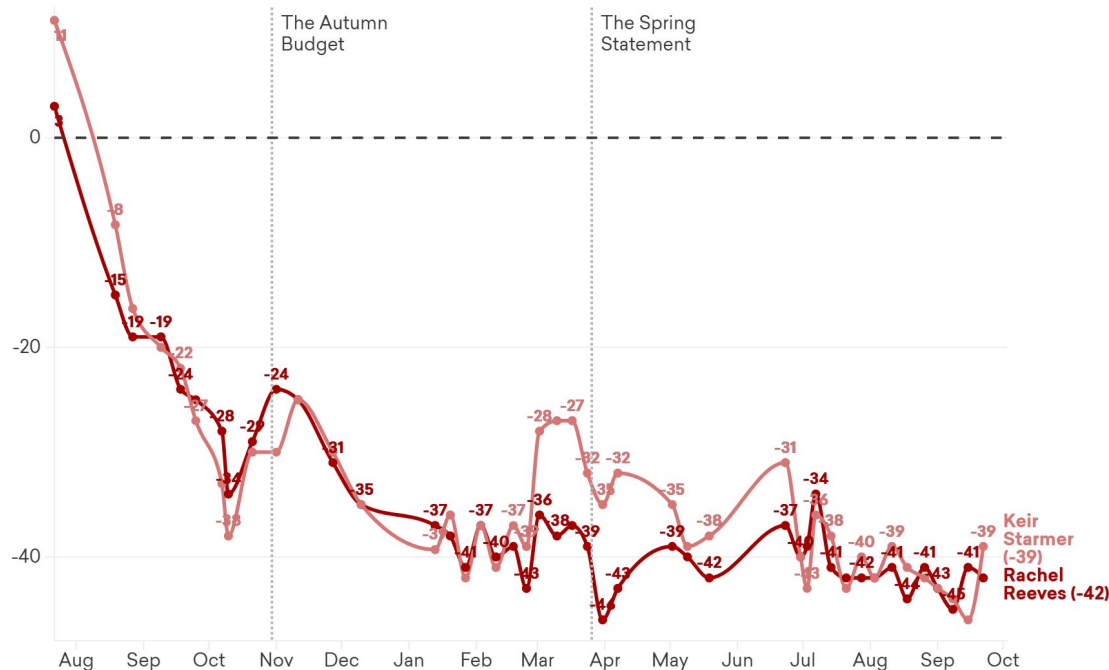
The Prime Minister's net approval rating has dropped by 50 points since the General Election.

From a high of 11 points in July 2024, it has now fallen to -39, after falling lower to a trough of -46.

As of this week, the Prime Minister's approval rating is nearly 20 points lower than it was during Labour Conference last year.

Approval: Rachel Reeves and Keir Starmer

Net approval rating



Starmer's perceived indecisiveness cuts through with the public

Keir Starmer is personally carrying the bulk of public disapproval with particular questions over his leadership skills.

He has net negative approval when it comes to government management, uniting the party and showing that this Government is significantly different from the last

In a word, how would you describe Keir Starmer?

May 2024

September 2025

Uninspiring
Incompetent
Reliable
Smart
Trustworthy
Labour
Bland

Competent
Incompetent
Pragmatic
Determined

"I think he's probably a really good manager and he's really good at discipline behind the scenes and he's really good at that. But he's not inspirational and he's not good at messaging. And I think even the really tough decisions, even the flip-flopping, if he was a better orator, a better inspirational leader, I think you'd at least go, okay, I don't like this decision, but I can see where he's going. That courage of conviction just isn't there. And I think that's the challenge that they've got." - [Kate, Established Liberal, Chippenham](#)

his mind too often.

"I think he bowed to pressure and I think he's just unravelling in that way that he's now starting to bow to pressure rather than to actually listen to his own initial... what's the word? His own morals and his own compass that he started leadership with. And I think that he's lost that."

