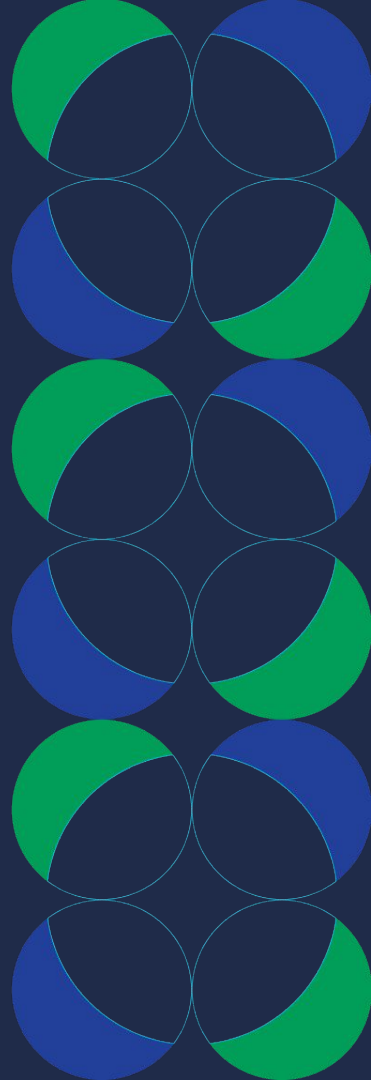




More in
Common

Final briefing

More in Common's guide to elections
across Wales, Scotland and parts of
England



Two days until May 7...



Local elections in England

Around 5,000 council seats up for election across 136 local authorities, including all London boroughs. Seats were mostly last contested in 2022.



Holyrood elections in Scotland

129 MSPs to be elected, 73 from constituency elections under FPTP and another 56 from proportional representation via regional lists.



Senedd elections in Wales

New electoral system with 96 MSs to be elected, with 6 members across each of 16 PR wards.

Two days until May 7...

Local elections in England

The insurgent election

In England, we are likely to see **the next stage of the breakdown of the two-party system**, as insurgent parties across the left and the right challenge some of Labour's key urban strongholds, and the Conservatives experience further losses.

Expect both main parties – but particularly Labour – to see record-breaking seat losses, while the Greens and Reform UK make landmark gains.

Is there a difference between Labour and the Tories? It's just a continuation of life being harder.
Matt, Sefton

Holyrood elections in Scotland

The "meh" election

In Scotland, voter disenchantment is likely to define this election. With widespread dissatisfaction toward incumbents in Holyrood and Westminster alike – and no obvious change candidate – we're seeing widespread apathy and resignation.

Expect record fragmentation, and potentially low turnout.

"It doesn't matter who gets in, they're all disappointing. Nothing seems to improve."
Karen, Midlothian

"It's just another throw of dice, I suppose."
William, Rutherglen

Senedd elections in Wales

The change election

In Wales, it's likely to be **a vote for change**: with Labour facing a double-incumbency effect, momentum has risen behind Plaid Cymru and Reform UK as carriers of change, yet doubts remain about whether they're ready for government, and if a potential Plaid-Labour coalition will represent 'more of the same'.

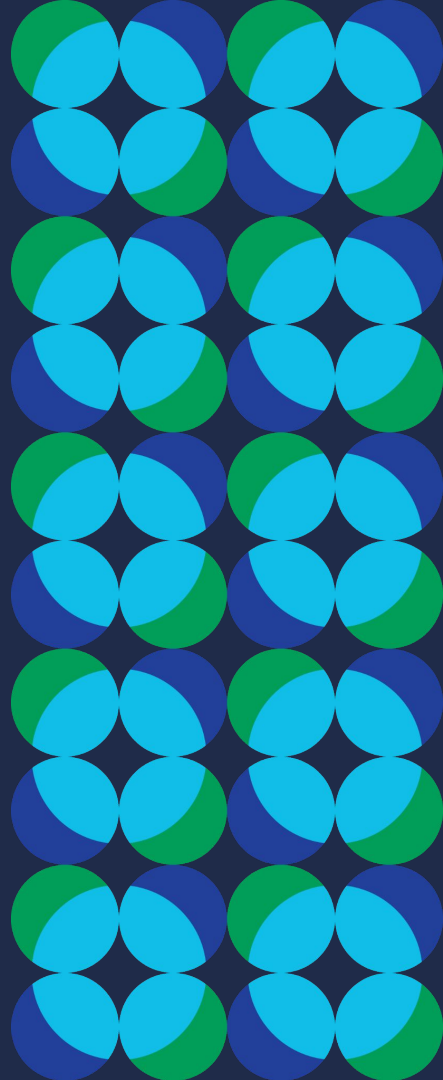
Expect historic losses for the Labour Party, and a dramatic Reform UK breakthrough.

"Labour have had their chance – and they've blown it."
Tracy, Cardiff



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The context



Labour's coalition is splintering in every direction

Local elections are taking place in some of Labour's urban strongholds, so a defining story will be the rise of the Green Party and Labour's progressive threat. **Yet Labour is still losing votes across the left, right and centre.**

Around one in ten who voted Labour in 2024 (11 per cent) now plan to vote Reform in a General Election, while a similar proportion have moved to the Green Party (9 per cent).

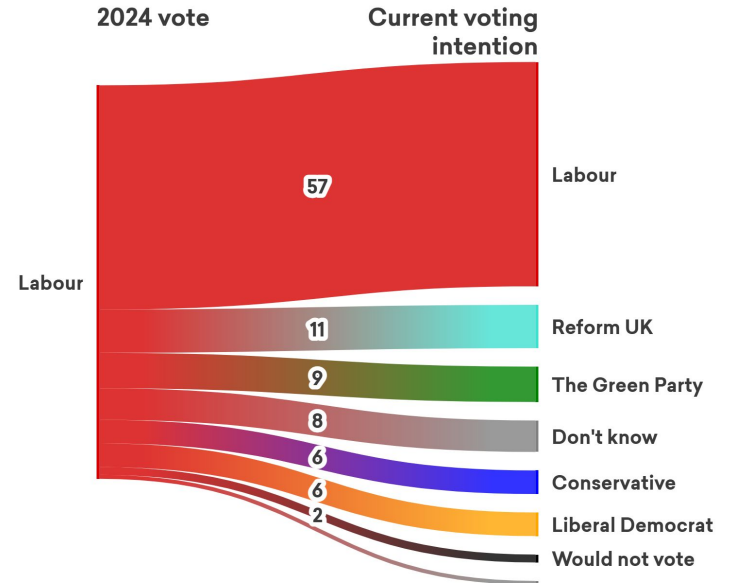


I just feel so lost. We've got the elections next week, I just don't know where I'm going to go.

Karen, Merthyr Tydfil

How has Labour's support changed since 2024?

Current voting intention of 2024 Labour voters




A broken social contract fuelling anti-incumbency

A thread running across the three nations – with voters across the political spectrum who are rejecting the status quo – **is a sense that the social contract in Britain is broken.**

Younger graduates moving to the Green Party describe following the rules, but still struggling to get on the housing ladder or to pay off their student debt.

Meanwhile voters moving to Reform UK describe a sense that “you’re a mug for playing by the rules” – that the welfare state disincentives work, asylum seekers get looked after and a cost-of-living crisis makes hard work pointless.

 What am I working for? I've got no money to do a holiday, I've got no money to go on a night out or for a nice meal.

Laura, Rutherglen



It just doesn't pay to work anymore. I've voted Labour all my life and I'm frustrated. They don't seem to be putting any effort into helping the working person. It's like we're not getting anything back.

Dave, Sefton



I won't ever vote Labour again. I don't feel like they represent people that work. They represent people that don't want to work and want to take advantage of the system.

Jody, Newport



Being a young person that has done everything right, get good grades, go do a good degree. We still can't afford to buy a house. Still having to live like a student in a flat share (...) Every January like clockwork, I start looking at how can I leave the UK? How can I leave the NHS? I don't care anymore. I don't want to be here.

Shaikho, Tottenham

Donald Trump and “that bloody war” shaping British politics

These might be local and devolved elections, **but the context is highly international. Donald Trump and the war in Iran dominates focus groups, and will undeniably shape how many see each party and its leaders.**

A key test for Labour is how well Keir Starmer handles the unpredictable global scene, and how the Government insulates Britain from the fuel crisis. While voters tend to give Starmer credit for his handling of Trump, many feel let down by a lack of progress on the cost of living.

The international context also has implications for Reform. Despite Nigel Farage’s efforts to distance himself from the US President, his “Trump problem” feels more significant than ever. It is cited as the top reason not to vote Reform, and arises in nearly every focus group as a source of apprehension.

I’ve become obsessed with the price of petrol (...) I did the school run the other day, and on the way out it was £1.56, on the way back it was £1.59.



Karen, Merthyr Tydfil

What news story have you heard about the most this week?



Fieldwork dates: 20 - 22 March 2026



The news is a car crash. I can't bear to watch it. Every time I put it on it's just one depressing, awful, world-ending story after another — mostly because of Putin and Trump.

Amy, Midlothian



Farage has openly said he admires Trump, that he sees him as one of his closest friends. He has seen what worked in America and is doing the same here.

Tom, Edinburgh

Scandals have shattered the public's remaining trust

The Mandelson saga will loom over these elections.

In focus groups, voters describe how the scandal has reinforced their perception that every politician has “skeletons in the closet”.

The impact is especially potent for those who placed their trust in Labour in 2024, hoping they would be different after losing faith in the Conservatives.



I think they always know. It's like Boris Johnson and the COVID thing. He know. The thing with Starmer and Epstein. He knows. I think they all know really.

Becca, student, Edinburgh



The first thing I wanted when they came in was for Labour to establish a trust system again. Don't know about the rest of you, but post-COVID, I just thought you couldn't ... Nobody was being held to account for essentially lies they were telling.

Joe, finance professional, Newcastle



They've all got skeletons in their closet. It's a given. Every single one of them will have something that they've done 10 years ago, 20 years ago. That's always going to come out.

Emma, nurse, Newcastle



They think they'll get away with these things. Going back to (Sturgeon's) motor home, going back to – look at Mandelson! (...) They must think we're stupid out here.

Stephen, semi-retired, Edinburgh

Who actually cares about these elections?

In each of the nations going to the polls this week, no more than one in three people consider the outcomes "very important". English voters, facing local elections, are slightly more likely to care than their Scottish and Welsh counterparts approaching devolved contests.

A weary fatalism runs through focus groups across all three nations: many voters now almost expect to be disappointed. Yet, these elections also represent **an opportunity to punish the traditional parties. Reform UK voters in England and Wales are far more likely than other voters to see the results as important.**

I'm going to vote, but I'm not too bothered. I just feel like it's one of them things where you have to do it. I guess not much is going to change.

Christine, Midlothian

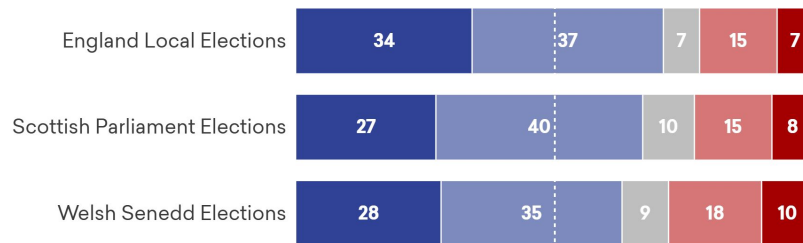
Sometimes I think it's not worth voting. But then if I didn't vote and the wrong one got in, I'd have no room to complain about it.

Leanne, Hull

The median voter thinks these elections are "fairly important"

How important, if at all, would you say that the outcome of the upcoming [Local/Scottish Parliament/Welsh Senedd] elections are to you personally?

● Very important ● Fairly important ● Don't know ● Not very important ● Not important at all



Nobody's really talking about it. Nobody's mentioned it at work or with mates or anything. It's just all a bit... well, you wouldn't say it's positive anyway.

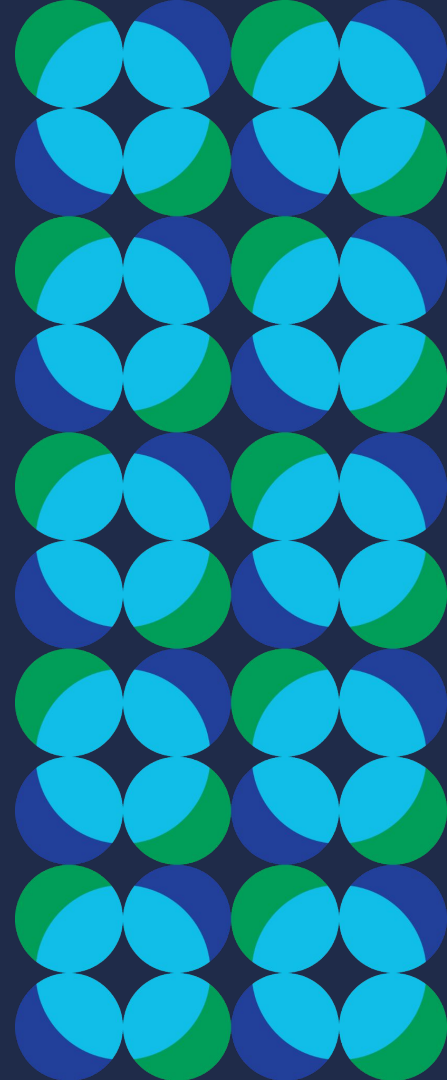


Simon, Edinburgh



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Leader thermometers



Keir Starmer

Net approval rating: -45

Not waving but drowning

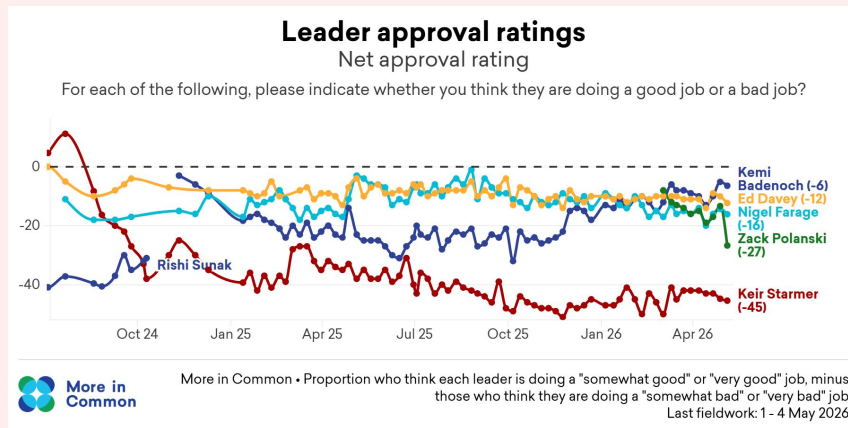
These elections are the biggest test so far of public attitudes to Keir Starmer's premiership. Around half of the electorate which led to his 2024 General Election victory has left the party; Labour faces historic losses in this round of local elections.

Positives:

- **The Diplomat:** Some Britons give Keir Starmer credit for not dragging the UK into US–Iran war, and praise his handling of Trump.
- **Crisis leadership:** Many Britons acknowledge that the Prime Minister has been navigating multiple crises beyond his control. Some feel that he simply **needs more time**.

Negatives:

- **Seen as weak:** Many feel that Starmer has been absent or disengaged for much of his time as Prime Minister, failing to set out a vision for Britain, stick to his principles or govern with integrity. In this absence, many think this government represents 'more of the same' chaos and sleaze.
- **Seen as insincere:** after a series of u–turns and perceived broken promises, many Britons believe the Prime Minister to be dishonest and untrustworthy..



I think 18 months is not a very long time (...) there's wars going on, he's had to manage funding for defences and that takes priority unfortunately.



Fiona, semi-retired, Colwyn

There's not much to him. He's a bit of a doormat. He doesn't make anyone feel anything. He's very just dull.



Reagan, Sheffield

I come from a very Labour-oriented area. You put a donkey in a red rosette in Morley and people will vote for it. (...) I think they've done appallingly. (...) I wasn't a Boris fan, but at least he had an opinion!

Sue, Halifax

Who would Britons prefer as Prime Minister?

By a margin of 2:1, Britons tend to say it would be better for the country if Keir Starmer was replaced by another Labour Politician.

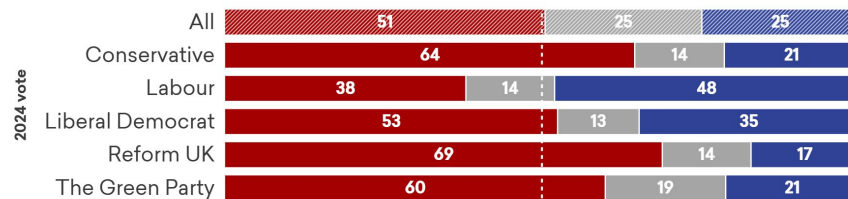
Yet in head-to-head comparisons with other Labour figures, the only one who beats the Prime Minister by a margin of more than 10 points is Andy Burnham, whom 64 per cent of Britons prefer over Starmer. Wes Streeting is also now ahead with 54 per cent choosing him over Starmer, as is Yvette Cooper (53 per cent).

Other figures, including Angela Rayner, John Healey, Ed Miliband and Shabana Mahmood, are roughly tied with, or marginally behind the Prime Minister.

Most Britons think Starmer should be replaced

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

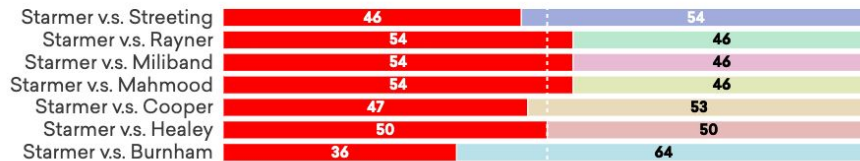
- It would be better for the country if Keir Starmer was replaced as Prime Minister by another Labour politician
- Don't know
- It would be better for the country if Keir Starmer remained as Prime Minister



Starmer's head-to-heads with senior Labour figures

Who would you rather be Prime Minister?

- Keir Starmer
- Wes Streeting
- Angela Rayner
- Ed Miliband
- Shabana Mahmood
- Yvette Cooper
- John Healey
- Burnham



Kemi Badenoch

Net approval rating: -6



Rising popularity, but anchored by the Tory brand

We've seen a definite "Badenoch bounce" in the polls in recent months, with the Leader of the Opposition going from being relatively unknown and described as "quiet", to being seen as a powerful challenger to the Prime Minister. Yet the Conservative vote share has not improved, and they face heavy losses in these elections.

Positives:

- **Strong challenger:** many praise Badenoch's "straight-talking" style of politics, and believe she is good at holding the Government to account.
- **Most improved:** Her popularity has steadily risen since becoming leader, and in focus groups many say they've seen a marked improvement in her performance

Negatives:

- **Held back by the brand:** While Badenoch is becoming more popular, the Conservative vote share has not shifted. Many express admiration for the leader, but still feel unable to forgive the party.

People are still scarred from the 14 years, especially the last six years or so.

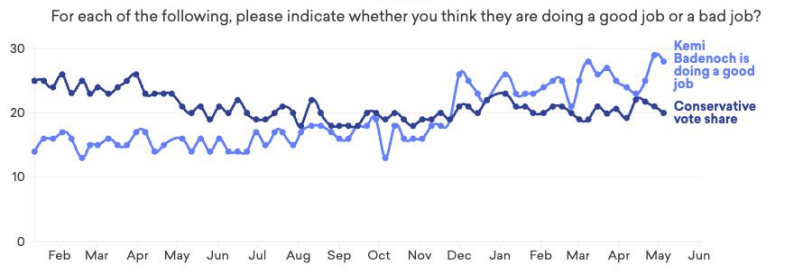
Tom, Halifax

She so fiercely doesn't give a shit what she says. I absolutely love her. The way she challenges and she stands up for what she believes in

Laura, Sowerby Bridge

More Britons hold a favourable view of Kemi Badenoch than would vote for the Conservative Party

(Proportion who think **Kemi Badenoch is doing a good job**, compared with **Conservative vote share**)



I think Kemi came into the job, as you say, she was a little quiet, but I can see now what she was doing. She was feeling the room and now she's got the feel for the room and worked out who she's dealing with. She's found their weak spots and she knows exactly how to go for it.

