More in Common

What does Britain's past mean for its place in the world today?

More in Common Conference | September 2026

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The context: the Seven Segments

Introducing the Seven Segments

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

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



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Progressive Activists



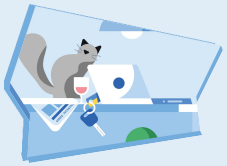
…an outspoken group that is politically engaged and globally minded, championing social justice but feeling alienated from mainstream politics

Incrementalist Left



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

Established Liberals



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

Sceptical Scrollers



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

Rooted Patriots



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

Traditional Conservatives



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

Dissenting Disruptors



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

Labour's 2024 voter base

Where do the Segments stand on this issue?

 **Progressive Activists**	Show higher than average support for the moral case for reparations, as well as for the concept overall. However, they are cynical that the UK will ever pay them and do not prioritise reparations as an issue.
 **Incrementalist Left**	A key part of the base of any campaign around reparations. They are less cynical than Progressive Activists, but are resistant to any framing that is dramatic, or pins responsibility on those alive today.
 **Established Liberals**	Broadly in line with the average Briton in their view of Britain's role in the slave trade, but many are unsure on the specific question of reparations. A key swing group who aren't convinced by the moral case.
 **Sceptical Scrollers**	A persuadable middle ground group which is less concerned about how Britain's history is portrayed, but is concerned about potentially negative social and financial impacts of a national debate around reparations.
 **Rooted Patriots**	Split on a formal Government apology for slavery, but strongly against financial reparations. Particularly attuned to the sentiment that elites don't care about them, and see this as an 'establishment' debate.
 **Traditional Conservatives**	The most strongly opposed to reparations. They are proud of Britain's history and a majority say that Caribbean countries were helped, not harmed, by British rule.
 **Dissenting Disruptors**	Strong opponents of reparations, but less instinctively defensive of Britain's history than Traditional Conservatives.

Britons are more likely to say reparations are a bad idea than a good one

More than four in ten Britons think the UK government giving Caribbean nations reparations for profits made during the slave trade is a bad idea.

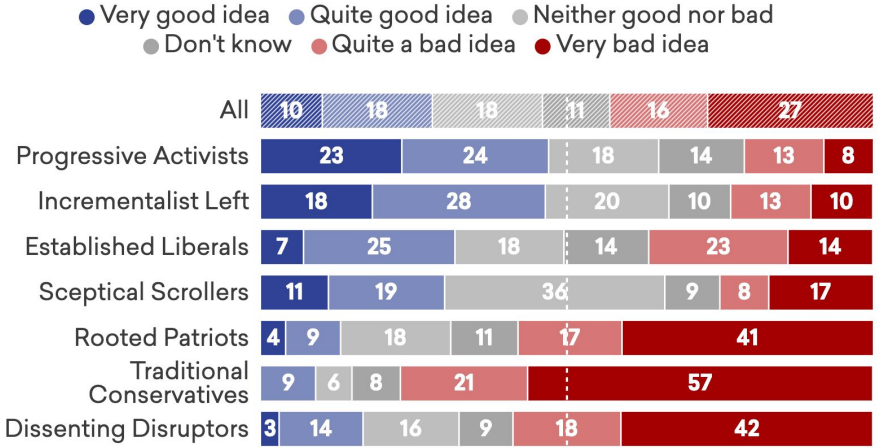
Views divide sharply along ideological lines, though not as cleanly as one might expect. Even the most left-leaning segments, Progressive Activists and the Incrementalist Left, fall just short of majority support.

Meanwhile, among the right leaning segments, majorities already view reparations as a bad idea.

> *I think it's an exceptionally difficult thing to quantify... I don't think anyone really has a clear way of how you do quantify that and split it up.* — Gareth

There is no segment with a majority saying reparations are a good idea

Some people have proposed that the UK government should award Caribbean nations reparations (compensation or redress) for profits made during the transatlantic slave trade. Do you think this would be a good or bad idea?



Britons are split on Britain's legacy in the Caribbean

There is no public consensus, that Britain caused lasting harm to the Caribbean that persists today.

