



More in  
Common



# Conservative Thinking at the Cross-roads: Where Next for the Right?



Monday, 6 October



15:00 to 16:00



Central 6, Secure Zone,  
Manchester Central



**Alex  
Newton (Chair)**

More in  
Common



**Marc  
Stears**

UCL Policy  
Lab



**Esther  
McVey MP**

MP for  
Tatton



**Penny  
Mordaunt**

Former Leader, House  
of Commons



**Luke  
Tryl**

More in  
Common



**David  
Davis MP**

MP for Goole &  
Pocklington



# **The state of the Conservatives**

## Progressive Activists



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

## Incrementalist Left



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

## Established Liberals



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

## Sceptical Scrollers



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

## Rooted Patriots



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

## Traditional Conservatives



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

## Dissenting Disruptors

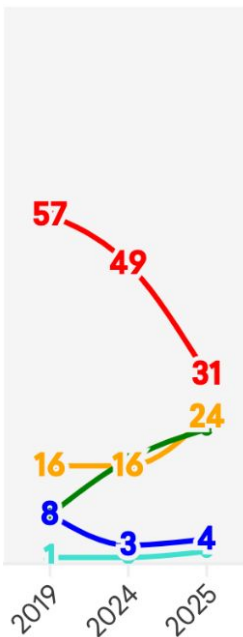


... a frustrated group that craves radical change and backs strong leaders who promise to shake up a broken system

# How would the seven segments vote?

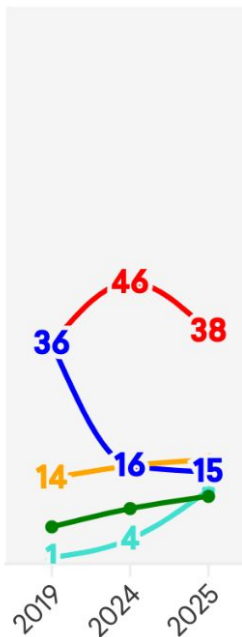
## Progressive Activists

"Corbynites"



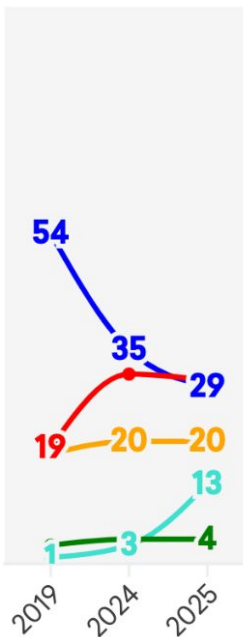
## Incrementalist Left

"Social democrats"



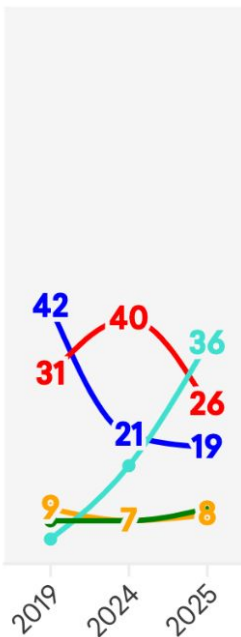
## Established Liberals

"Blue Wall"



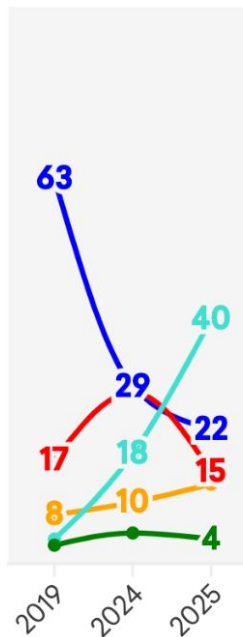
## Sceptical Scrollers

"Online Disengaged"



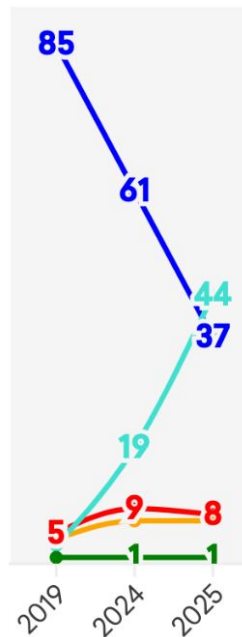
## Rooted Patriots

"Red Wall"



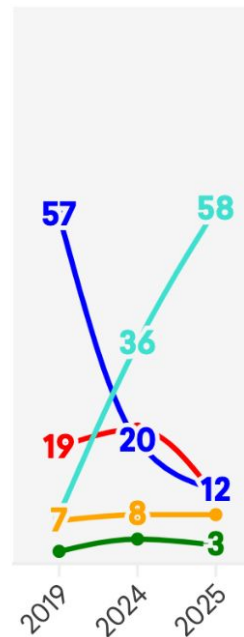
## Traditional Conservatives

"Shire Tory"



## Dissenting Disruptors

"Populist Right"



# The Conservatives' core segments

## Established Liberals

'Cameronite Tories' who have left the Party in recent years for Labour and the Liberal Democrats. For many, changes in direction after the EU Referendum caused them to leave the Conservative Party, even though they are closely aligned with Conservative values on the economy.



## Rooted Patriots

Socially conservative voters living in places that feel left-behind and overlooked. They have voted for Labour and Conservatives in the past and many are now attracted to Reform, having been let down by the main parties. They are more risk-averse than Reform's core voters.



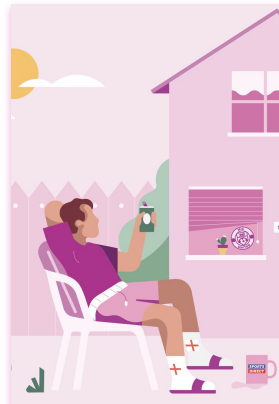
## Traditional Conservatives

Traditionally the Conservatives' core voter base, they value respect, tradition and authority more than any other voter group. However they are increasingly attracted to Reform UK as many say the Conservative Party has not learned its lesson from the last election.



## Dissenting Disruptors

A politically disengaged group who tend not to vote in elections unless there is a chance to cause meaningful change. This group feels disparaged by elites and that diversity is undermining Britain. Given this, they are extremely attracted to Reform UK and the opportunity to 'tear down the system' with a completely new party.





**Isolationism or global  
leadership?**

# Britons' support for Ukraine

**President Trump's volatile relationship with Volodymyr Zelensky has not dampened the British public's support for Ukraine. On the contrary, 44 per cent say they feel more sympathetic to Ukraine as a result, while 45 per cent say their views have not changed.**

Only 11 per cent said they felt less sympathetic towards Ukraine following the Oval Office meeting.