Mike, Braintree

Ed Davey

Net approval rating: -12



I kind of looked at Ed Davey as I think Joy said it was, I haven't really heard his name much. It was kind of, oh, he's the leader, that's who I'm voting for ultimately. But actually locally they're really good MP so that's why I voted for them

Darcie, Norfolk

Missing in action?

While Ed Davey is not personally disliked by many, his party has so far struggled to break through as a challenger to the main two parties. While Britons' disdain for Labour and the Conservatives has propelled Reform's and the Greens' popularity, the Liberal Democrats have remained flat.

Positives:

- **Britain's least disliked leader?** Only 3 in 10 Britons have a negative view of Ed Davey, fewer than any other party leader.
- **Locally popular:** in some councils where the Liberal Democrats have a strong presence – such as Hull – they are often spoken of positively.

Negatives:

- **What type of change?** Many Britons are unclear about what the Liberal Democrats' vision for Britain looks like. The top barriers to voting Liberal Democrat are: a sense they won't win, a lack of policy solutions, and not knowing "what they will actually do differently".

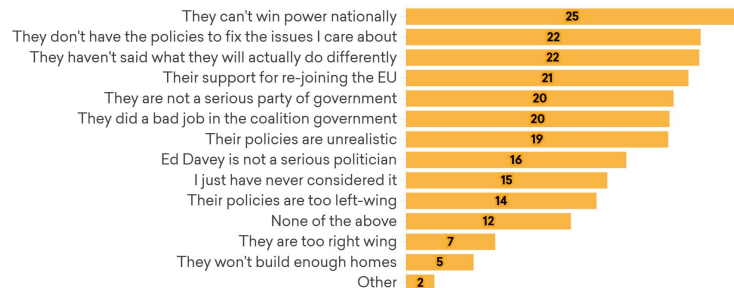


I don't really hear that much about Ed Davey to be honest. So I can't form an opinion on him.

Abigail, London

Many are unsure what the Liberal Democrats would do differently

In your view, which of the following, if any, are the main reasons not to vote for the Liberal Democrats? Select up to three



I think it's more simple than that. I think the Liberal Dems do the work, whereas Labour doesn't.

Steve, Hull

Nigel Farage

Net approval rating: -16



The country is desperate for change. (Farage) offers change. Whether I see him as a leader, that's another question.

Alan, Calderdale

Britain's last hope, or a mini-Trump?

Reform enters this election ahead in the polls, but with signs of plateauing support and some uncertainty around Farage. He is seen as a risk by some, but for many as the only agent of real change worth rolling the dice on.

Positives:

- **A vote for change:** Many see Farage as a change candidate. He scores more highly than other party leaders on **strength**, and having **fresh ideas**. Even among those who consider him a risk, some consider Farage to be "Britain's last hope".

Negatives:

- **The Trump problem** – Farage's connection to President Trump is the biggest barrier to voting for Reform UK. Many worry that Reform will bring the same chaos and unpredictability.
- **Seen as too establishment:** In focus groups more participants say they think Farage is more of the same. A small, but growing minority point to other right-leaning figures like Lowe.

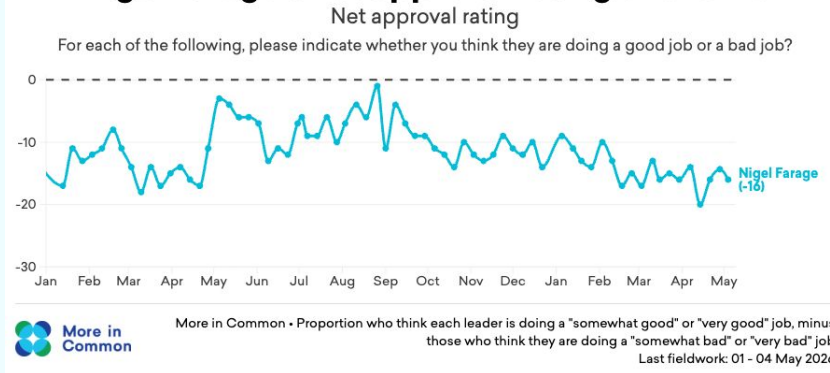
If Nigel Farage does get in and he completely messes it up, I'm out of here, I can't cope with this country any longer. I feel like we've had it as a nation and there's nothing else that we can do.

We are at breaking point and it's going to get to the point where it either gets fixed or it's broken forever. Jodie, Newport



I would say he's this country's last hope in a way. In some way, I hope he will help to restore that part that we've lost
Sam, Birmingham

Nigel Farage's net approval rating over time



I think he's an undercover racist. I don't trust him whatsoever. I think he's the UK's version of Donald Trump. He's just waiting to get his foot in the door. I actually do think he's the UK's Donald Trump. He's just sitting there waiting to get into power.



Dwayne, Birmingham, lorry driver

Zack Polanski

Net approval rating: -27

A source of hope, but also apprehension

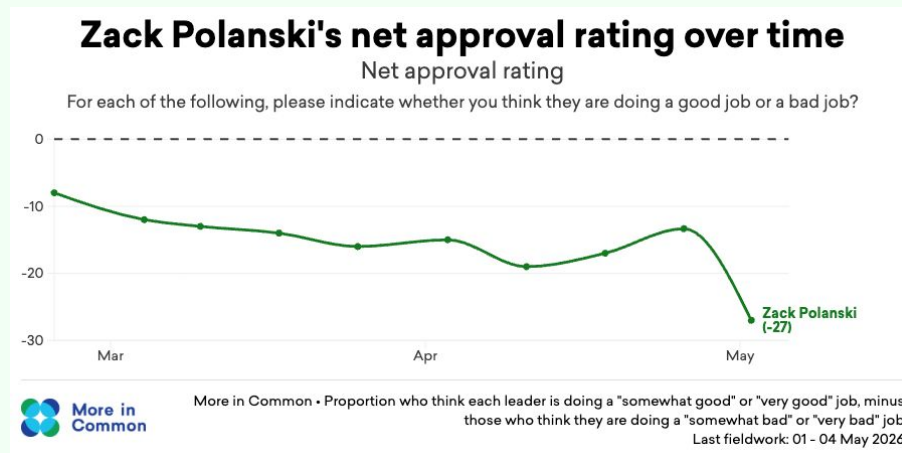
The Greens have momentum heading into these elections. Many see Polanski as a source of hope, yet there are serious concerns about his past, and certain policy positions.

Positives:

- **'Politics of hope':** To many Britons, Polanski feels like a breath of fresh air. With his focus on the cost-of-living crisis and targeting billionaires, he is seen as refreshingly focused on the issues that matter most.

Negatives:

- **Credibility challenge:** Many feel the Greens are unprofessional with a lack of experience in government. Their positions on defence and drugs and the economy are barriers to many. The "hypno-boob" scandal may erode support for the Greens.
- **Golders Green response:** This week, Zack Polanski's net approval rating has dipped by 14 points after he shared a post criticising Met Police for their handling of the Golders Green attack.



A bit of a charlatan, really. He's a failed actor. He used to be a hypnotist



Rod, Cardiff

I'm hopeful that there's now going to be something actually different, rather than just the Tory Party versus the Labour Party pretending to be the Tory Party.



Caroline, Leeds

I'd rather him be hypnotising people to get bigger boobs than to be in the Epstein files, to be honest.

Reagan, youth worker, Sheffield



It's just so refreshing to hear from a normal person who cares about the country he lives in.

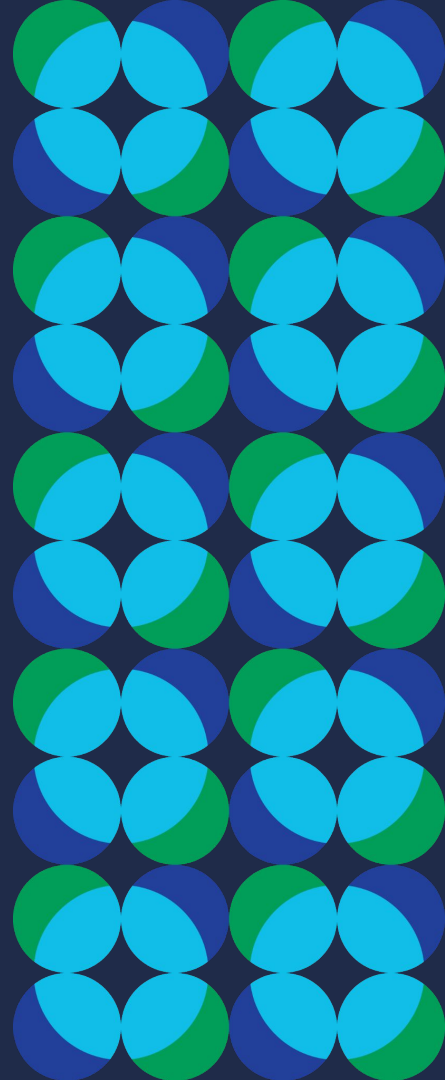
Maddy, Leeds



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English locals

The Insurgent Election



Where elections are happening in England?

5,014 councillors will be elected with more than half of these being in either London or the South East.

The Government tried to delay 6 county council elections already deferred from last year but faced legal challenges and ultimately abandoned the plan.

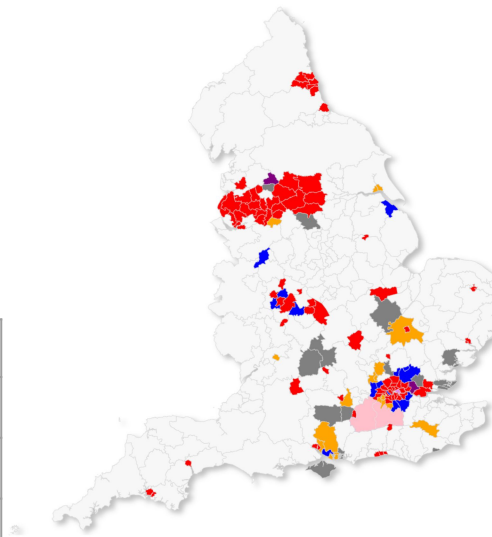
Some of these councils will only be electing in thirds, so not all seats are up for selection (e.g. all 10 in Manchester, Southampton, West Oxfordshire and Hastings).

Compared to last year's local elections these elections are taking place on much more Labour territory, including London.

Party	Number of councillors held
Labour	2,196
Conservative	1,134
Liberal Democrat	663
The Green Party	170
Reform UK	78

Lower tier councils up for election in May

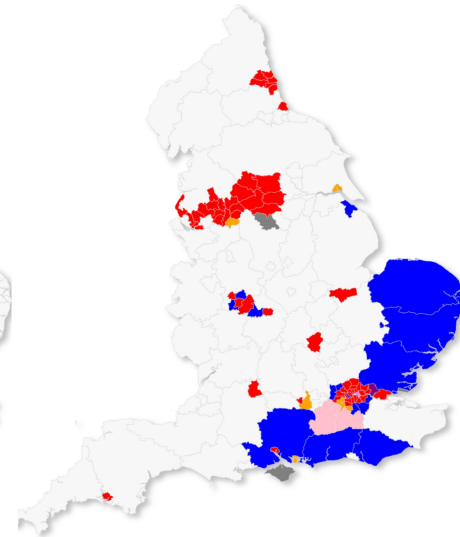
Current largest party: ● Labour ● Liberal Democrat ● Conservative ● No Overall Control ● Independent ● Other ● New authority (2026)



More in Common

Upper tier councils up for election in May

Current largest party: ● Labour ● Liberal Democrat ● Conservative ● No Overall Control ● Independent ● Other ● New authority (2026)



Source: Open Council Data More in Common

Source: Open Council Data

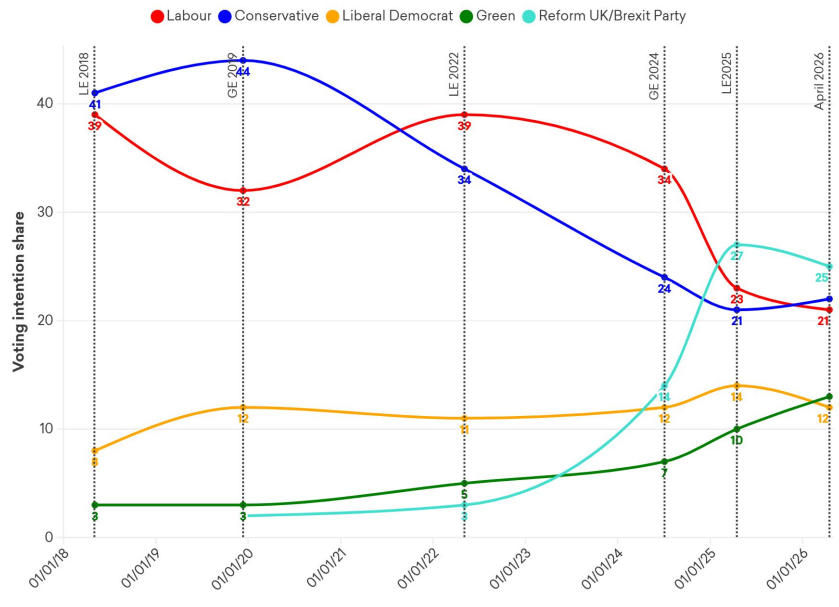
What has changed since 2022?

The 2022 local elections came as the Conservatives' electoral successes of 2019–21 began to collapse.

In May 2022, YoY CPI inflation hit 9.1%, while the partygate scandal had been rumbling on for several months and had recently been given new life when Boris Johnson was issued a fixed penalty notice in April. The elections came shortly before the release of the Sue Gray report, and a couple of months before the Chris Pincher scandal brought the Johnson Government down.

In 2022, the Conservatives lost 336 of 1414 councillors in England, and 10 out of 45 English councils that they had previously controlled. Among these, Labour marginally benefited (+22 and +3 respectively), and the Liberal Democrats did well (+194 and +3 each), as did the Green Party (+63 councillors).

Nationwide support for Labour and the Conservatives has fallen since 2022



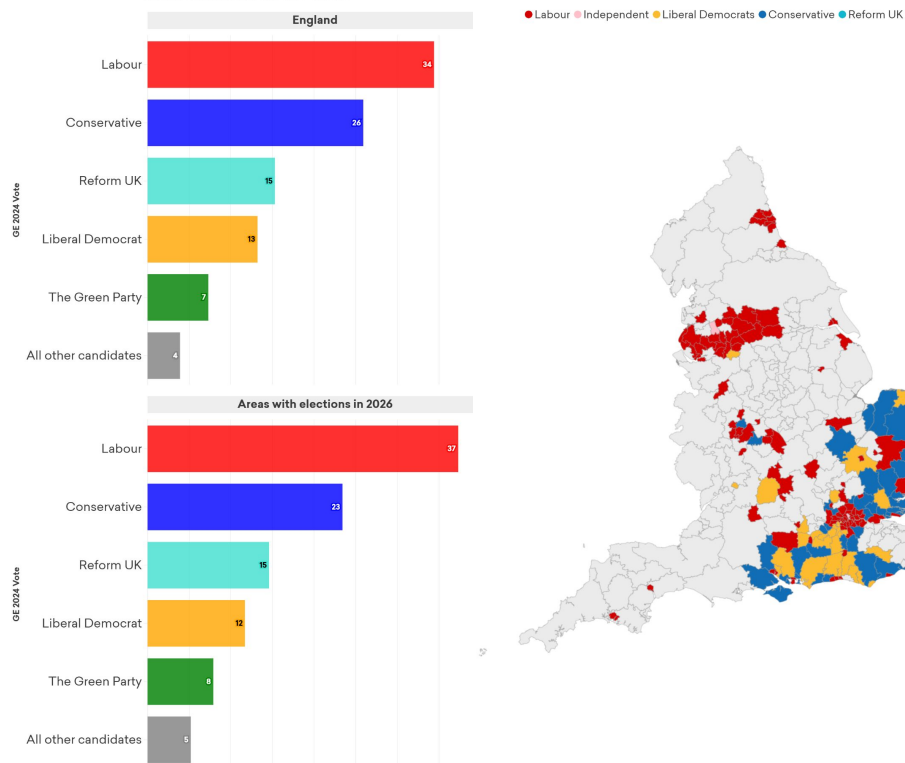
The 2024 baseline

These elections are happening on turf Labour dominated in 2024. Around three-quarters of the 126 councils with elections overlap with areas that returned Labour MPs at the last General Election. This is particularly true in London and other metropolitan area.

Even among the district councils with elections, Labour won the overlapping parliamentary seats in most cases.

This means that Labour's losses will be magnified, and a bad night for Labour could see them losing more than 1,500 seats.

2024 vote in England as a whole, and in areas with local elections in 2026



“A plague on both your houses”

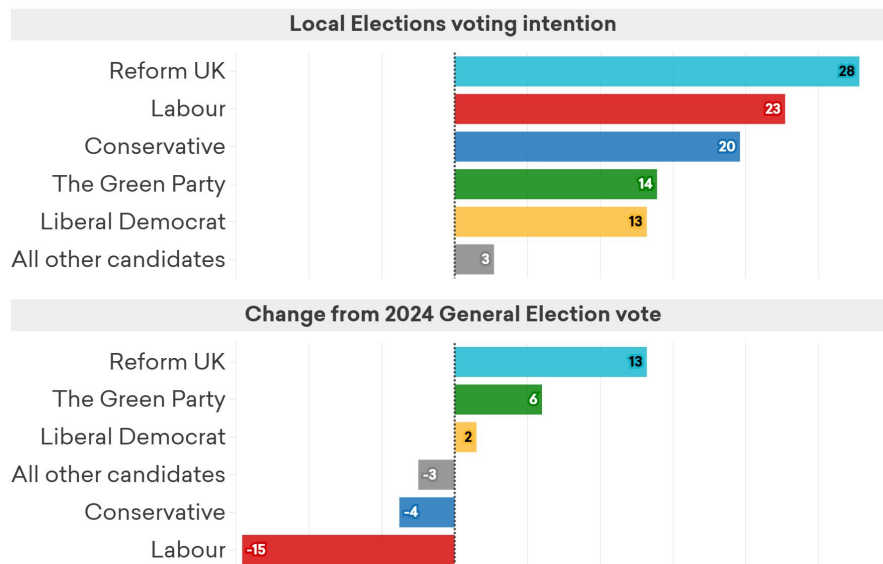
The English local elections will be defined by a swing away from traditional parties, towards Reform UK and the Greens.

In English councils going to the polls, Reform UK currently lead on 28 per cent, ahead of Labour on 23 per cent and the Conservatives on 20 per cent. The Greens are just 6 points behind with 14 per cent.

Since the General Election, Labour has collapsed in these areas, down 15 per cent from their 2024 vote share. Reform UK have gained the most ground, up 13 points, with the Greens up 6.

While these areas were not typically Conservative strongholds – and 2024 was already a low point – they are still down 4 points since the General Election.

Labour's vote share has collapsed - while Reform UK and the Greens have surged - in parts of England going to the polls



What happened at last year's locals?

The 2025 local elections saw Reform UK make sizeable gains across England while the traditional mainstream parties suffered.

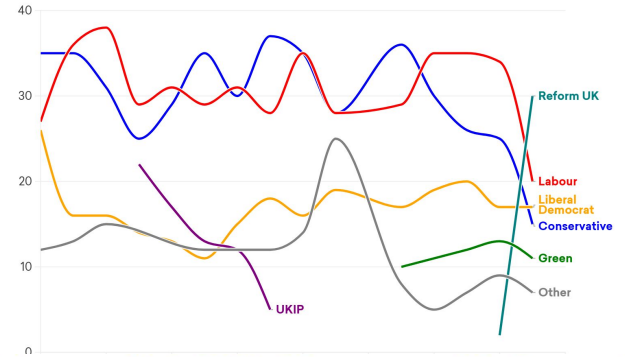
Losses hit the Conservatives in particular. Their seat win total was less than a third of that of 2021, when the party was at an electoral high under Boris Johnson following the vaccine bounce.

