More in Common

The Leader's speech:
How will the public respond?

Labour Party Conference 2026

What do Britons want from Burnham?

People agree with the Prime Minister that we can't carry on 'as we are'

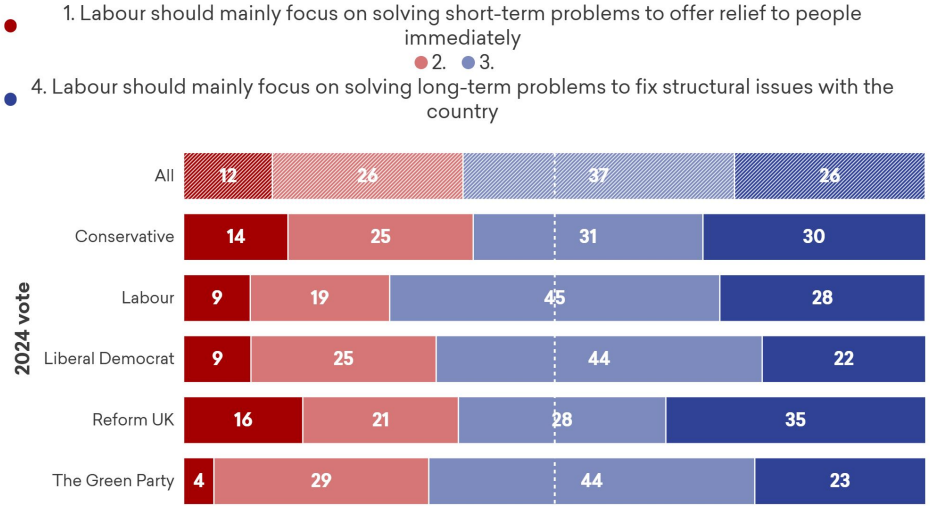
More than seven in ten Britons think the country is 'broken'. A frustration that nothing works, that the social contract is broken, and that ordinary people are struggling to get by is fuelling demand for radical, long term change.

In July 2024, 52 per cent of Britons favoured the government pursuing smaller, gradual change, versus the 38 per cent who wanted something more radical. By the time of Burnham's election as Labour leader in July 2026, this had flipped - 36 per cent favoured gradual change, versus 42 per cent who wanted something more radical.

Many think the country faces big problems which require big solutions, not sticking plasters. Almost two thirds (63 per cent) say Labour should mainly focus on solving long-term problems and fixing the country's structural issues, versus 37 per cent who prioritise immediate relief.

Most Britons believe that Labour should focus on fixing long-term problems rather than short-term relief

Please place yourself on a scale to 1 to 4 based on which statement comes closest to your view.



Many feel exhausted by a continued sense of financial struggle

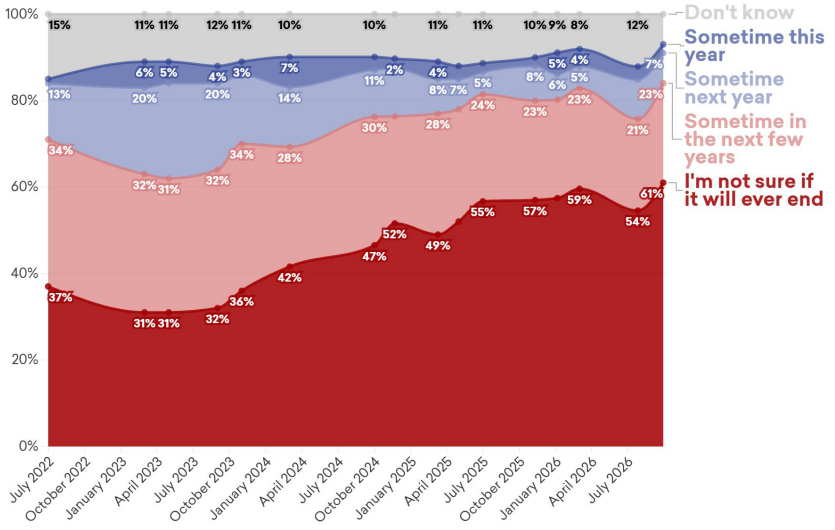
Many Britons feel they are 'not living, just surviving'. Four in ten say money is one of their main sources of stress, while a quarter say they either struggle to make ends meet, or end up having to go without essentials like food or heating to do so.

