

Incrementalist Left

21 per cent of the population.

A satisfied group rooted in their community, who hold left-of-centre values but do not like talking about politics and who avoid divisive issues. They want to see change in the world, but do not want that to come at the expense of what is good already, and they are happy to compromise in order to get there.

"I like Keir Starmer. I think he is a good man amongst a lot of politicians who are not and I think he genuinely cares about all people in society"
Tamara, Chester

"We're quite active in the local community, both giving back from a business point of view but also doing things, helping out at groups and things where my son goes to."
Becky Chester



Key words

Liberal, compromising, conflict-averse, cautious, satisfied, community-oriented, trusting.

What they worry about

Rising inequality in society, polarisation and division in Britain, the rise of Reform UK, global instability and uncertainty around conflict and the rise of populist leaders, the future of the NHS.

Where you might find them

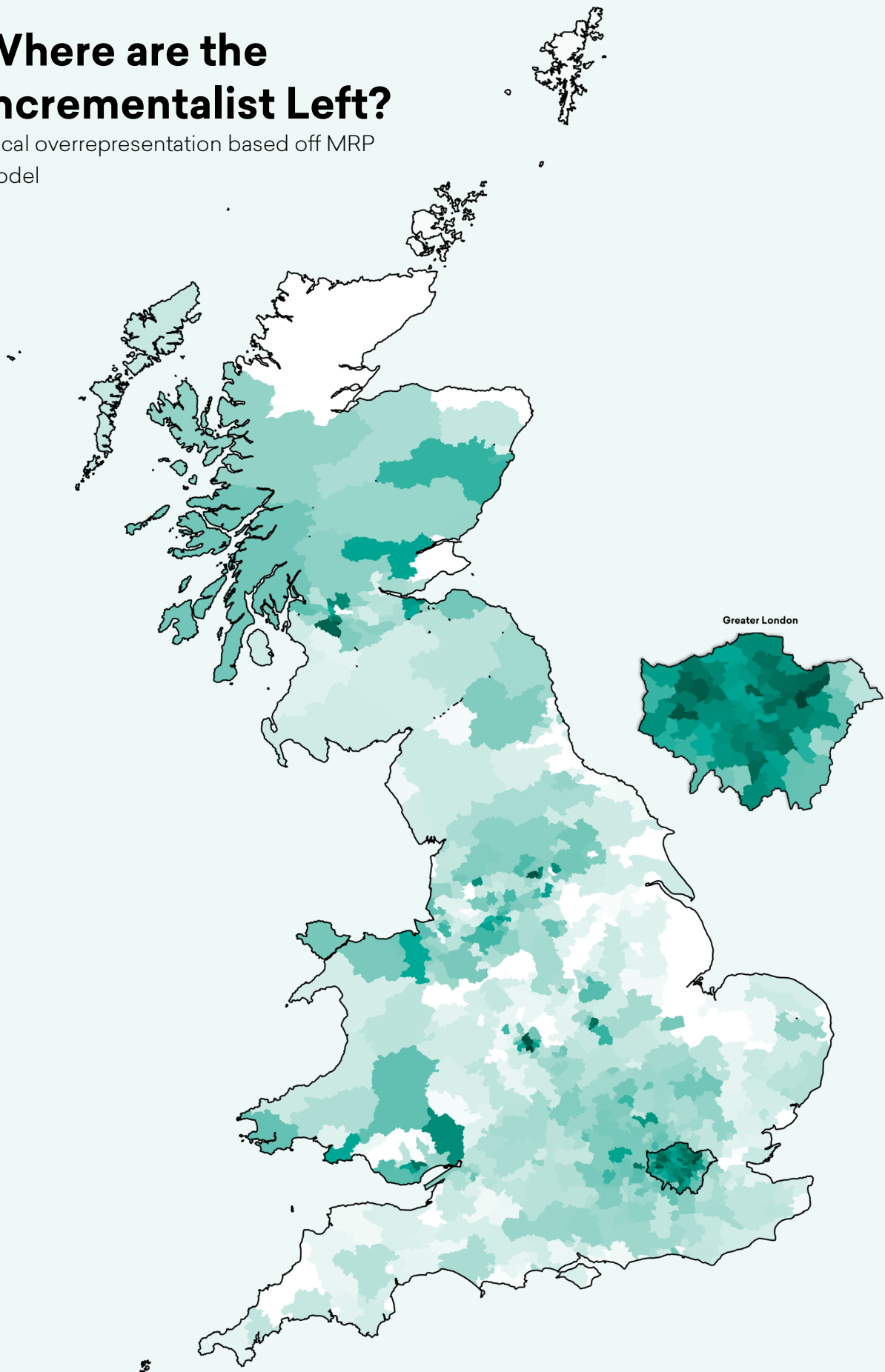
Working in public sector jobs such as in schools and hospitals; volunteering in their community; at a play park with their young children; in cities and commuter towns; in constituencies such as Reading Central, Milton Keynes Central, Edinburgh North and Leith, Hove and Portslade and Coventry East.