Last year's results were particularly dramatic given the areas in which local authorities were up for election. More rural and coastal Conservative heartlands such as Lincolnshire and Kent collapsed to Reform UK, while the Liberal Democrats also made gains in councils such as Oxfordshire in a pincer movement.

Labour losses were less pronounced as there were fewer urban-based local authorities being contested. But where they did hold seats in places such as Doncaster, the party made significant losses. 2026 will, however, look quite different as more urban areas are up for election across London and other major cities.

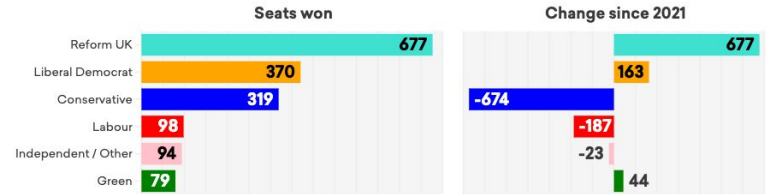
Labour and the Conservatives had record poor performances in 2025

BBC / Curtice Projected National Share (PNS)



Reform won big in 2025 at the expense of the Conservatives

Seats won in the 2025 local elections and change from 2021

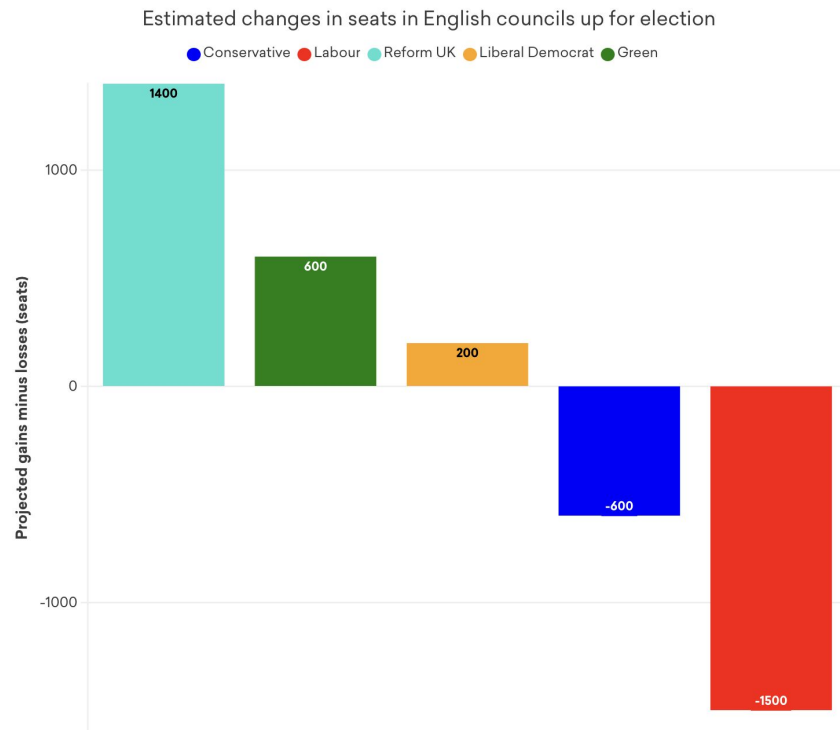


Seat projections

Based on current projections, Labour are set to see the heaviest losses in this election, potentially losing two thirds of their councillors up for election.

The following is a broad estimate based on current More in Common voting intention at a national level. While a range of seat outcomes are plausible in this set of elections, and small changes in vote share or distribution can have a large effect on seat totals, the below gives a rough sense of what the night may look like for each party.

- **Reform UK +1400**
- **Conservative -600**
- **Labour -1500**
- **Liberal Democrat +200**
- **Green +600**



Local dissatisfaction pushing voters away from Labour

While this election is, in part, a referendum on the Labour Government in Westminster, **local decline and dissatisfaction are also driving voters away from Labour.**

Those planning to vote Labour in these elections are outliers in their local optimism: they are the only voter group who tend to say that their local area is getting better, that their council is going in the right direction, and that they trust their local government. On each of these measures, **Reform UK voters are the most unhappy with their local area.**

In focus groups, residents in Labour-run councils often point to hyper-local symptoms of decline as evidence that the country needs change.



It doesn't look clean. It doesn't smell nice. All the shops are just shutting down. It's just going downhill.

Tanisha, retail worker, Birmingham

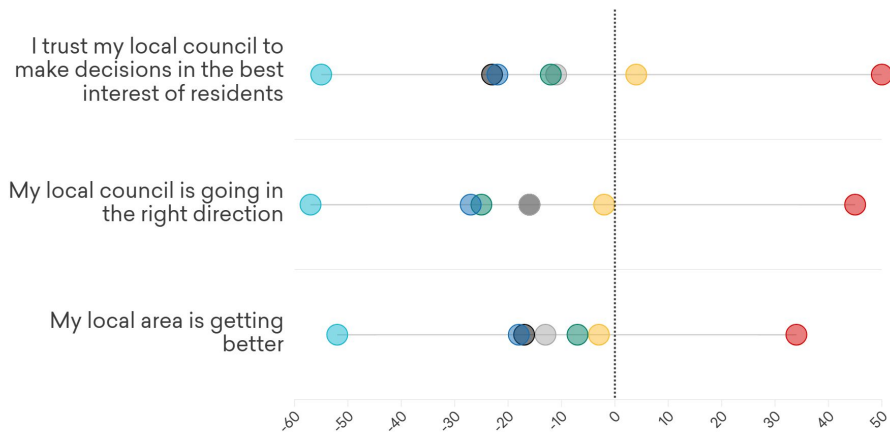
Our services are all being cut and our bills are all going up. And it's making us all become quite angry

Lucy, train conductor, Newcastle

Those planning to vote Labour in the local elections are outliers in how optimistic they feel about their local area

Net agreement with each statement

- All likely voters ● Labour ● Liberal Democrat ● The Green Party ● All those unlikely to vote
- Conservative ● Reform UK



Reform supporters are most motivated

Reform UK voters appear the most mobilised at **this election**. Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of English Reform voters in areas going to the polls say that the outcome is “very important”, compared to 53 per cent of all likely English voters.

Those planning to vote for the Liberal Democrats or the Green Party are less enthused, with fewer than half saying that the outcome of these elections is very important.

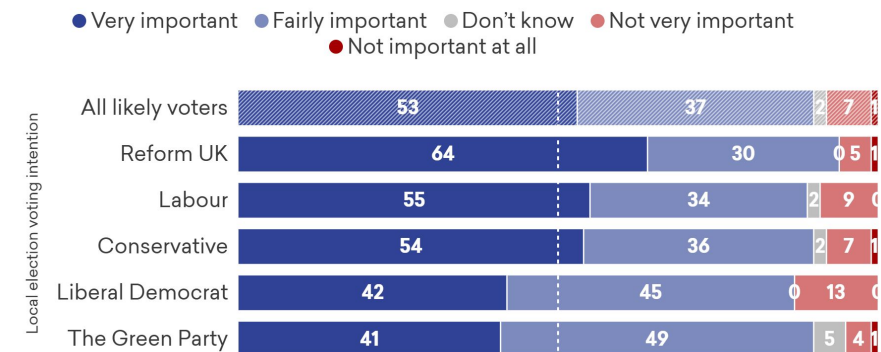


I've always voted locally, but this time I'm changing, going Reform because I want to send a message.

Richard, Leeds

Two-thirds of English Reform voters say these local elections are “very important”

How important, if at all, would you say that the outcome of the upcoming Local elections are to you personally?



I want to send a clear message to Labour that they're doing an awful job at the moment.



Steven, Hull

All about turnout

Reform UK voters appear the most mobilised at this election.

Much like in the 2025 Local Elections, Reform UK's lead is greatest among those who say they are *certain to vote*. This means that if fewer people turn out on polling day, and the electorate is limited to the most motivated, Reform UK will be boosted.

Meanwhile, Labour performs best among those who say they are likely, but not certain, to vote.

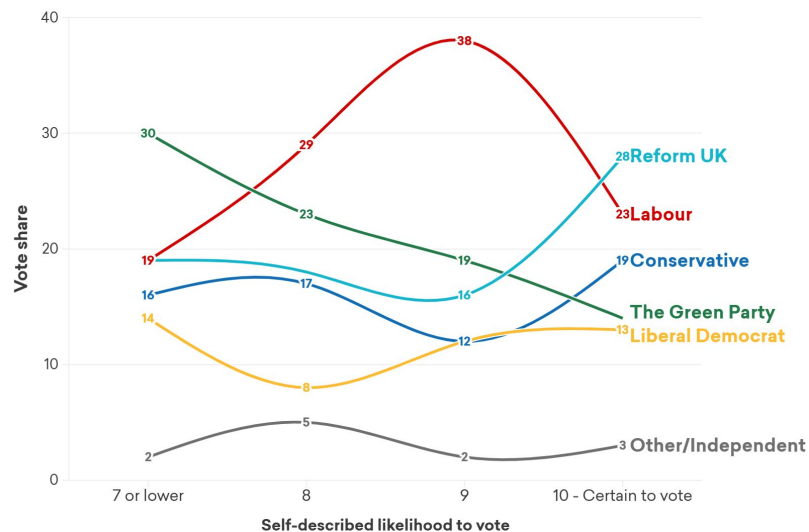
Turnout could be the Green Party's greatest challenge. The party leads among those who are unlikely to vote, but their vote share halves among those who are certain to vote.

Low turnout could be good for Reform UK. Meanwhile a key challenge for both Labour and the Green Party will be motivating their supporters.

Reform UK's vote share is highest among those who say they are certain to vote

Local election voting intention, by self-described likelihood to vote

How likely are you to vote in these local elections? Please rate from 0 to 10, where 0 means certain not to vote, and 10 means certain to vote. If you have already voted via a postal vote, please select "10 - Certain to vote"



A council tax election?

The two biggest local issues for people going to the polls are *council tax levels* (37 per cent) and *potholes and road repairs* (37 per cent).

In focus groups, people often cite council tax as an integral part of the cost-of-living crisis – made all the more politically toxic by the fact that many feel it is being raised without proper explanation, and while local services seem to be deteriorating.

For those voting Labour or Green in these elections, *housing* is the top local issue that concerns them.

Anti-social behaviour and community safety ranks in top four for everyone, but is particularly salient for Reform and Green voters.

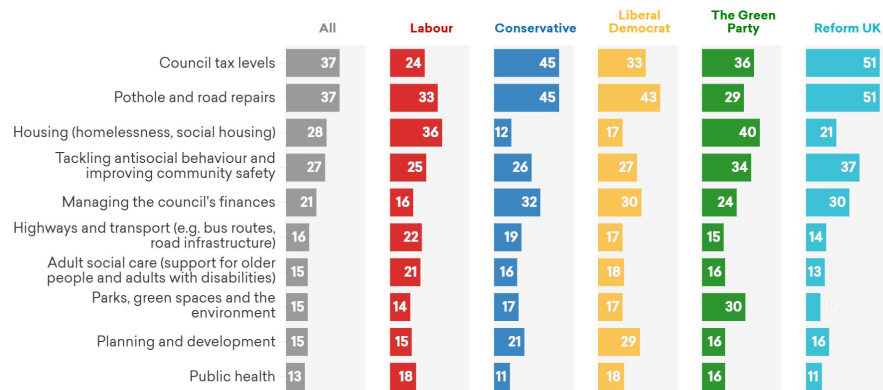


The council tax goes up every year – but without any explanation, without saying we’re going to do more bins or whatever. We’re just putting it up, taking it out of your account.

Jeanette, Sefton

Council tax and potholes are the two biggest issues for voters in the English local elections

Thinking about issues directly under your local council’s control, which of the following are the most IMPORTANT issues facing your local area?



Source: More in Common, April 2026 • Only shown to English people living in councils with elections



Leeds Council are utter shit. You pay so much in rates, but don’t get any services.

Richard, Leeds

Illegal migration as a key test for the Government

While these elections are local, the Government’s handling of national issues like channel crossings will shape how Britons vote.

Across parts of England heading to the polls, nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) believe that the government have been too soft on illegal immigration.

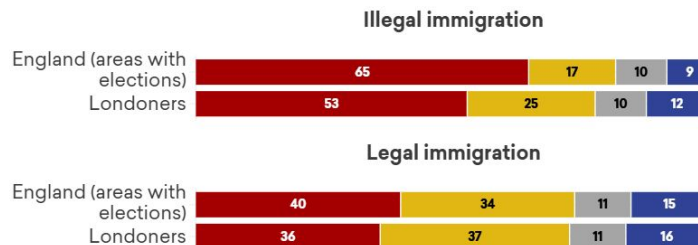
While the issue may be less salient in the capital, a majority of Londoners (53 per cent) also agree that the Government has been too soft.

However, voters in these elections are more likely to say that the Government is getting it right when it comes to legal immigration. While 40 per cent of people across England and 36 per cent in Wales think the Government is too soft, about as many think the Government is getting it about right. Again only a minority think the Government is being too harsh.

Most people in London - and across England - say the Government is too soft on illegal immigration

Thinking about [legal/illegal] immigration, would you say that generally speaking the UK Government’s approach has been too harsh, too soft or about right?

● Too soft ● About right ● Don't know ● Too harsh



They're illegal immigrants. They're coming over on the boats. They're just letting them come through the countries, giving them a free life, giving them all the money that they need... they come over and they're from different countries that have different laws

Amber, Sheffield



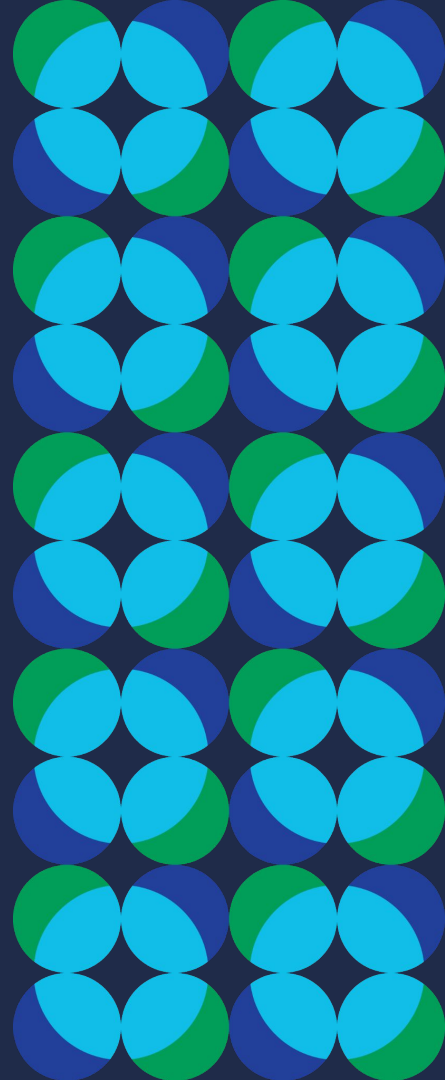
Since Brexit and so forth, immigration and illegal immigration and everything else, we've got no power now and it's like it's become much, much, much worse, much worse.

Cass, Birmingham



More in
Common

Races to watch



Calderdale – a test case for insurgent parties

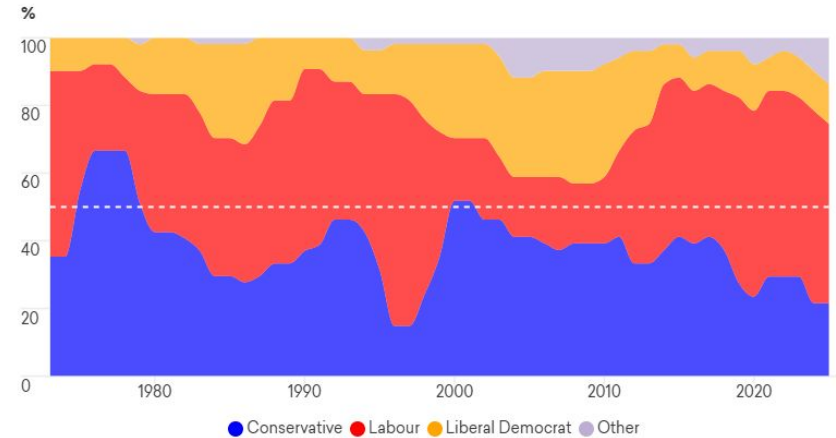
Since 2015 Calderdale has been a Labour controlled council, with the council historically changing hands between the two major parties.

In 2026, Labour look set to lose their majority, squeezed on both sides by insurgent parties. Reform UK are on track to be the largest party in the council, while the Greens are also expected to make significant gains.

Calderdale's different communities means it's one to watch for assessing both insurgent parties: **the Greens** can be expected to make strong gains in more traditionally liberal areas like Hebden Bridge, along with Muslim communities in Halifax. Meanwhile **Reform UK** is likely to surge in working-class, Leave-voting wards like Brighouse, Illingworth and Ovenden.

Watching the results of Calderdale will give a signal of how well Labour can defend its base from both sides.

Calderdale Council Composition



Source: Open Council Data UK

We've been hit by so many things over the last decade that we feel a little bit browbeaten. There's no good news. No one feels well off. Just scraping by.

Archie, Halifax

I stopped following politics because it gives me a lot of anxiety. It just makes me worried about what the future will be like.

Esther, Brighouse

Calderdale as a microcosm of the Insurgent Elections in England

Calderdale is a case study of the forces driving voters across England away from the main parties – and toward insurgents across left and right.

Voters feeling left behind by Labour



Labour got in because people were fed up for 14 years of Tory rule – but nothing's any better. It's getting worse.

Derek, Sowerby Bridge

We had Conservatives that were consistently shit. Whereas Labour is shit but faster.

Anouschka, Sowerby Bridge

My default is now to not believe a politician. Keir Starmer is about as reliable as exists currently (...) And it's a dirty word now, 'politician'.

Dominic, Calderdale

I've worked since I left school, always paid taxes – obviously we're all struggling

Susie, Halifax

Apprehensively turning to Reform UK

People are so fed up at the minute, they'll just do it just to see what happens. And if it doesn't work, we're back to square one. But people feel they've got nothing to lose.

Paul, Halifax

He's offering change. Labour said they were going to do that and they didn't. People are fed up.

Anna, Sowerby Bridge

He seems like the only one who really wants to tackle illegal immigration. Labour said they'd prosecute the gangs – they did not. The Tories have been fighting that battle forever. That just leaves Reform.

Derek, Sowerby Bridge

Or seeking change through the Greens.

Somebody's finally saying these things. Somebody mentioned billionaires at long last. I was instantly like, brilliant, there's something to cling onto.

Helena, Hebden Bridge

I feel like voting Green might force Labour to actually think, and be a bit more passionate about what the population actually wants.

Ellie, Hebden Bridge

I find it really disgusting – driving around and just seeing (Reform UK material) repeatedly outside.

Sannah, Halifax

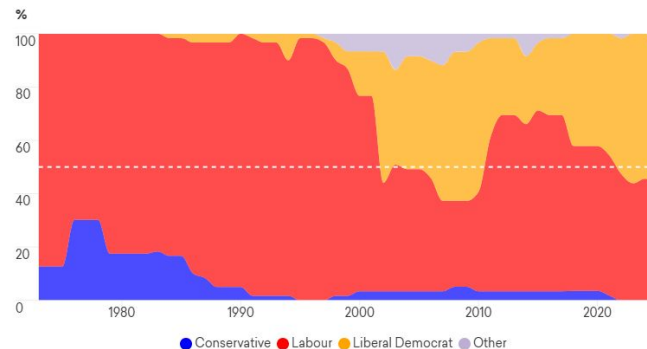
Hull City Council – Liberal Democrats versus Reform UK

Hull City Council is a prime example of the insurgent election – where anger at the status quo means that Labour and the Conservatives are being squeezed off the pitch. Focus group participants didn't want to reward either of the main parties, but while the Liberal Democrats were the main 'outside' option in the past, now Reform are also seen as a viable option.