In More in Common's tracking, the proportion of people who say they're not sure the cost of living crisis will ever end has risen to 61 per cent, the highest since July 2022.

In focus groups, participants describe going without 'little treats', such as a takeaway or a trip to the cinema, because of rising costs. For many, the government's failure to tackle the cost of living is seen not only as incompetence but as a sign that it doesn't care about "people like them".

Three in five Britons are unsure if the cost of living crisis will ever end

While economic conditions are difficult to predict, when do you expect the cost of living crisis to end?



Source: More in Common, September 2026

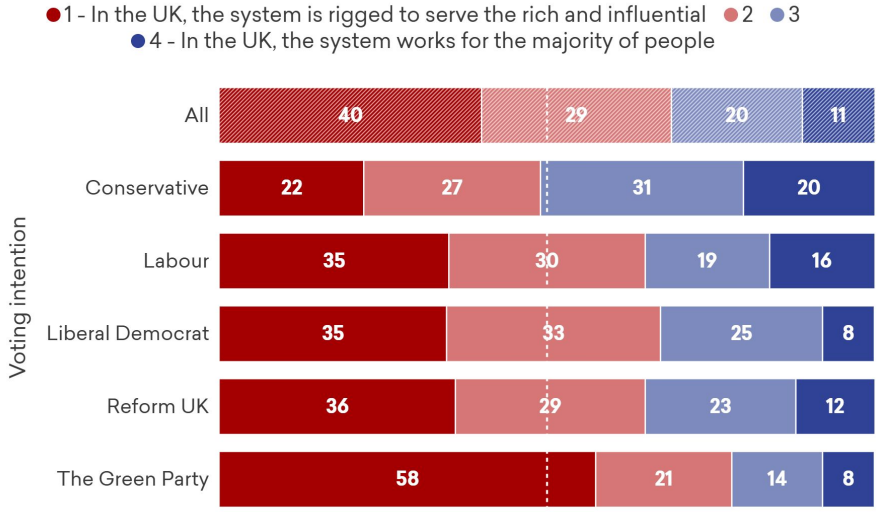
Most Britons think the system is rigged in Britain

A majority of Britons, and of the supporters of almost every party, believe that the UK is rigged to serve the rich and influential. Current Conservative voters are the only exception, though even among them 49 per cent hold this view.

Green supporters are especially likely to see the system as run for those with the most power and influence. Since 2024, Labour has lost some of its most progressive voters to the Greens on its left flank. Winning them back will mean tackling the perception that the odds are stacked against them, and taking tangible action on wealth and regional inequality.

Seven in ten Britons think that the system is rigged

Which comes closer to your view?



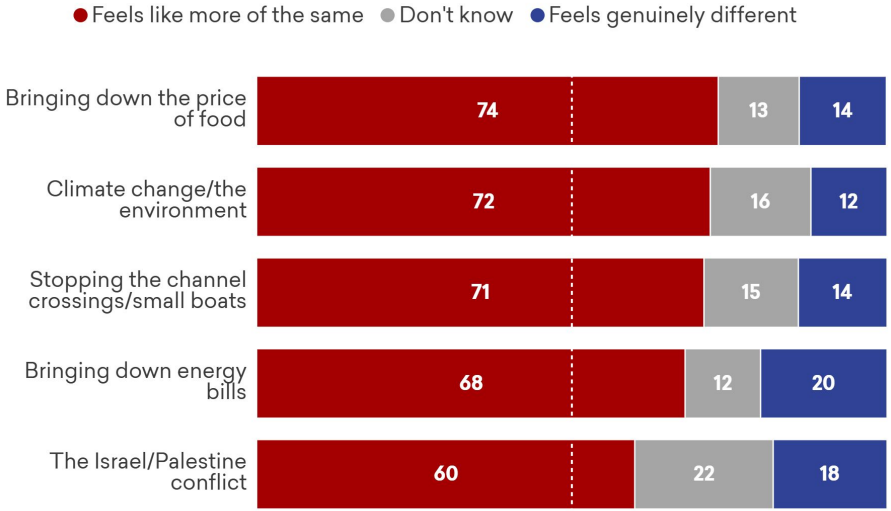
More of the same?