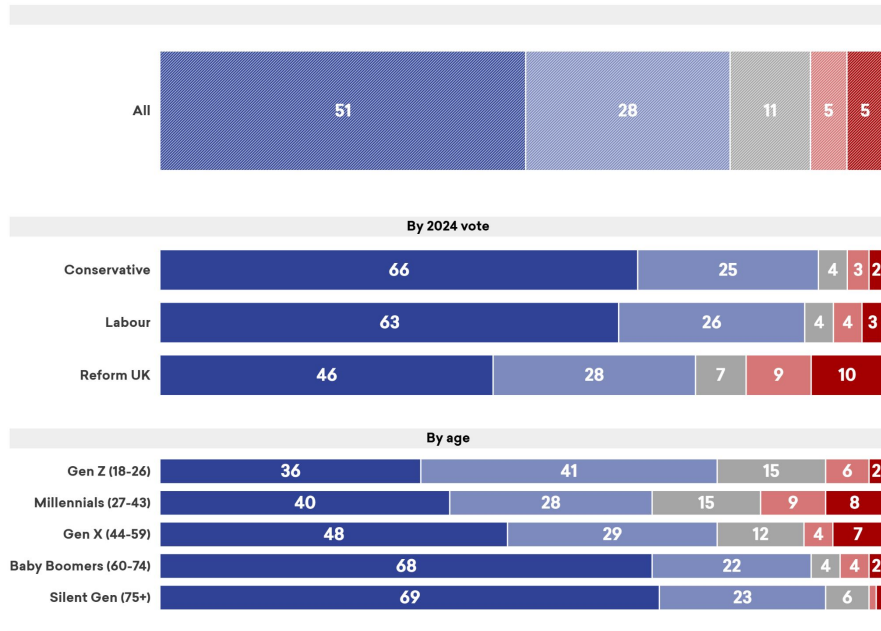
**Eight in ten Britons (79 per cent) say Ukraine's defence is important to the UK - an increase of six points since mid-February.** Unlike in other countries, this support spans across all main voter groups and generations.

What's more, support for Ukraine is not tied to views of the American President: two thirds of Britons who approve of Donald Trump think that Ukraine's defence is important to the UK.

## Support for Ukraine's defence spans across age and politics

Thinking about the war in Ukraine, how important is it for the UK that Ukraine defends its sovereignty against Russian aggression?

Very important   Somewhat important   Don't know   Not very important   Not at all important



# Britons are more united than other countries on Ukraine

While support for Ukraine is strong across Europe and the United States, British voters are uniquely united in their attitudes toward Ukraine, with remarkably little political polarisation.

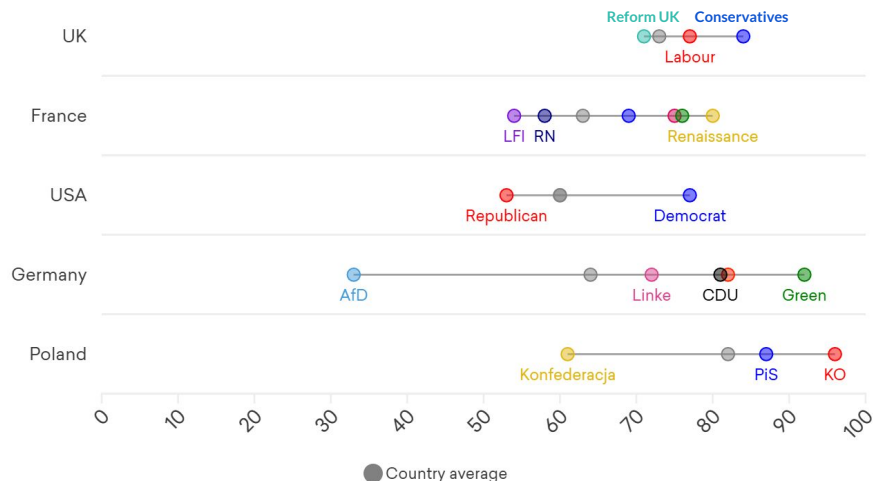
On a range of measures - including the importance of Ukraine's defence, sympathy for the country, and the belief that Russia started the war - the opinion gap between voters of the different parties in Britain is significantly smaller than in every other country polled.

In the United States, Democrats are 24 percentage points more likely than Republicans to believe that Russia started the war. In contrast, the gap between Labour and Conservative voters in Britain is just seven points, with Conservatives slightly more likely to blame Russia. Even between Reform and Conservative voters, the difference is only 16 points, with the latter more likely to blame Russia.

## Britons are less polarised than other countries on Ukraine

Who do you think is responsible for the war in Ukraine?

Proportion of each voter group who think that **Russia** is responsible.





# Standing up for Britain

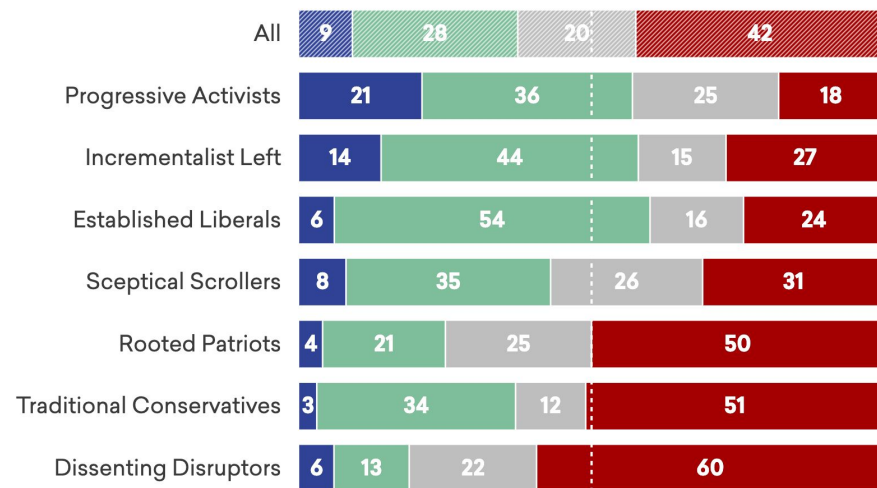
**The public also wants to see a leader who stands up for Britain.** For some, this will mean making sure money isn't wasted on overseas projects where the benefit to Britain is unclear. For others, this will mean investing more in the British defence industry.

Either way, there is clearly some scope for a more populist leader to tap into the distrust in Britain's current geopolitical position to pursue a position similar to Donald Trump's 'America First' movement, even if this is unlikely to be popular with most Britons.

However, there is probably more scope for a leader who pledges to help restore Britain's leadership rather than pulls away entirely from global issues.

Thinking about the UK taking a stance on global issues, which of the following comes closer to your view?