Last year's local elections saw the election of a Reform Mayor for Hull and East Yorkshire – local boxer, Luke Campbell. Locals feel like they haven't seen much from him so far but have a lot of affection for him, and want him to do well. In groups, many are willing to consider voting for them at these elections.

Hull saw riots in the summer of 2024, centred around anger around migration underlining a feeling of national decline. With the cost-of-living crisis showing no sign of ending, this anger has not yet been put to bed.

Hull City Council Composition



Source: Open Council Data UK



We don't ever seem to get away from problems to do with the government rather than them talking about the cost of living. I mean, let's face it, the prices and the shops are just going up and up and up

Fiona, security worker, Hull



Can anyone actually tell me the last time something went really good for them? When was the last time someone got paid and... had money at the end of the week?

Leanne, service manager

The council wastes a lot of money. They spent millions and millions converting [a road] into a single carriageway. Totally wrong. And then a million to put it back to a dual carriageway because it doesn't work.

John, retired, Hull

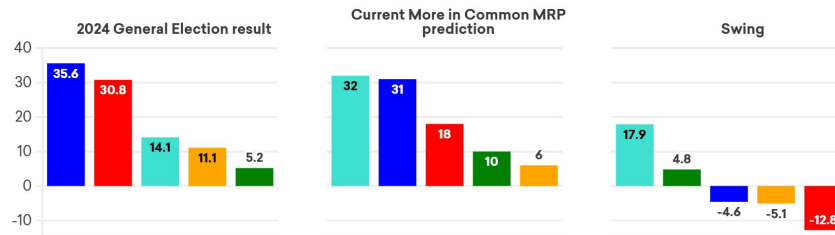
Reform's threat to the Conservatives: Essex

Essex is similar to many of the other counties where Reform did well in the last general election at the Conservative's expense, digging into their heartlands.

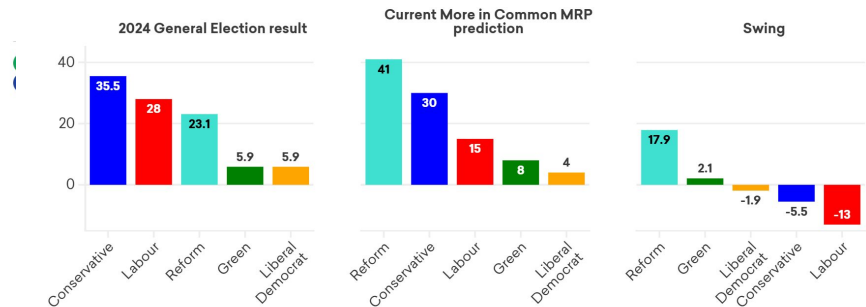
Reform could perform well in the back gardens of senior Tory figures: **North West Essex (Kemi Badenoch)** and **Bratintree (James Cleverly)** are both former Conservative strongholds that are projected to flip to Reform in a general election.

If Reform win in these areas of Essex, it will suggest that they are continuing to win over the small towns and affluent villages that form the traditional backbone of the Conservative Party's support base.

Northwest Essex in a General Election



Bratintree in a General Election



Reform's threat to Labour: Sunderland

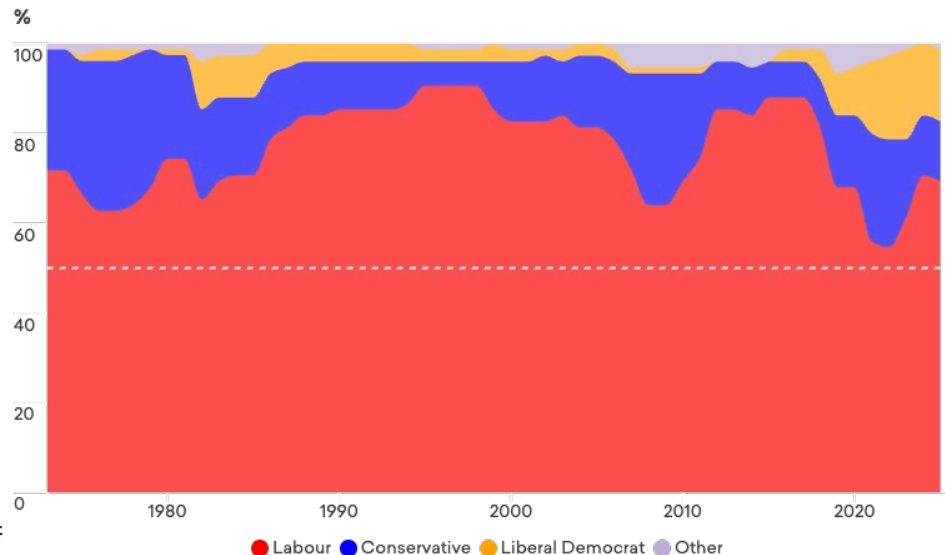
Sunderland is one of the clearest example of Reform's threat to Labour in its heartlands.

Sunderland City Council has been Labour-led since its formation, when the country was led by Harold Wilson.

This is a part of the country where Conservative support crept up in 2019 and support for Reform/Brexit Party has always been latent.

More in Common's Westminster MRP model this month projects Reform would win the Sunderland Central constituency in a general election tomorrow taking 37% of the vote, with Labour 12 points behind. Bridget Phillipson the Education Secretary would also lose her Houghton and Sunderland South seat.

Sunderland Council Composition



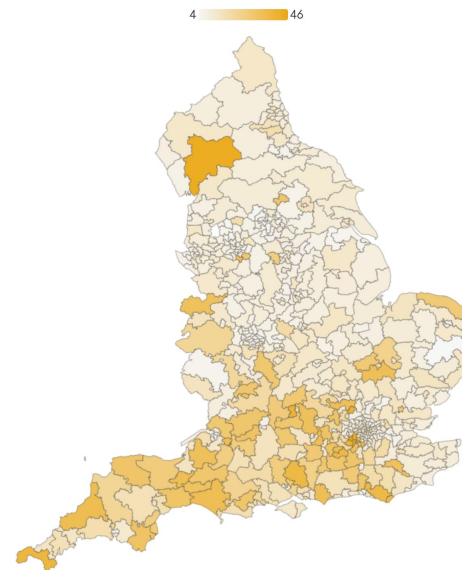
Opportunity for Liberal Democrats to further cement themselves into the Blue Wall

The core test for the Liberal Democrats this May will be one of **retention**. In the small number of existing 'Blue Wall' councils up for election, there is little room for growth such as has been the collapse in support for the Conservatives over the last few years.

Continuing to assert their overwhelming dominance on councils like Tunbridge Wells, St. Albans, Winchester, Cheltenham and South Cambridgeshire will be an important indicator that their support in the seats they gained at the 2024 General Election is resilient to any uptick in favour that the Conservatives are enjoying now they are in opposition.

Offensively the Liberal Democrats will want to show they can continue to be a threat in the Conservatives' heartlands in the new authorities up for election. The new East and West Surrey unitary authorities should be fertile ground for the party and on a good night, we would expect the Liberal Democrats to take control of these councils.

Liberal Democrat projected performance in More in Common's April 2026 MRP



In their own words: focus groups in Birmingham



It's shocking. It's terrible. I go outside my front door and I can see the neighbourhood just going downhill, more rubbish around, grass is overgrowing everywhere. It's just the basics. It's the standard of living. It's just the standards. I'm not asking for there to be lovely plants. If I go to Warwick or somewhere and I walk down the road, they have lovely streets. The streets are clean, they've got plants, they've got flowers, they've got hanging baskets. Everything's just much nicer. But I come to my area, and I'll be lucky to see if the rubbish is being picked up this week. It's just the basics. We're not asking for a lot. It's just the basics are not being done.



I voted Labour all the years I've been voting, but now I don't think I'd vote for them again... the people who have been in the seats before, they haven't shown us anything, so they can't be upset when we vote elsewhere.

Alice



There's not enough evidence for us to see that there's been improvements. We don't see anything. I don't see anything that makes my life actually better or see anything that makes anything around me better. And I know the government's got a tough job and they have to consider lots of different things, but at the same time, me being selfish, I can't see anything that's improving my standard of living at all. If anything, it seems to be getting, and with everybody around me as well, it seems to be getting worse.



Joe

What [Keir Starmer] is, he's a fraud. I remember when before the election he was saying, "Labour will do this for you. Labour will do this for you. Help this, help that." And he didn't stick to one thing.

David

Ollie

Sefton – a Labour stronghold under attack

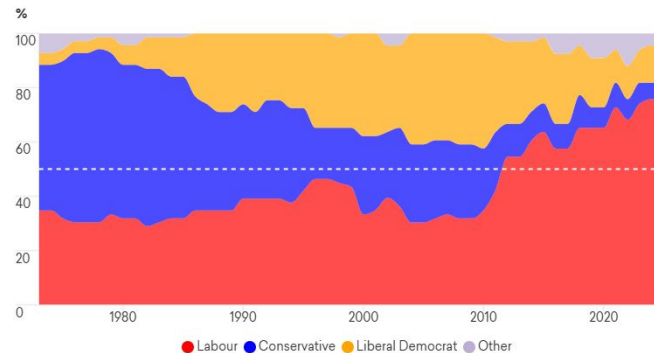
Sefton has been under Labour control since 2012 and alternated between Labour and Liberal Democrat council leaders since 1987. This year, the borough will be a bellwether that tells us how resilient Labour support in Merseyside really is, and whether the region is actually more *anti-Conservative* or *anti-right*.

Sefton is one of the Merseyside authorities where the Tories have retained a presence on the council – Liverpool City Council, by contrast, has not returned a Conservative councillor since 1988. The borough has also had a strong Liberal Democrat presence, particularly in its more affluent areas, while Labour has dominated the more working-class urban wards.

Going into the elections, **both Reform UK and the Liberal Democrats pose a challenge to the two main parties**, drawing in voters dissatisfied with each. More in Common's most recent constituency-level MRP puts Reform UK and Labour neck-and-neck on 29 per cent of the vote apiece, with the left bloc (Labour, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats) on 55 per cent of the vote, against 33 per cent for the right bloc (the Conservatives and Reform UK).

In Sefton focus groups, lifelong Labour voters describe feeling that the party has drifted away from its core, and from the values it was meant to stand for, leaving them willing to roll the dice on insurgent alternatives. Reform headway in Sefton would mark a crack in the wall of a region that has been red for so long.

Sefton Council Composition



Source: Open Council Data UK



Is there a difference between Labour and the Tories? It's just a continuation of life being harder.

Matt, Sefton



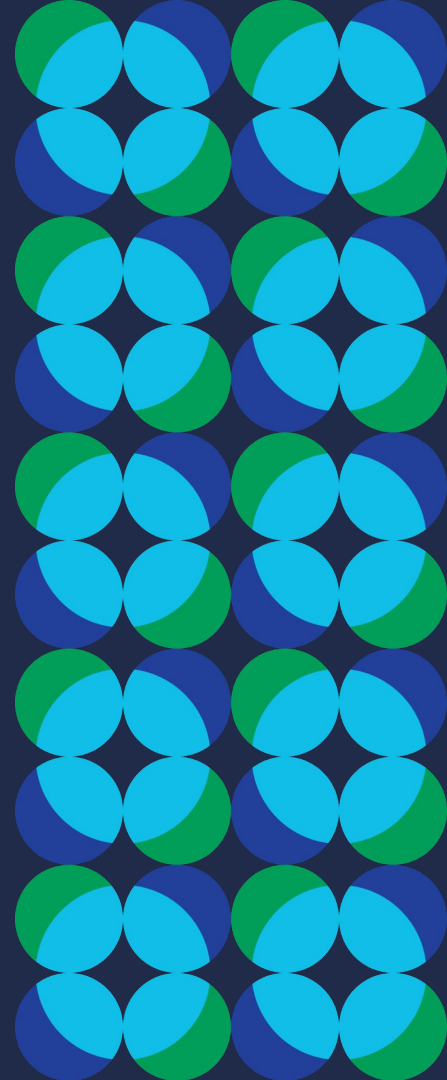
We don't hear from the councils... until the post and the canvas through the door, and the posting is so gentle in case you open the door... you've never seen them before.

John, Sefton



More in
Common

London




Top issues facing London: crime, council tax and affordable housing

Policing and crime is the issue that Londoners consider most important to their vote: 34 per cent of Londoners say it will affect their vote, followed closely by council tax levels (33 per cent) and affordable housing and planning (26 per cent).

Labour and Green voters in London are most worried about affordable housing, while Reform voters are especially worried about crime, and Conservatives and Liberal Democrats are most worried about council tax levels.

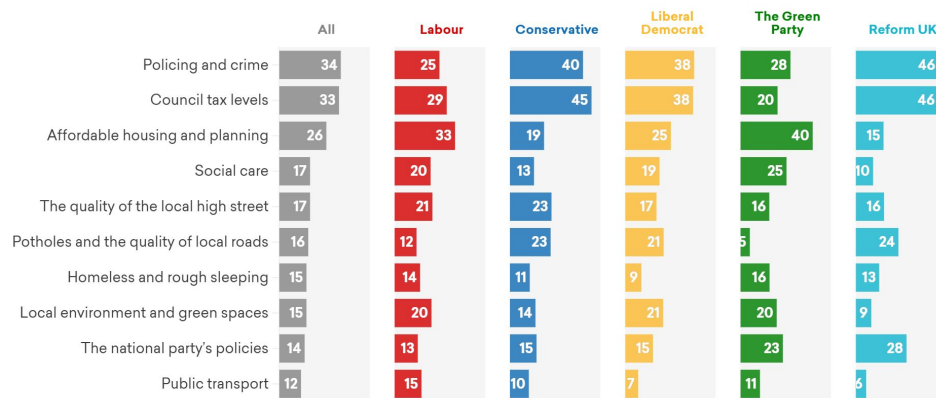
 *I've been renting since I was 16 and I can never see myself buying a property.*
Lauren, Tottenham

 *We pay so much for council tax and the services are really poor and the roads are really run down.*
Neil, Tottenham

Policing and crime is the most important issue that will shape how Londoners vote

Which of the following issues will be most important for determining which party you will vote for in the upcoming Local elections on May 7th? Please select up to three.

Showing top 10 choices



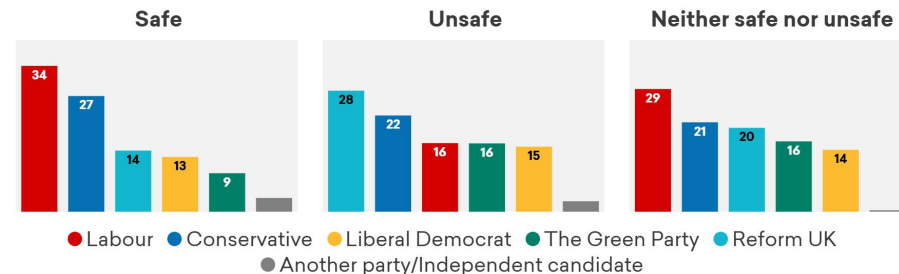
Crime, policing and safety in London

Crime and policing is the top issue people say will decide their vote in London, and a key faultline in London politics appears to be how safe people feel in the city: **Labour voters stand out in their sense that the city feels safe; Reform and Green voters are most likely to feel unsafe.**

If only Londoners who felt *unsafe* in their local area could vote in this election, Reform UK would win with 28 per cent of the vote. If only those who felt safe could vote, Labour would win by 34 per cent, while Reform would earn just 14 per cent. The Greens' vote share is higher among those who feel unsafe than safe (16 to 9 per cent).

If only Londoners who felt unsafe in their local area could vote, Reform would win the London elections

(Local election voting intention by how safe Londoners feel in their local area)




These gangs of kids on electric bikes going around phone snatching, the knife crime seems to happen all the time on the news, (...) And when you've got teenagers, it's petrifying to think that they're going out at that age where they're starting to go out in the evening and they should be free to go and explore our wonderful city. But there's always this doubt in the back of your mind – I

hope they're going to be okay

Neil, Tottenham

Electoral fragmentation reaches the capital

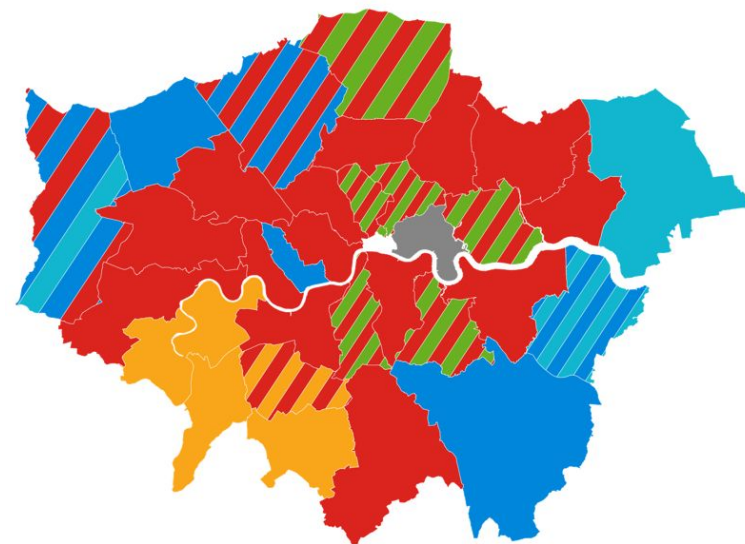
Labour looks set to hold the capital, getting the highest vote share in 21 of 32 boroughs, but on a significantly reduced vote, down 15 points since the 2024 General Election. **The combined vote of the two traditional parties has collapsed by 19 points, with that ground seized almost entirely by insurgent parties.**

 *I voted Labour and I was quite enthusiastic. But it's been almost two years now. It's just been very disappointing.*

Dan, Holborn and St Pancras

	Councils Leading on Vote Share	Implied Voting intention	Change in vote share since 2024 General Election
Labour	21	28	-15
Tory	5	17	-4
Liberal Democrat	3	14	+3
Greens	1	20	+10
Reform UK	1	15	+6
Ind & Others	1	6	+3

More in Common's April London MRP



Insurgents breaking through in London

The Greens are the main beneficiary of Labour's collapse in inner London, up 10 points across the capital and projected to top the poll in Hackney – the first time the party has ever led in a London borough – with Islington, Lambeth and Lewisham all within touching distance.

Reform, meanwhile, are on track to break through in the suburbs around East London, projected to lead in Havering and effectively tied with the Conservatives in Bexley.

The Conservatives still lead in five boroughs – Bexley, Bromley, Harrow, Hillingdon, and Kensington and Chelsea – but are pushed into third place on average vote share, behind Labour and the Greens, and just ahead of Reform by just 2 points.



There's no idea of where we're going. There's no sense of this is what we're all aiming towards.

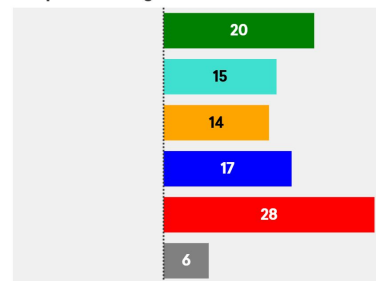
Sophie, Tottenham

Labour's support in London has fallen dramatically since 2024, while the Greens and Reform have made gains

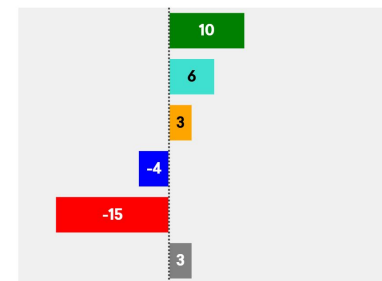
More in Common London MRP result - April 2026

● Labour ● Conservatives ● Liberal Democrats ● Greens ● Reform UK
● Other/Independent

Implied Voting Intention (local elections)



Change in voting intention since 2024 (London General Election results)



Labour stays on top in the capital but is besieged on all fronts

Labour faces dramatic losses in London with previously loyal Labour voters fragmenting in multiple directions, but particularly to the Greens.

