



More in
Common



The politics of respect

Why respecting ordinary
people could help Labour
build a lasting voter coalition

Labour Party Conference Fringe Event 2024

Progressive Activists



Civic Pragmatists



Disengaged Battlers



Established Liberals



Loyal Nationals



Disengaged Traditionalists



Backbone Conservatives



...a group for whom politics is an important part of their identity and who seek to correct long-standing injustices

...a group that cares about others at home or abroad. They wish for less conflict and more compromise.

... a group that are just getting by. They blame the system for its unfairness, but not other people.

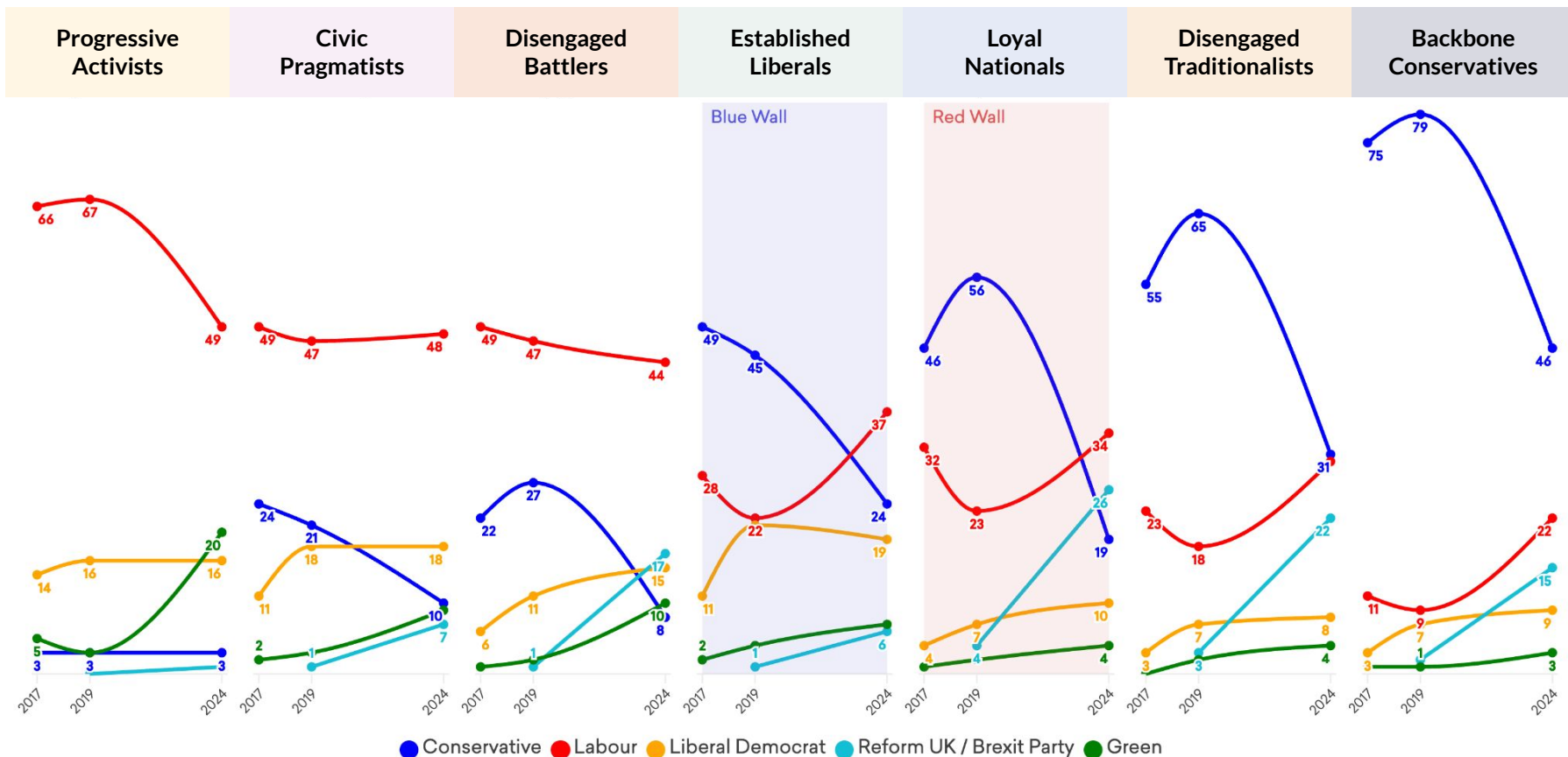
...a group that has done well and means well towards others, but also sees a lot of good in the status quo.