- The UK takes advantage of other countries
- Both the UK and other countries get a fair deal
- Don't know
- Other countries take advantage of the UK



# A weak point for Reform

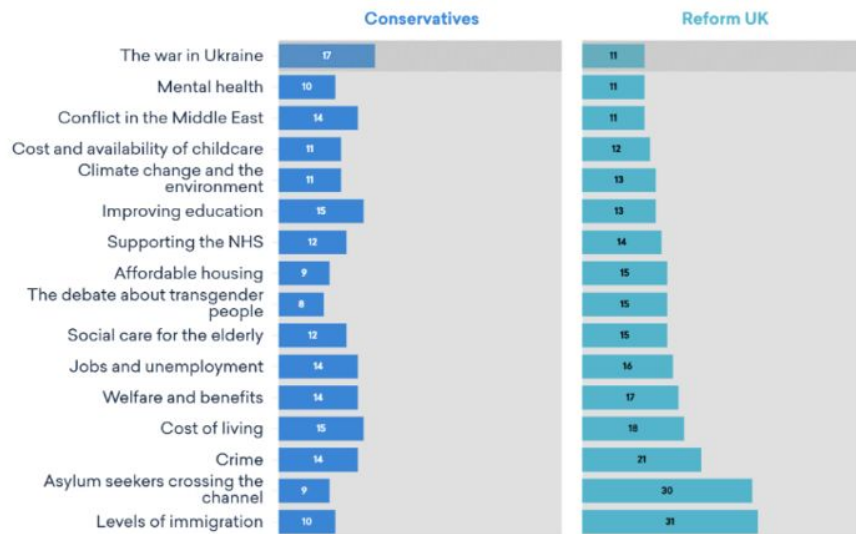
**Foreign policy is both a strong point for the Conservative Party and a weak point for Reform UK- making it one of the topics on which the Conservatives could challenge Reform most effectively.**

For example, the war in Ukraine is the policy area in which the Conservatives perform the best and Reform UK performs the worst.

Burnishing the Conservatives' credentials as the party of defence, a party that supports advancing Britain's interests in the world and stands up for western democratic principles is likely to be a key strength in the battle against Reform.

## Ukraine is the issue on which Britons trust the Conservatives the most, and Reform the least

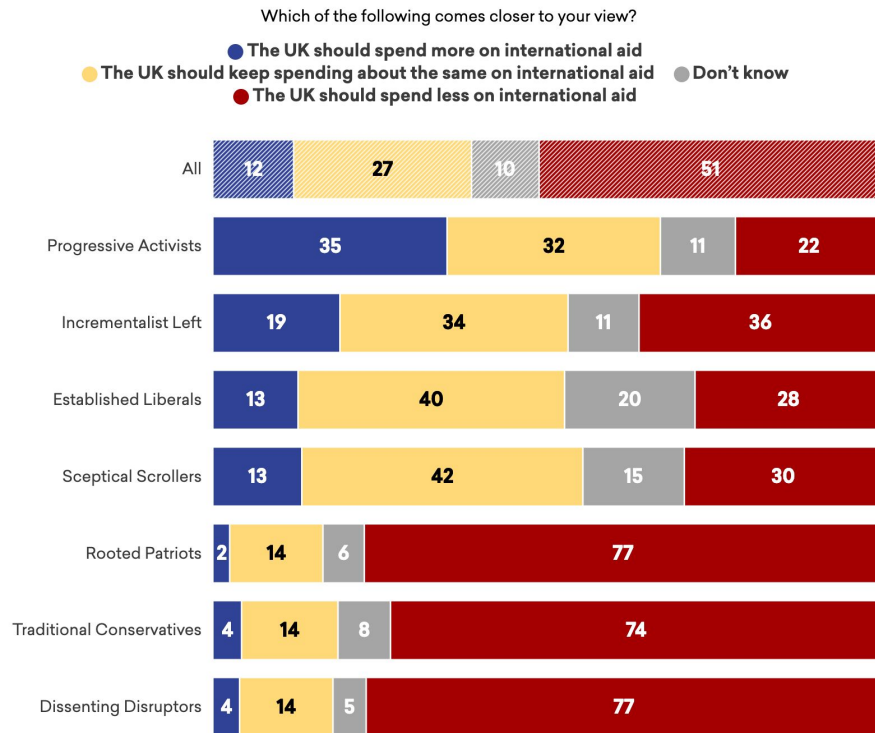
Which of the following parties do you trust most on each of the following issues?




# Aid

The political consensus on aid has wavered in recent years: Established Liberals are now the only segment of the Conservatives' four voter groups to say aid should be increased or kept at current levels.

That said, Rooted Patriots and Traditional Conservatives in particular do not want to see Britain completely shirking its international contributions. They want to see aid that benefits Britain and less wasteful spending. Support for disaster relief and vaccinations abroad, for example, remains high. However, it is also true that the tight fiscal situation in the UK has led to Britons having much less patience with aid spending they see as wasteful or unbeneficial to the UK.





**Build Baby Build or Not in  
My Backyard?**

# The Canadian example

In Canada, Pierre Poilievre steered the Conservative Party to significantly increased success in the polls on the back of Justin Trudeau's unpopularity and a stronger message on housebuilding (in some cases at the expense of environmental policies).

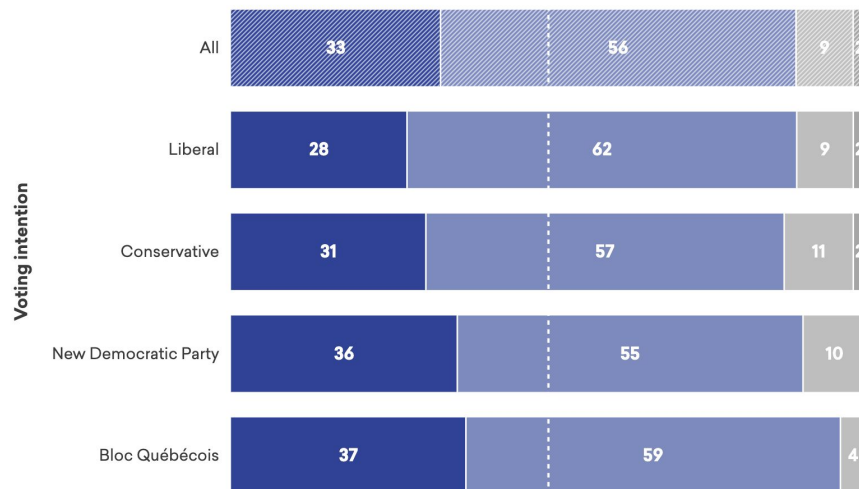
Of course, this was soon undone by a change of Liberal Party leadership and a new President in the US, yet gains among young people persisted.