Melissa, theatre manager, Stevenage

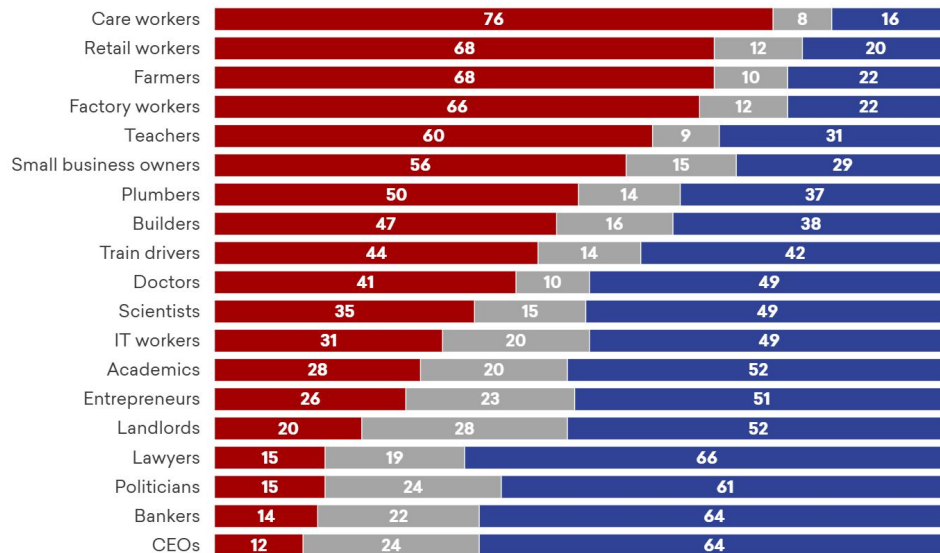


Respect

Those who keep the show on the road aren't shown respect

Thinking about the following groups of people, do you think generally they get the respect they deserve or don't get the respect they deserve?

● Don't get the respect they deserve ● Don't know ● Get the respect they deserve



Most of the public don't think that those who keep the show on the road - care workers, shop workers, farmers and factory workers - get the respect they deserve in society today.

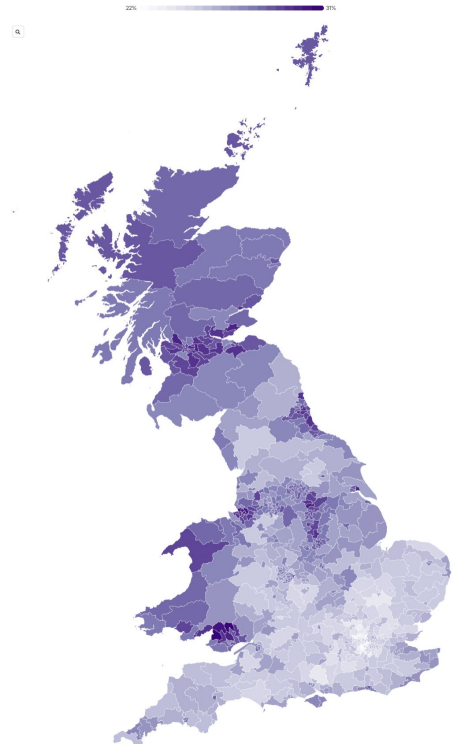
Instead many believe that respect has become aligned with having a degree or being wealthy - rather than your contribution to society.

I think it's good that he's thinking about the wee man in the street and he's thinking about them, but whether he actually delivers to them, the proof will be in the pudding.

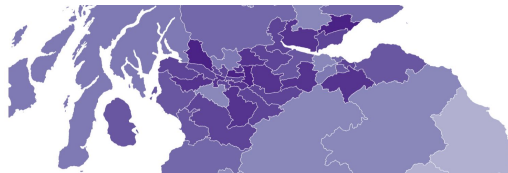
Liz, Retired Procurement Manager, Kirkcaldy

Respect as the key to holding Labour's coalition together

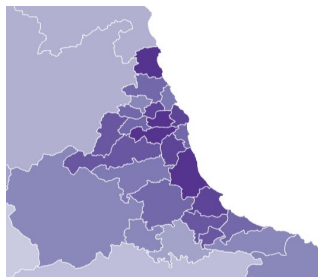
Where does respect matter?
Proportion of each constituency who consider "showing respect to ordinary people" the most important attribute for a political leader to have.



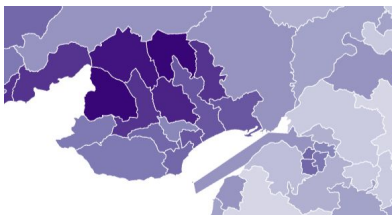
Scotland's Central Belt



The North East of England



South Wales and Bristol



From focus group conversations, it's clear that Labour's collapse in former heartlands was driven by a sense the Labour Party had stopped respecting working people.

