



Climate and Energy at the 2024 General Election and beyond

More in Common and E3G

Introduction

Polling of 12,000 people the week after the election

Polling of 50,000 people throughout the election campaign

Focus groups with 100+ people in the election campaign and the week after

General Election 2024

As the election campaign unfolds, we'll be monitoring the latest changes in public opinion here.

Latest Voting Intention
Focus Group Live

Climate and energy at the General Election

Our polling shows how Labour's energy policies helped them secure the win at the General Election, while Sunak's climate renewables did nothing to prevent their losses.

General Election Post-Mortem

More in Common general our first indicator of the General Election, the post-mortem on Thursday night's results, in conjunction with the ICM, the ICM Lab.

Labour has its work cut out

More in Common's Labour TV writes on the challenger facing Labour as Keir Starmer enters Downing Street.

MRP

More in Common's Real-time Polling

General Election Pre-Mortem

Our first webinar of the election campaign reveals how voters are thinking as they head to the polls.

Wisdom of the Crowds

We asked British voters to predict the results of the General Election.

More in Common projects Labour will gain a majority of over 200 seats on 4 July

More in Common projects Labour will gain a majority of over 200 seats on 4 July.

Scotland

Final Scotland-only poll of the General Election campaign.

Wales

Final Wales-only poll of the General Election campaign.

Is social mobility on the ballot?

A look at how the public approach the topic of social mobility and how the party manifesto stacks up - based on polling and focus group research in partnership with the Sutton Trust.

Scottish Voters and General Election - Final Poll

More in Common's final poll of Scottish voters of the General Election campaign shows Labour ahead by five points.

Welsh Voters and the General Election

More in Common's final Wales-only poll of the General Election campaign finds Labour set to dominate again in Wales, despite Gettling's approval ratings slumping to new lows.

The Seven Segments at the General Election

We've updated our non-partisan Foundation line to our opinion poll tracking throughout the campaign to see how the seven segments have changed in attitudes over the course of the last few weeks, going deeper insight into why the polls are where they are.

Political apathy

"Everyone just hates politics"

We hear from voters in that dark, the lowest-voted constituency about why the time round they'll be staying at home.

The Final Debate

More in Common's mag poll reveals who won election campaign last TV debate, according to the people who watched it.

Labour on

Tracking the

Change Pending

The Path to the 2024 General Election and Beyond



Climate and energy at the General Election

Introduction

Overview of the Seven Segments at the General Election

The current state of climate polarisation in the UK

The geography of UK climate attitudes: MRP

Why did the Conservatives lose the election?

Why did Labour win?

What do people want from the Labour government?

Attitudes on specific policies

Is the rise of Reform UK a sign of growing climate backlash?

Our unique lens - The British Seven Segments

- The 'British Seven' segments were formulated in our 'Britain's Choice' report, published in 2020
- They are created entirely from questions around five areas of core beliefs, drawn from social psychology: group identity and tribalism, perceived threat, parenting style and authoritarianism, moral foundations, personal agency and responsibility
- No demographic information (race, class, or gender) is used for the segmentation, though the segments created by this process often have demographic differences
- Segmentation shows that values and beliefs are powerful in influencing how individuals form opinions about issues and their behaviour. Often, the segments are more predictive of beliefs than any other metric



The British Seven Segments

Progressive Activists



...a group for whom politics is an important part of their identity and who seek to correct longstanding injustices

Civic Pragmatists



...a group that cares about others, at home or abroad. They wish for less conflict and more compromise

Disengaged Battlers



... a group that are just getting by. They blame the system for its unfairness, but not other people

Established Liberals



...a group that has done well and means well towards others, but also sees a lot of good in the status quo

Loyal Nationals



...a patriotic group, who worry that our way of life is threatened and also feel our society has become more unfair