On many of the key issues facing the country, Burnham hasn't yet convinced the public that his approach is substantively different from Keir Starmer's.

Around seven in ten say that Burnham's approach is "more of the same" compared to Starmer's on bringing down the price of food and energy bills, or stopping channel crossings.

Most Britons say Burnham feels like more of the same on key issues

Thinking about the approach and action the current government led by Andy Burnham is taking on the following issues, compared to the previous government led by Keir Starmer, would you say they feel genuinely different or like more of the same...



Burnham’s brand

Three key tests for this government

Britain is, by its nature, a nation of gradualists - but that patience is wearing thin. In 2024, Britons still preferred gradual change (52 per cent) to radical change (38 per cent). Two years on, that has flipped: 42 per cent now want radical change, and 36 per cent gradual.

The public recognise that change takes time, but in the meantime Britons will need to see that three conditions are being met:

The "gets it" test

Does Andy Burnham understand the public's sense of exhaustion?

Britons overwhelmingly see the political class as self-serving and disconnected. Asked to describe Keir Starmer in a few words, "out of touch" was consistently among the top responses.

This is sharpest on the cost of living. It has topped the public's priorities since the crisis began in 2022, yet most Britons feel the government doesn't share that priority.

A key test for Burnham is showing that he understands.

The "trying" test

Does this government have the will to improve things for ordinary people?

Britons feel that consecutive governments have failed to address their top concerns - be it controlling migration, improving the NHS and public services, or alleviating the cost of living crisis - many have become convinced that politicians lack the *will* to deliver change.

Smaller, tangible interventions cut through, and show voters that - even if fundamental change takes time - you are *trying*.

The "can" test

Does the government have a credible plan to deliver long-term change for Britain?

Understanding and *trying* will be essential for buying this government time, but they will also need to show that they have a realistic plan to deliver change.

Short-term relief on energy bills has helped show that Burnham cares - but Britons want to see that there's a plan to tackle the root causes of the cost of living crisis.

The upcoming Budget will be a key moment to demonstrate credibility.

Britons think Burnham's biggest strengths are *communicating well* and being *in touch with ordinary people*

Asked to choose Andy Burnham's greatest strengths, Britons most often say he **communicates well** (19 per cent) **and is in touch with ordinary people** (17 per cent). Among those who voted Labour in 2024, being in touch with ordinary people comes top (26 per cent).

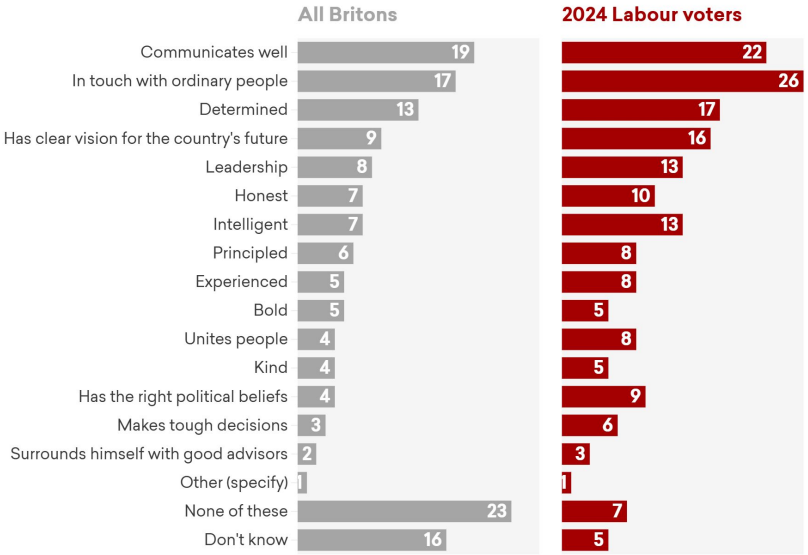
He has also focused on the issue the public care about most. The cost of living is the top test Britons will judge this government on (58 per cent), and his early cost of living measures cut through – more than four in five Britons had heard of the £2 bus fare cap.

