

Changing culture conflicts: where next for the culture wars and EDI?



Sunday 28 September ⌚ 16:00 - 17:00pm 📍 Sherwood Arena Room, ACC



Ava-Santina (Chair)
PoliticsJOE



Claire Ainsley
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UCL

Introducing the Seven Segments

The British Seven segments were developed to move beyond traditional left-right or party-based analysis by exploring the deeper psychological, cultural, and value-driven foundations that shape public opinion.

This approach helps explain why political loyalties have fractured and offers a more nuanced understanding of what drives attitudes on issues like immigration, climate, and the economy—enabling more effective engagement with the public across a fragmented political and social landscape.



Progressive Activists



Incrementalist Left



Established Liberals



Sceptical Scrollers



Rooted Patriots



Traditional Conservatives



Dissenting Disruptors



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

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

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



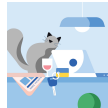




...a disengaged group that has lost trust in mainstream institutions and increasingly looks online for sources of truth

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

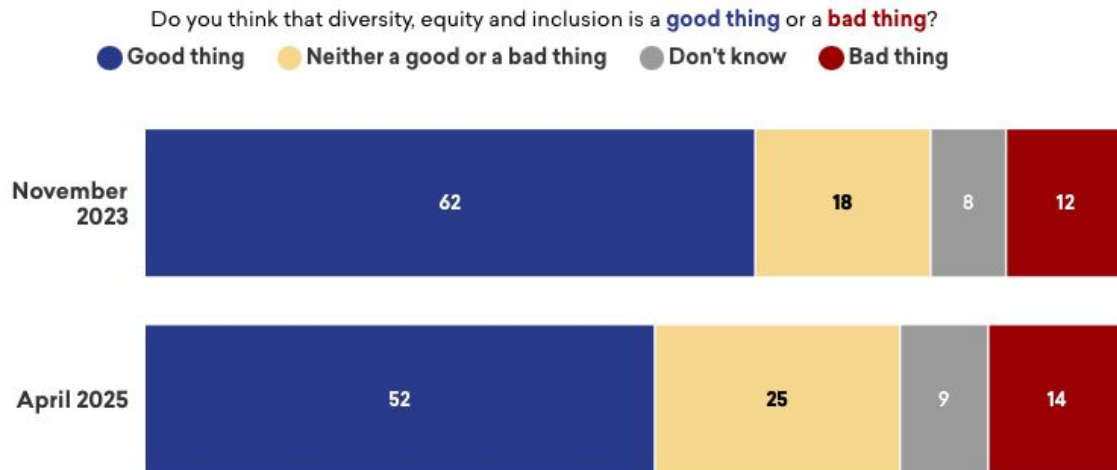
... a nostalgic group that respects tradition, authority and personal responsibility, while remaining sceptical of rapid change

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

The seven segments on EDI

	Progressive Activists	Most supportive of EDI which to this group is about removing systemic barriers and empowering minority groups. They perceive no negative impacts of EDI and even support mandatory approaches.
	Incrementalist Left	Instinctive supporters of EDI. For this group EDI is about respecting people from different backgrounds and equal access to opportunity. They prefer voluntary over mandatory approaches.
	Established Liberals	Strong supporters of EDI - but unconvinced by certain measures such as diversity quotas. More in favour of centralised guidelines or rules on EDI than other segments.
	Sceptical Scrollers	Lowest awareness of EDI of any segment - they tend to support EDI initiatives but many do not hold strong views on debates around EDI implementation.
	Rooted Patriots	EDI for this group is about respecting people from different backgrounds, and being polite. They are more willing than other socially conservative segments to accept limits on language.
	Traditional Conservatives	Most likely to associate EDI with political correctness. They are the only segment who oppose diversity targets based on ethnicity and socioeconomic background, feeling qualified candidates get overlooked.
	Dissenting Disruptors	Most opposed to EDI initiatives, many view EDI as a box-ticking exercise and are twice as likely as the general public to say EDI is bad for people like them.

Public has become slightly more EDI-sceptic, but EDI retains majority support



Overall, public opinion has become slightly more EDI sceptic - compared to late 2023: the public is less likely to see EDI positively. More people now take a neutral stance.