Disengaged Traditionalists



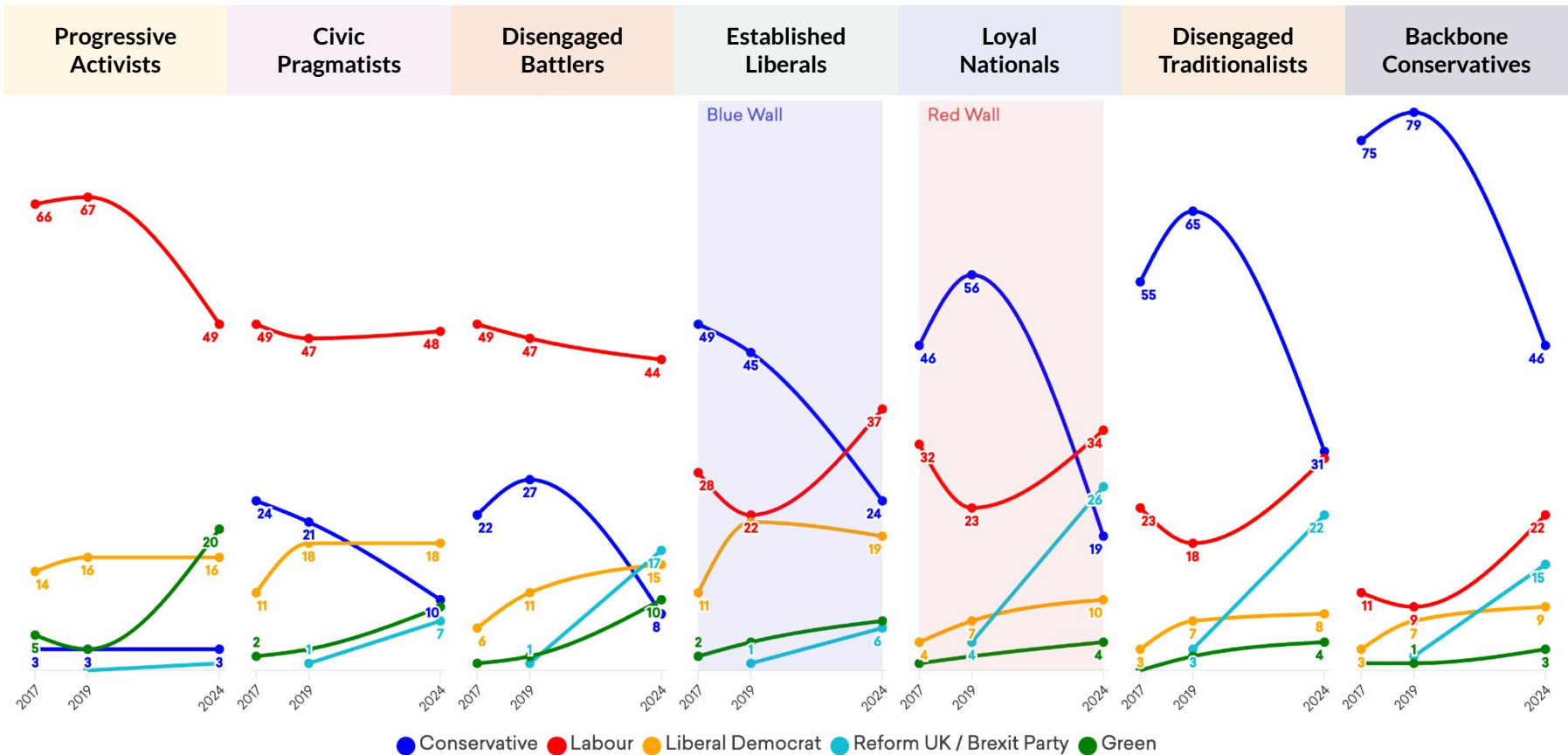
...a group that values a well-ordered society and prides in hard work. They want strong leadership that keeps people in line

Backbone Conservatives



... a group who are proud of their country, optimistic about Britain's future outside of Europe, and who keenly follow the news

How did the Seven Segments vote?





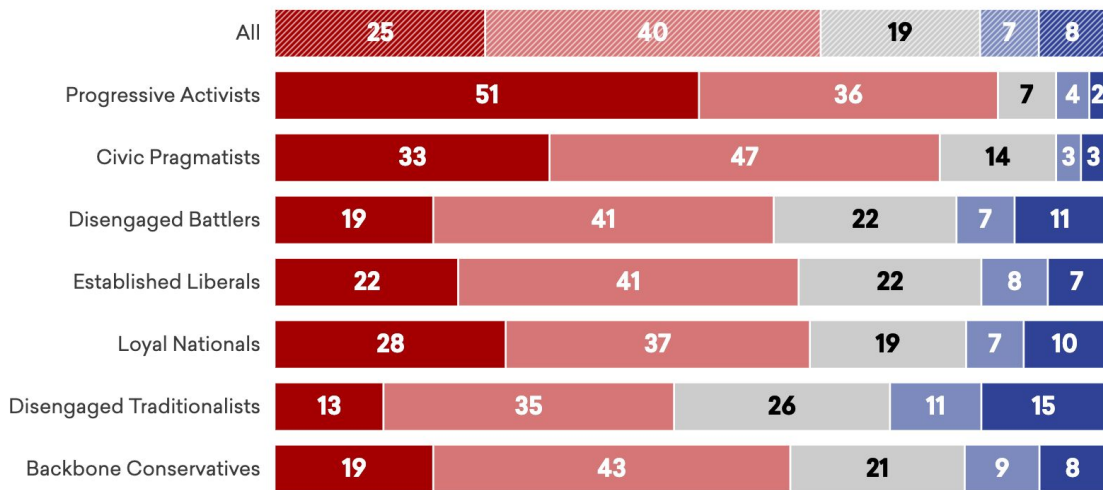
The public's top-line attitudes to climate change in 2024

Climate change is not a polarising issue in the UK

How worried are you about climate change?

By segment By 2024 GE vote By age

● Very worried ● Somewhat worried ● Neither worried nor unworried ● Somewhat unworried ● Very unworried



Unlike in other countries, there is a broad public mandate for climate action in the UK.

Across all our seven segments, a large plurality are worried about climate change, with only 15 per cent saying they are not worried.

The least worried segment is Disengaged Traditionalists, but even they are twice as likely to be worried than to be unworried about climate change.