Labour does not break 40 per cent in a single borough according to the model's estimates. The party's strongest performance is in Camden (40 per cent), followed by Hammersmith and Fulham (37 per cent) and Brent (37 per cent). For reference, in 2022 Labour won more than 40 per cent of the vote in two-thirds of all London boroughs (21 councils of 32).

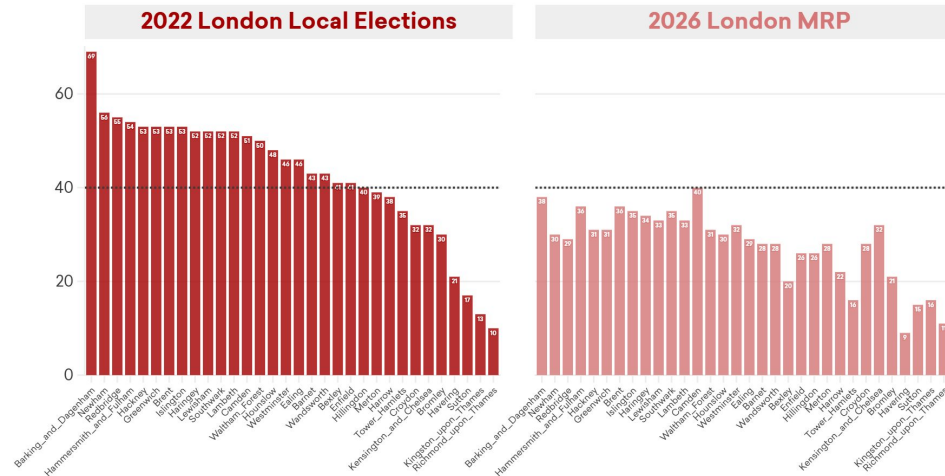
The Greens are the second-placed party in 16 of Labour's 21 boroughs – meaning the main threat to Labour in the capital now comes from its left, rather than from its right.

There hasn't been an area in the last 18 months where Labour have been successful with anything, has there? Which is quite sad.

Martine, Holborn and St Pancras

In 2022, Labour surpassed 40 per cent of the vote in two-thirds of London boroughs; today, they are not modelled to surpass 40 per cent in a single borough

Labour vote share in London boroughs in 2022 local elections and 2026 MRP



Undecided voters could reshape London

A high degree of marginality means that party leads in some boroughs are very narrow, with small swings potentially shifting how the election plays out in individual wards.

Around a fifth of London voters are still undecided (19 per cent), meaning how late voters break could shift the composition of councils dramatically.



I'll probably vote Green in the next election, but that's actually not really because of Zack Polanski... I just don't really know what the appeal of Labour is to me.

Eddie, Holborn and St Pancras

One in five London voters are still undecided about how to vote

Would you say you have definitely decided or are still undecided on how you are going to vote in the local elections on May 7th?

I've definitely decided on who to vote for



I'm still undecided on who to vote for

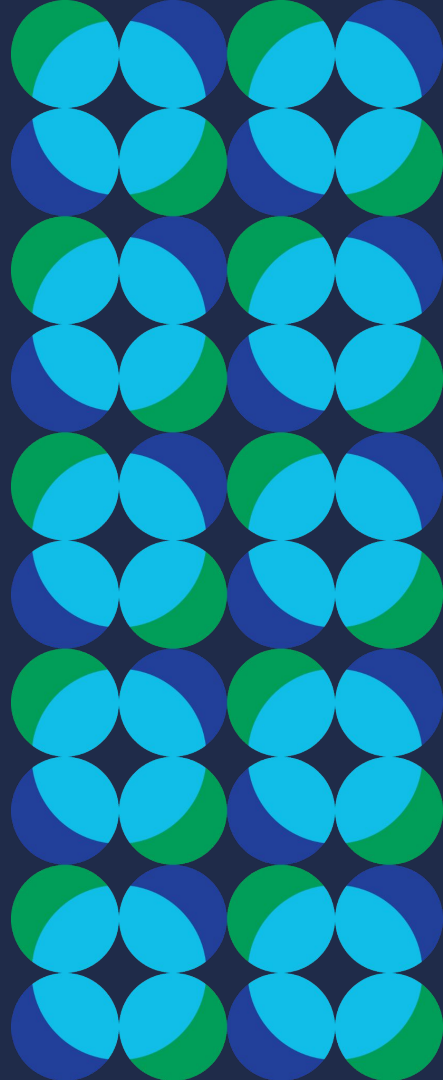




More in
Common

Scotland

The 'Meh' Election



The big “meh”

Voters in Scotland are impatient for change: almost three-quarters (73 per cent) of Scots say that it is time for change in the country, while only 27 per cent think that Scotland should “stick to the plan”.

Yet Scotland is in an unusual position because while the public is impatient for change, **there isn't a clear 'change' candidate – nor even a single incumbent:** many Scots describe a desire for something new after nearly two decades of the SNP, yet they are also often deeply disillusioned with the Labour Government in Westminster.



The SNP need to lose, but I don't know what a good outcome would be. (...) We need change but we're not going to get it.

April, North Berwick

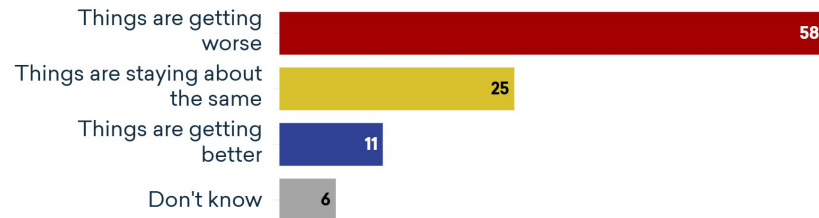


There's a doom spiral, we need some kind of action or change. We're just stagnating (...) I don't think the SNP have a grasp on any of these problems; they've caused some of them. They've not got any solution or anything. That stagnation is particularly strong because we have two governments – in Scotland and in London. It feels like we're managed badly twice.

Sam, Midlothian

Three in five Scots think things are getting worse

Thinking about Scotland today, would you say...?



More in Common • April 2026
(Only those who describe themselves as likely to vote)


It's a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea. This is the first election where I'm really struggling, I've always voted SNP. This time I'm really not sure. My mum and dad, all their days, they voted Labour (...) even my dad, he's disgusted with them. It's very, very difficult.


Lorraine, Glasgow

Many miss the “Big Beasts” of Scottish politics

Across Scottish politics, many voters lament a lack of powerful leaders. Interestingly, people’s sense of respect tends to extend even to those they disagree with on the constitutional question: staunch unionists often speak about Nicola Sturgeon and Alex Salmond with a sense of admiration. Meanwhile, SNP voters often say they miss figures they passionately disagreed with like Ruth Davidson.

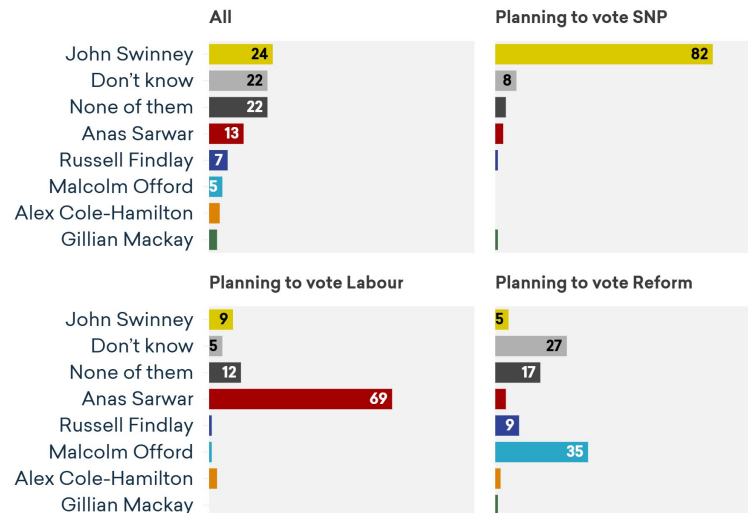
John Swinney is seen by nationalists as a “decent man” but without the “fire in his belly” of previous Scottish leaders. Asked which of the main party leaders they would choose to be First Minister, John Swinney rises to the top; yet only 24 per cent of Scots picked him as their first choice, compared to 44 per cent who selected “neither” or “don’t know”.

 I think (Swinney) is a decent guy, but I don't know that he's got the charisma to drive things on. I think that's the difference between... I wasn't a fan of Nicola Sturgeon, but she certainly put herself out there.
April, North Berwick

 I preferred politics when it was Sturgeon, Ruth Davidson, Kezia Dugdale
Sam, Midlothian

John Swinney is narrowly Scots' top choice for First Minister, although nearly twice as many pick "don't know" or "none of them"

Would you say you have definitely decided or are still undecided on how you are going to vote in the local elections on May 7th?



“SNP fatigue”

Many Scots now feel that, after nearly two decades in power, the SNP is running out of energy and “out of ideas”.

Popular policies, such as abolishing prescription charges, and expanding free school meals, have been overshadowed by scandals and perceptions of mismanagement.

Instead of being seen as an insurgent challenger to Westminster, the SNP is itself viewed as an complacent and out-of-touch incumbent.

The current SNP have been in place so long – nearly 20 years. They’ve been getting complacent, they’ve run out of ideas, (...) Where’s the fresh thinking coming from?

Where’s the fresh thinking coming from?

William, Rutherglen & Cambuslang

It’s very difficult to have 19 years of SNP and then say, vote SNP for change. They’ve been in power for 20 years, so that rules them out. So people then look for alternatives.

Jim, Rutherglen

The Scottish Government's successes and failures

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





Labour's fall from grace in Scotland

In the 2024 General Election, Labour surged in Scotland as voters rallied behind the party to punish the incumbent SNP.

Yet less than two years later, Labour is facing their worst-ever defeat in Holyrood.

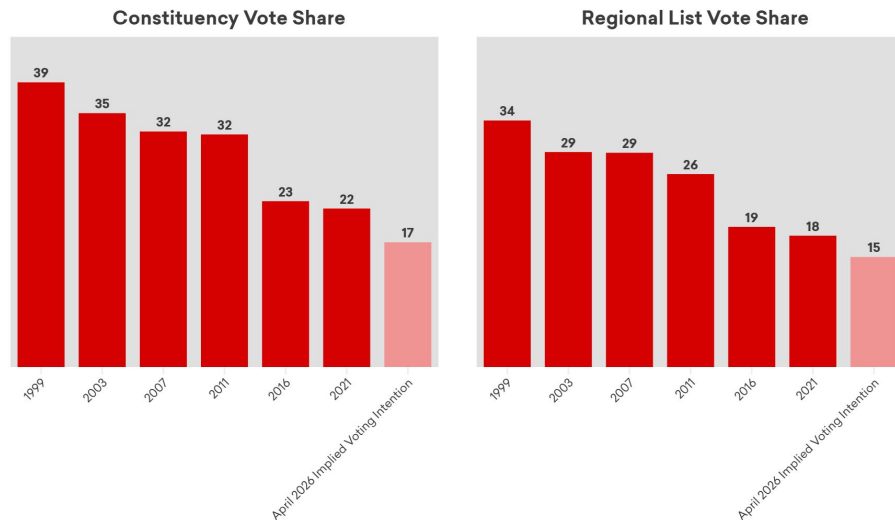
The Mandelson scandal hangs over most focus group conversations in Scotland, and it's clear that many feel that this Labour Government is little different from the Conservatives.

 *I had high hopes on July 4th, it was shattered on July 5th*
Stephen, Edinburgh

 *Well, I think there was a lot of hope in Labour coming into government, and I think they've just failed to deliver on anything.*
Caroline, Midlothian

2026 could be Labour's worst Holyrood defeat

Scottish Labour's vote share in all Holyrood elections, and More in Common's Scottish implied voting intention for 2026



Scottish Reform voters are less enthused than in England or Wales

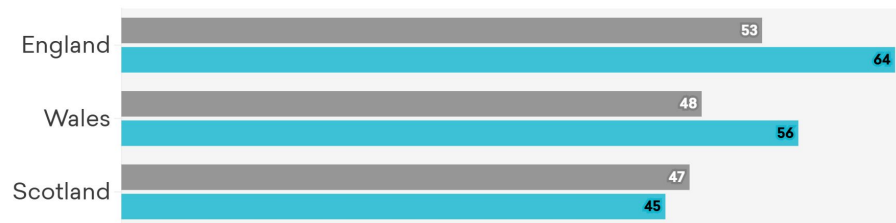
Voter apathy in Scotland is also evident among those planning to back Reform in Holyrood. **In England and Wales, Reform voters are the most likely to think that these elections are “very important”. Yet in Scotland, they are no more likely than average to see the elections as important.**

Malcolm Offord has, so far, struggled to cut through in Scotland: only 3 in 10 Scottish Reform voters have a positive view of Offord, while 58 per cent are unaware of him or hold no view. Among the Scottish public as a whole, only 11 per cent have a positive view of Offord.

Reform UK voters are significantly more enthusiastic than average in England and Wales, but not in Scotland

Proportion who believe that these elections are “very important”

● All likely voters ● Planning to vote Reform



It can't get any worse than it's been and hopefully somebody would come in and prove their point, instead of retracting over what they say to get in. I'd like (Reform) to do what they say because on paper, it looks good. They need to talk the talk and walk the walk.

Caroline, Midlothian

Scots remain split on independence – but few consider it a priority

Attitudes toward independence have not shifted dramatically since 2014 – there remains around half of Scottish voters who would support independence. More in Common’s latest polling suggests an almost 50:50 split on the independence question.

Yet while there remains a significant constituency of Scottish voters who would back independence, there is limited appetite for a renewed indy debate: **fewer than 1 in 10 Scots** (9 per cent) **believe that Scottish independence is one of the top issues facing the country.** Even among those who support independence, only 20 per cent consider it a top issue.



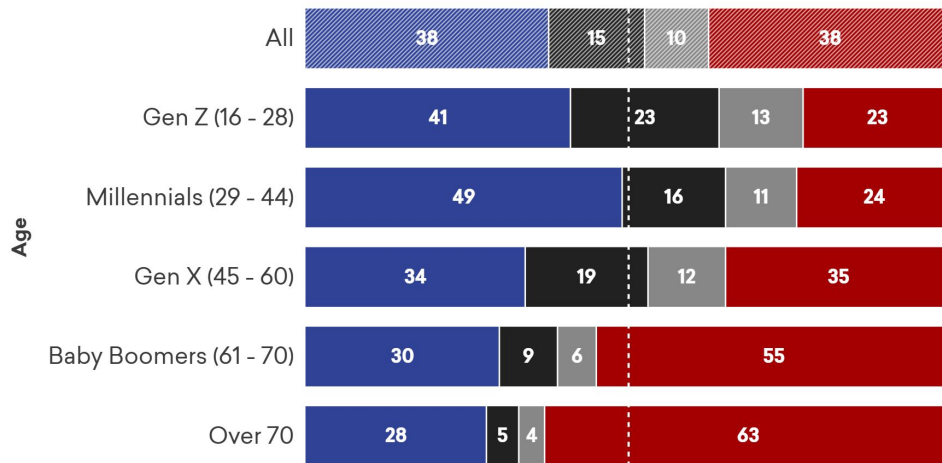
Independence is always up there for the SNP. That's what they lead with. And then I think the last time I read something, the next one down was the NHS and that's the two most important things for me.

Emma, SNP voter, Dundee

Scots remain split on independence

And if the independence referendum was held today, how would you vote?

● FOR Scottish independence ● I would not vote ● Don't know
● AGAINST Scottish independence



What do Scots make of party leaders?

John Swinney is currently the only major Scottish party leader with positive net approval. His net approval has risen 17 points from -16 per cent in February to 1 per cent in March. A third of Scottish voters now say Swinney is doing a good job.

Anas Sarwar is the least popular leader currently with -12 per cent net approval.

Malcolm Offord has had limited cut-through.

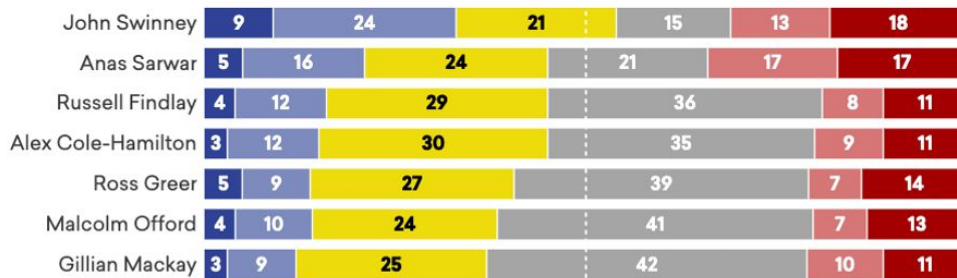
Nearly two thirds of Scottish voters hold no view on how a good a job he is doing.

Swinney and Sarwar have the greatest public awareness. Over half of the Scottish public have a take on whether each leader is doing a good or bad job.

Swinney is the only major Scottish party leader with positive net approval

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think they are doing a good job or a bad job?

● Very good job ● Somewhat good job ● Neither a good job nor a bad job
● Don't know ● Somewhat bad job ● Very bad job



He [Swinney] is a very nice man but he's useless.

Tom, Reform voter, Dundee

Fragmentation is both helping and hindering the SNP

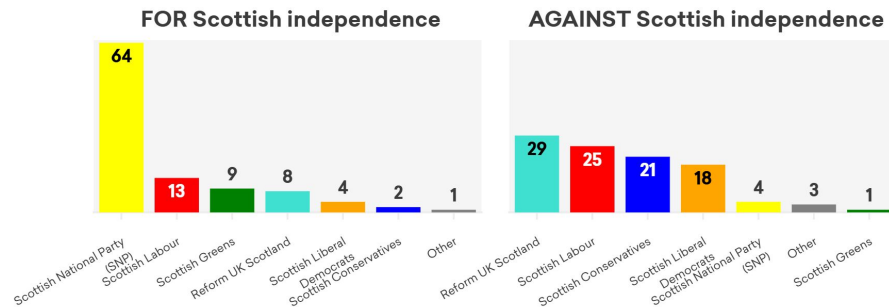
With Reform UK breaking through in Scotland for the first time, the unionist vote appears more fragmented than ever, with four parties commanding similar levels of support competing among anti-independence Scots. In previous elections, this would have been the perfect environment to springboard the SNP to a historic victory.

Yet the SNP's gains will be hampered by fragmentation on the nationalist side as well.

According to the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (SSA), the years after devolution saw a strengthening relationship between support for independence and support for the SNP – culminating in 84 per cent of pro-independence Scots voting SNP in 2021. This election could see that trend reversed, as the SNP's monopolistic grip on the nationalist vote loosens, **possibly earning the SNP the lowest share among pro-independence Scots since 2003.**

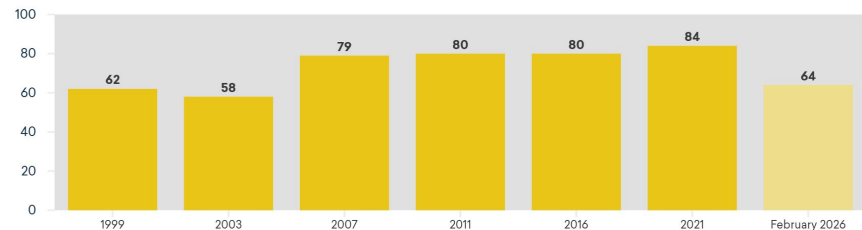
Scottish Constituency Voting Intention by stance on independence

Fieldwork: 21st August - 1st September 2025



This election could be the SNP's lowest vote share among pro-independence voters since 2003

SNP vote share among Scottish voters who support independence



The fallout from the STV debate

Last week's STV debate had significant cut-through: while 13 per cent of Scots say they watched it live, a further 40 per cent watched clips or at least read something about the debate.