> *He's not been one of those mayors what says and doesn't deliver. He's delivered. (…) And he's genuine. You can relate to him. He's been in our shoes. He's grown up, he was born in Liverpool. He's grown up in a working class family. So I think there's a lot to relate to him. Whether he's going to deliver or not, that's another question.*
>
> **Yasmin, housing officer, Manchester**

> *When he was mayor in Manchester, I quite liked him. I thought he was quite for working class people, if you can put it that way. Compared to other politicians, he did seem quite normal.*
>
> **Harley, events project manager, Nuneaton**

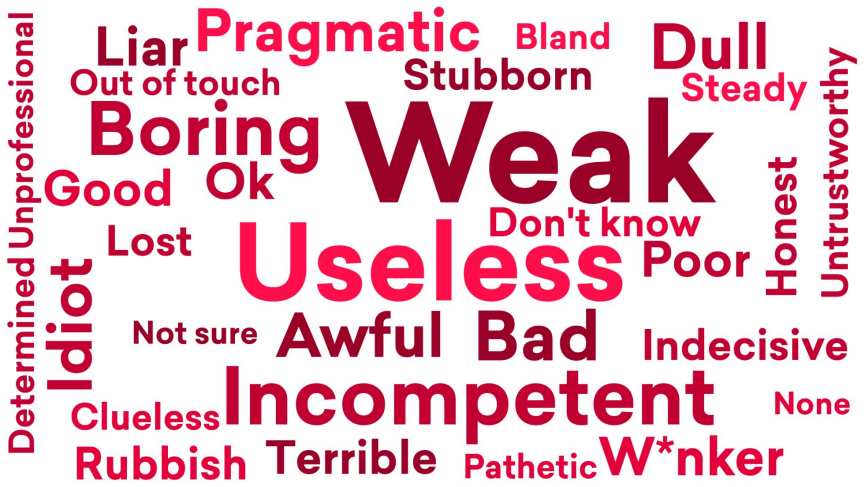
Britons believe Burnham's greatest strengths are communicating well and being in touch with ordinary people

When you think about Andy Burnham, which of the following do you think are his greatest strengths? Select up to two.



Burnham in a word

In a word or two, how would you describe Keir Starmer?



More in Common

19 - 22 June 2026

In a word or two, how would you describe Andy Burnham?



More in Common

18 - 21 September 2026

The view from the focus groups: how Britons respond to Burnham's speeches

I was actually shouting at the telly this morning, eating my breakfast, watching that acceptance speech or whatever you call it. And I was agreeing with everything going, "Yes, Andy, it is your last chance". It's your last chance saloon! Don't waste it, mate! I was having a conversation on my own with the telly. I felt quite passionate. I felt quite goosebumpy when he was saying those things.

Lisa, Teacher, Winstanley

As a non-Labour supporter, it's given me a little bit of hope (...) As he said in his speech, he's listening to people... that they're giving him a chance and he knows he's got three years. He's got three years here and if they don't sort it out, if he's not true to his word, then they're all out of a job.

Alex, Machine Manufacturer, Ashton

In his speech he said everybody knows politics isn't working and we all need change and we've got to have hope. ***He hasn't once said how he's going to change politics to make everybody feel happier.***

Susan, Therapist, Ashton

The other fellow comes in on Monday. Starmer hides behind a lectern with a sheaf of notes. And it's all prepared. ***The other fella stands in the middle of Downing Street. There's no lectern. He's not hiding.***

Bernard, retired construction worker, Trafford

He's just establishing himself. ***He's telling people what they want to hear****, and then what they do after that is a different story, because they obviously like to get people on their side to start with. And then it probably changes after he's made a bit of a good impression, because we all seem to kind of like prime ministers to start with.*

Leanne, carer, Bermondsey

But some consider Burnham a 'people pleaser' – and have doubts about his vision for the country