Seven starting points on environmental issues



Climate justice
Progressive Activists



Nature
Civic Pragmatists



Lower bills
Disengaged Battlers



Green technology
Established Liberals



Threat
Loyal Nationals



Energy independence
Disengaged Traditionalists



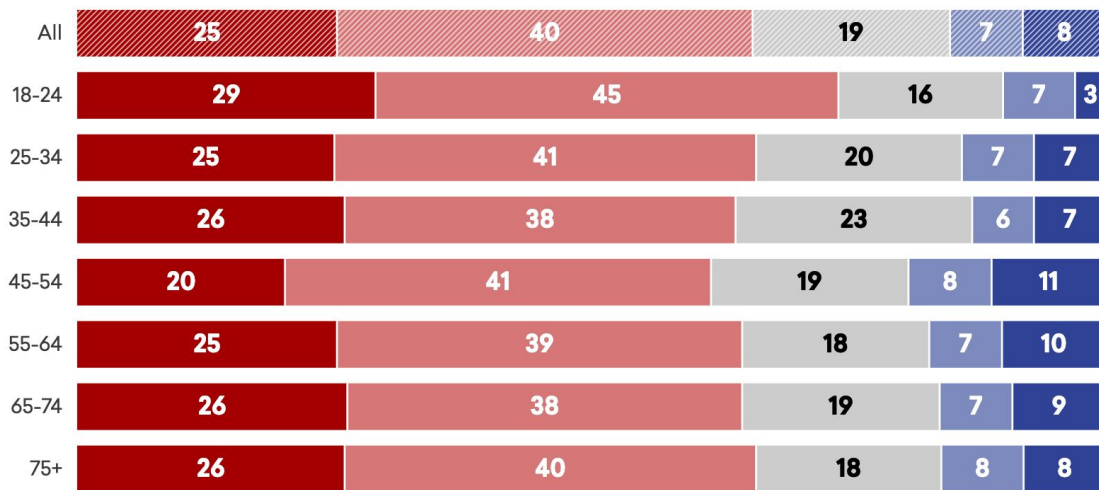
Conservation
Backbone Conservatives

Climate change is not a polarising issue in the UK

How worried are you about climate change?

By segment By 2024 GE vote By age

Very worried Somewhat worried Neither worried nor unworried Somewhat unworried Very unworried

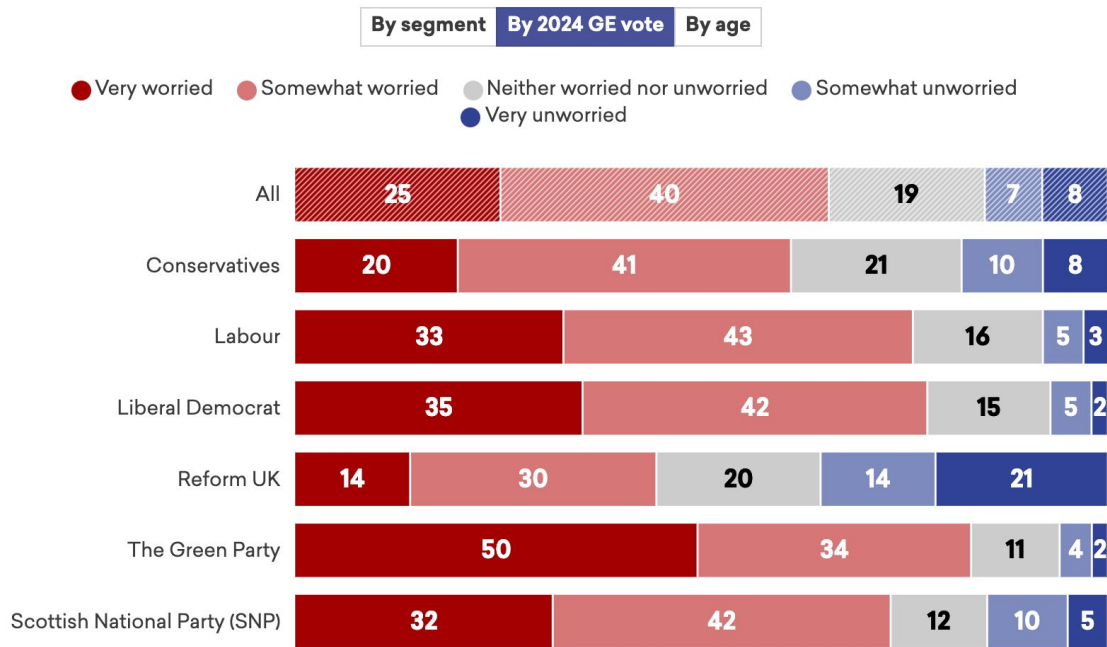


It is a misconception that climate change is only a “young persons’ issue” in the UK.

Old people are just as likely to say they are worried about climate change, and they are more likely to priorities climate change and the environment in the biggest issues facing the country.

Climate change is not a polarising issue in the UK

How worried are you about climate change?



There is some polarisation on climate by party votes in the UK - but it is not as significant as you might expect.

61 per cent of Conservative voters say they are worried about climate change, compared to 76 per cent of Labour voters and 78 per cent of Liberal Democrat voters.

The exception is Reform UK voters, where 44 per cent are worried about climate change - which is more than the 35 per cent of them who are unworried, but still one of the few demographics where less than a majority say they are worried.