Keir Starmer succeeded in reversing that trend. It is no surprise that some of Labour's biggest gains came in areas MRP analysis shows 'respect for ordinary people' is valued most highly - Scotland's central belt, the Red Wall and across South Wales.

Keir Starmer's rhetoric about respect and service resonated with these constituencies - particularly Con-Lab switchers - the test now is delivering on that rhetoric.



Racism and attacking Reform

How should Labour fight Reform?

Attacking Reform and Nigel Farage for 'talking down' Britain doesn't work- many people agree with his diagnosis that the country is broken.

46 per cent believe that Farage is being realistic about the issues Britain faces, including **55 per cent of Rooted Patriots** - a crucial segment for Labour.

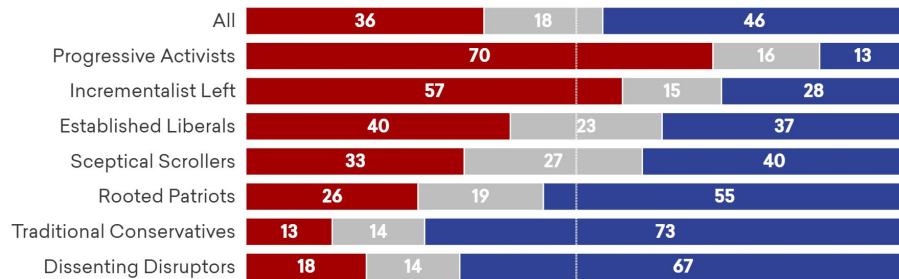
The challenge for Labour in trying to argue that Britain isn't broken is two-fold. Firstly, Labour itself spent the run up to the last election arguing that the Tories had broken the country; saying now that the country is not broken implies either that Labour have fixed it (something the public doesn't believe) or that they weren't telling the truth.

The second challenge is that it appears pollyannaish or, worse still, out of touch when people are really struggling.

Britons tend to think Nigel Farage is being realistic about the state of the country

Which comes closer to your view?

- Nigel Farage is too negative about the state of the country and is talking down Britain.
- Don't Know
- Nigel Farage is being realistic about the problem Britain faces and the need to take action to fix them.



Source: More in Common • September 2025

"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 don't live now. I just survive. (...) So I think this is just not life anymore. So I think we do need a change."

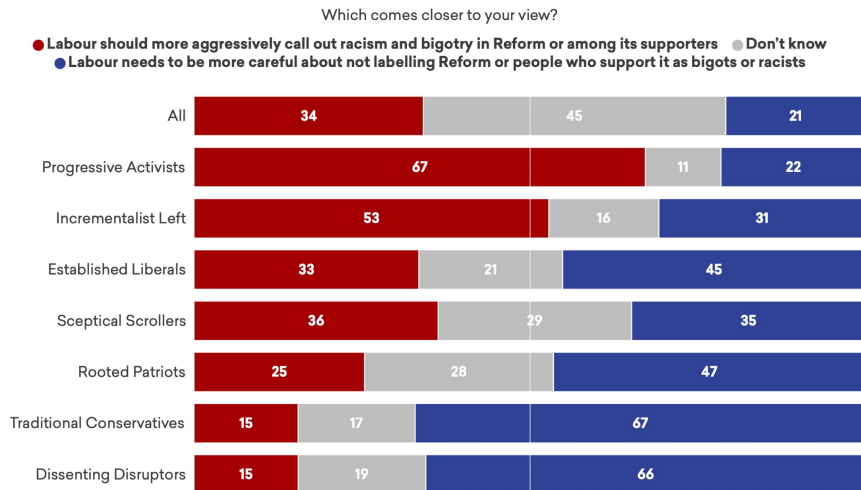
Vicky, Supermarket Assistant

How should Labour fight Reform?

Labour needs to tread carefully when challenging Reform's policies. 45 per cent of the public believe Labour should be more cautious about branding Reform or its supporters as racist or bigoted. Of the segments, **only Progressive Activists and the Incrementalist Left want the Government to take a stronger stance in "calling out" Reform.** Direct attacks risk Labour repeating the mistake made by Hillary Clinton and her 'deplorables' gaffe.