...a patriotic group who worry that our way of life is threatened and also feel our society has become more unfair.

... a group that values a well-ordered society and prides in hard work. They want strong leadership that keeps people in line.

... a group who are proud of their country, optimistic about Britain's future and who keenly follow the news.

How did the Seven Segments vote?

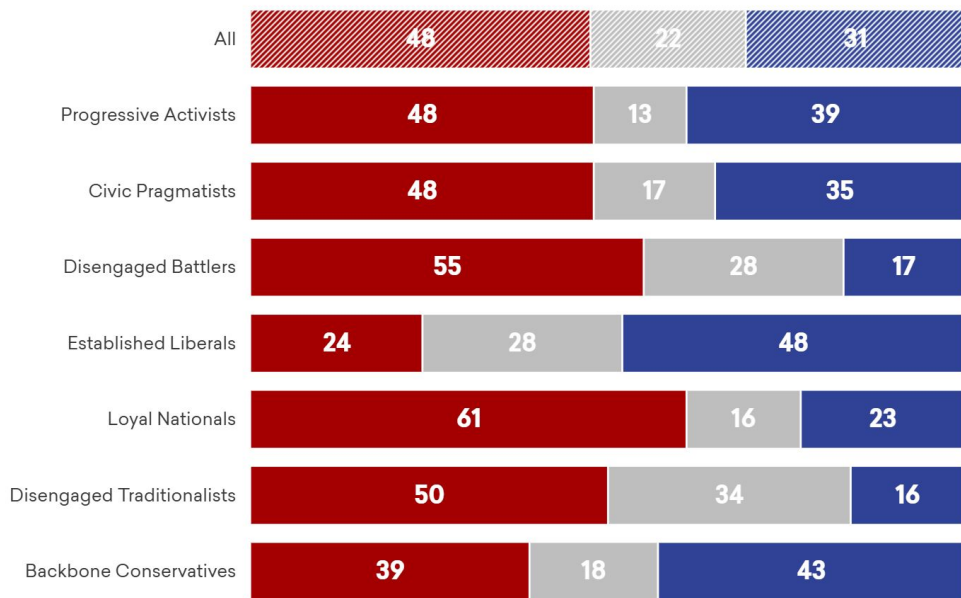


**The trust and respect
challenge facing the government**

Half the public think democracy isn't working

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

● British democracy isn't working ● Don't know ● British democracy is working



Nearly half of the public say that British democracy isn't working - this is highest among "Red Wall" Loyal Nationals and lowest among "Blue Wall" Established Liberals. In large part this is because of a sense 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 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

The most common description of Britain is 'Broken'

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



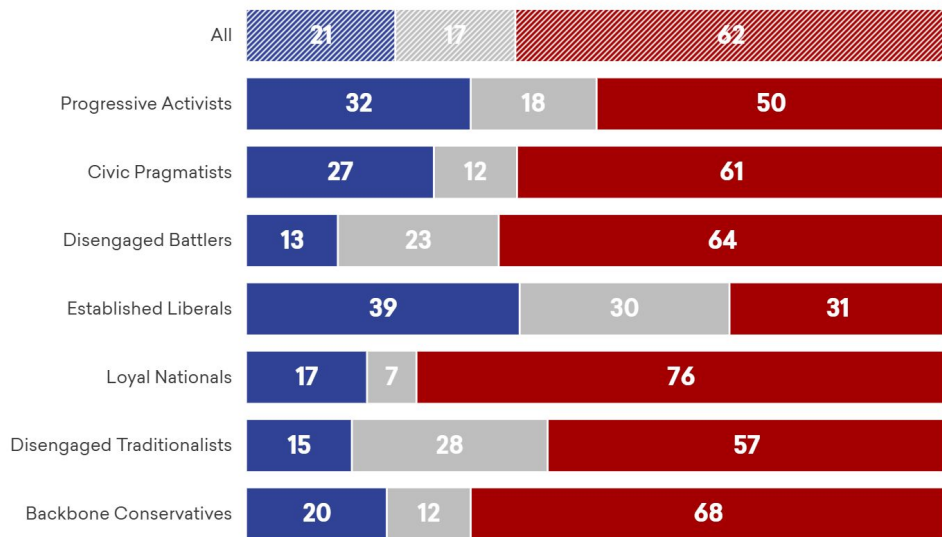
People's everyday experience is that too much of life has become a struggle and that Britain - from our public services to our high streets - feels broken. That has created a sense of national gloom that politicians haven't managed to shift and in some cases have reinforced.