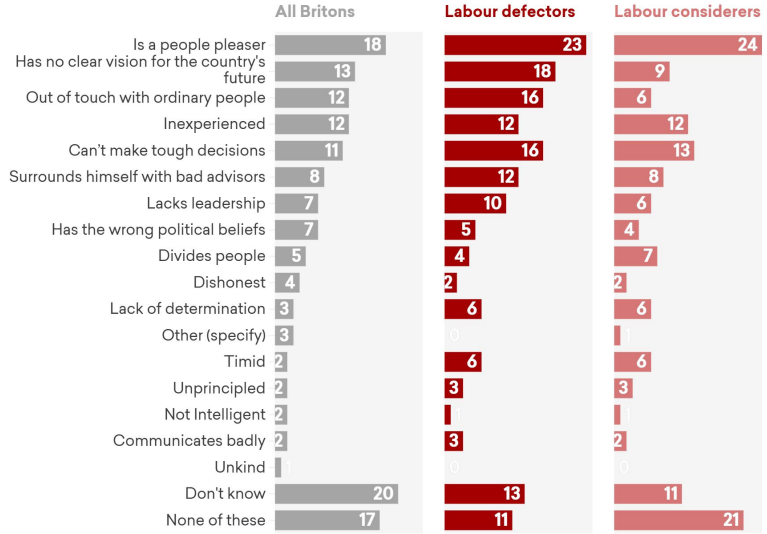
Asked to choose what holds Andy Burnham back the most, Britons most often say he is **a people pleaser** (18 per cent) or **has no clear vision for the country's future** (13 per cent). Among Labour defectors (those who voted Labour in 2024 but have since moved elsewhere), these rise to 23 and 18 per cent.

Some also have doubts about his decision-making. Around one in ten say inexperience is a key weakness (12 per cent) or that he can't make tough decisions (11 per cent), rising to 16 per cent of Labour defectors. But notably, just 4 per cent call him dishonest.

> *His speech was nice... but I think putting those things actually into practice is the hard part... Is it just the speech to get us all on his side? What is he actually going to do?"*
>
> **Rachel, operations executive, Holborn and St Pancras**

Britons believe Burnham's greatest weaknesses are being a people pleaser and lack of vision for the country's future

When you think about Andy Burnham, which of the following do you think holds him back the most? Select up to two.



Burnham's first speech as Prime Minister

In a word...

Among the top words used In Burnham's speech were "people," "Britain," "country," "care," and "control". Each of these words was said 24 or times or more.

These are followed by "today," "need," "make," "new," "home," "back," and "support."

Andy Burnham's 2026 Labour Party Conference speech, word for word

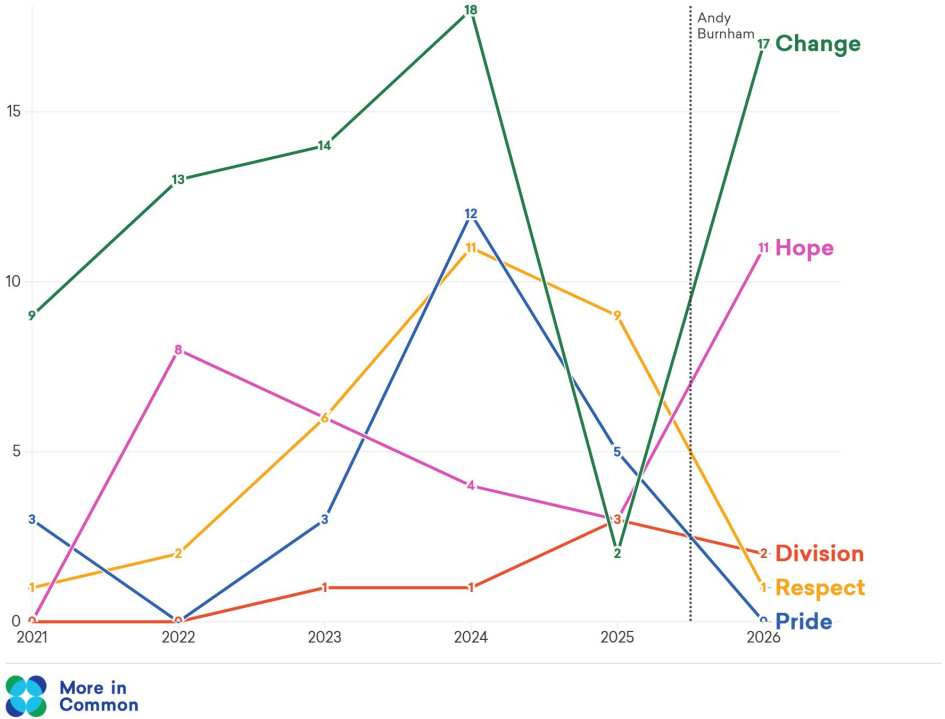


Hope again?