62 per cent say the party should prioritise advancing its own programme in government rather than using up energy criticising Reform. Spending too much time attacking Farage could risk the Government looking out-of-touch with the priorities of the public.

All but the most liberal segments believe Labour should be careful to avoid framing Reform supporters as racist or bigoted



"I dunno if anyone's seen a press conference today, we're four years away from an election and Starmer has come out and had this done this press conference for no reason, just attacking Reform. He's obviously rattled, isn't he? So [Farage] is doing a good job, I think."

- Bal, Traditional Conservative, Fareham and Waterlooville

A Labour-Reform showdown pulls some defectors home

When faced with the prospect of Nigel Farage becoming Prime Minister, a significant share of voters who have shifted from Labour to other parties on the left would be willing to return.

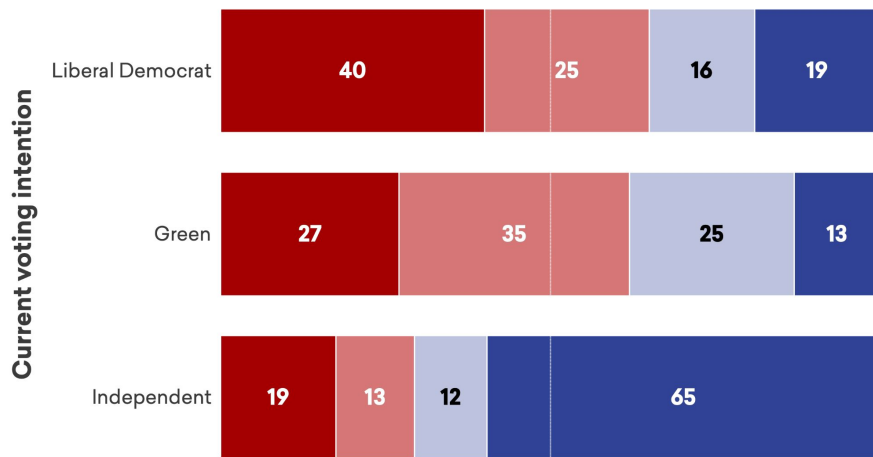
While 65% of those supporting independents would *not* vote Labour in such a circumstance, **two-thirds (65%) of those currently intending to vote Liberal Democrat and 62% of current Green supporters would do so to keep Reform UK out.**

However in order to activate this strategy, Labour will have to burnish its progressive credentials **focusing on the issues that matter most to this group**, such as the NHS, poverty and climate, **and draw a clear distinction between itself and Reform**, ensuring voters see a fundamental difference between the two parties.

Most Liberal Democrat and Green supporters would vote Labour to keep Reform UK out of power

You said you would vote for another party / independent candidate in a General Election. If in your constituency, it was likely to be a very close race between Labour and Reform UK, would you consider voting for Labour?

- I would definitely vote Labour to stop Reform UK
- I would probably vote Labour to stop Reform UK
- I would probably not vote Labour to stop Reform UK
- I would definitely not vote Labour to stop Reform UK





Policy

The three key tests to unite Labour's coalition

There are three major measures on which Britons will judge Labour's time in government:

1. Reducing the cost of living
2. Demonstrating competence on migration
3. Improving the NHS

Delivery in these three areas will be essential for winning back Labour's diverse coalition.

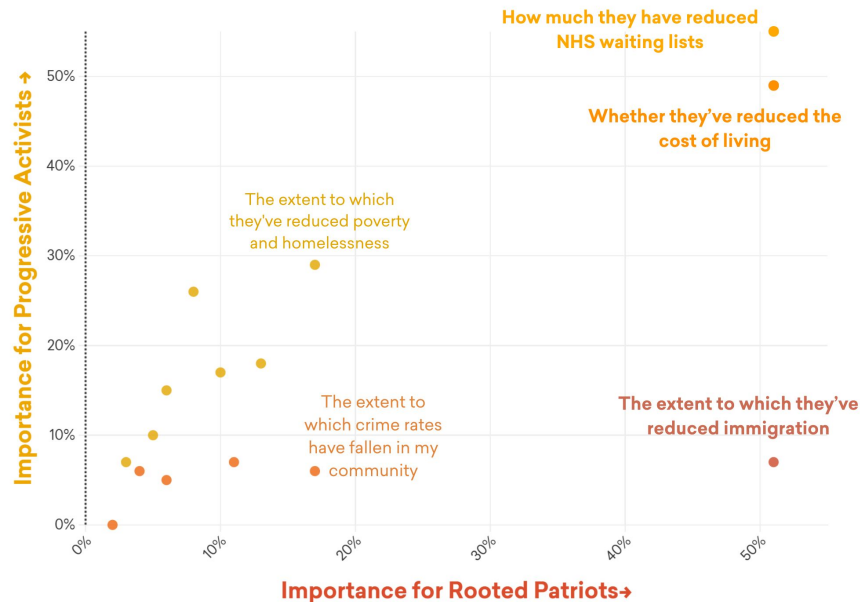
While migration lacks salience among Labour's left flank, it is one of the top priorities for Rooted Patriots (51 per cent say they will judge Labour on how much it reduces immigration).