The age of the average Conservative voter is now 59 and the party is in fifth place with Gen Z. Given the Conservative Party's existential problem with young people, there is an argument to be made that the Conservatives need to emulate some of this strategy in the UK.

## Canadian Conservatives tapped into high levels of concern about housing

Which of the following best describes your opinion about the housing shortage in Canada today?

● It's an emergency ● It's a major problem ● It's a minor problem ● It's not a problem

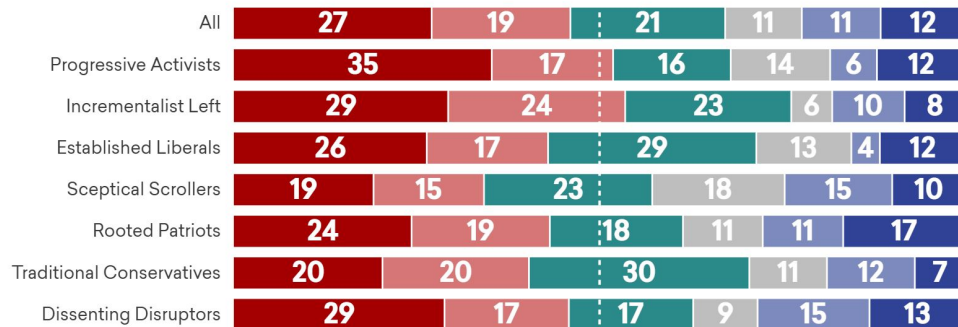


# Britons believe we are not building enough homes

## All Seven Segments are more likely to believe we are building too few, rather than too many, homes in the UK

Do you think in the UK we are currently building too many, too few or about the right number of new homes for people to live in?

● Far too few ● Slightly too few ● About the right number ● Don't know  
● Slightly too many ● Far too many



Britons believe too few homes are being built in the UK: 46 per cent say too small a number is being built in contrast to 22 per cent who feel it's a case of too many.

43 per cent of those who own their home think we are building too few homes compared to 53 per cent of those renting from the council or a housing association, and 60 per cent of those renting privately.

Those who are dissatisfied with their housing, those living in urban areas and those with younger children are more likely to think that not enough houses are being built.

The age divide we observe counters popular narratives: older Britons, particularly Baby Boomers, are the most likely to think we are constructing too few homes.

# Conservative environmentalism

Any move to build more houses needs to be coupled with a conservative approach to environmentalism.

Most Britons do not see themselves as 'NIMBYs' or 'YIMBYs' but want politicians to build more houses without damaging the environment.

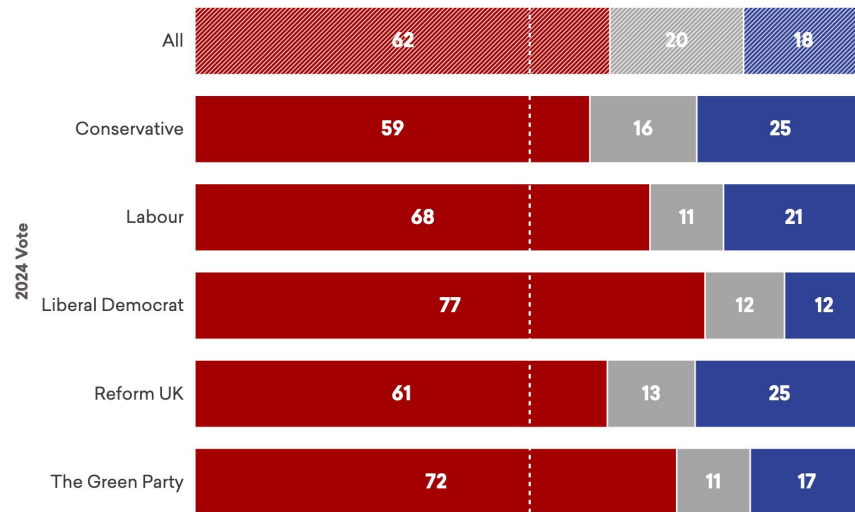
Indeed, Britain's wildlife and countryside is deeply important to Britons across the political spectrum (regardless of their broader views on climate change), and most Britons' support for housebuilding stops if it is seen to be damaging the environment.

Conservative leaders may want to find ways to build more homes without ripping up the rulebook on certain environmental protections.

## Britons want the protection of wildlife to be prioritised over costs in the construction of infrastructure

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- We should prioritise protecting wildlife, even if it makes it more expensive to build infrastructure
- Don't know
- We should prioritise building infrastructure, even if it means some wildlife is harmed





**Out-do Reform on  
immigration, or focus on  
the economy?**



# Conservatives beat Labour and Reform on the economy

While the Conservatives lag behind Reform and Labour on many of the country's biggest issues, the economy stands out as a topic on which the Conservatives do still have an advantage over both Labour and Reform UK.

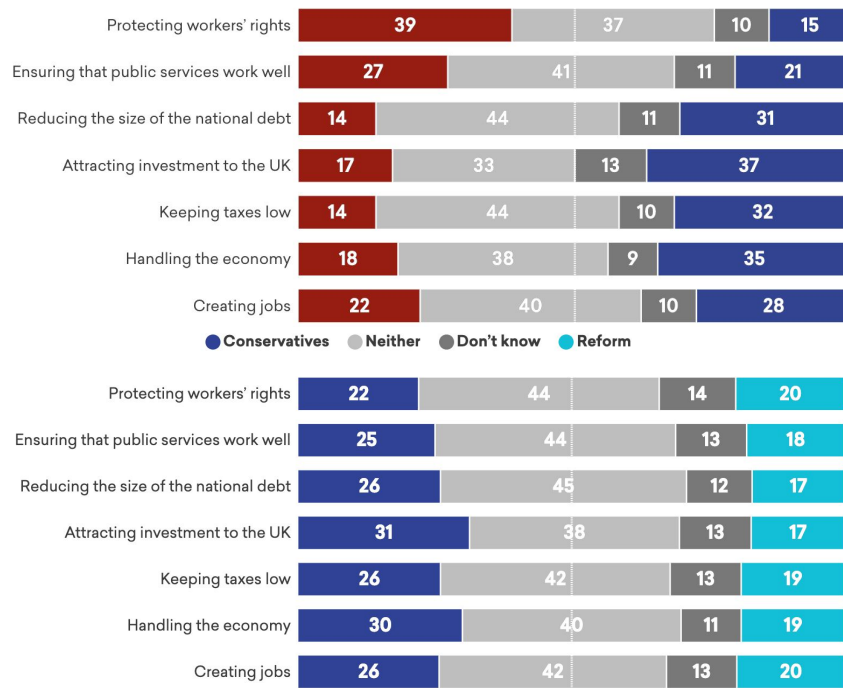
The Conservatives lead Labour on reducing the size of the national debt, attracting investment to the UK, keeping taxes low, handling the economy and creating jobs.