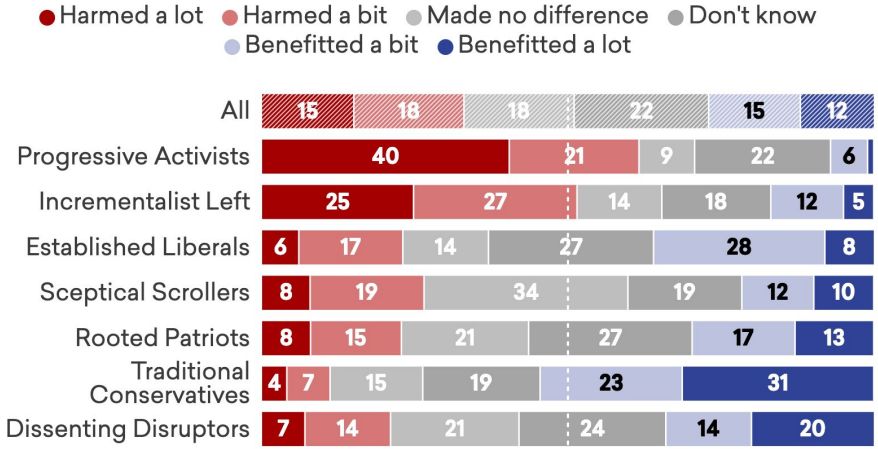
Only a third of Britons (33 per cent) say Caribbean countries were harmed by British rule while slightly fewer (27 per cent) say they benefited, and 18 per cent say it made no difference. Half of Britons reject the idea that slavery's legacy still harms the Caribbean. Only the most progressive segments believe that Britain's actions still harm the Caribbean.

Two thirds of Britons (66 per cent) tend to think that the challenges Caribbean countries face today, are mainly due to recent events and decisions made by those countries' own governments. Even Progressive Activists only marginally blame colonisation and slavery (44 per cent) for these challenges over recent events (42 per cent).

> *They're [Caribbean nations are] thriving. So how has that 300 year ago slavery [had] impact? "* — Farah, teaching assistant, middle ground group

Britons are marginally more likely to say Caribbean countries were harmed rather than helped by British rule

Overall, do you think Caribbean countries were harmed by or benefited from British rule in the long term, or did it make no difference?



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Britons think we should help Caribbean nations, but not because we owe support

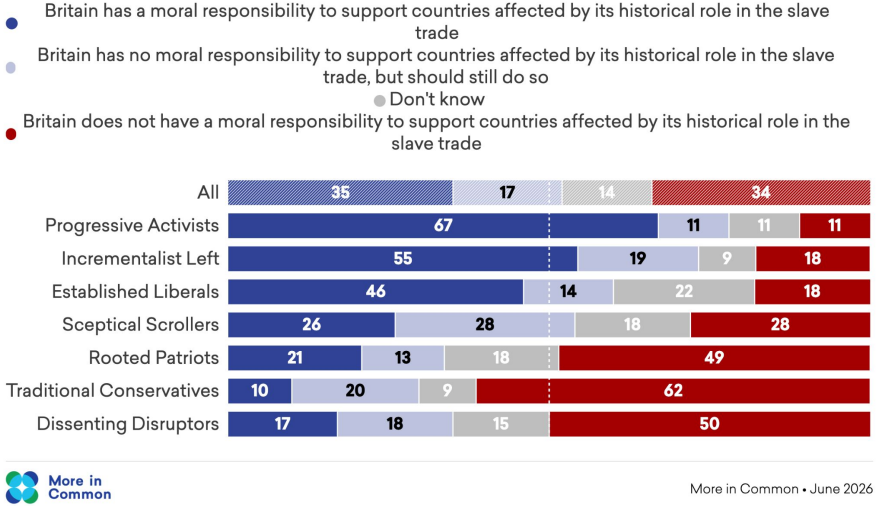
Despite scepticism about whether present day challenges in the Caribbean stem from slavery and British colonial rule, Britons do still think Britain should support affected countries.

35 per cent say Britain has a moral responsibility to do so, and a further 17 per cent say it should help even without one, bringing total support to just over half.

Even more sceptical segments, like Sceptical Scrollers, Traditional Conservatives and Dissenting Disruptors, are more open to the idea of helping countries affected by its historic role in the slave trade when this is eparated from the moral argument that it should.

More than half of Britons say Britain should support countries affected by the slave trade, but less than half say there is a moral responsibility to.

Which of the following comes closest to your view?