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

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Our politicians are up to facing the challenges our country faces
- Don't know
- Our politicians are not up to facing the challenges our country faces



Over three in five say that our politicians are not up to managing the challenges our country faces - a view held across 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.

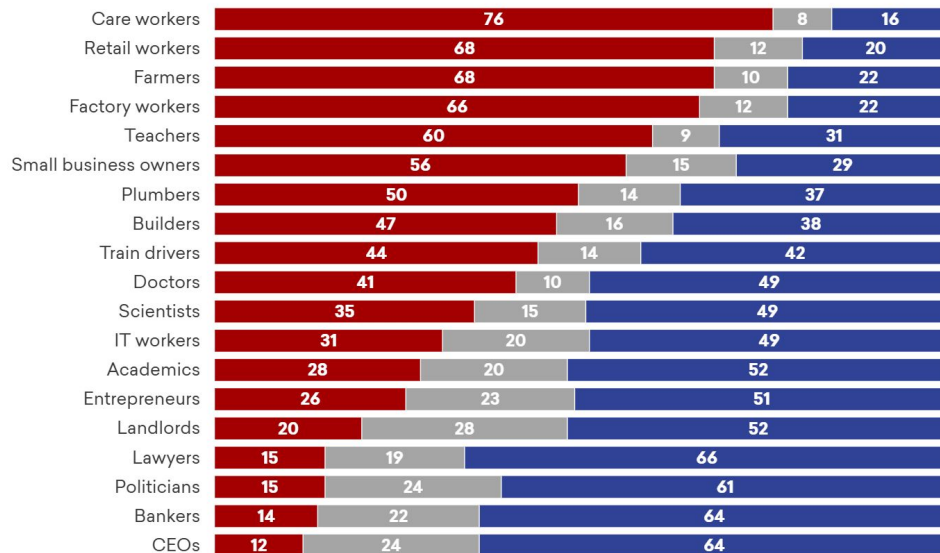
I'm not sure the politicians have got an absolute Scooby about anyone that works hard actually. I'd welcome any of them to come and do a 12-hour shift with me. That actually turns into a 15-hour shift. I think Chaz is being generous with them lasting two nights. I think they probably last about four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

Lorraine, Ambulance Worker, Croydon

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.

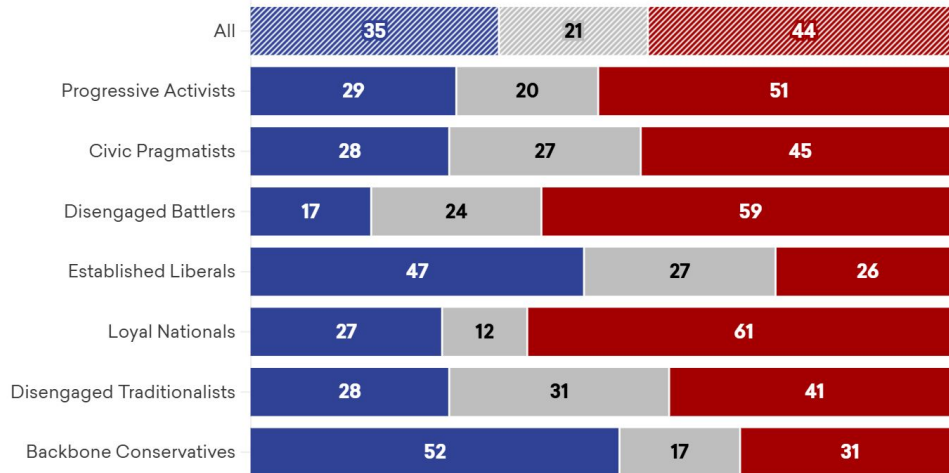
Liz, Retired Procurement Manager, Kirkcaldy

Almost half the public think don't get the respect they deserve

For each of the following groups of people in British society, do you think they generally get the respect they deserve or do not get the respect they deserve?

You personally

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



Only a third of the public think they get the respect they deserve, with a plurality saying the opposite.

This is a view held strongly across Labour's electoral coalition - from Red Wall Loyal Nationals (who hold that view most strongly), to the urban economically insecure voters (Disengaged Battlers) as well the left flank of Labour's base - the graduate heavy Progressive Activist segment.