The Conservatives lead Reform on every economic issue tested. However the large proportion of people saying "neither party" on these questions shows just how far all political parties in the UK have to go if they are to earn public trust to handle the nation's finances.

## The Conservatives are trusted more than Labour and Reform on many economic issues

Which party do you trust more on each of the following?

● Labour ● Neither ● Don't know ● Conservatives



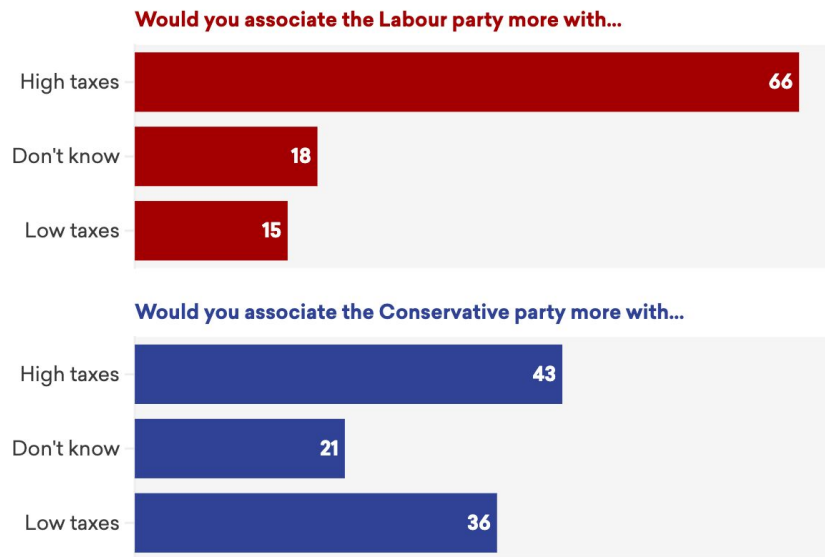
# Tax as a wedge issue


Labour has not shaken off its reputation for increasing taxes: two in three associate the Labour Party more with high taxes than low taxes.

Yet high levels of taxation under the previous Conservative Government may have undermined the Party's edge on this question: Britons are split roughly evenly on whether the Conservatives represent high or low taxation.

The public is far more likely to trust the Conservatives than Labour when it comes to keeping taxes low (32 per cent vs 14 per cent) and slightly more so when comparing the Conservatives to Reform (26 per cent vs 19 per cent). If the Conservatives can position themselves as a party of low tax this could be a wedge issue with both Labour and Reform.

## Britons are much more likely to associate Labour with high taxes than the Conservatives





**Protecting Christian  
family values, or live and  
let live?**

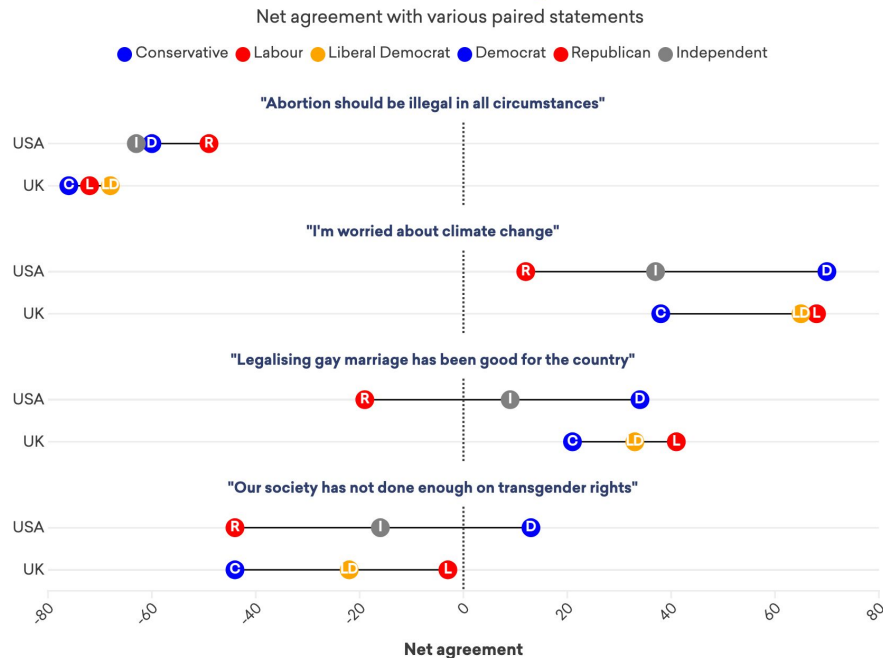
# UK Conservatives are very different from US Republicans

On many social issues, UK Conservatives are very different to US Republicans. For example, abortion is nowhere near as divisive in the UK as it is in the US, and British Conservatives and Reform voters overwhelmingly support gay marriage whereas US Republicans tend to oppose it.

Interestingly, the US is more divided on transgender rights than the UK: Democrats are much more supportive of transgender rights than Labour voters are.

That said, few of these issues are of high salience in the UK. Most people support abortion rights and the right of gay couples to get married, and don't want to see wars fought over those issues. Even as many have serious concerns about some of the demands from transgender rights activists.

## The US and UK differ on a range of social issues



# Support for gay marriage is high in Britain, and not polarised on party lines

The overwhelming majority of Britons support same-sex marriage, and opposition is limited.

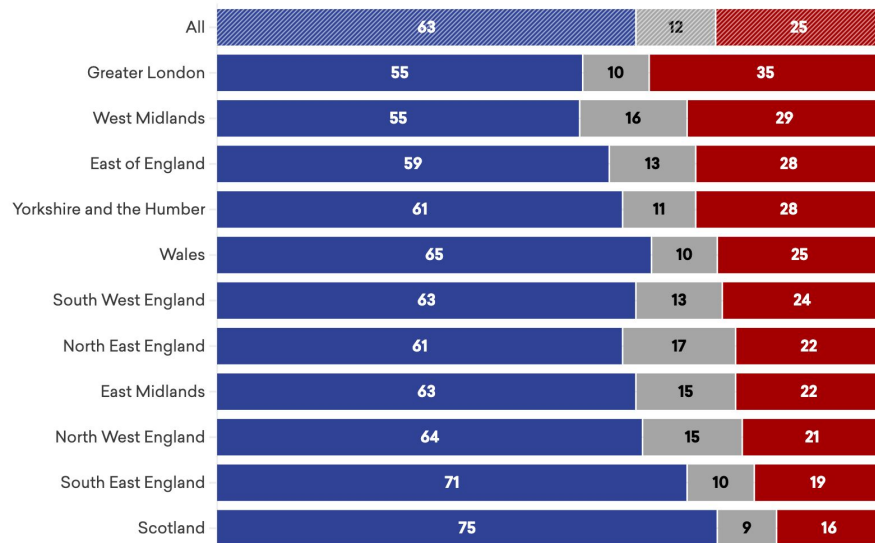
That said, opposition tends to be highest in areas where immigration has been highest in recent years - particularly in Greater London.