But public opinion on EDI has not flipped - most continue to see EDI as a good thing and a plurality of Britons see institutions investing in EDI as a good use of money (48 per cent, whereas 36 per cent think it is a bad use of money).

Britons reject USA-style rollbacks of EDI

Which of the following comes closest to your view about EDI efforts in businesses and institutions like universities?

- **They should stop their work on EDI** ● **Don't know**
- **They should continue at the current level**
- **They should do more work on EDI**



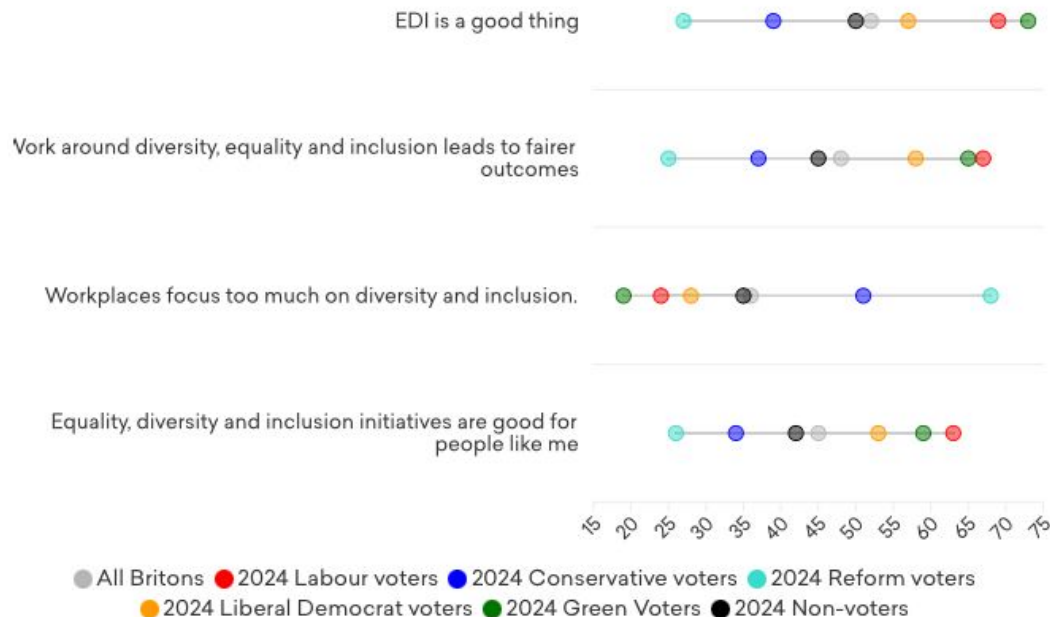
Britons don't support calls to follow America's sweeping rollback of EDI initiatives.

Only 37 per cent support cutting back EDI in public bodies. There is even less appetite for rollbacks in the private sector or institutions such as universities.

Views on EDI are politicised

Comparing voters' views on EDI

(% Selecting each statement)