The majority of people in every UK constituency are worried about climate change

How worried are you about climate change?
Total proportion saying they are somewhat or very worried



The majority of people in every UK constituency are worried about climate change

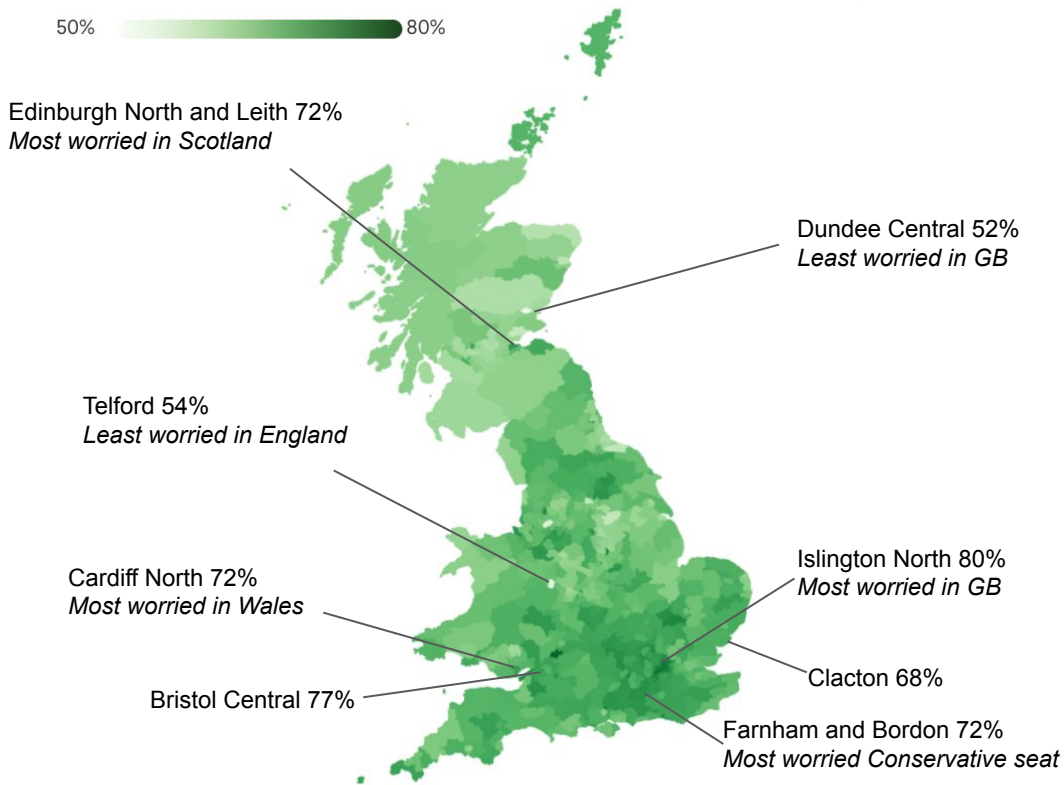
Most worried:

Islington North
IND GAIN
Hornsey and Friern Barnet
LAB HOLD
Stroud
LAB GAIN FROM CON
Bristol Central
GREEN GAIN FROM LAB
Richmond Park
LD HOLD
Eastleigh
LD GAIN FROM CON
Hampstead and Highgate
LAB HOLD
Hackney South and
Shoreditch
LAB HOLD
Clapham and Brixton Hill
LAB HOLD
Ealing Central and Acton
LAB HOLD

How worried are you about climate change?

Total proportion saying they are somewhat or very worried

50%  80%

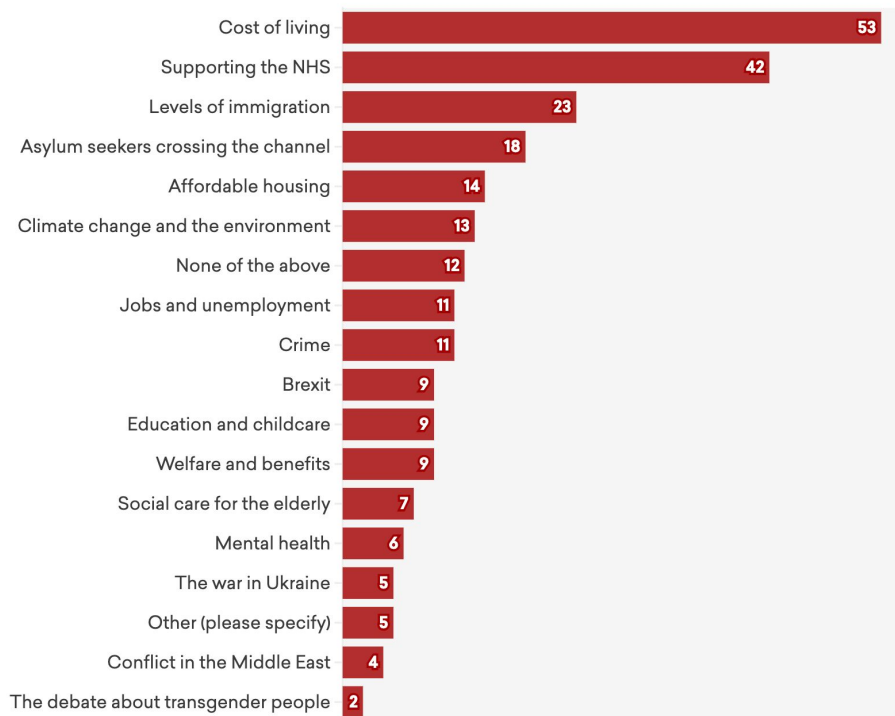


Least worried:

Dundee Central
SNP HOLD
Telford
LAB GAIN FROM CON
Leigh and Atherton
LAB GAIN FROM CON
Glenrothes and Mid Fife
LAB GAIN FROM SNP
Leeds West and Pudsey
LAB HOLD
Doncaster North
LAB HOLD
Middlesbrough South and
East Cleveland
LAB GAIN FROM CON
Aberdeen North
SNP HOLD
Aberdeenshire North and
Moray East
SNP GAIN FROM CON
Glasgow North East
LAB GAIN FROM SNP

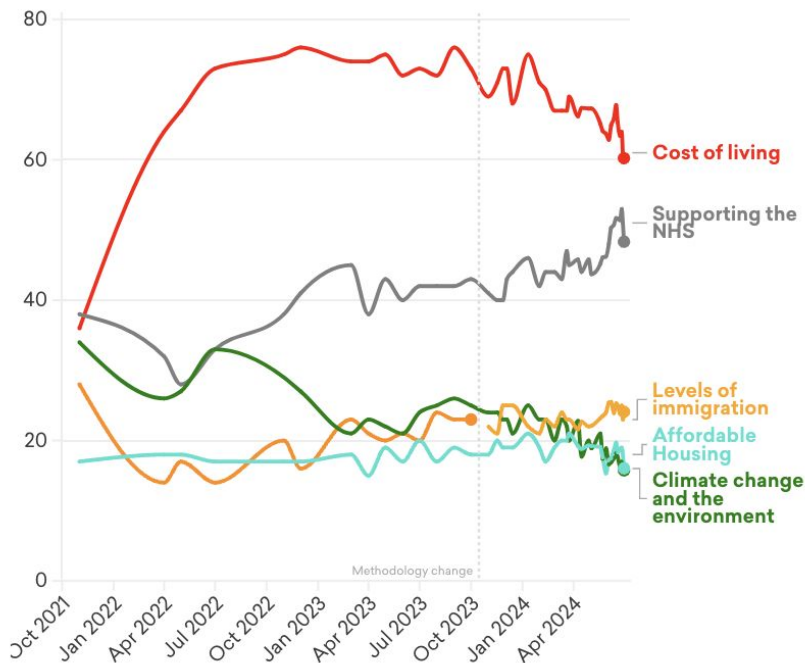
This election was won and fought over the cost of living and NHS

Thinking about the General Election, which of the following issues had the biggest impact on how you voted? Please select up to three



Britons' big issues over time

Thinking about the next General Election, which of the following issues are most likely to impact your vote? Please select up to three



Cost of living is the key lens through which people see climate action

I just worry if everybody's got the money to be able to do the things that the government are wanting to bring in because a lot of these things are extremely expensive.

Kathy, GP Receptionist, Clacton

I just think it is absolutely ridiculous. It's not feasible, it's not doable at all. Electric cars are too expensive, there's not enough charging points. I think it's a lot of talk just to try and make themselves look good.

Adrian, Fast Food Area Manager, Clacton

[Climate change] is a risk, I think simply because generally it increases cost and increases complexity for business because it's new, so businesses are needing to innovate. But I guess the opportunity is to get it right.

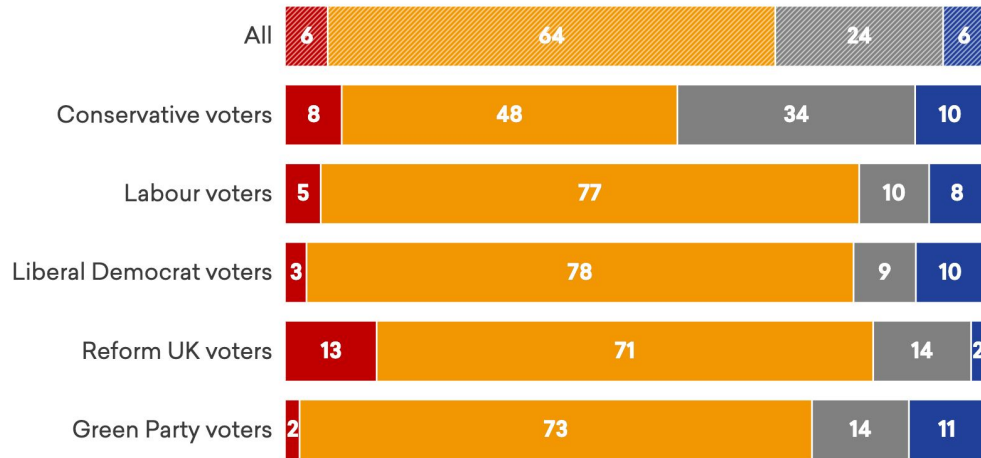
Paul, Logistics Operations, Tees Valley

The Conservatives' loss

The Conservatives lost on competence, not ideology

From the following list, which do you think best explains why you think the Conservatives lost this election?