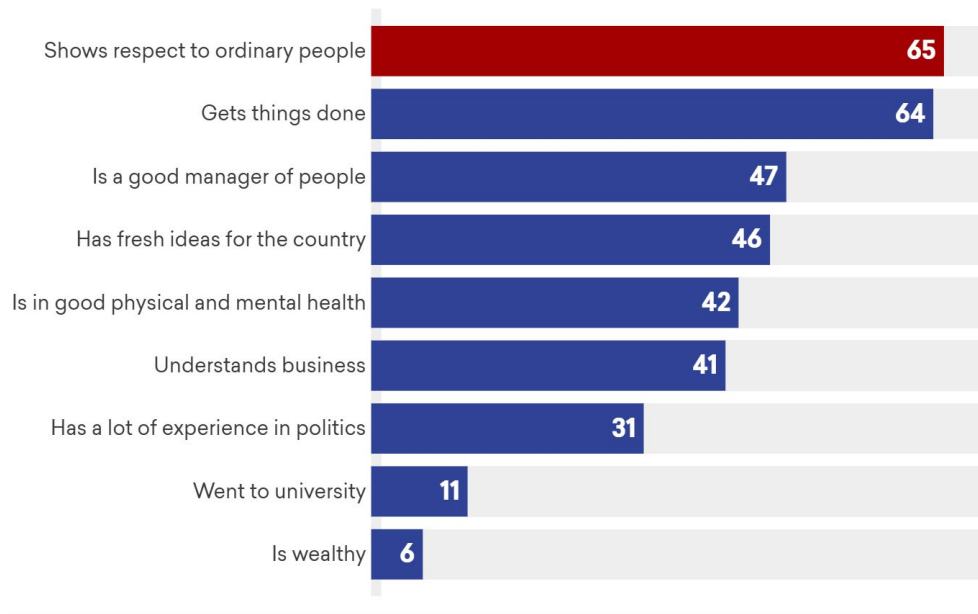
This is why Labour's mission must go beyond delivery and address people's sense of disrespect, powerlessness and lack of agency.

The respect opportunity

Respect - key attribute for a political leader

On a scale of 0-5 where 5 is very important and 0 is not important at all.
How important is it that a political leader...

% selecting '5' very important



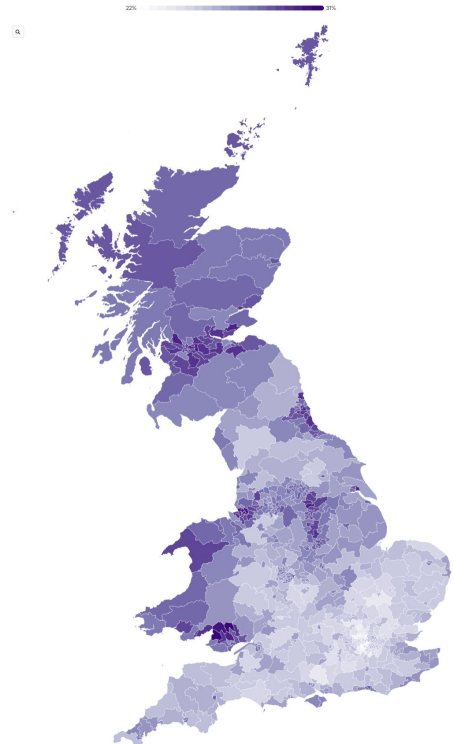
The most important attribute in a political leader is showing respect to ordinary people - this is rated above getting things done or having fresh ideas for the country. Showing respect then is a central test for the new government.

I think we've had little or no respect from politicians for 12 years for the working-class people...so anything Starmer can do to improve upon this will really help. So, I think he's a good start to his reign by talking about that

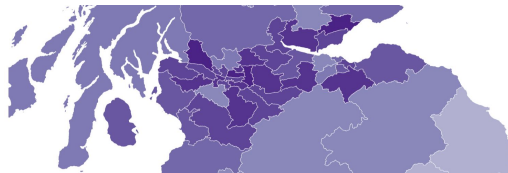
Karl, Sales Manager, Cannock Chase

Respect as the key to holding Labour's coalition together

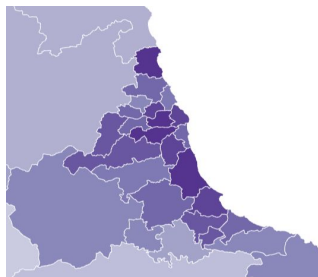
Where does respect matter?
Proportion of each constituency who consider "showing respect to ordinary people" the most important attribute for a political leader to have.