This raises questions about how integration and immigration relate to Britain's social values.

## Majorities in every region support same sex marriage, but Londoners are the most likely to oppose it

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

● Same sex couples should have the right to get married ● Don't know  
● Same sex couples should not have the right to get married



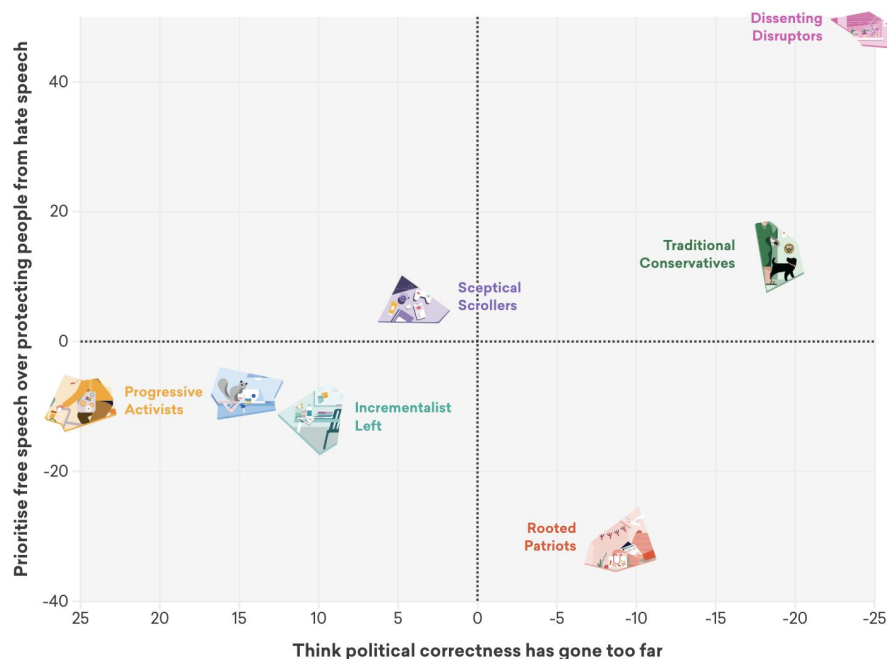
# Taking on political correctness

Britons don't have an American or absolutist view of free speech, but many are concerned about political correctness or about views being silenced because they are seen as offensive by progressives.

The median Briton will look for a British settlement on free speech that ensures people are protected from hate speech (and they certainly don't want political leaders themselves to be spreading speech seen as hateful), whilst also ensuring that people aren't being punished or silenced for their political views.

Dissenting Disruptors are outliers in this regard, supporting maximalist positions on free speech even at the expense of allowing more hate speech.

## Britons possess a complex range of opinions on freedom of speech and political correctness





**Euromphiles or into the  
Anglosphere?**

# Britain's relationship with the EU

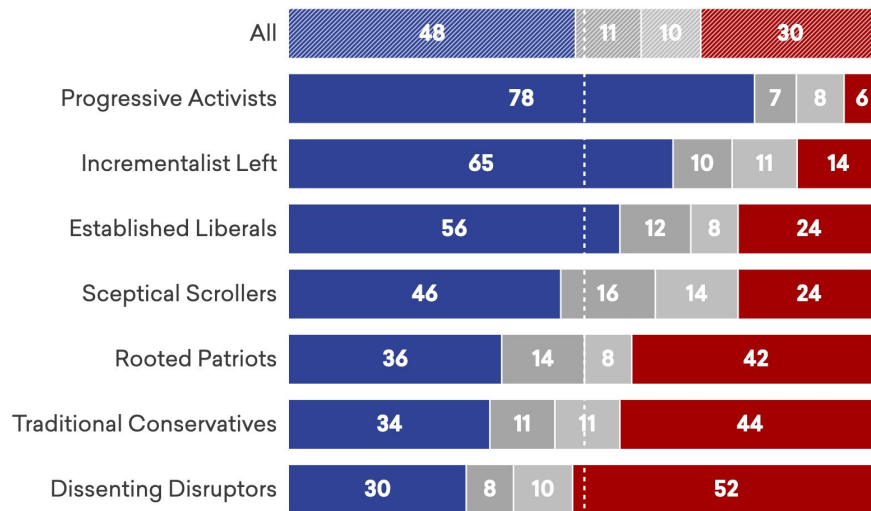
Established Liberals are the only segment of potential Conservative voters who would vote to rejoin the EU in a referendum today: Rooted Patriots, Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors would all vote to leave the EU.

That said, some members of these segments are willing to countenance greater alignment with the EU on issues like defence if they can see it clearly benefiting Britain. Few of them would accept anything that looks like it would undermine the referendum result, and most want to put Brexit divisions behind us.

## Established Liberals are the only Conservative-inclined segment who would vote to remain in another EU referendum

If the 2016 Brexit referendum was held today, how would you vote?

● Remain ● Would not vote ● Don't know ● Leave





# American Conservatism and British Conservatism

Only 11 per cent of Britons want the UK to be more like America, with Dissenting Disruptors the most likely to express such a desire.

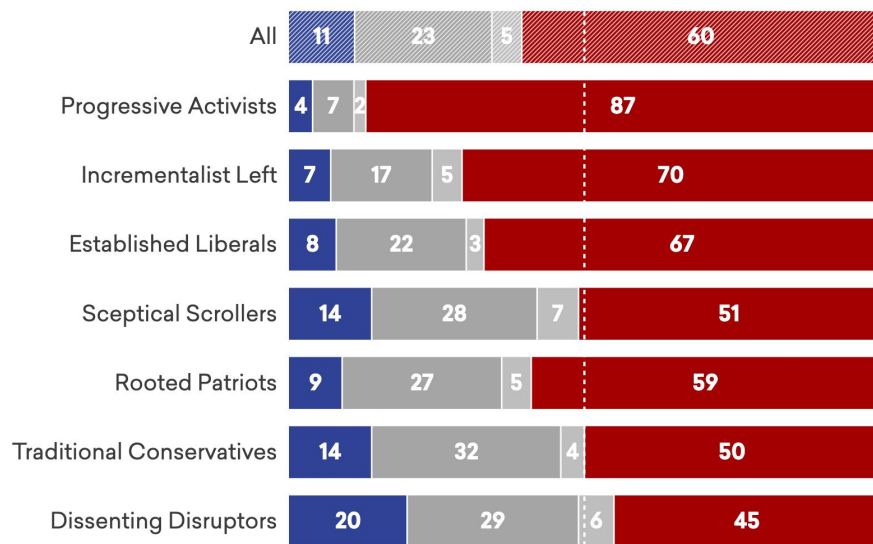
At the same time, Reform UK is seen by voters as the most 'American' party (45% choose Reform), a clear challenge for that party.