Meanwhile the NHS and cost of living are issues that unite Labour's support base - ranking in the top three issues for every segment that voted for Labour in 2024.

The cost of living and NHS unite Rooted Patriots and Progressive Activists

Which of the following do you think will be most important for judging whether the Labour government has improved?

(Proportion of Progressive Activists and Rooted Patriots selecting each priority)



Universities and apprenticeships

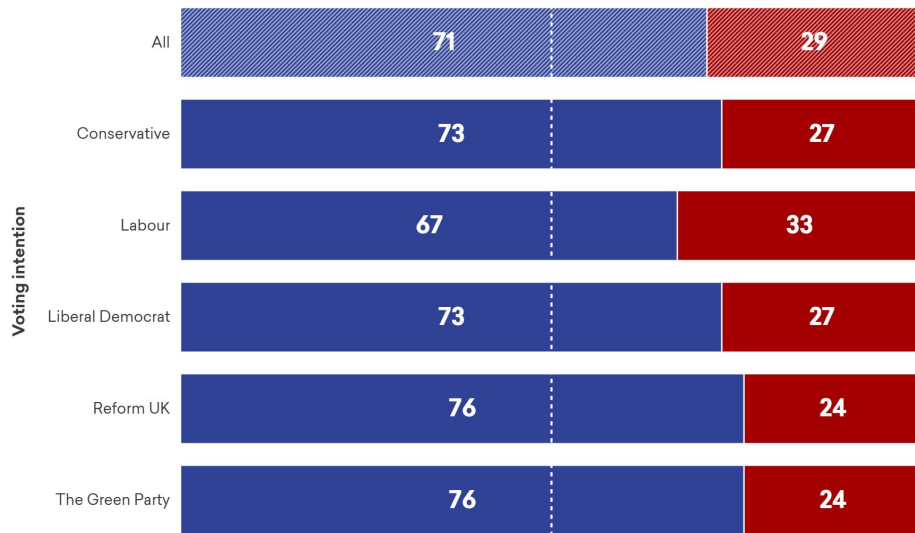
The public aligns with Labour's focus on vocational training over expanding university attendance.

Seven in ten Britons say that we should focus more on the 50 per cent of Britons who do not attend university by investing in practical, technical and vocational training - rather than .

This view spans across politics, with more than two-thirds of every voter group in agreement.

Britons across politics believe the government should focus on vocational training over expanding university places

- Britain should focus more on the 50% of people who don't go to university by investing in practical, technical and vocational education and training .
- Britain should encourage more than 50% of young people to get a university education by increasing university places.



Balancing compassion with control on migration

The Prime Minister emphasised the need for secure borders alongside compassion for those fleeing persecution.