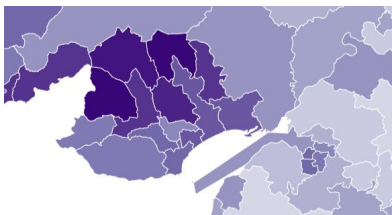
Scotland's Central Belt



The North East of England



South Wales and Bristol



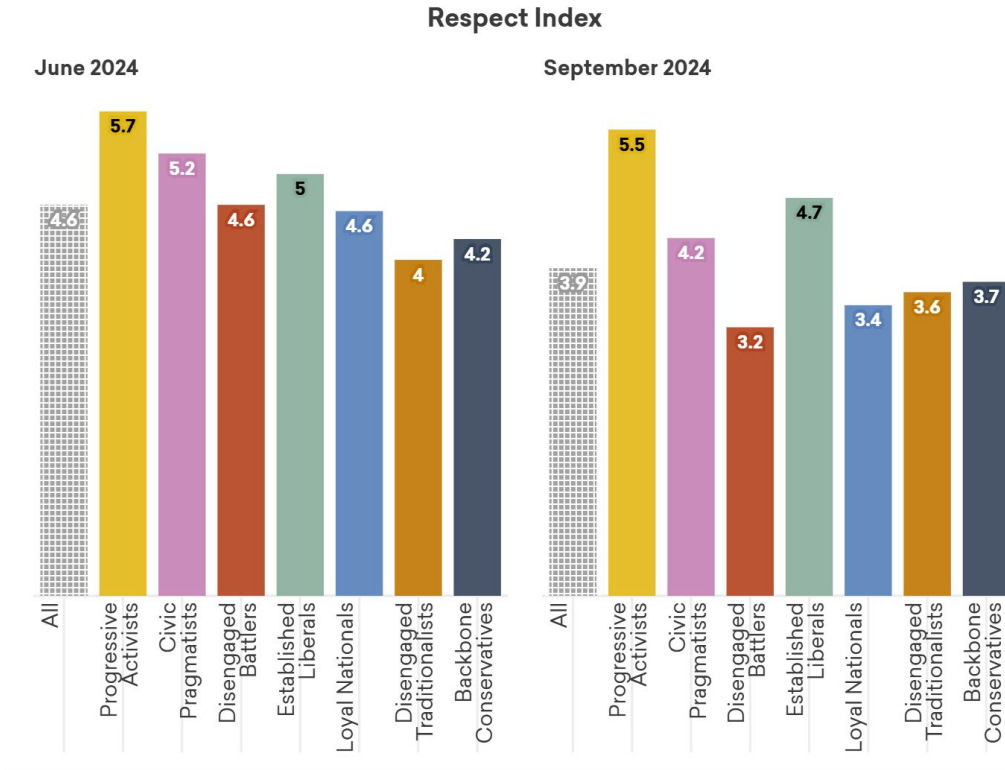
From focus group conversations, it's clear that Labour's collapse in former heartlands was driven by a sense the Labour Party had stopped respecting working people.

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.

**How has the government started on the
politics of respect?**

Public feel less respected by Labour now than during the campaign



During the election campaign More in Common and UCL Policy Lab developed the “Respect Index” which tracked how well politicians are connecting and speaking with the hopes, concerns and issues of ordinary people.

Compared to the campaign, **people are now feeling less respected by the Labour Government.**

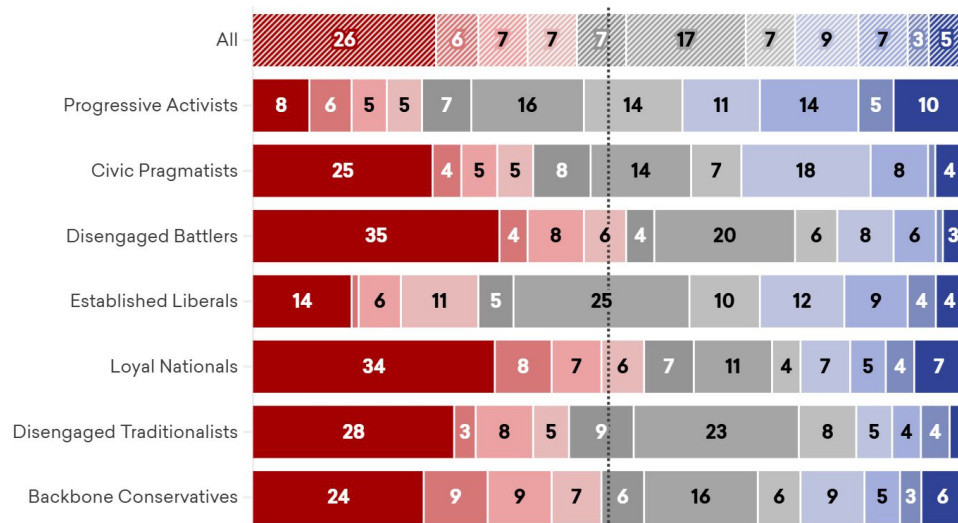
The most dramatic drops are among Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Battlers - Labour’s Red Wall and economically insecure urban voters.