Unsurprisingly, 'hope' was a central theme in Andy Burnham's speech: he used the word eleven times. By comparison, Keir Starmer only said "hope" three times in last year's party conference. Keir Starmer's use of the word hope declined steadily between 2022 and 2025.

But above most other themes, Burnham used the word 'change' 17 times - only one fewer than 2024, the year that 'Change' formed Labour's central message.

Andy Burnham used the word 'change' 17 times, and 'hope' 11 times

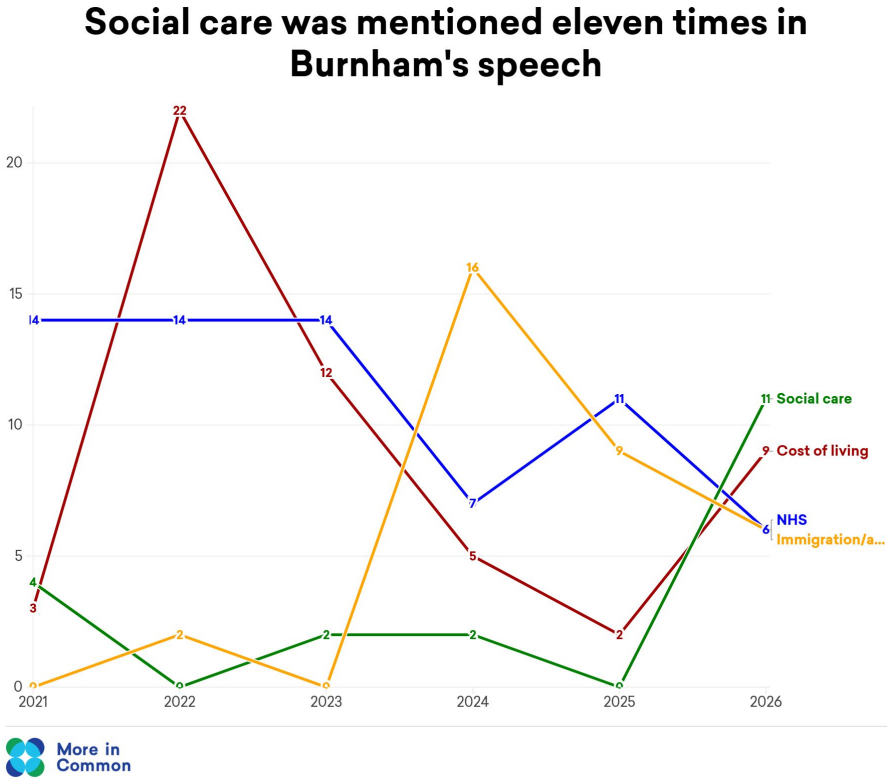


More in Common

Social care and cost of living

Andy Burnham's speech mentioned social care eleven times; previously, it had not been mentioned more than four times by Keir Starmer.

Meanwhile Burnham mentioned the NHS and immigration less than Keir Starmer did last year – both being mentioned six times.



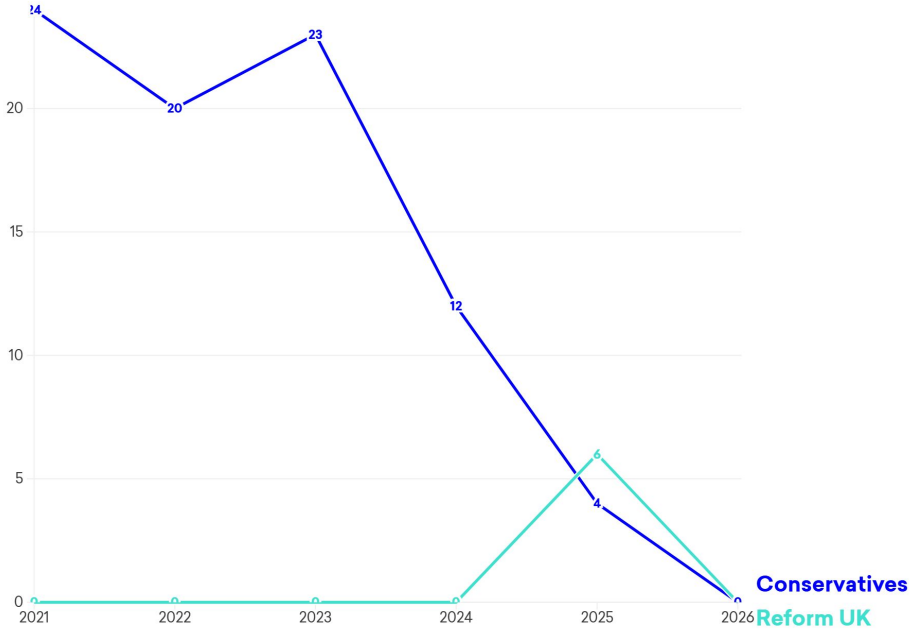
No direct mention for Conservatives or Reform.