If there was finance, maybe it would be in conversation with those governments, whether Britain could support the development of infrastructure or fund certain things. So rather than just handing a lump sum over, to work with those governments. **– Ruth, writer, progressive group**

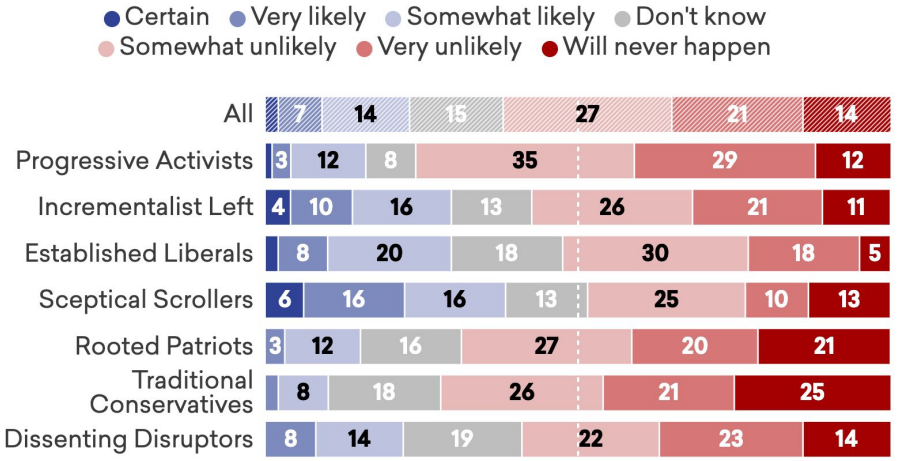
Few think that Britain paying reparations is a realistic prospect

Regardless of whether they think they are a good idea or not, the public think it is unlikely that Britain will ever pay reparations to Caribbean countries. 2 per cent say it is certain, and just 21 per cent say it is likely, while almost half say it is unlikely. 14 per cent say it will never happen.

Even the two segments which make up the largest part of a 'base' for reparations are noticeably different in their scale of pessimism. Just 15 per cent of Progressive Activists think it is likely or certain that Britain will ever pay any reparations, against 26 per cent of the Incrementalist Left.

Progressive Activists are half as likely to think reparations will happen than the Incrementalist Left

Thinking about the future, how likely do you think it is that Britain will ever pay reparations for its role in in the slave trade?



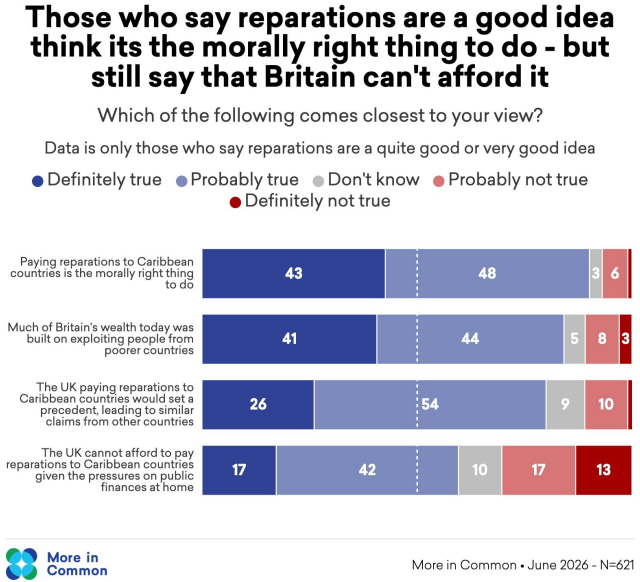
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Even those who believe reparations are a good idea still have some practical concerns

Even the more liberal segments who make up the 'base' of support for Britain paying reparations hold some reservations about what doing so would mean in practice.

Eight in ten of those who say paying reparations would be a good idea also worry that reparations would set a precedent for paying other countries, while six in ten say Britain cannot afford it, and five in ten doubt the money would be spent well by recipient governments.

In focus groups, participants also raised the idea that Britain has pressing issues to address at home first, making reparations feel like a lower priority, even if seen as the right thing to do in principle.