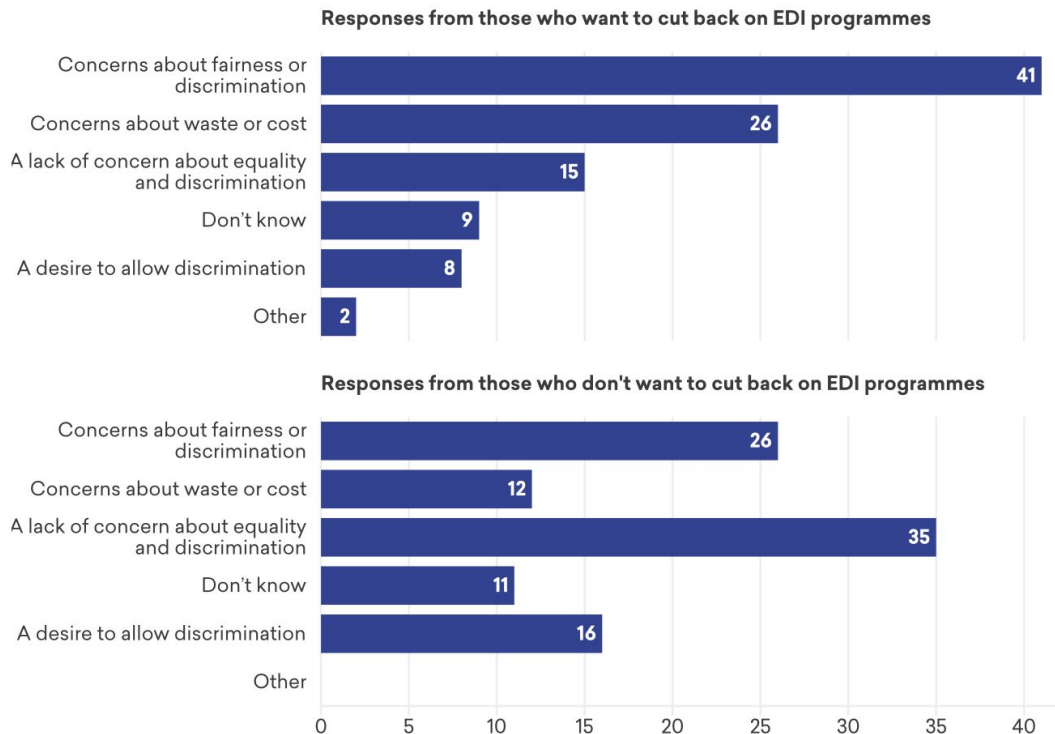


Reform voters, Labour voters and Green voters all stand far apart from the median Briton in their views on EDI.

Those engaged with this issue should avoid conflating the views of litigants in online debates with the British public at large, from whom EDI receives qualified support.

EDI supporters can misunderstand reasons for opposition

In your view, efforts to stop or reduce EDI initiatives are mainly motivated by:



Those who want to cut back on EDI do so because of a belief that it is in fact leading to less fair outcomes.

However, when those who don't want to cut back on EDI are asked about the motives of those who do, they are more likely to say it is because those people lack concern about equality and discrimination.

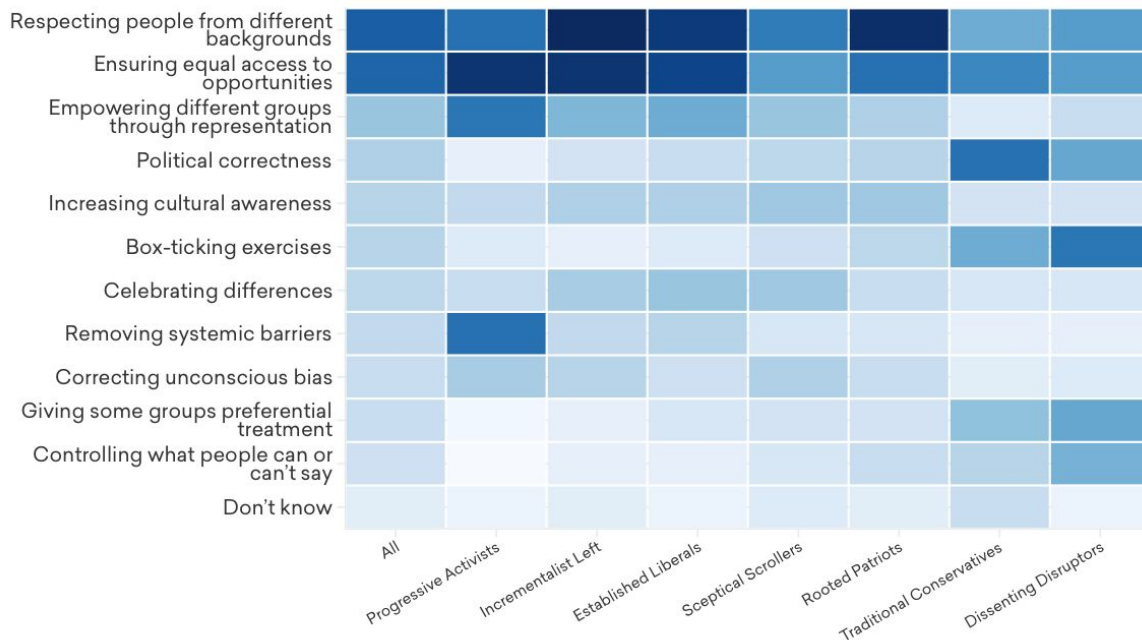


A way forward

Building on shared values of respect and equal opportunity

Which of the following do you associate with Equality, Diversity, Inclusion?