Respect challenge for both the Workington Man and Stevenage Woman

Thinking about the Labour government, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

It is being led by people who respect people like me

0 - Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Strongly agree



Nearly half of the public disagree that the Labour government is being led by people who respect people like them.

This view is held most strongly by the Red Wall Loyal Nationals and Disengaged Battlers (Labour's economically insecure urban voters) - from both groups more than half disagree.

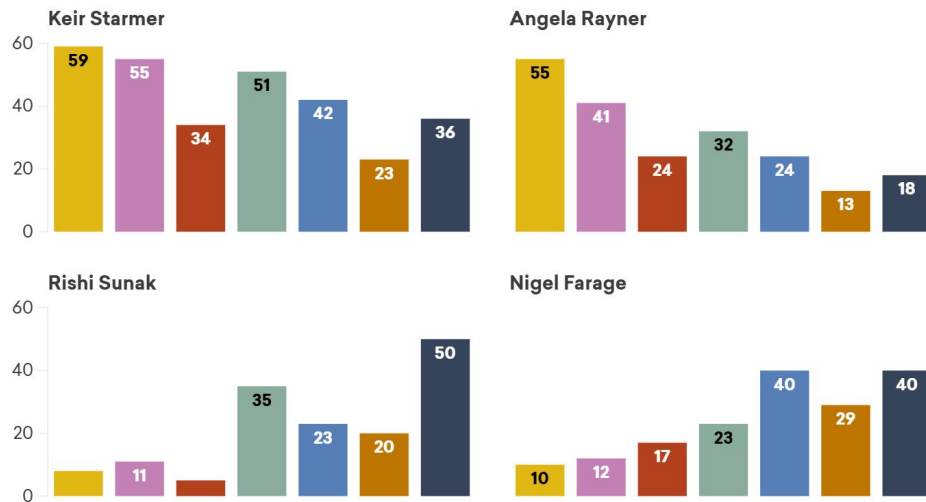
The sense of disrespect is held more strongly by these Labour voting groups than the Backbone Conservative group.

Ahead of the Tories on respect, but Farage challenge in Red Wall

Thinking about each of the following politicians in Britain, which of the following comes closer to your view?

% Selecting 'Respects people like me'

Progressive Activists Civic Pragmatists Disengaged Battlers Established Liberals
Loyal Nationals Disengaged Traditionalists Backbone Conservatives



A majority of the most solidly Labour voting segments think that Starmer and Rayner respect people like them - it's a view held strongly by Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists for both Rayner and Starmer.

Starmer and Rayner are significantly ahead of Rishi Sunak, but Starmer is only marginally ahead of Farage with Red Wall Loyal Nationals voters.

A government reset on respect?

Build on the strong response to the handling of the riots

For many, the riots were an anathema to the public's notion of respect for their community and their neighbours.

Starmer's approval on handling of the riots jumped 11 points over the course of August, and sat much higher than his general approval rating.