Malcolm Offord's "six boats, six houses" comments appear polarising: 44 per cent say it reflected badly on Offord, while 23 per cent say it reflects well on him.

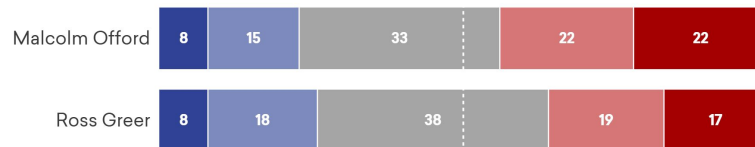
But this wasn't a point-scorer for the Greens either: people are also split on Greer, and tend to say his assertion that Scotland needs "fewer people like Offord" reflects poorly (36 per cent to 26 per cent).

In focus groups some say they come across as "arrogant", while others respect that the leader has "done well" and paid into the system.

Few think that Offord and Greer's STV exchange reflected well on either of them

How does Malcolm Offord saying he owns six houses, six boats and five cars reflect on Malcolm Offord?
/ How does Ross Greer's response, saying that Scotland should have fewer people like Malcom Offord, reflect on Ross Greer?

- Reflects very positively on him
- Reflects positively on him
- Reflects neither positively nor negatively on him
- Reflects negatively on him
- Reflects very negatively on him



More in Common • April 2026



Full wording: During the debate, Malcolm Offord (Reform UK) said "I was born in a tenement in Greenock... today I own six houses, five car and six boats and in a 40 year business career I've employed 100,000s of people and paid £45 million in tax", and asked Ross Greer whether the Greens wanted more or fewer people like Malcolm Offord in Scotland.

Fair play to him, he's done well.
We do need more people who are contributing to the tax base.
Stacy, Rutherglen

Disgusting. I just think (Offord) is arrogant"
William, Rutherglen

Re-electing the SNP is seen as the best of bad outcomes

It's hard to see an outcome of this election that more than a third of the Scottish public would find palatable.

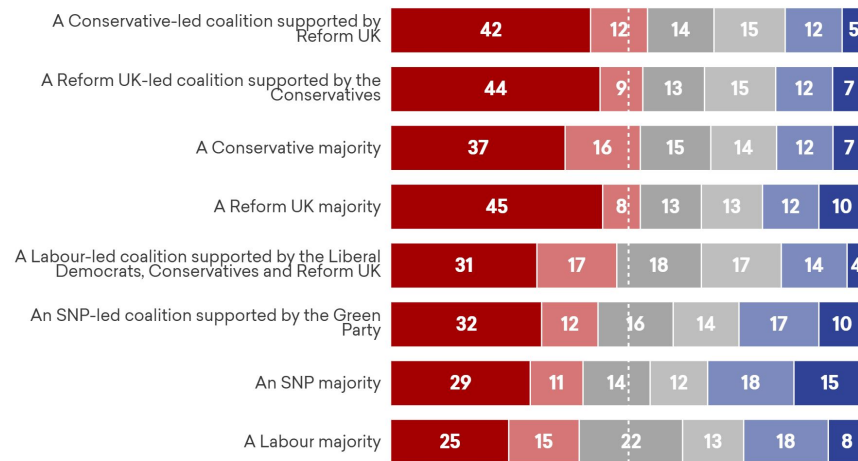
Scots tend to think that most outcomes – from an SNP-led coalition to a Reform UK majority – would be bad outcomes. Yet the public seem particularly averse to a Reform or Conservative-led government, with a narrow majority saying this would be a bad outcome.

The largest proportion of Scots (33 per cent) say that an SNP majority would be a good outcome, higher than any other possibility tested. **Yet this would also be a highly polarising result, with 68 per cent of anti-independence Scots saying this would be a bad outcome.**

Little enthusiasm for any outcome of the Scottish Parliament Election

Would you personally think each of the following would be a good election outcome or a bad election outcome after the upcoming Holyrood elections in Scotland?

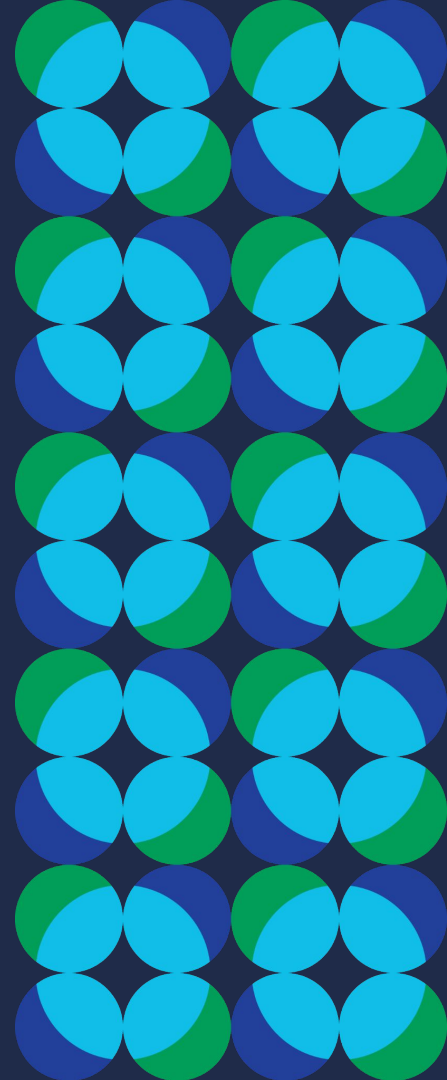
● A very bad election outcome ● A fairly bad election outcome ● Neither a good nor bad outcome ● Don't know ● A fairly good election outcome ● A very good election outcome





More in
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More in Common's latest Holyrood MRP



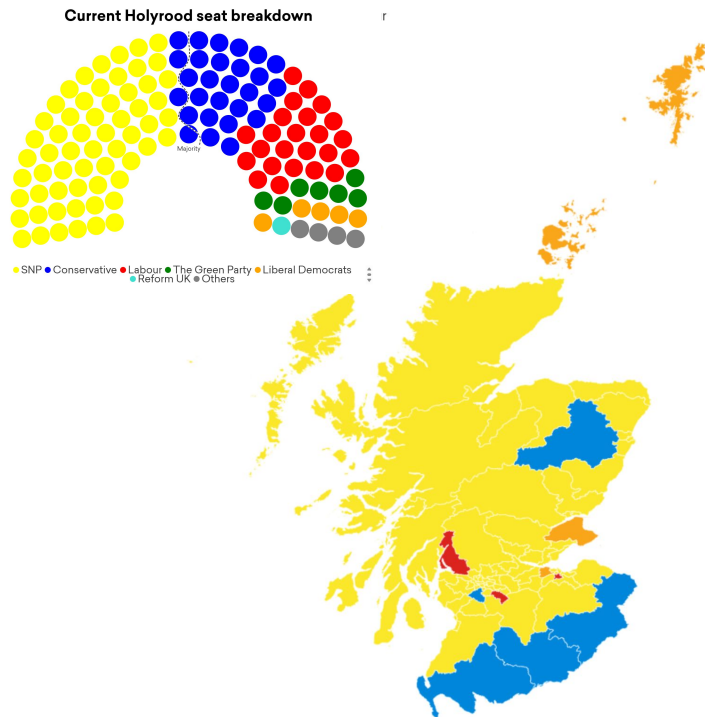
The context: the SNP is defending a high base

Currently, the SNP hold 60 seats, the Conservatives 28, Labour 24, the Greens 7, the Liberal Democrats 5, Reform UK 1, and 4 members sit as independents.

The last Holyrood election, in 2021, was the SNP's fourth consecutive victory, and one of their strongest. They won 64 of 129 seats – just one short of an overall majority – and their highest-ever share of the constituency vote. The Conservatives held steady in second place on 31 seats, while **Labour had their worst-ever Holyrood result with just 22.**

The SNP and Conservatives are both entering 2026 from a high base. Reform UK – absent from Holyrood in 2021 – are set to break through north of the border for the first time.

Current Scottish Parliament Constituencies



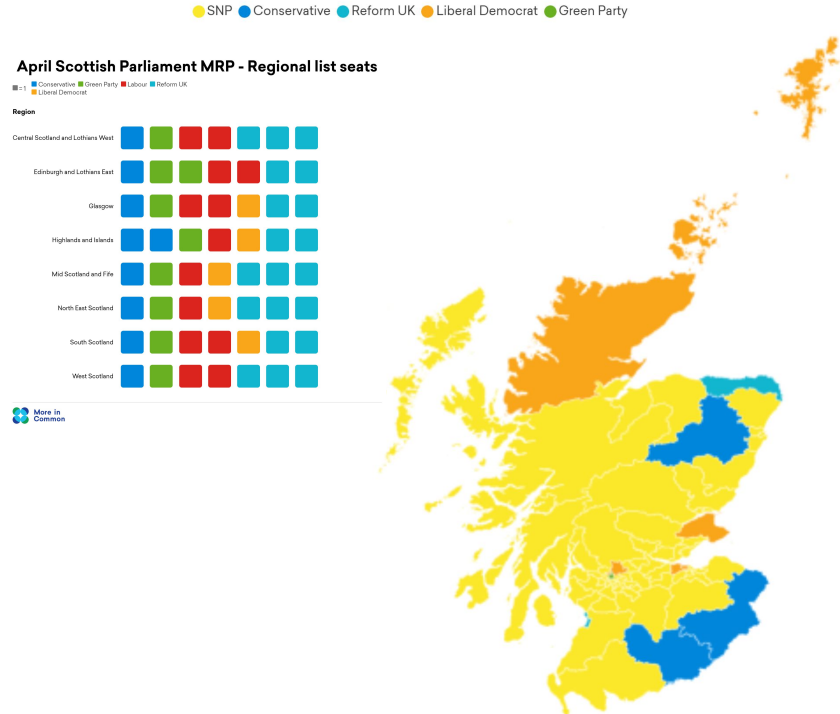
SNP recovering ground but struggling to get a majority

The latest model estimates the SNP will win 60 of 129 seats, an increase of four seats since More in Common's first model, but still **five short of the 65 needed for a majority** and down four on their 2021 result.

The SNP's victory is fuelled being by fragmentation in the unionist vote, rather than a surge in support for them. In fact, **this result would represent the SNP's lowest vote share in nearly two decades**: their lowest constituency vote share since 2007, and lowest regional since 2003.

Both the Greens and Liberal Democrats are on track to make gains in Scotland. But the big gainers are likely to be Reform UK, from no seats to potentially second place.

Meanwhile the Conservatives look set to lose nearly two-thirds of their MSPs, going from the second-largest party in Holyrood to tying for fourth place with the Liberal Democrats.



Reform shoots into a clear second place, while Labour lags behind

The battle for second place looks fluid, with Reform UK currently beating Labour.

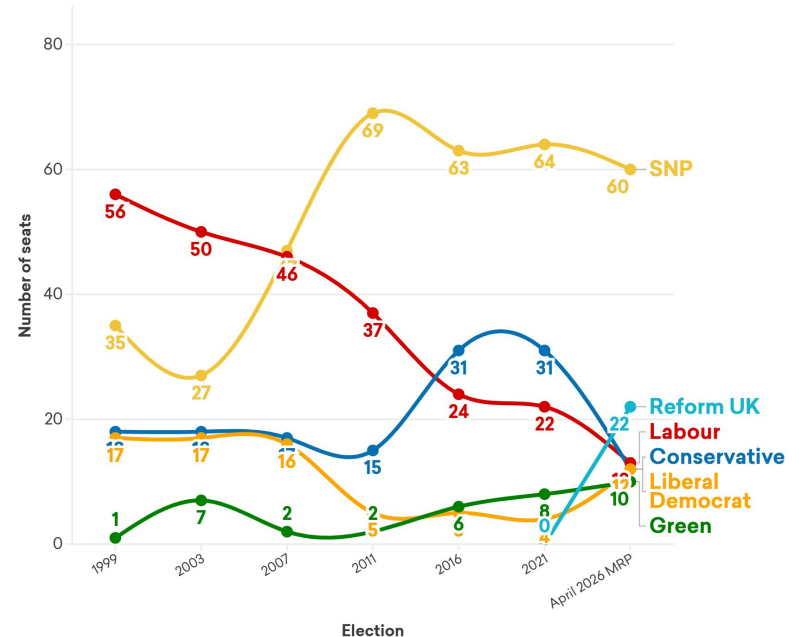
Reform UK is projected to win 22 seats, shooting into a clear second place at Holyrood. Its lead over Labour has grown from 5 seats to 9 seats since early April.

Labour, meanwhile, is facing its worst Scottish result since devolution, projected to win just 13 MSPs – a drop of 9 seats since 2021 and the party's lowest ever total since the Scottish Parliament was formed in 1999. The party is projected to win no constituency seats at all, leaving it relying entirely on the regional list.

Perhaps most significantly, Labour could lose Dumbarton – the only constituency to have voted Labour in every election since devolution – to the SNP by 5 percentage points.

Number of Scottish Parliament seats by party

Number of seats won by each party in every Scottish Parliament Election, and More in Common's April MRP



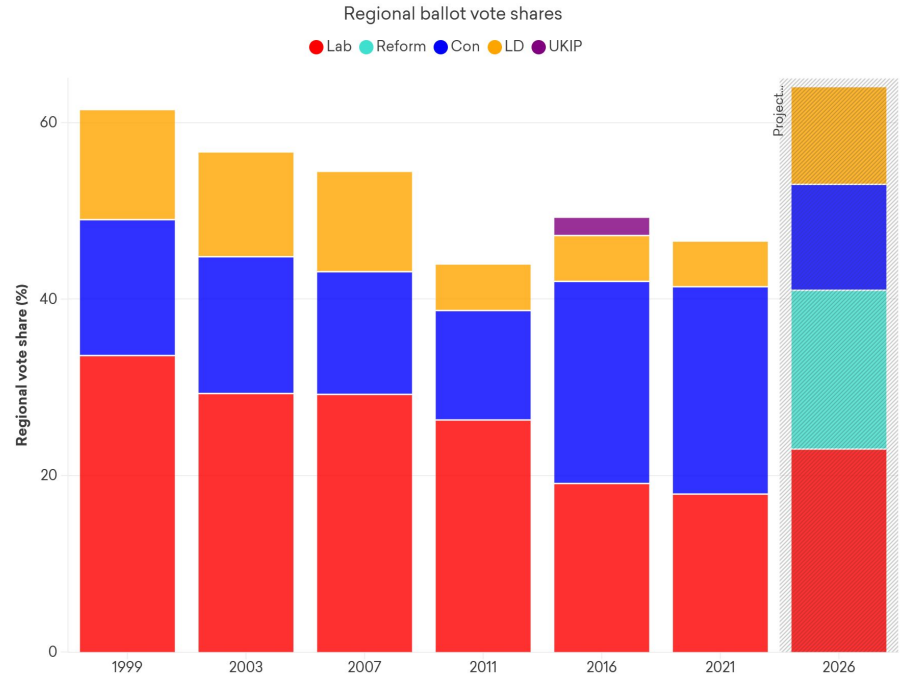
Growing – but fragmented – support for unionist parties

For the first time since 1999, Unionist parties are on track to earn more than 60 per cent of the vote.

Yet this Unionist vote appears more fragmented than ever, with four parties competing with similar shares of the vote.

In this context, even if three in five voters back Unionist parties, a nationalist majority in Holyrood appears to be a likely outcome.

The unionist vote is projected to grow, but be split



All to play for: marginal gains could win the SNP a majority; marginal losses could cost them the election

The model finds a highly competitive contest, with many marginal constituencies. If these tight races swing in the SNP's direction, they could springboard them to a majority; if they lose their marginal seats, a nationalist coalition could become impossible.

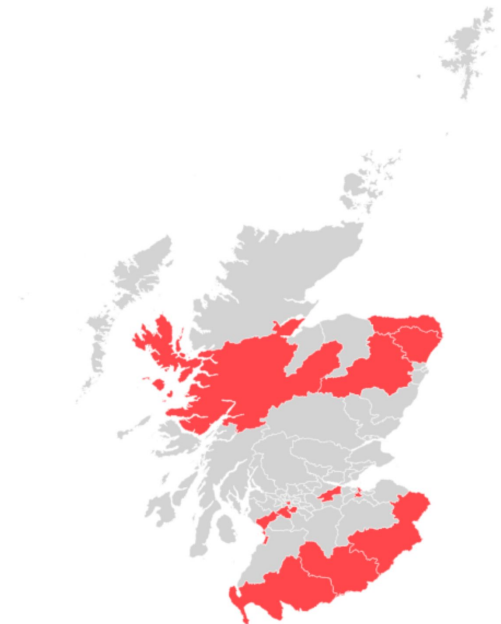
Fifteen of 73 constituencies are decided by margins of under five percentage points, with nine of those under three points.

Marginal seats could win the SNP a majority: Alongside the 60 seats they are projected to win, the SNP are within 5 percentage points of victory in five constituencies. Winning these seats would bring the party to 65 seats – *enough to govern Scotland as a majority government.*

But the SNP's position is precarious: there are *10 constituencies* that the SNP wins with a margin of less than 5 percentage points. Losing these seats would give the SNP their **worst result since 2007**, and could make even a coalition with the Green Party unfeasible.

Many Holyrood constituencies are tight races

Seats that would change hands on a swing of 5 points or less



Undecided voters could shape Scotland

Days from polling day, a fifth (18 per cent) of Scottish voters say that they are still undecided.

In focus groups, many describe this election as a highly difficult decision with some saying they will “decide on the day”.

In a race with many highly marginal constituencies, these uncertain voters could have an outsized impact, potentially helping determine whether the SNP earn a majority or are reduced to their lowest seat count in years.



I'll probably just vote SNP, to be honest (...) because if you vote for someone else, they might just make things even worse

Declan, Rutherglen

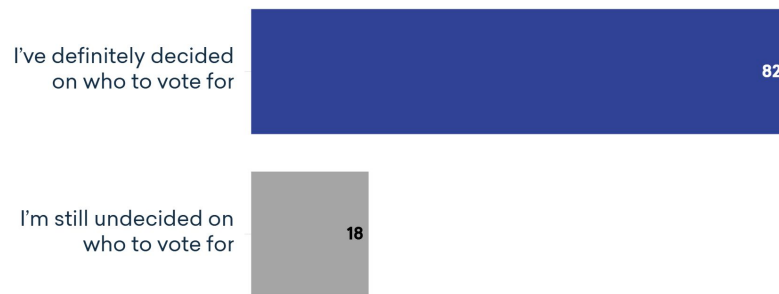


There's no any great choice in any of the politicians just now. For me it's either vote for change to hope that something can happen, or else you vote just to remain the same and go along the same way we've been going the last 19 years.

Stephen, Edinburgh

18 per cent of Scottish voters are still undecided

Would you say you have definitely decided or are still undecided on how you are going to vote in the Holyrood (Scottish Parliament) elections on May 7th?