While Andy Burnham spoke extensively about the legacy of the previous government, and the long-term impacts of Thatcherism, he did not refer to the Conservatives by name once.

Nor did he refer to Reform UK or its leader at all.

In last year's speech, Starmer referred to Reform UK 3 times and Nigel Farage 4 times.

Neither the Conservatives nor Reform were mentioned by name in Burnham's speech



Source: More in Common, September 2025

Policies

Nationalisation

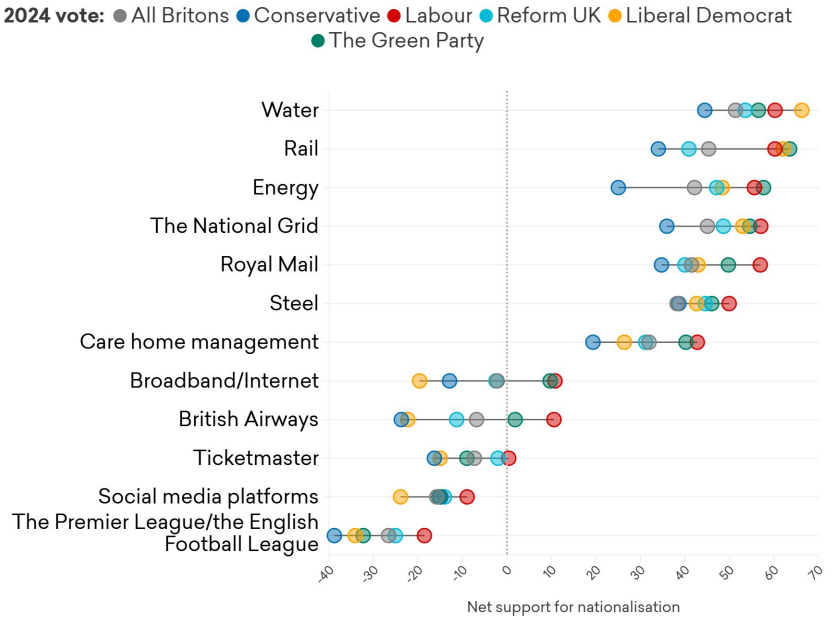
Nationalising utilities is a popular – and surprisingly non-partisan. Majorities across every voter group – including Conservative - support nationalising water, rail and energy.

Majorities also support nationalising the National Grid, Royal Mail, the Steel Industry, and care home management. Britons are more divided when it comes to nationalising broadband.

Water is the most popular industry to nationalise: 63 per cent of Brits support nationalising water, including 62 per cent of Conservatives and 68 per cent of Reform voters.

Across voter groups, most Britons support nationalising water, rail and energy

Below is a list of industries and companies which some say should be nationalised (i.e. owned and run by the government instead of the private sector) . For each of the following, please indicate to what extent you would support or oppose nationalising them:



Source: More in Common • April 2025

Social care

The principle of funding social care through general taxation is popular.