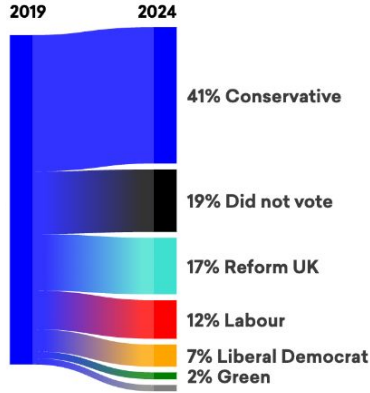
- They were too left wing
- They were incompetent
- Don't know
- They were too right wing



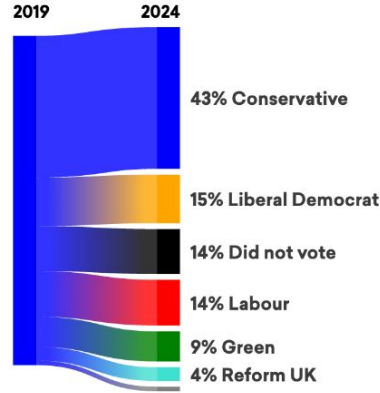
This election was a “valence” rather than a “values” election - the Conservatives faced a huge defeat because the public saw them as no longer fit to govern rather than because they disagreed with their views and priorities.

But voter flows were determined by ideology and values

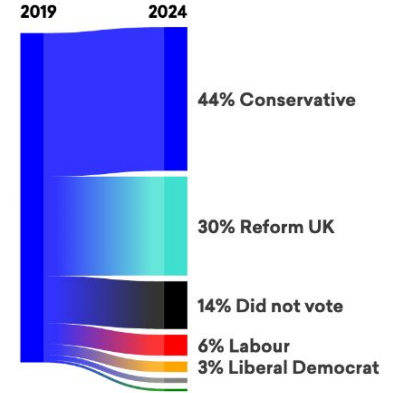
All Conservative 2019 voters



Top issue: Climate change and the environment



Top issue: Immigration

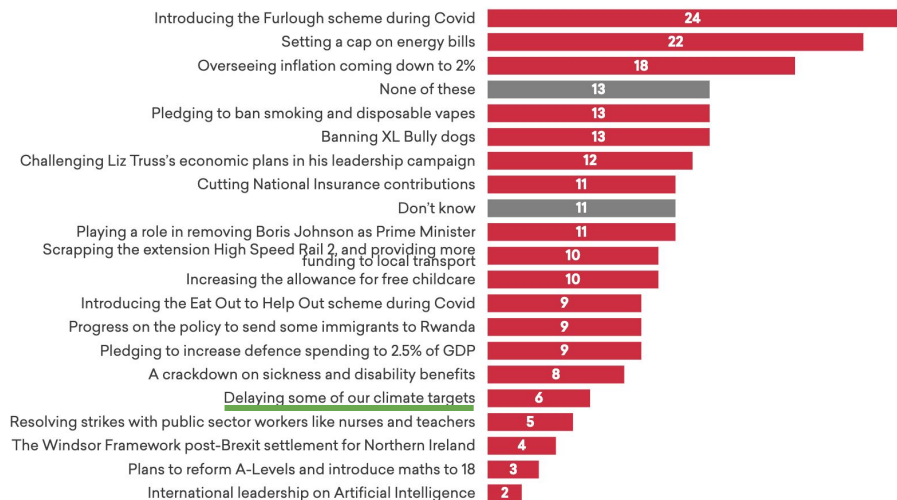


Across the country, Conservatives held onto 41 per cent of their 2019 voters, driven by a prevailing sense that the party has not been competent in government and not delivered on voters' top priorities of the NHS and cost of living.

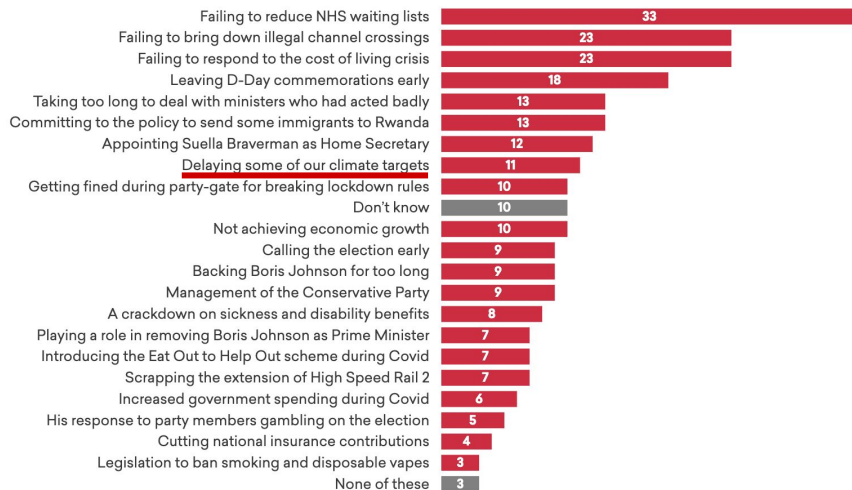
But where voters went after abandoning the Conservatives was heavily determined by their priorities as voters - with those who prioritise immigration overwhelmingly moving to Reform UK, and those who priorities immigration moving to the Liberal Democrats, Labour and Greens.