The future of conservatism in the UK involves a distinctly British style that does not mirror the bombastic and sometimes extreme politics of the USA.

## Few Britons want Britain to be more like America

Do you want Britain to be more or less like America?

● More like America ● No more or less like America ● Don't know  
● Less like America



# American Conservatism and British Conservatism

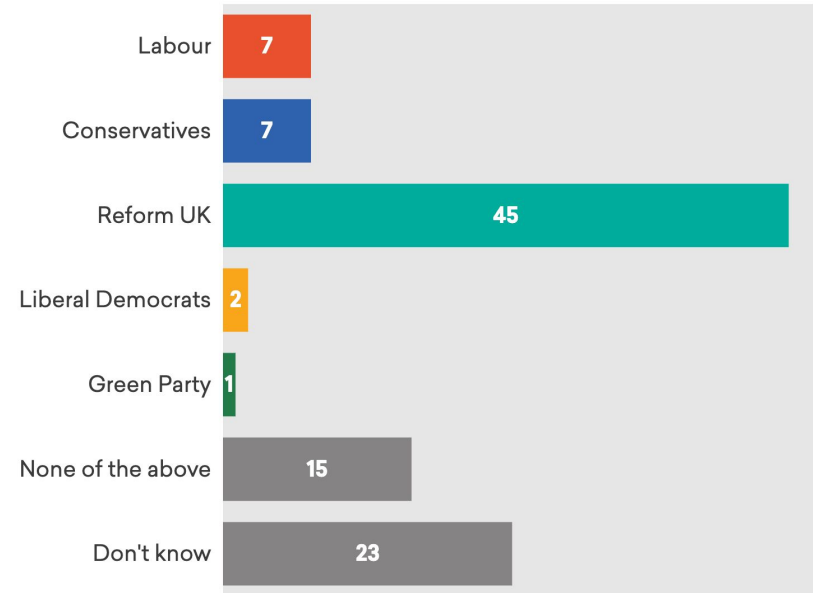
Only 11 per cent of Britons want the UK to be more like America, with Dissenting Disruptors the most likely to express such a desire.

At the same time, Reform UK is seen by voters as the most 'American' party (45% choose Reform), a clear challenge for that party.

The future of conservatism in the UK involves a distinctly British style that does not mirror the bombastic and sometimes extreme politics of the USA.

## Reform UK is seen as Britain's most "American" party

Which British political party do you think is most "American" in its style?

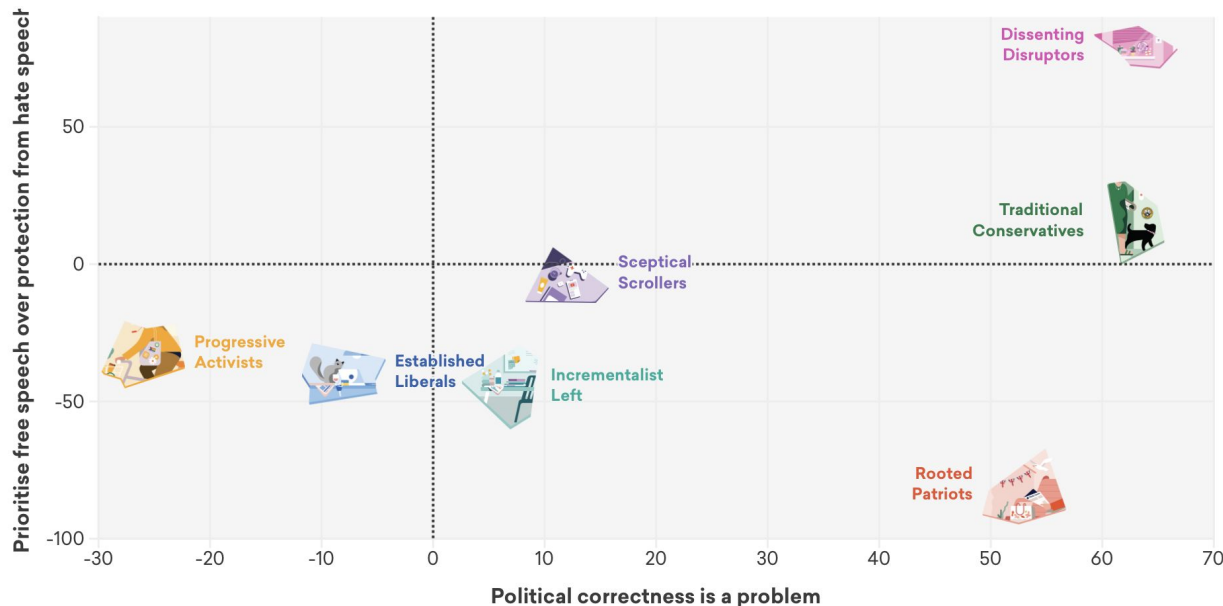


# Free speech, political correctness and hate speech

The more socially conservative segments believe political correctness is a problem, but differ on how to handle offensive speech. **Traditional Conservatives** and **Dissenting Disruptors** prioritise free speech, even if offensive, while **Rooted Patriots** lean toward protecting people from harmful speech.

62% think political correctness is a problem in the UK, but a similar number (58%) think it is important we protect people from hate speech. A third of the country (34%) says both.