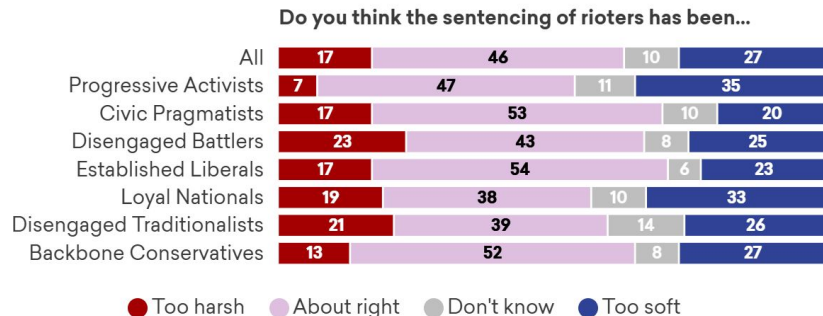
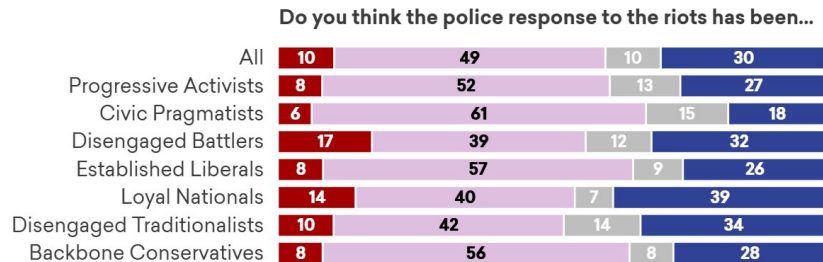
Quickly tackling the disorder with the rapid sentencing of rioters, alongside also focusing on the contribution of those involved in the community clean-up was **the right zone for the public and one which embodied the politics of respect**.

Government should build on this strong response going forward.

I think his recent action based on recent riots we've had as well, which has been a difficult time for everybody. He did act really quickly and I know he has to. I know that's naturally what people would expect him to do, but I think it was the right thing to do and he put a stance down really early that he wasn't going to accept it.

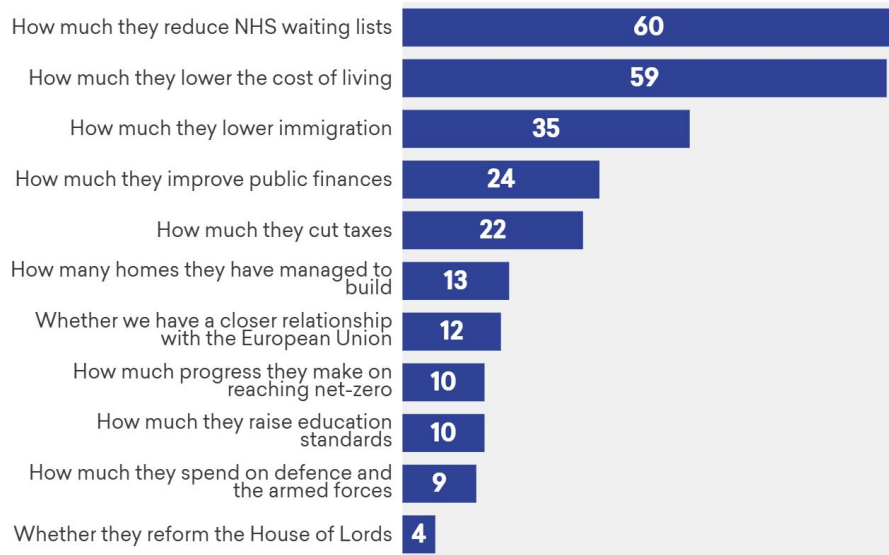
Ricky, Waterworks Worker, Swindon

Majority think policing and sentencing of riots has been "about right" or "too soft"



Reset on the less assured start on the economy

Which of the following will be most important to you in judging the success of the Labour Government after 5 years? Select up to three.



The government's change mandate is first and foremost to fix a country which feels broken - not principally on fixing the public finances, which comes behind NHS waiting lists, the cost of living and lowering immigration in our recent polling.

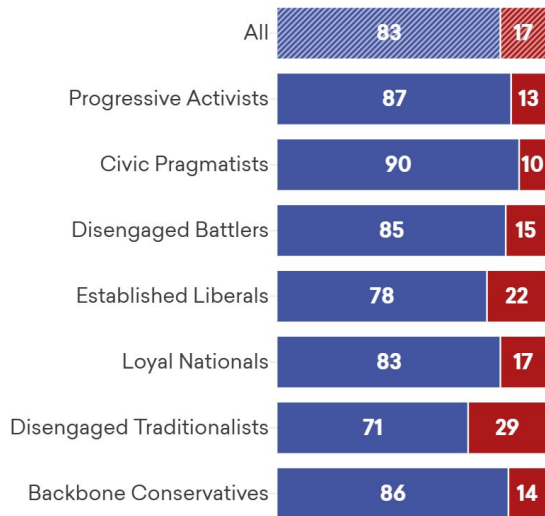
While fixing the public finances is an important step towards achieving progress on those practical and policy objectives, it's a means to an end for most voters, not an end in and of itself. It was certainly not front of mind as people cast their ballots.