I think that these things for me are the immediate things - to live in a safe place for myself before I look outwards. - Esra, finance manager, middle ground group

It’s important to acknowledge that reparations are not a current priority

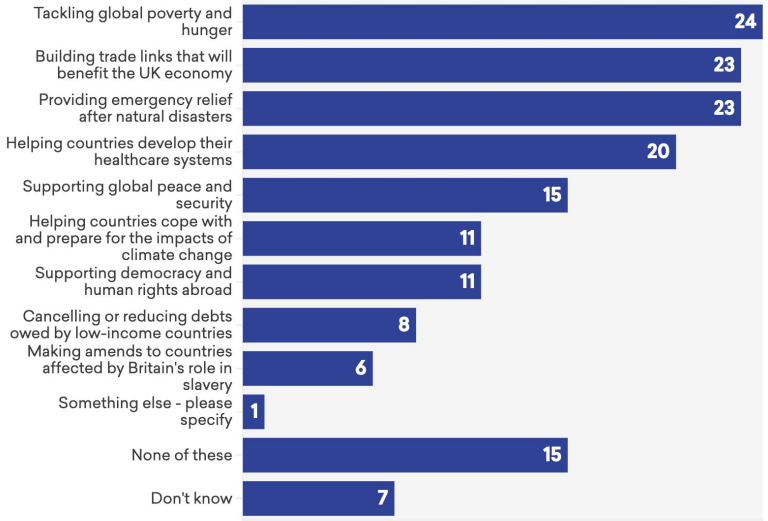
Reparations rank near the bottom of British priorities for foreign aid spending. Making amends to countries affected by Britain's role in slavery trails far behind, chosen by just 6 per cent of respondents. Even among the Incrementalist Left and Progressive Activists, fewer than 10 per cent choose this as one of the government’s priorities when assisting lower income countries.

Even among those who view reparations as a good idea, they are rarely a spending priority. Just 17 per cent of those who say reparations are a good idea select ‘making amends to countries affected by Britain's role in slavery’ when asked how the UK should support lower income countries.

In focus groups, even those sympathetic to the idea of reparations said it wouldn't make them more likely to vote for a party that included it in their manifesto, and some even express it would make them less likely to want to vote for such a party.

Reparations and debt cancellation are the lowest priority for spending to support lower income countries

If the UK government were to spend money to support lower income countries, which of the following actions should it most prioritise? Select up to 2



Reparations is also seen as a potentially divisive issue

46 per cent of Britons think a debate about Britain paying reparations for its historic role in the slave trade would be good for society regardless of the outcome, while 54 per cent think it would be harmful.

The split maps broadly onto the political spectrum. The three most socially liberal segments – Progressive Activists, the Incrementalist Left, and Established Liberals – all see value in having the debate. The four more socially conservative segments are more negative.

Among those who think the debate would be harmful, the dominant concern is one of principle rather than practicality: 39 per cent say it would be unfair to hold people today responsible for the actions of previous generations, and 36 per cent say the past cannot be changed. Concerns about division (26 per cent), distraction from more pressing issues (18 per cent), and the low chance of Britain ever paying (17 per cent) also feature.

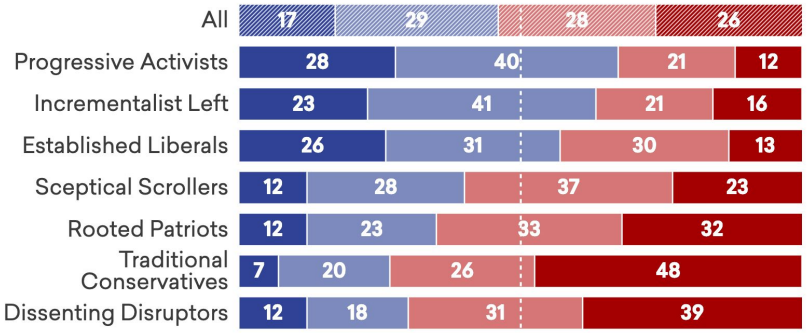
At least a third of each segment say a debate on reparations itself would be harmful for society

Please indicate which statement you agree with more, using the 1 to 4 scale below.

1 - A public debate about whether Britain should pay reparations for its historic role in the slave trade would be good for society

2 3

4 - A public debate about whether Britain should pay reparations for its historic role in the slave trade would be harmful to society



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There is no public appetite for teaching less about slavery

There is broad consensus that education on the British Empire and Britain's role in slavery matters. Britons are more likely to say they want to learn more on these topics than less, whether reflecting on their own lives or on what happens in schools.

Whether learning is presented as exploring the history of Empire and the Commonwealth, or more explicitly as confronting "the darker parts" of Britain's past, Britons are equally likely to say they want more of it. Around four in ten say they have already spent the right amount of time on these topics, but very few want less.

Even among more socially conservative segments like Rooted Patriots and Dissenting Disruptors, around a quarter say they would like to learn more, regardless of how the topic is presented