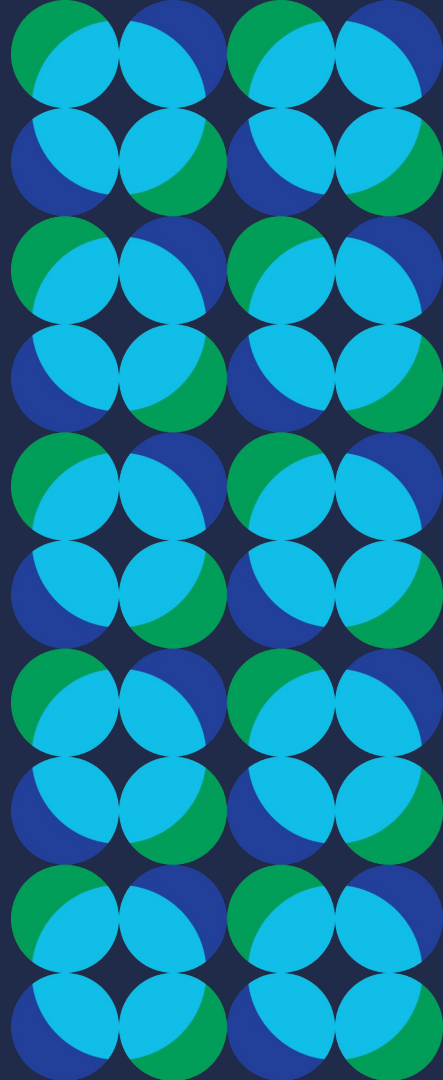




More in
Common

Wales

The Change Election



The context: Labour and the Conservatives have a lot to lose

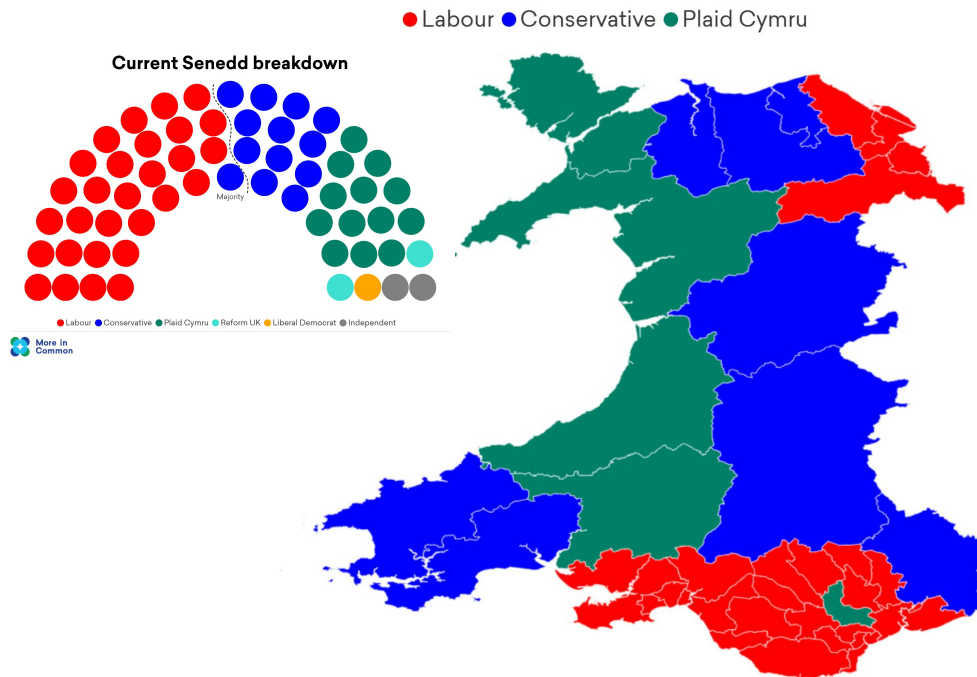
Currently, Labour hold 29 of the Senedd's 60 seats, while the Conservatives and Plaid Cymru hold 13 each. Reform UK has two seats, the Liberal Democrats one, and two are held by independents.

The last Senedd Election, 2021, was a good year for Welsh Labour: it won 30 of 60 seats in 2021 – equalling its best-ever result, and putting the party just a seat short of a majority. Mark Drakeford's popularity improved during the COVID pandemic, and Welsh Labour was viewed relatively positively at the time.

2021 was also the Welsh Conservatives' best ever result in the Senedd: they won 16 seats, five more than in 2016, and displaced Plaid Cymru as the second largest party.

While the new voting system limits direct comparisons, Labour and the Conservatives are both starting from a high base – while Reform and Plaid Cymru will be expecting to improve their standing in the Senedd significantly.

Current Senedd Constituencies



Wales in a word

The public mood in Wales is one of disillusionment.

Asked to describe the current state of Wales in a word, “poor”, “struggling” and “broken” rank highly – although “good” and “beautiful” also feature.

More than half of Welsh people (53 per cent) say that things are getting worse in Wales – albeit far lower than the 75 per cent of Britons who say the UK is getting worse.



I think I feel sorry for the young kids starting off. I've got two of my own. The fact that, compared to when I started looking for jobs, it's like every job is now minimum wage.

Karen, administrator, Colwyn

In a word, how would you describe
Wales at the moment?



A change election

Labour is facing a double-incumbency effect in Wales.

After 27 years of Labour Government in the Senedd, four in five Welsh people (including 47 per cent of Labour voters) believe it is time for a change in how Wales is being run. After just 18 months in Westminster, Labour's support in Wales has halved as the party has lost support across the left, right and centre.

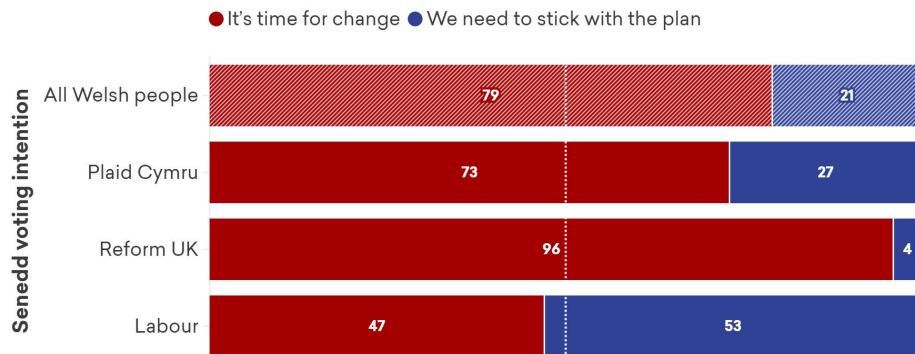


It's been 26 years, I think. They've got big elections coming up, haven't they, in May? And I think it's time for change. But then again, what with?

Sally, hospitality worker, Wrexham

Four in five Welsh people say it's time for change

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



Source: More in Common, February 2026



Absolutely anything to give Labour a bloody nose right now I think will be a good thing.

Simon, retired, Colwyn

Is Devolution on the ballot?

Reform UK has provided an electoral vehicle for voters disillusioned with devolution in Wales.

A third of Welsh adults – and seven in ten Reform voters – support abolishing the Senedd. Meanwhile, 26 per cent of Welsh people, and more than three in five Reform voters, say devolution has been bad for Wales.

However, Welsh Labour voters are aligned with Plaid Cymru voters in their support for devolution.



I think the Welsh Government layer itself should be removed. It's extra cost. Again, as I said earlier, they turned around and said that they haven't got money for this, money for that..

David, medical secretary, Pembroke Dock



They've got money for the 20 mile per hour thing, though.

Lynn, shop assistant, Pembroke Dock

A third of Welsh adults think the Senedd should be abolished

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

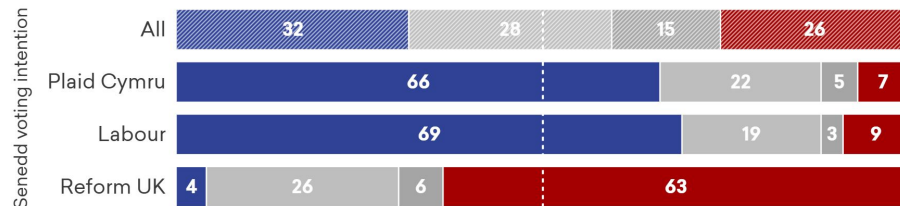
- The Welsh Parliament (Senedd) should NOT be abolished
- The Welsh Parliament (Senedd) should be abolished



Most Reform voters think devolution has failed

Do you think the creation of the Senedd (Welsh Parliament) has been....

- A good thing for Wales
- Neither a good thing nor a bad thing for Wales
- Don't know
- A bad thing for Wales



The respect crisis in Wales

Respect is the public’s number one demand from politicians, and any government that hopes to win back public trust in an age of anti-politics will need to demonstrate real respect for “ordinary” Welsh people.

This is a measure on which Rhun ap Iorwerth performs particularly well: 43 per cent of Welsh people say he respects the people of Wales – more than the proportion who say the same for any other leader.

This may also present an electoral liability for both Nigel Farage and Keir Starmer: majorities of Welsh people say that these leaders lack respect for the people of Wales.



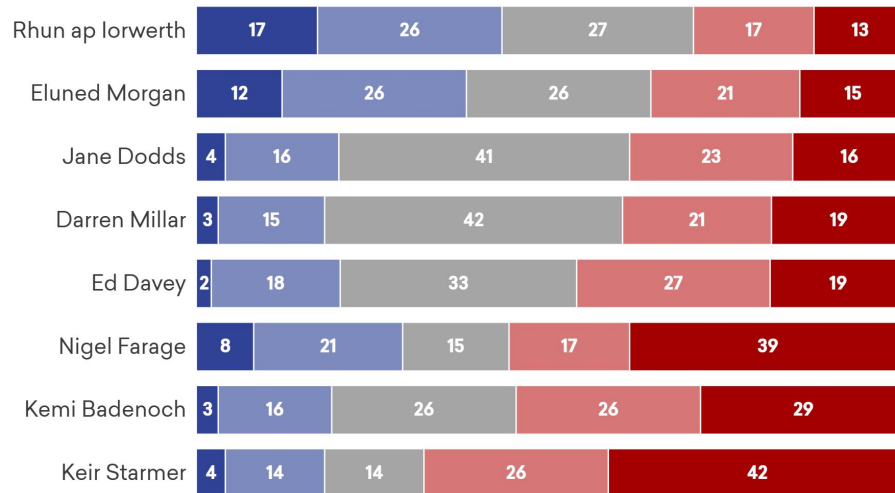
There’s a kind of idea about Labour in Wales now that is this elite kind of political class that nobody’s really in touch with. And I feel Plaid are a more grassroots based kind of thing. (...) parties like Reform, we’ve had a big scandal recently about parachuting candidates and things like that.

Rod, call centre manager, Cardiff

Rhun ap Iorwerth is the leader most likely to be seen to respect the people of Wales

For each of the following, how much respect do you think they have for the people of Wales?

● A great deal ● A fair amount ● Don't know ● Not much ● None at all



Is Reform “too English for Wales”?

The main barrier that Welsh voters say is stopping them from voting for Reform is Farage’s support for Donald Trump. 22 per cent of non-Reform voters say this while 15 per cent also object to Farage himself.

Beyond objecting to Reform’s leader, key issues were a lack of trust on Reform’s support for the NHS and ability to manage the economy.

One in five stated that they would not vote Reform as they believe the party does not care about Wales, suggesting that Reform’s ‘Englishness’ remains a barrier to Welsh support.



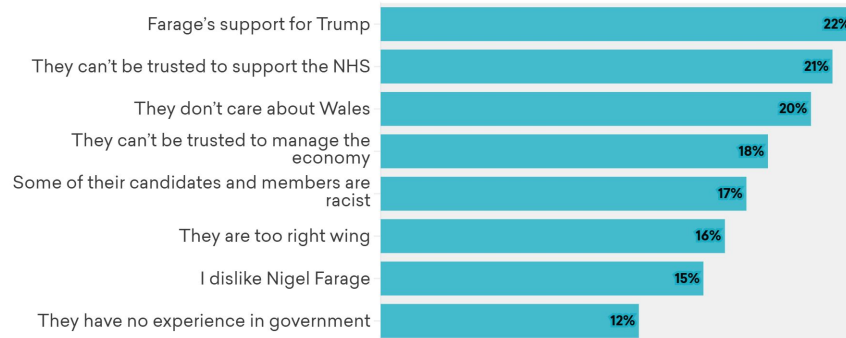
Farage, he’s got no interest in the Welsh language or Welsh culture. He said on many occasions he wants to get rid of Welsh education in schools. He’d be an absolute disaster for this country. He has no pro-Welsh policies whatsoever.

Adrian, company director

A perception that Reform doesn't care about Wales is a key barrier among Welsh voters

In your view which of the following, if any, are the main reasons NOT to vote for Reform UK? Select up to three.

(Top 8 answers shown)



Welsh voters share English concerns on migration – but see it as less of a priority

Wales is not distinct from England in attitudes toward migration, with three in five saying levels are too high.

However, the issue is less salient in Wales.

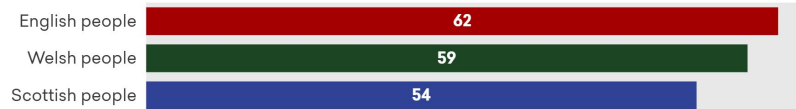
Welsh voters are less likely than those in England to see immigration – or small boats – as top issues facing the country.

This gap also applies to Reform voters: **44 per cent of Welsh Reform voters say channel crossings are a top issue, compared to 64 per cent of English Reform voters.**

Majorities in England, Scotland and Wales say levels of immigration are too high - but the issue is more salient in England

(% in each nation who believe the following statements)

Government should reduce the number of immigrants accepted into the UK



Levels of immigration are a top issue facing the UK/Wales/Scotland



Channel crossings are a top issue facing the UK/Wales/Scotland



Reform fuelled by a sense that Wales isn't working

While immigration is highly important to Welsh Reform voters, it is not as central as in England. Forty-five per cent of Welsh Reform voters say that channel crossings are a important issue facing Wales, compared to 60 per cent of English Reform voters.

Welsh Reform voters are three times more likely to worry about the NHS than English Reform voters (50 per cent to 17 per cent).

In focus groups, it's clear that Welsh voters considering Reform UK are driven by a sense that the country isn't working, anger toward the Labour Government, and in some cases a sense that devolution has failed.



I have voted Conservative in the past and I voted Labour in the past. Labour, I won't ever vote for again – they represent people that don't want to work. I feel like Reform are the only other option. I do like some of the things they're saying in terms of stopping illegal immigration. And my priority would be getting people back into work.

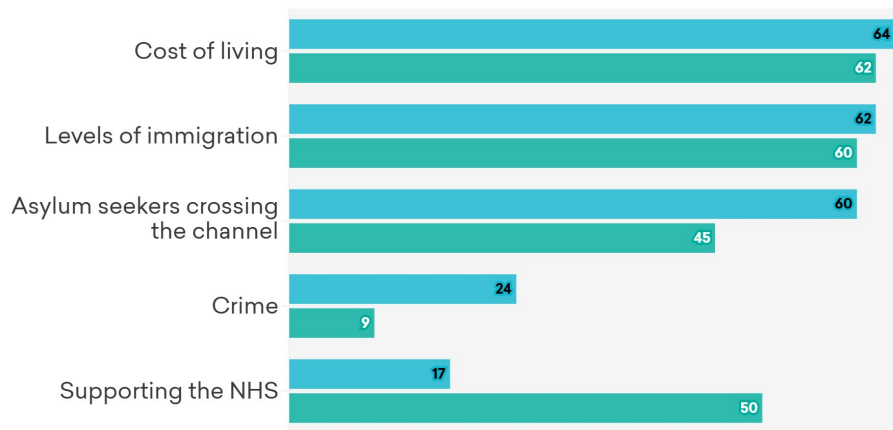
Jodie, Newport

Welsh Reform voters are less worried about channel crossings than English Reform voters, and three times more likely to worry about the NHS

In your opinion, which are the most important issues facing Wales/the country today? Please select up to three

Proportion who select each issue as a top issue facing the country

● English Reform voters ● Welsh Reform voters



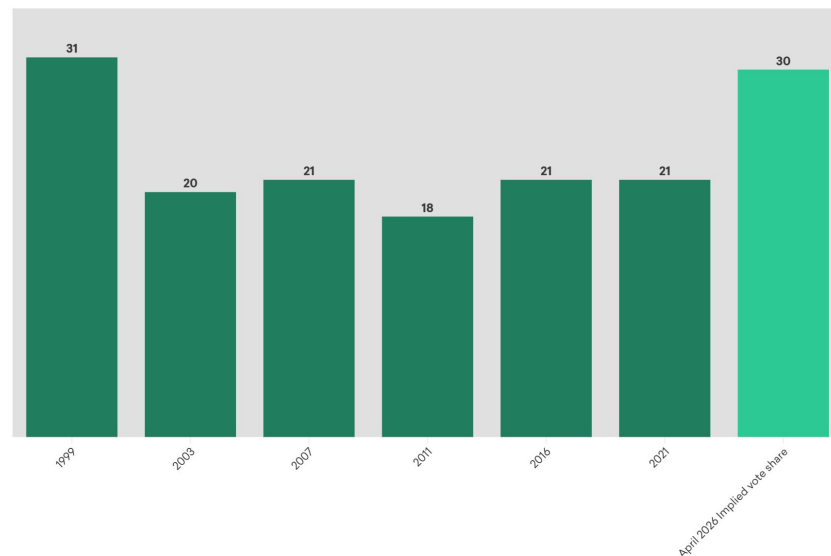
Momentum behind Plaid Cymru

For many Welsh voters, Plaid Cymru is now carrying the change mantle. In focus groups, it's clear that Plaid Cymru has three key drivers:

- **A progressive alternative to Labour**, taking a similar role to the Green Party in England. *Plaid Cymru's voter base has moved to the left since 2021 as disillusioned progressives have defected from the Labour Party.*
- **A challenger to Reform**: As seen in the Caerphilly by-election, many progressives are now rallying behind Plaid Cymru as the party seen as best-equipped to take the fight to Reform.
- **A voice for Wales**: While many see Labour as out-of-touch and subservient to Westminster, Plaid Cymru is seen as locally-rooted – the only party voters consider to be proud of Wales. While there is little support for independence, many express a desire for a party that “puts Wales first”.

Plaid Cymru could see their highest support since 1999

Plaid Cymru's regional vote share in every devolved election since 1999




Voters want a voice for Wales, not a voice for independence

From voters across Welsh politics, there is a strong desire to see a **voice for Wales**.

This takes different forms for different voter groups: **Reform voters are disenchanted with devolution in part because of the Senedd's perceived inability to challenge Westminster**.

This anger is also fuelling Plaid Cymru: **Plaid voters are the most likely voter group to say that issues facing Wales will influence their vote**, rather issues facing the UK.

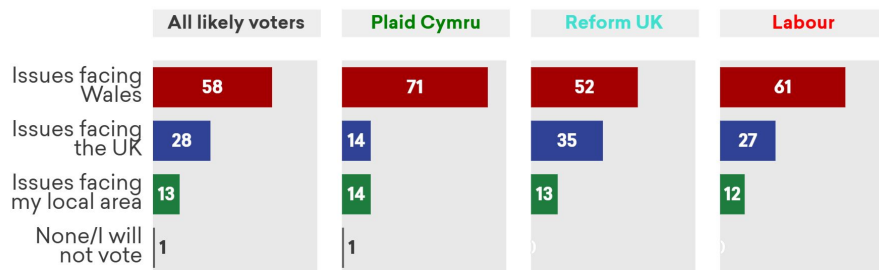
Plaid's unique position as an independent Welsh Party – without a less popular Westminster-wide party – helps to set it apart from Labour and Reform UK. In focus groups, voters describe Plaid as locally-rooted and sincere, contrasting it with an “out-of-touch” Labour party and “parachute” candidates from Reform UK.


 *There's a kind of idea about Labour in Wales now that is this elite kind of political class that nobody's really in touch with. And I feel Plaid are a more grassroots based kind of thing. (...) parties like Reform, we've had a big scandal recently about parachuting candidates and things like that.*

Rod, Cardiff

Plaid voters are the most likely to prioritise issues facing Wales

When deciding how you will vote in the upcoming Senedd Election, which of the following is more important to you?



 *I think they're the only party really that has their sole focus on Wales. (...) And again, my politicians are politicians at the end of the day so I don't give my full trust in them at all. But I do feel like they give a voice to Wales and they don't play down to Westminster.*

Nia, Colwyn Bay

Anger toward Labour – and fear of Reform – may have de-risked Plaid Cymru

Plaid Cymru enters this election with momentum, but questions remain about whether they are ready to lead Wales. Only 42 per cent believe the party would be ready to form a government if it won.

Yet they perform better compared to Reform: **only 28 per cent think Reform is ready for Government in Wales.** And most Welsh people doubt whether Labour is fit for re-election: just 21 per cent think that Labour is fit to govern Wales if they win re-election, compared to 51 per cent who say they are not.