## Exploring the segments' attitudes toward free speech



# Vaccines and science

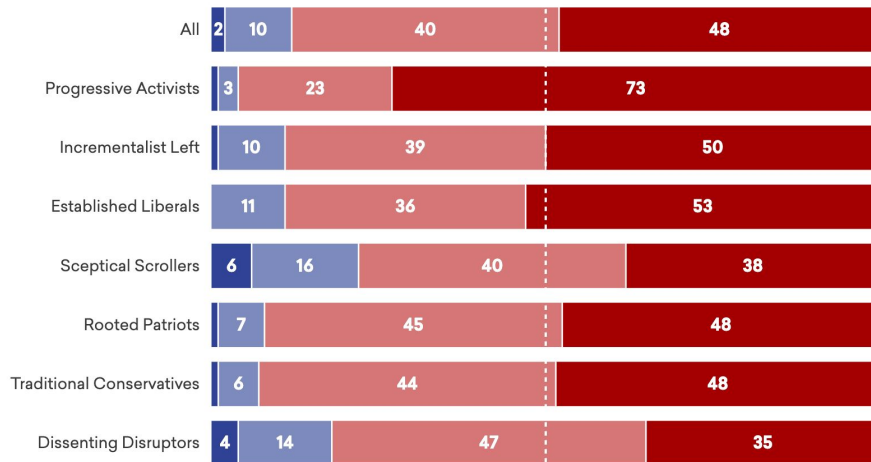
One feature of American politics that does not land well in the UK is scepticism of science. Donald Trump's rejection of the scientific consensus on paracetamol, for example, is unlikely to be popular in the UK.

In fact, while the British public's trust in politicians and the media has fallen significantly, all seven segments trust scientists more than they distrust them, and scientific advice is some of the most trusted information in the UK.

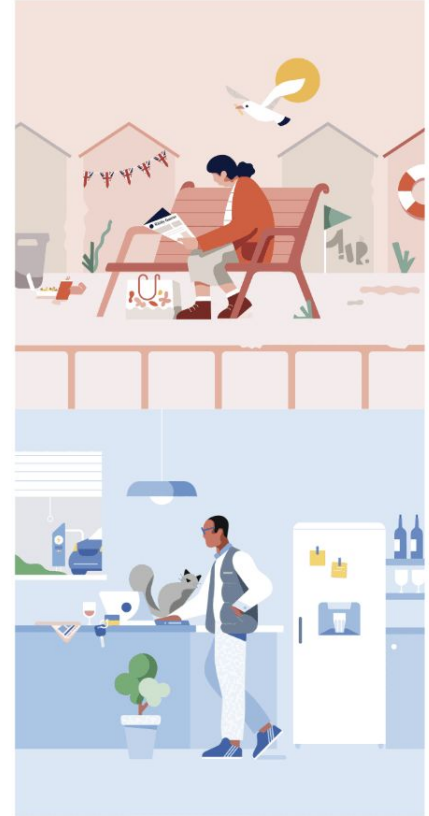
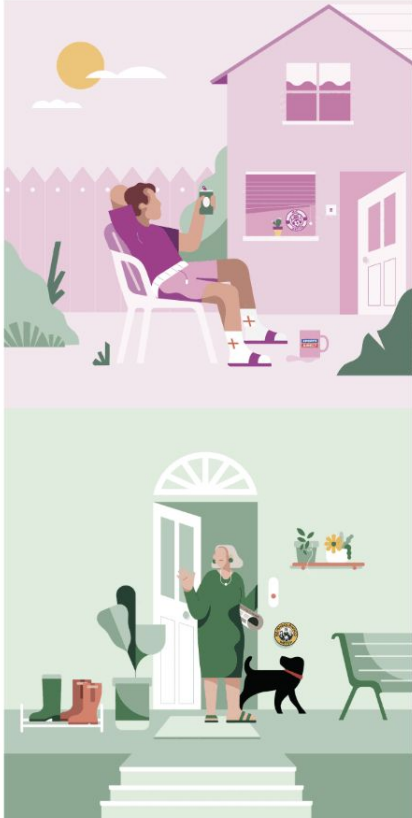
## Just 2% fully believe Trump's claim that paracetamol causes autism

On Monday, US President Trump said that the use of paracetamol (called Tylenol in the US) during pregnancy is causing a rise in autism cases. UK health experts and officials have pushed back on this claim, saying there is "no evidence" **Do you think that the claim that paracetamol causes autism is true or false?**

● Definitely true ● Probably true ● Probably false ● Definitely false



# A coalition being pulled in all directions





More in  
Common



# Conservative Thinking at the Cross-roads: Where Next for the Right?



Monday, 6 October



15:00 to 16:00



Central 6, Secure Zone,  
Manchester Central



**Alex  
Newton (Chair)**

More in  
Common



**Marc  
Stears**

UCL Policy  
Lab



**Esther  
McVey MP**

MP for  
Tatton



**Penny  
Mordaunt**

Former Leader, House  
of Commons



**Luke  
Tryl**

More in  
Common



**David  
Davis MP**

MP for Goole &  
Pocklington

# Later today:



 Monday, 6 October

 16:30 to 17:30

 Central & Secure Zone, Manchester Central

## This Place Matters: Social Cohesion for a New Age



**Kate Ferguson**  
(Chair)  
The Sun on Sunday



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Sunder Katwala**  
British Future



**Miriam Cates**  
Centre for Social Justice



**Greg Stafford MP**  
Member, Health & Social Care Committee




**Kelly Fowler**  
Belong





**Katy Bourne**  
Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

# Tomorrow:




 Tuesday, 7 October


 11:30 to 12:30

 Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland

## Economic Reset: The Future of Conservative Economics




**Sophie Stowers**  
(Chair)  
More in Common



**James Wild MP**  
Shadow Exchequer Secretary




**Charlotte Pickles**  
Re:State



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Lord Willetts**  
Resolution Foundation



**Professor Geraint Rees**  
UCL



 Tuesday, 7 October

 18:00 to 19:30

 Stanley Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland

## Rebuilding the Coalition: A Tory Reset



**Emily Maitlis**  
(Chair)  
The News Agents



**Greg Smith MP**  
Shadow Transport & Shadow Energy Security & Net Zero Minister



**Claire Coutinho MP**  
Shadow Energy Security & Net Zero Secretary



**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common



**Cllr Aled Richards-Jones**  
Leader, Conservative Group, Wandsworth Council



**Sir Gavin Williamson MP**  
MP for Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge



 Tuesday, 7 October

 13:00 to 14:00

 Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland

## A new future for universities: how can we ensure universities support British success and build local pride?



**Alex Newton**  
(Chair)  
More in Common



**George Freeman MP**  
Member, Science, Innovation & Tech Committee




**Steve O'Neil**  
UCL




**Matt Warman**  
Former MP & Minister




**Sophie Stowers**  
More in Common




 Tuesday, 7 October


 16:00 to 17:00

 Chester Suite, Secure Zone, The Midland


## A Reset on Immigration: Can Conservatives regain public trust?




**Rachel Sylvester**  
(Chair)  
The Observer




**Luke Tryl**  
More in Common




**Chris Philip MP**  
Shadow Home Secretary




**Gavin Rice**  
Onward



**Robbie Moore MP**  
Shadow Farming Minister



**Salma Shah**  
Broadcaster & former SpAd



**Lord Davies**  
Shadow Home Office Minister