Sunak's climate reversals will be looked back upon negatively

Thinking back on Rishi Sunak's time in government, which of the following have been his best achievements? Select up to three.



Thinking back on Rishi Sunak's time in government, which of the following have been his best mistakes? Select up to three.

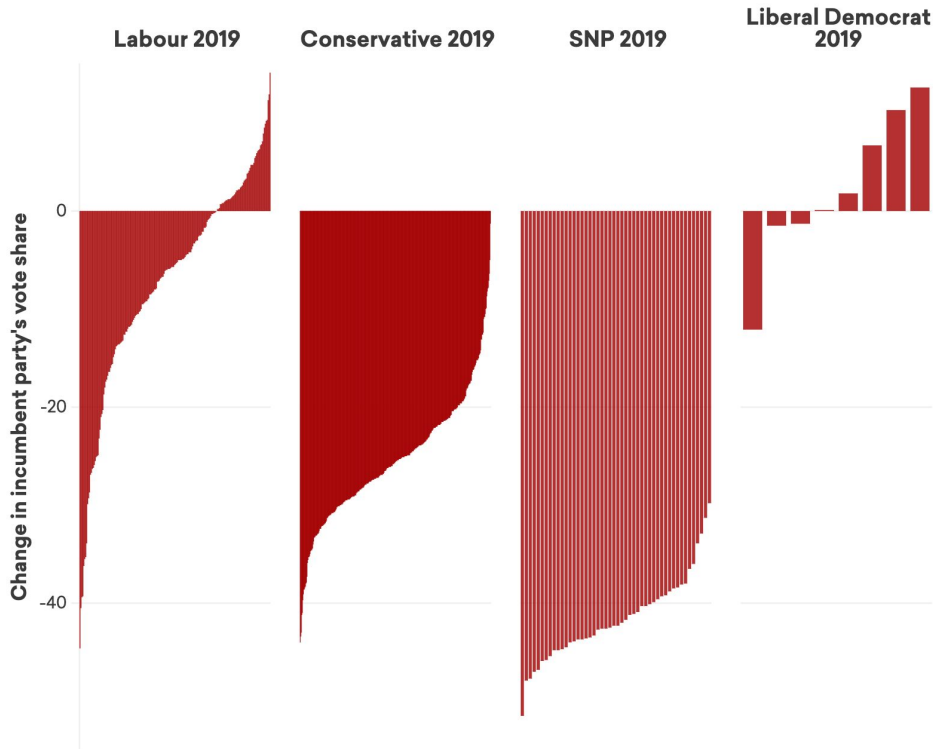


Very few voters give Sunak any credit for delaying our climate targets, whereas they see the decision to delay our targets among his top ten mistakes while in office.

**Why did Labour win? And
what to the public expect
them to do?**

The change election

Incumbent parties lost vote share in the vast majority of UK constituencies



Across the country, people voted for change - even in seats that were held by Labour parliamentarians.

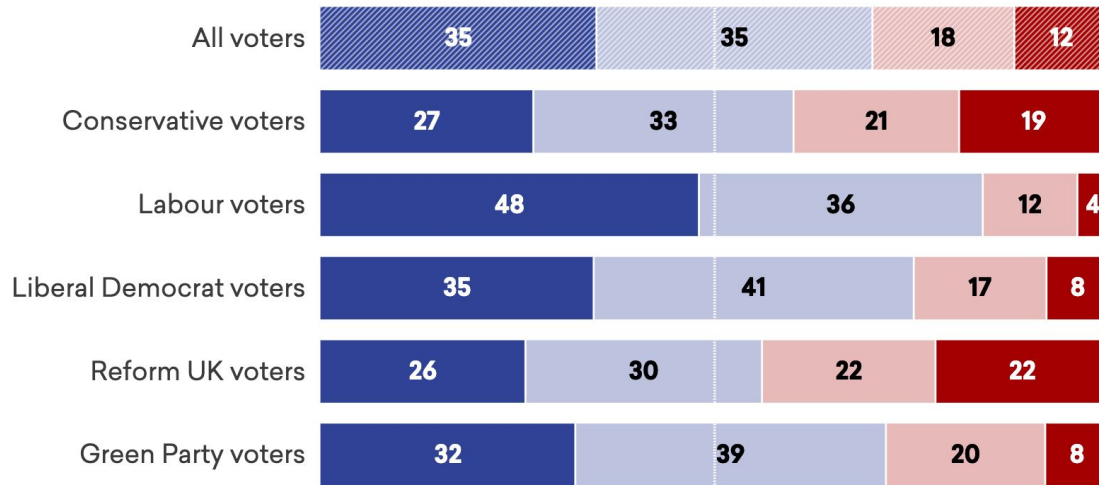
In this sense, the 2024 election is the third time in recent years (after 2016 and 2019) that the public have dramatically voted for significant change - but this might be the last time that the public trust Britain's major parties to deliver it.