% selecting 0 50



For most Britons, EDI is about putting into practice the shared principle of respect for other people and giving everyone a fair chance.

This presents an opportunity for those championing EDI initiatives to ground their work in shared values rather than inaccessible language on systemic challenges, which primarily resonate with Progressive Activists.

A focus on workplace culture

When it comes to EDI initiatives in businesses, do you think they generally make businesses

Better/worse places to work



More/less successful



● Better place / More successful ● Don't know ● Make no real difference ● Worse place / Less successful

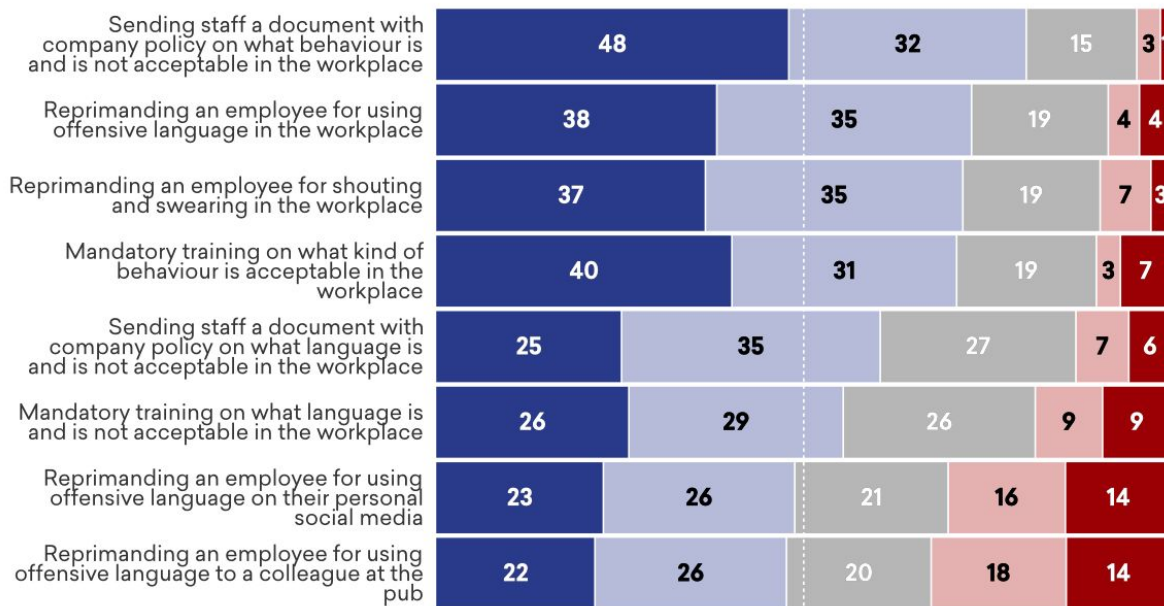
Strong public support for workplace EDI reflects an understanding of its role in creating fairer, more professional environments.

A plurality believe EDI initiatives make workplaces better with overwhelming support for core protections such as anti-discrimination measures, shared parental leave, and accessibility improvements.

Voluntary over mandatory approaches

Do you support or oppose universities doing the following?

● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

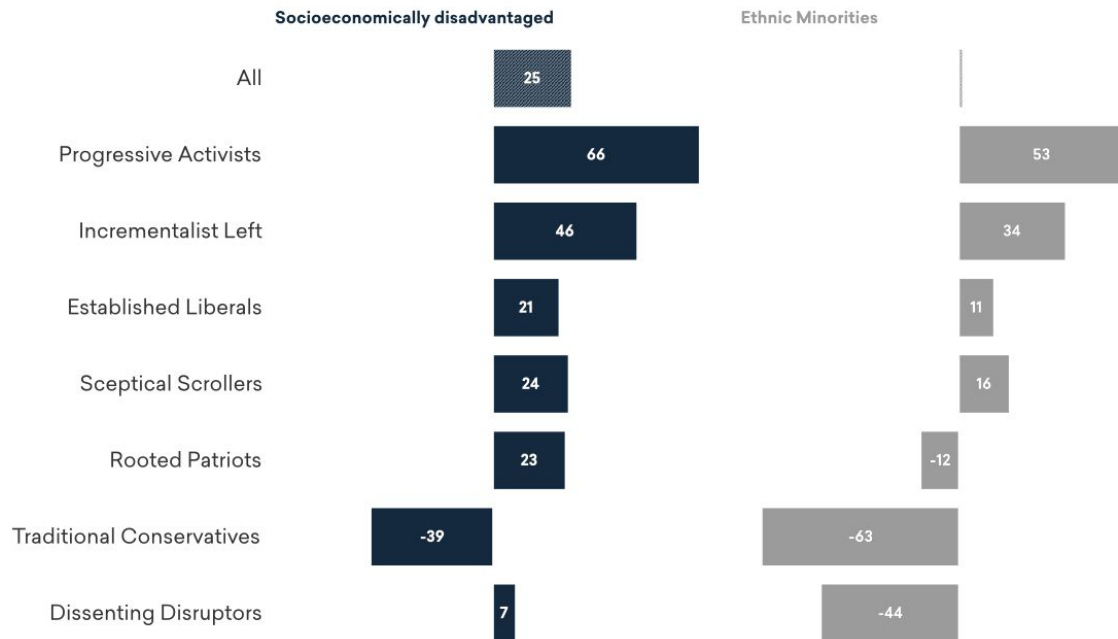


The public tends to balk at rigid rules applied to everyone. On many issues people support a personal choice approach, are split on guidelines, and have more resistance to mandatory requirements.

This may point towards a possible future for EDI work that is more focused on institutional culture.

Greater attention to socioeconomic disadvantage

Do you support or oppose universities setting targets for more students from the following backgrounds



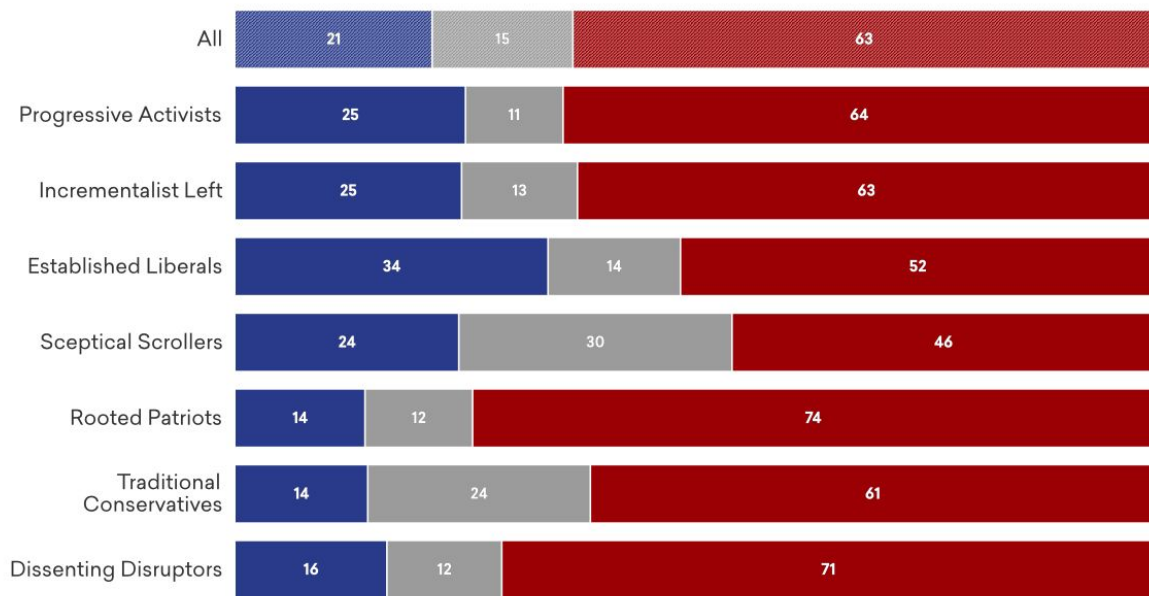
Targets for socioeconomic diversity tend to be more popular than targets on ethnic diversity, particularly among more socially conservative segments.

This highlights the importance, in the eyes of the public, of ensuring that EDI initiatives align with, rather than rub against, efforts to address socioeconomic disadvantage.

Bottom-up rather than top-down approaches

Which of the following comes closest to your view? Public institutions and workplaces should base their approach to equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives on...