This is 2024 not 2010 and concerns about the state of public services and fixing practical problems now trump concerns about the debt and deficit.

Empowering communities as a form of respect

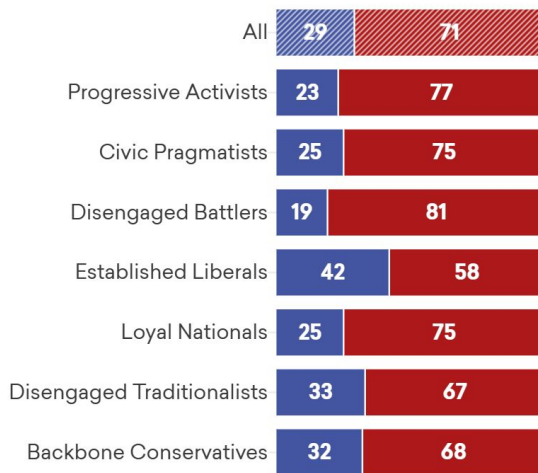
Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

- Local residents and community groups have ideas and skills that could improve the local community
- Local residents and community groups do not have ideas and skills that could improve the local community



Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

- In general, local and national government gives residents and community groups the freedom to bring about improvements to their area
- In general, local and national government does not give residents and community groups the freedom to bring about improvements to their area



Four in five Britons say their community has the ideas and skills to make improvements, but only 29% say they have the freedom to do so.

Britons don't want top-down approaches from the government making big decisions about people's lives without giving them a say.

Instead, they want to be empowered to bring about the change they need in their community.

People are more positive about the local than the national

In a word, how would you describe your local area today?

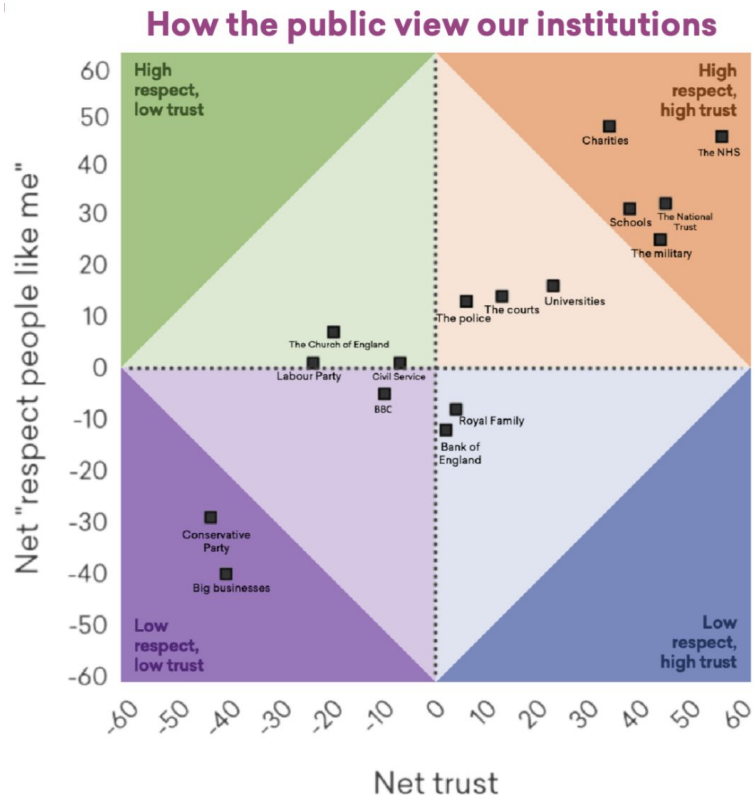


The public are more likely to say positive things about their local area than the country as a whole - tending to see the good in both the environment and community.

Nonetheless the most common descriptor is 'rundown', which speaks to why the levelling up agenda chimed with the public and why its failures were so keenly felt.

A local respect agenda that empowers people to deliver 'ordinary hope' is a strong antidote.

See the challenge as broader than just politics



More in Common and the UCL Policy Lab's research show the challenges facing a range of national institutions on respect - including businesses, the Royal Family and the Civil Service - the crisis of trust and respect goes beyond politics.

As well as learning from high trust and high respect institutions such as the NHS and charities, Labour needs to work with organisations like the BBC and businesses to help show the public respect in a way the public thinks they are currently failing.



**More in
Common**