How they get their news

They tend not to seek out news constantly, but want to be at least somewhat informed about the world. They might turn on BBC news over dinner, or listen to a podcast such as *Newscast* on their commute, but prefer non current affairs podcasts such as *The Rest is History*. They also come across plenty of news information organically on social media, although many of them try to block it out.

Where are the Incrementalist Left?

Local overrepresentation based off MRP model



Source: More in Common, June 2025

The Incrementalist Left is a softly progressive segment – they hold left-of-centre values but are broadly content with the way things are and see no urgency for radical change. A more university-educated group living in cities such as London and commuter towns, they are satisfied with their lives and feel quite optimistic about a future benefiting from economic growth and new technologies. This segment is more community-oriented than national or global – they volunteer, trust their neighbours and feel connected to society around them.

I've got close neighbours, I do a lot for charity, for an autism charity, but there's always certain things that they're doing in St. Albans to raise money and yeah, I think it's a good place, good place to live and everyone works together.

Abbie, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

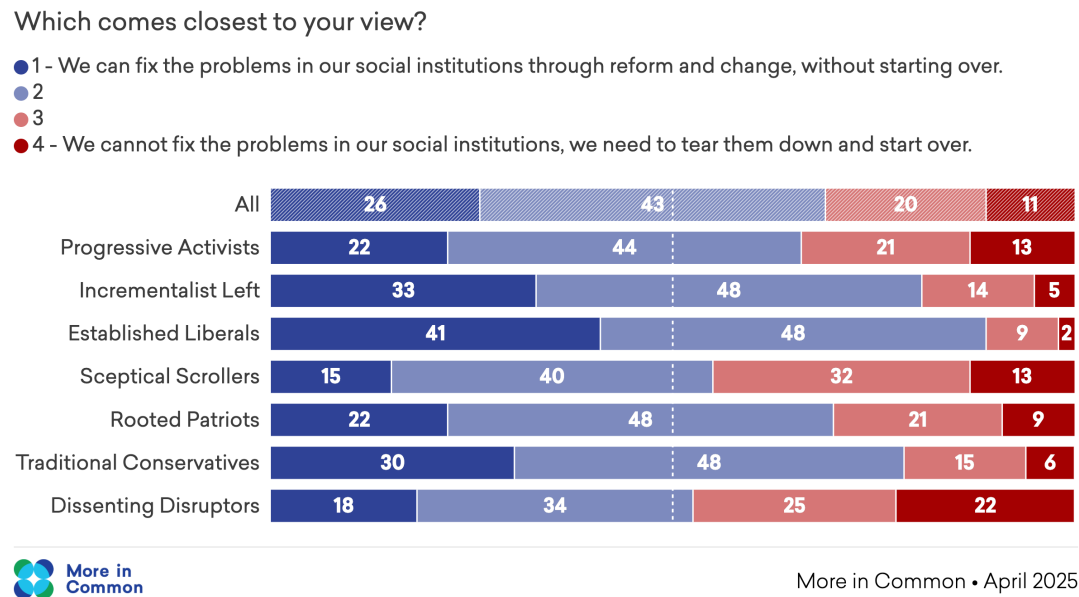
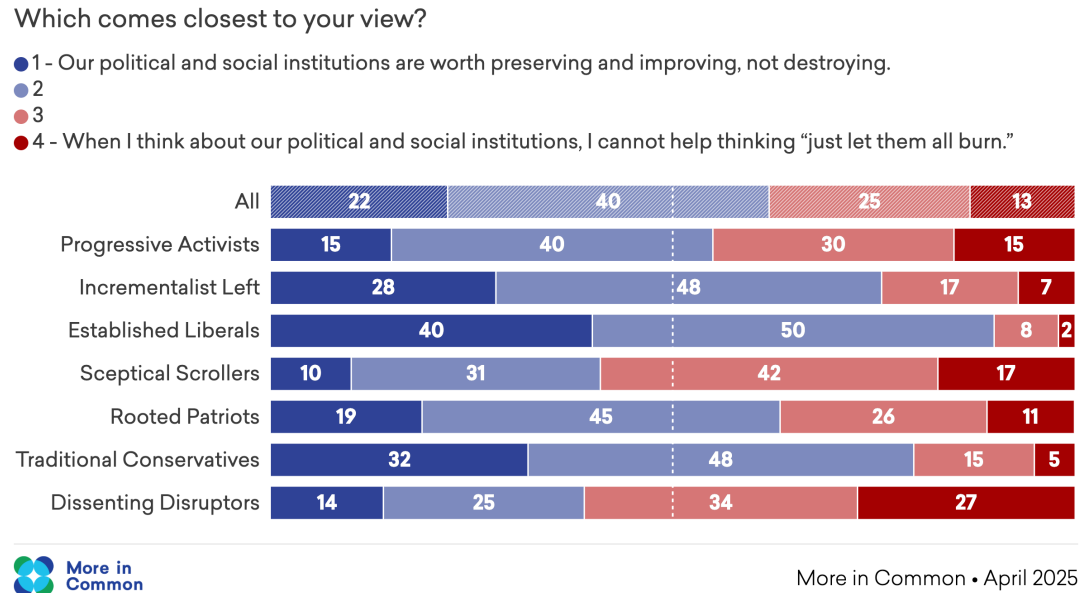
I'm a governor in a local school. I do things, we're quite active in the local community, both giving back from a business point of view but also doing things, helping out at groups and things where my son goes to.