● Guidance and rules from the government ● Don't know
● The wants and needs of their employees and customers

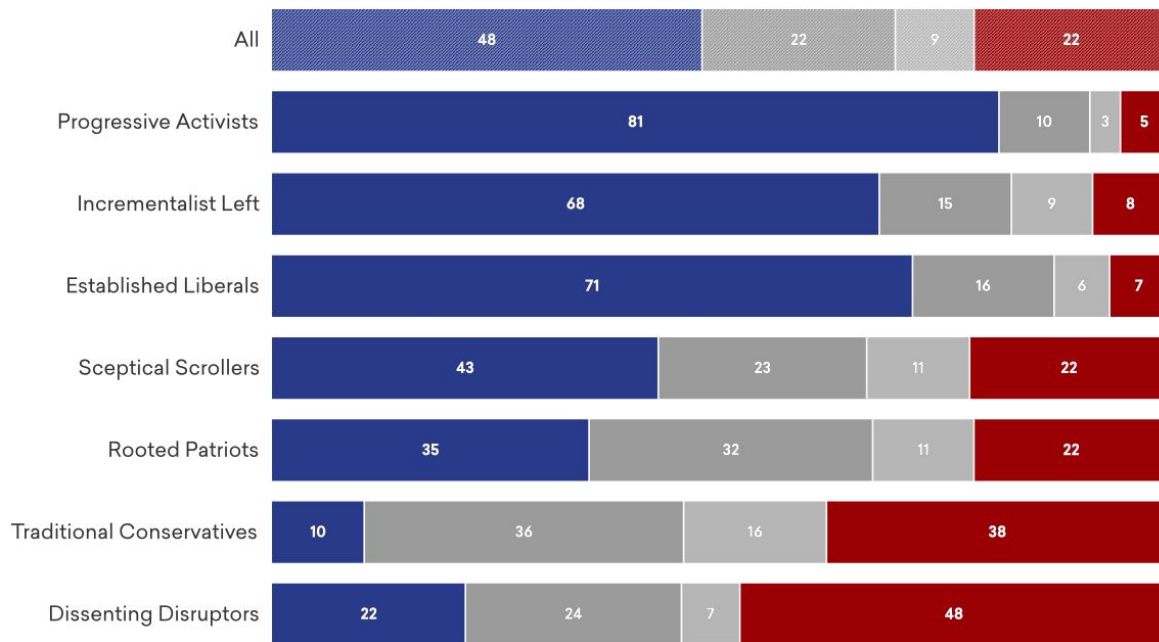


While the public supports anti-discrimination and equal treatment rules that apply to everyone, they know that when it comes to the specifics, universities, businesses and public bodies face different challenges, and EDI approaches which adapt rather than conforming to a one-size-fits-all model are likely to gain wider support.

Addressing zero-sum critiques

In general, do you think equality, diversity and inclusion...

● Makes things more equal ● Makes no difference ● Don't know ● Makes things less equal



A growing perception that EDI creates winners and losers rather than mutual benefit poses the greatest challenge to EDI's future. While most see EDI as benefiting ethnic minorities, LGBT+ people, and women, critics increasingly view it as harmful to white people, men, and the working class. Advocates must demonstrate genuine benefits for all groups perceived as disadvantaged.

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MORE IN COMMON SUNDAY FRINGE TIMETABLE

BRITISH RULE OF LAW: A SECURE AND PROSPEROUS BRITAIN - RICHARD HERMER KC, ATTORNEY GENERAL IN CONVERSATION

12:00 - 13:00 - SHERWOOD ARENA ROOM, ACC

POWERING UP BRITAIN: CAN LABOUR DELIVER ON ITS SOLAR ENERGY PROMISE?

Speakers: Helena Horton - The Guardian (Chair); Michael Shanks MP - Minister for Energy; Bill Esterson MP - Chair of Energy Security and Net Zero Select Committee; Madeleine Gabriel - NESTA; Chris Hewett - Solar Energy; Luke Tryl - More in Common

14:45 - 15:45 - SHERWOOD ARENA ROOM, ACC

CHANGING CULTURE CONFLICTS: WHERE NEXT FOR THE CULTURE WARS AND EDI?