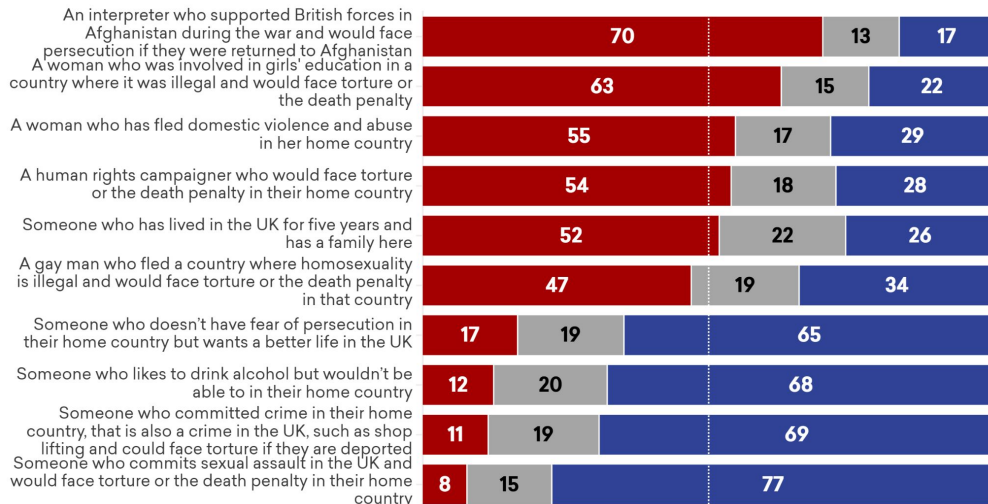
This aligns with the public's priorities on migration: Britons tend to want a system that balances control and stopping small boat crossings, while also ensuring compassion for those in need.

An approach to deportation that exposes vulnerable people to torture or persecution would be widely unpopular.

Britons oppose deporting people who could face torture, deportation or the death penalty

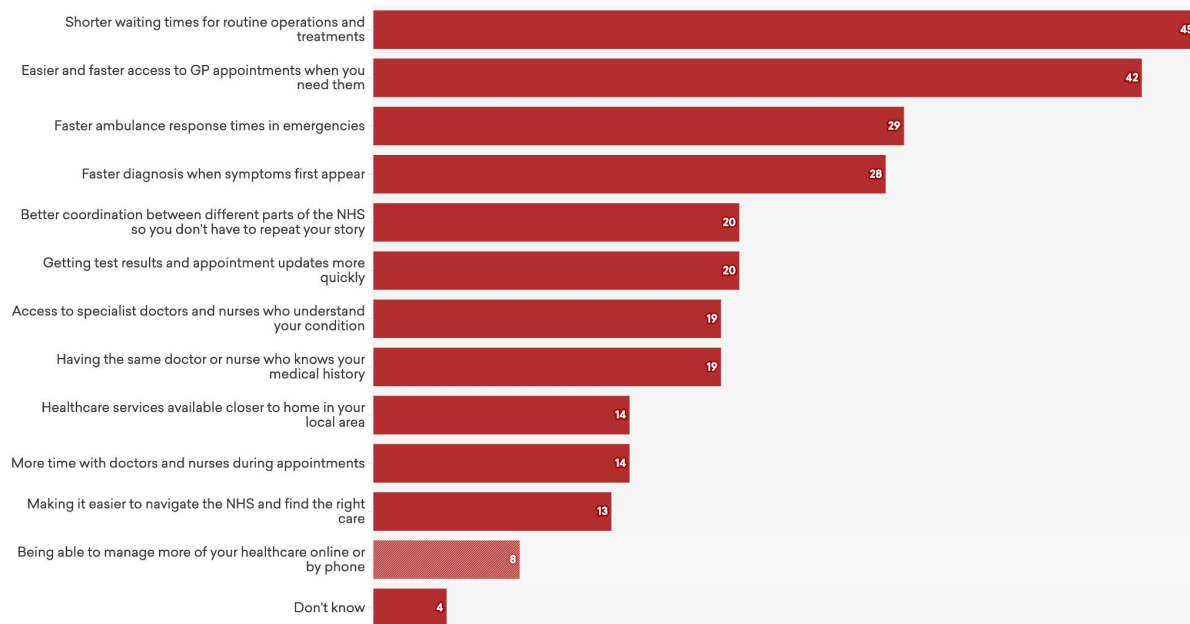
Imagine that each of the following arrive in the UK by crossing the channel in a small boat. For each of them, please indicate whether you would rather they were granted asylum in the UK, or deported back to their home country or another country.

● They should be granted asylum in the UK ● Don't know ● They should be deported to another country



NHS online is not a priority - but it could help deliver Britain's top priority for the NHS

Which of the following improvements to NHS care should be the top priorities over the next four years? Please choose up to three.



On the proposal for an entirely digital NHS trust - online health care was the lowest priority of the twelve options we polled on.

As an outcome it is not what the British people want most for the NHS, but it could be part of delivering highest priorities for the NHS: shorter waiting times and easier access to GPs.



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