Becky, Incrementalist Left, Chester

The Incrementalist Left are distinct from Progressive Activists in their approach to change. While both segments share similar concerns about the direction of the country, and are passionate about issues such as climate change or inequality in society, the Incrementalist Left see less of a need to tear our institutions down and start over, and are much more likely to favour solutions centred on reform rather than revolution.

They worry most about the cost of living, jobs, the NHS, housing and climate change. But rather than demanding radical systemic change, they believe that we should preserve and improve our existing institutions. Along with Established Liberals, this group places great value on expertise and trusts qualified professionals (from scientists to judges and the police) to handle relevant challenges. They see our policy challenges as complex and trust experts to deliver positive change.

Figure 67 | Desire to drastically change our institutions by segment



Demographically, the Incrementalist Left are slightly older and more financially secure than Progressive Activists and are more likely than other segments to have young children. They are twice as likely as Progressive Activists to be religious. They are the most ethnically diverse segment, with almost a quarter identifying as non-white. This group also has the highest proportion of people identifying as Muslim of any segment (9 per cent).

Their satisfaction with the status quo gives them a more relaxed approach to politics - they support progressive change not from personal urgency but from their moral perspective on right and wrong. Unlike their more ideological counterparts, they approach politics as observers rather than passionate participants. They do not enjoy talking about politics, preferring to leave it to people who know more about it, or finding it depressing.

That aversion to conflict and combative politics can occasionally mean that the Incrementalist Left deliberately avoids engaging in issues that they see as too negative, fraught or complex. If other segments might label Progressive Activists as 'woke', they might criticise the Incrementalist Left for having their head in the sand.

[My social media feed] isn't anything to do with the news. Not really. I get a few people reposting things that are going on in the world, but I kind of try not to look into them. I end up going down that spiral of negativity.

Frankie, Incrementalist Left, St Albans

In fact, in many ways they are relatively disengaged from politics. While they are likely to vote whenever an election comes around, in the years between they would much rather switch off from politics. The Incrementalist Left's approach to political disagreement reflects their generally optimistic and cooperative outlook. They diverge from the Progressive Activists in strongly valuing compromise, believing that most political problems can be solved through good-faith discussion between sensible people. They dislike leaders who they perceive as extreme such as Donald Trump, Jeremy Corbyn and Nigel Farage.

But their political disengagement should not be confused with civic disengagement. They care deeply about their local community and their role within it - they are more likely than average to volunteer in their community and the segment most likely to donate to their place of worship.

So I've got neighbours around, so what we do is charity funding, sometimes fundraising and all of that. Occasionally, I wouldn't say it's often or something we do regularly and on Sundays we do have get togethers around the garden.

Julian, Incrementalist Left, Chester

I'm proud of my local area. It's got its negative aspects of it, but it's a nice, okay place to live.

Becky, Incrementalist Left, Chester

The Incrementalist Left tend to think multiculturalism benefits British identity. They believe in the importance of traditions, but do not think that traditions need to be thoughtlessly maintained if they are causing harm. As with Progressive Activists, protecting people from harmful speech takes priority for them over the principle of free speech. However, the Incrementalist Left are more likely than Progressive Activists to see political correctness as a problem.

Sarah

Sarah teaches at a comprehensive school in Reading, where she has spent the last fifteen years watching her workload grow while resources shrink. The endless paperwork, larger class sizes, and constant pressure to hit targets leave her drained by Friday afternoons. But she does not always see this as a system failure – just the reality of a demanding job she still loves.

That said, when Labour won the election, Sarah felt some relief that her school might finally receive the investment she believes it deserves and the children need.

What worries Sarah more than government policy is what her students encounter online. She tries to weave discussions about climate change and global citizenship into her lessons, but increasingly finds herself competing with the latest conspiracy theories or extreme content that they have absorbed from social media.

Sarah volunteers at a local food bank and feels deeply connected to her community, preferring to focus her energy on tangible help rather than political arguments. Sometimes Sarah's most progressive friends or colleagues get frustrated with her that she will not join them in taking a stand alongside them against injustice – whether in school or on global issues such as the conflict in the Middle East. She trusts that experts and institutions will eventually sort out the big problems – she sees her job as to prepare students to think critically and treat each other with kindness in an increasingly complicated world.

Sarah will catch the BBC at six o'clock some days, but deliberately avoids scrolling through social media for updates that she knows will only leave her feeling helpless about problems beyond her control. When friends share articles about education cuts or climate disasters she clicks the link, but she would not share that kind of thing on her account.

Sarah's approach to the challenges facing education reflects her broader worldview: problems are real and serious, but they are best solved through steady improvement rather than dramatic upheaval.