Speakers: Ava-Santina Evans - Politics Joe (Chair); Claire Ainsley - Progressive Policy Institute; Olivia Bailey MP - Minister for Equalities; Luke Tryl - More in Common; Tim Soutphommasane - Oxford University

16:00 - 17:00 - SHERWOOD ARENA ROOM, ACC

BEYOND BRICKS AND MORTAR: WHAT'S THE PATH TO SEEING HOUSING AS PART OF NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE?

Speakers: Vicky Spratt - The i Paper (Chair); Dame Meg Hillier MP - Chair of Treasury Select Committee; John Grady MP - Member of Treasury Select Committee; Priya Nair - The Housing Finance Corp; Jamie Jenkins - Royal London; Luke Tryl - More in Common

17:15 - 18:15 - SHERWOOD ARENA ROOM, ACC

IS NATURE PROTECTION JUST NIMBYISM IN DISGUISE?

Speakers: Ros Wynne-Jones - Daily Mirror (Chair); Lord Glasman; Hilary McGrady - National Trust; Darren Moorcroft - Woodland Trust; Luke Tryl - More in Common

18:30 - 19:30 - SHERWOOD ARENA ROOM, ACC

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**More in
Common**

More in Common at Labour Party Conference 2025

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Sunday 28 September

Changing culture conflicts: where next for the culture wars and EDI?

4PM-5PM

With Ava Santana, Claire Ainsley, Olivia Bailey MP, Luke Tryl, and Tim Soutphommasane

Beyond Bricks and Mortar: What's the path to seeing housing as part of national infrastructure?

5:15PM-6:15PM

With Vicky Spratt, Luke Tryl, Dame Meg Hillier MP, John Grady MP, Priya Nair and Jamie Jenkins

Is nature protection just NIMBYism in disguise?

6:30PM-7:30PM

With Ros Wynne-Jones, Luke Tryl, Hilary McGrady, Darren Moorcroft and Lord Glasman

Monday 29 September

Can Labour deliver on reviving local places through heritage?

10:30AM-11:30AM

With Anoosh Chakelian, Luke Tryl, Baroness Twycross, Patrick Hurley MP, Matthew McKeague and John Orna-Ornstein

Britons and blasphemy- defending free speech in a changing Britain

12:45PM-13:45PM

With Will Hazell, Lizzi Collinge MP, Andrew Copson, Luke Tryl and Sam Rushworth MP (invited)

More in Common at Labour Party Conference 2025

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Monday 29 September

Bold promises: Delivering quality neurological care under Labour

2PM-3PM

With Luke Tryl, Jas Athwal MO, Joanne Welsh, Dr Martin Wilson and Georgina Carr

Who pays, who decides? Big money in British politics

4:30PM-5:30PM

With John Johnston, Ed Hodgson, Liam Byrne MP, Baroness Hodge, Duncan Hames and Susan Hawley

Nova Scotia

How can Labour rebuild its electoral coalition?

4:30PM-5:30PM

With Jon Sopel, Luke Tryl, Alistair Strathern MP, Christabel Cooper, Anneliese Dodds MP, Jonathan Hinder MP and Richard Burgon MP

Women and girls versus big tech? Ending online violence against women and girls

6:30PM-7:30PM

With Sophie Stowers, Jess Phillips MP, Joani Reid MP, Natalie Fleet MP, Catherine Fookes MP, Andrea Simon and Emma Pickering

Come Together: A celebration of what connects us

7:30PM onwards

More in Common, UCL Policy Lab and Citizen UK's Labour conference reception with guest speaker Ed Miliband MP, the Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero

RIBA North

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Tuesday 30 September

What the public thinks: What's next for UK aid?

9AM-10AM

With Luke Tryl, Baroness Chapman, Dr Jeevun Sandher MP, Moazzam Malik and David Hudson

The heat is on: powering up Britain's home energy transition

10AM-11AM

With Charlie Cooper, Luke Tryl, Martin McCluskey MP (invited), Tom Iowe, Jane Dawson and Richard Hauxwell-Baldwin

Nova Scotia

Things can only get hotter: Is ambition on climate and nature a route for electoral success?

12:15PM-1:15PM

With Fiona Harvey, Luke Tryl, Toby Perkins MP, Luke Murphy MP and Angela Francis

What do we think of the speech? Expert analysis of the Prime Minister's speech to party conference

5:30PM-6:30PM

With Luke Tryl, Marc Stears, Josie Rourke, Tom Baldwin and Rachel Sylvester