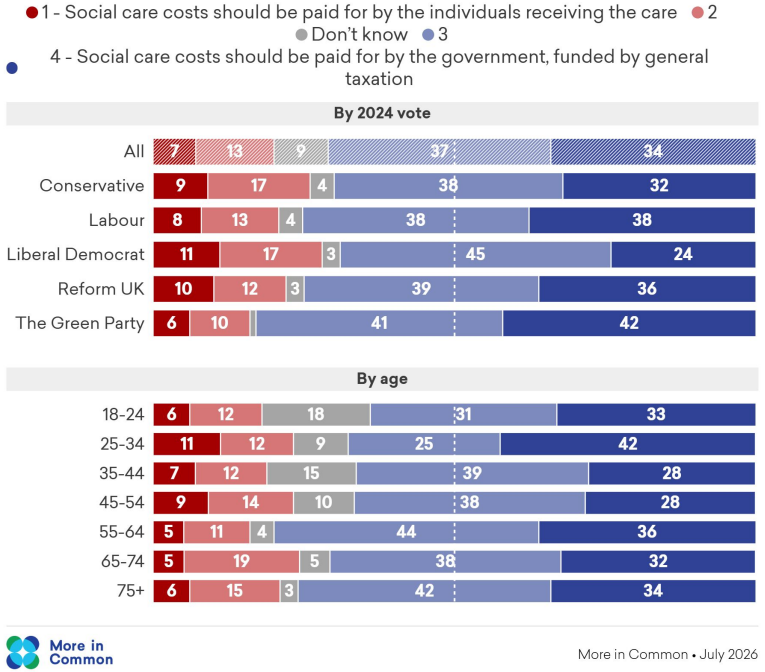
Seven in ten Britons (70 per cent) say social care costs should be paid for by the government, funded by general taxation, compared with 21 per cent who say they should be paid for by the individuals receiving the care.

This belief holds across every voter group and age group.

However, awareness of different models is low, and people might be more reluctant to see their own taxes rise in the face of a forceful anti-tax rise campaign.

Seven in ten Britons say social care should be funded by general taxation, not by the individual receiving the care

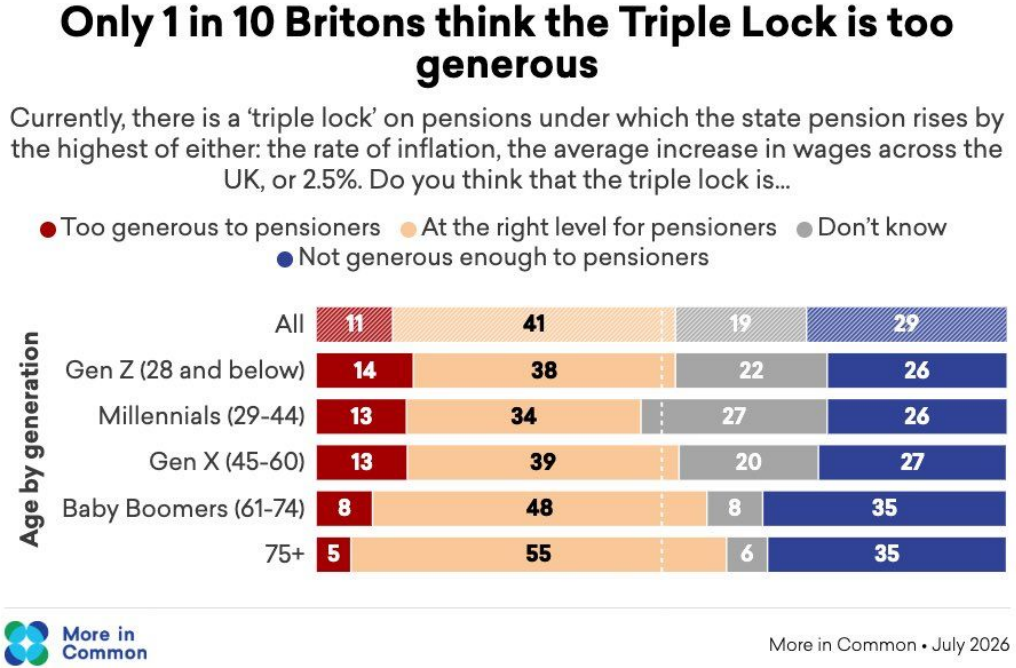
Please use a scale of 1 to 4 where 1 means you agree with the first statement and 4 means you agree with the second.



Triple lock

Pitching pension reforms around intergenerational fairness could prove risky: **only one in ten Britons believe the Triple Lock is too generous**, while a plurality across age groups say it is fair.

By a margin of 36 per cent to 23 per cent, Britons say that scrapping the Triple Lock would reflect badly on this government – although many say neither.



Thank you!