So while voters aren't entirely convinced by Plaid Cymru, it seems that anger toward Labour –and a desire to block Reform UK – has de-risked Plaid Cymru.



I'm not too sure. I don't know what Plaid would be able to do for the NHS. I don't know how they'd handle that.

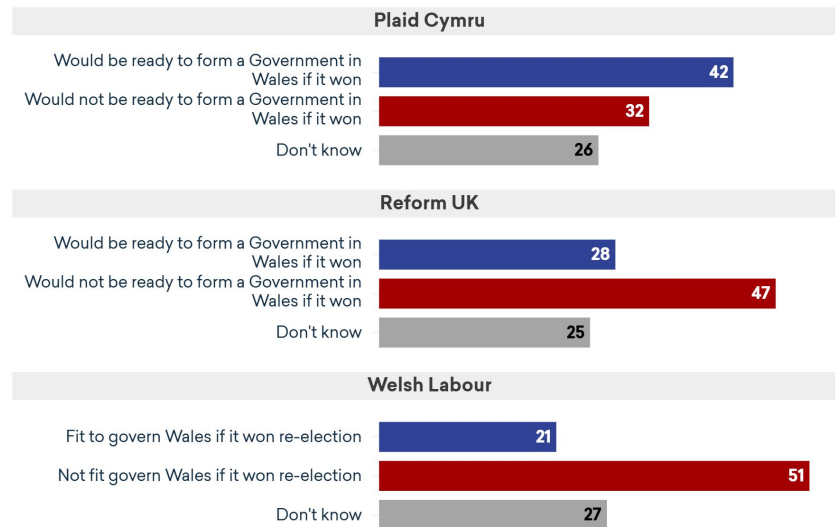
Joe, Cardiff



I'm not particularly on board with anybody at the moment – totally disillusioned with the whole lot of them. But I would trust Plaid and the Greens to tell fewer lies than anyone else. – Ellie, Narberth

Only two in five Welsh people think Plaid Cymru is ready for government - but even fewer think Labour is fit for re-election

Which of the following comes closest to your view about the upcoming elections in Wales?



The “Caerphilly Effect” squeezing Labour

As we saw in the Caerphilly by-election last year, many voters on the left are rallying behind Plaid as the best choice to stop Reform UK.

They are particularly pulling in 2024 Labour voters. Over a third (36 per cent) of their current voting base say they voted for Labour at the last General Election.

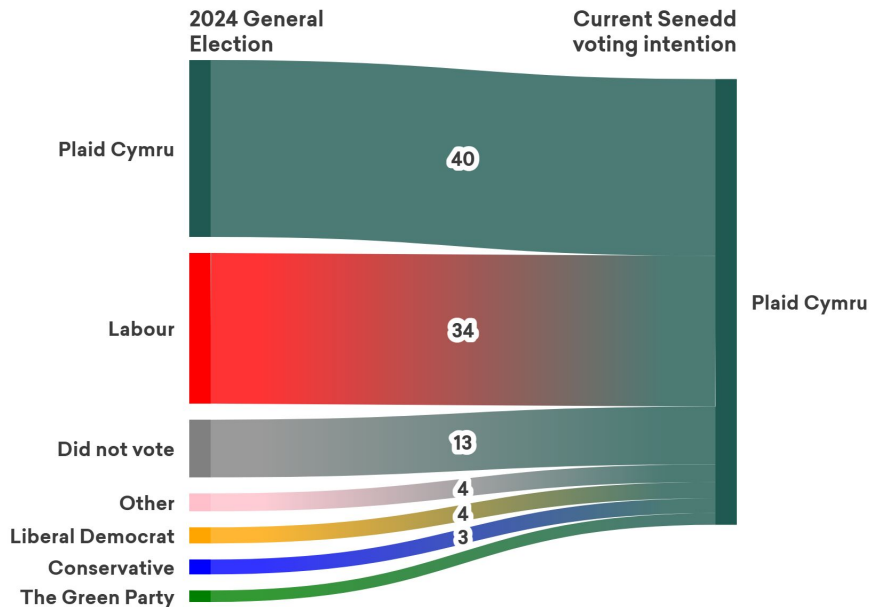
Around a tenth of their vote say they did not vote in 2024 but intend to this time, while a similar proportion backed either the Lib Dems, Conservatives or Greens.



I'm worried what Farage might do because he's quite like Trump. Is he planning to privatise the NHS? Is that true or false? I don't know.

Alex, Newport

More than a third of Plaid Cymru's supporters voted for Labour in the 2024 General Election



Progressive defections fuelling Plaid Cymru

Plaid Cymru has been fuelled by progressive defections from Labour. More than a third of Plaid's current supporters (36 per cent) voted Labour at the last General Election. Roughly a quarter voted Labour in the 2021 Senedd Election.

Much like the Greens in England and Scotland, Plaid has become a key destination for disillusioned progressives in Wales. This has implications for Plaid Cymru's voter coalition, who have moved firmly to the left since 2021.

In focus groups, Welsh progressives describe feeling let down by Labour in Westminster – with decisions on welfare and spending convincing them that the party was no different from the Tories.

Conservatives got out because everybody had such a bellyful of them. Everybody was excited for change and hoping for something new and nothing's really... we haven't had any change really.



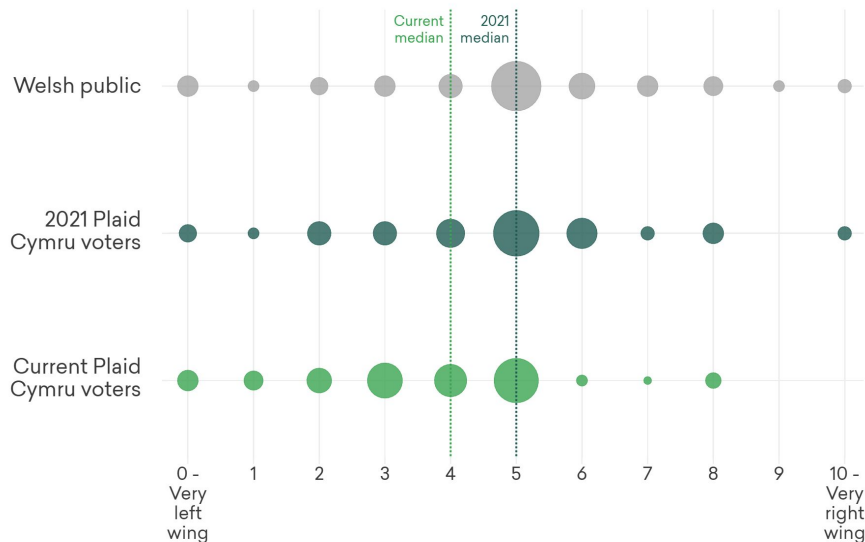
Rhiannon, Cardiff

On disability and PIP and stuff like that – they don't know what they're doing.

Tracy, Cardiff

The average Plaid Cymru voter has moved to the left since 2021

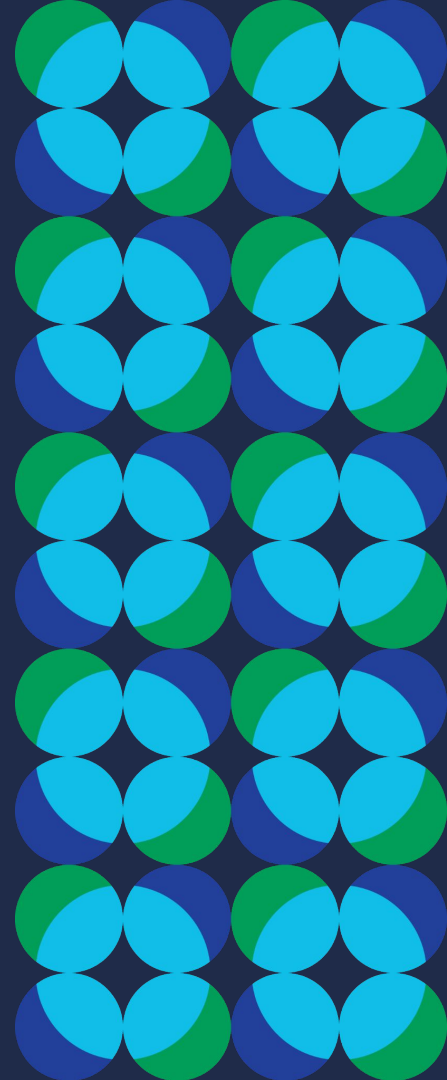
Sometimes politics is described as being on a left-right scale. Where do you put your own views on that scale, where 0 is very left wing, and 10 is very right wing?





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More in Common's latest Senedd MRP



Reform and Plaid Cymru in a dead heat

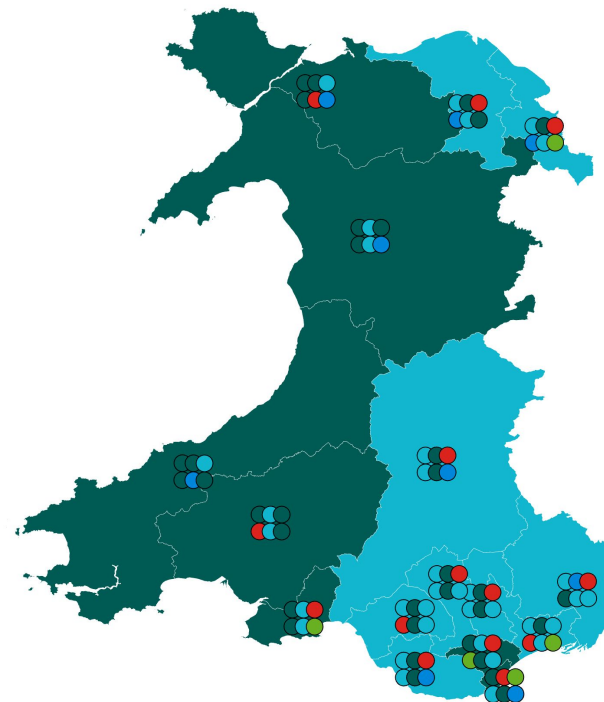
More in Common's latest MRP for the 2026 Senedd Election projects a dead heat: Plaid Cymru and Reform UK tied on 34 seats each, with neither party close to the 49 needed for a majority. **It is unclear who would form the next Government.**

Meanwhile the model suggests Labour could fall into third place with just 14 seats, on a vote share lower than ever in Welsh history.

The Conservatives would end up with 9 seats (their position stabilising since early April), and the Green Party would end up with 5 – **their first ever seats in the Senedd.**

Since More in Common's last MRP model in early April, Plaid have moved into a lead over Reform UK in vote share, but are now tied in terms of seats, with the "6th seat" and handfuls of votes likely to prove pivotal.

● Reform UK ● Plaid Cymru ● Labour ● Conservative ● Green



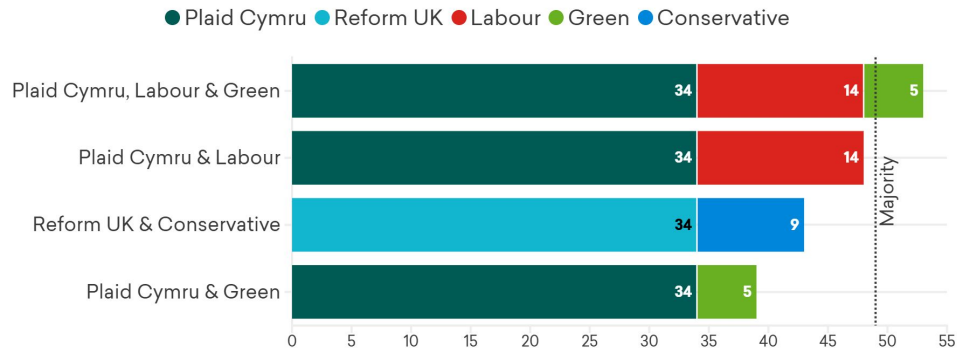
Wales heads for a hung Senedd with no clear path to government

In our first model of the campaign, a coalition between Plaid Cymru and Labour would have given them a comfortable majority (54 seats) but the collapse of Labour means even **a Plaid–Labour coalition could be one short of a majority** (48 seats).

This means that they would either have to govern as a minority, or enter into a **three-party coalition with the Green Party**.

Plaid leader Rhun ap Iorwerth has previously said he would prefer to lead a minority government, but on these numbers *Reform UK could reasonably make a similar claim, especially if bolstered by the Conservatives*.

A Plaid-Labour coalition would be 1 seat short of a majority



Will coalition prospects harm Plaid Cymru?

With Plaid fuelled by a widespread vote for change, the emerging possibility of a Plaid-Labour coalition is coming up in focus groups as a hesitation around voting for Plaid Cymru.

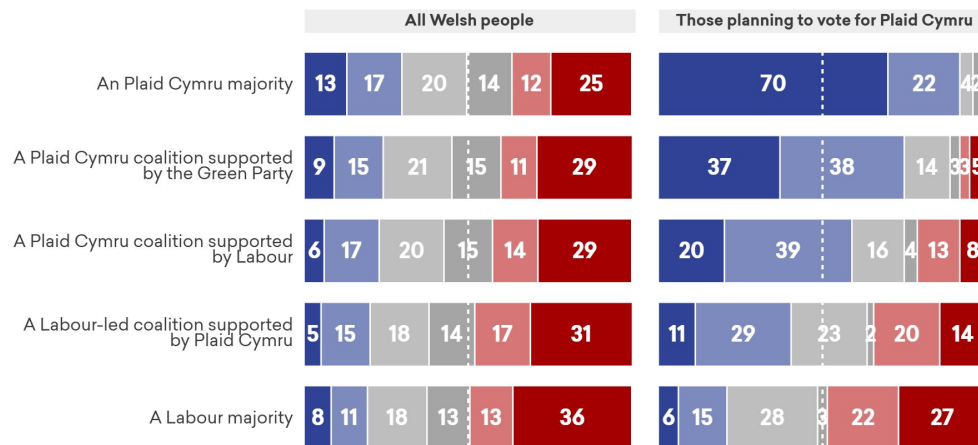
Nine in ten (92 per cent) Plaid Cymru supporters say that a Plaid majority would be a good outcome, but this drops to 75 per cent when asked about a Plaid-Green coalition.

Only three in five Plaid supporters think a Plaid-Labour coalition would be a good outcome, while one in five (21 per cent) say it would be a bad thing.

Some Plaid voters would feel disappointed by a coalition with Labour

Would you personally think each of the following would be a good election outcome or a bad election outcome after the upcoming Senedd elections in Wales?

● A very good election outcome
 ● A fairly good election outcome
 ● Neither a good nor bad outcome
 ● Don't know
 ● A fairly bad election outcome
 ● A very bad election outcome



I won't vote for Plaid because I just feel like they jump on the back of what Labour say. And I feel like if people vote for Plaid now, they're just going to get another Labour government – because that's basically what we've got now.

Rachel, Newport

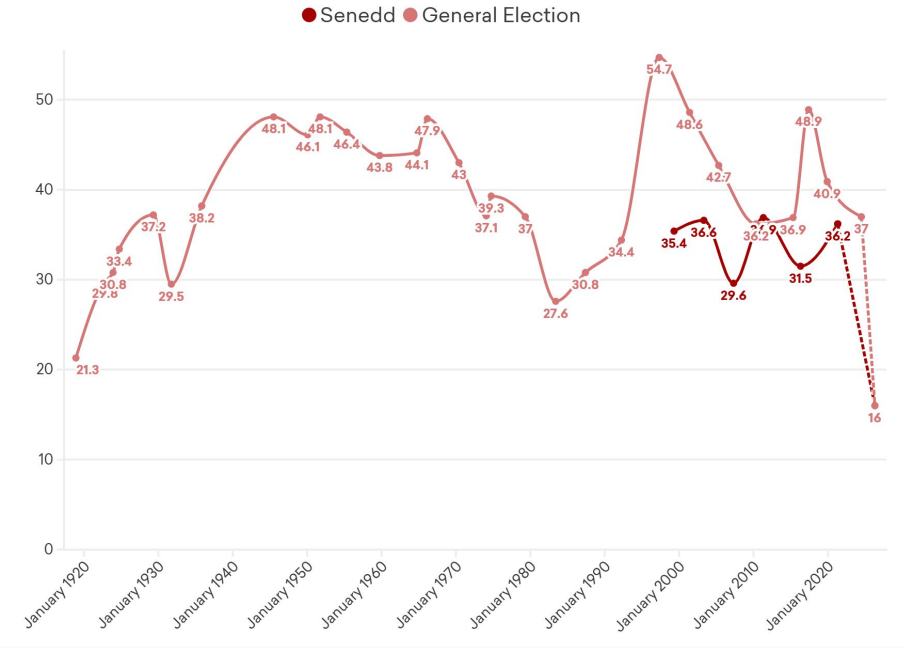
Labour on track for worst Welsh result in history

After leading the Welsh Government for nearly three decades, Labour is set for its worst Welsh result in a century, pushed into third place and *not leading in a single constituency*. The result would certainly deliver the first non-Labour First Minister since devolution.

Eluned Morgan could to fail to win a seat: in her new constituency of Ceredigion Penfro, Labour finishes fourth behind Plaid, Reform, and the Conservatives, the likelihood of her failing to win a seat is a coin toss, with the model estimating she misses out on a seat by just 0.2 per cent of the vote

This would be Labour's worst result in Wales since the extension of the franchise: Since Labour first became a political force in Wales in the 1920s, the party's support has never dropped below 20 per cent in a General or devolved election. More in Common's model has Labour falling to just 16 per cent – less than half of what the party earned as recently as the 2021 Senedd election (36 per cent).

Labour's implied vote share would be their lowest Wales-wide vote share in modern history



1 in 6 seats are incredibly marginal

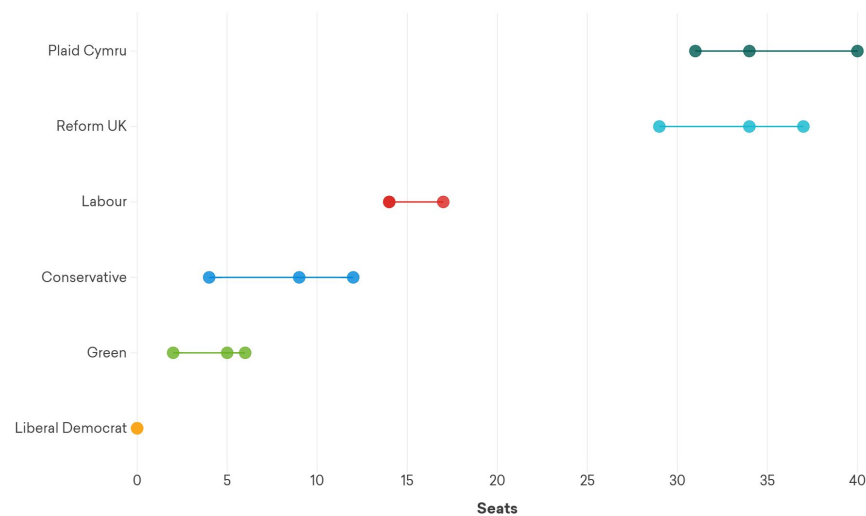
The D'Hondt formula (used to allocate seats based on votes) means that seats allocated later in the process are more sensitive to small changes in the vote, especially the fifth and sixth seat in each constituency, many of which could be decided by less than 2.5 per cent of the vote.

This means that one in six seats in Wales could be decided by razor-thin margins, with as little as 0.06 per cent deciding the sixth seat in one constituency.

These marginal seats could make or break Plaid Cymru's presence in the Senedd: If the marginal 6th seats all tip Plaid's way they could end up with as many as 40 seats in the Senedd – easily surpassing Reform – but a swing in the opposite election could force them down to just 31.

Conservative, Reform, and Plaid seats most open to small changes in support

These parties win the "last seat" or come runner up in a large number of constituencies, meaning slight changes difference in support or turnout could have a big impact on the election.





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Thank you