The public's strong desire for change enabled Labour's historic rise in this election, but also leaves open the question what sort of change the public wants.

Labour's mandate for change

Which comes closest to your view?

- 1 - The election result gives Keir Starmer a mandate to radically change Britain
- 2 -
- 3 -
- 4 - The election result does not give Keir Starmer a mandate to radically change Britain

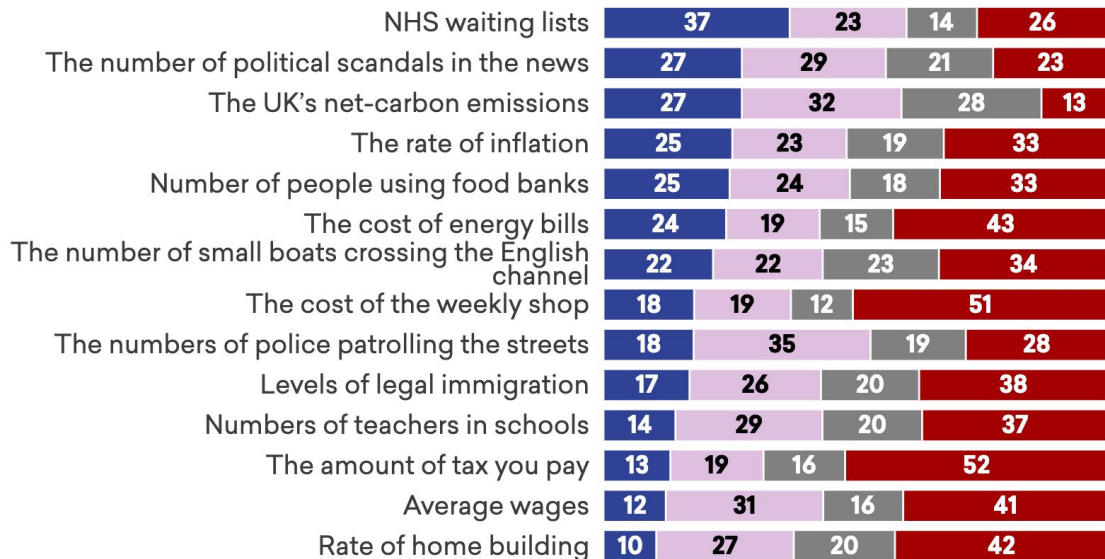


Overwhelmingly the public say that Labour has a mandate for radical change from this election, including strong majorities of people who did not vote for Labour.

Expectations for Labour

In 5 years' time, do you expect each of the following to be higher, lower or stay the same compared to what they currently are?

● Lower ● Stay the same ● Don't know ● Higher



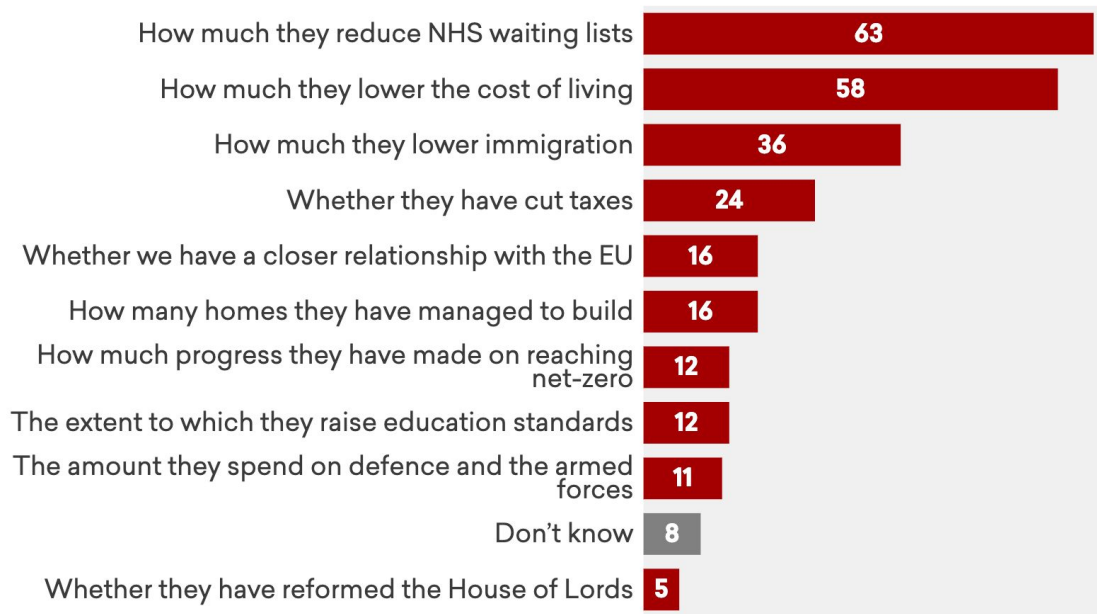
Fortunately for Labour, the public's expectations are not massively high.

People tend to expect NHS waiting lists, political scandal, and carbon emissions to come down - but less than a majority think so in each case.

People are gloomy with regards to wages, taxes, and immigration - all of which people tend to think will go up.

What does change look like?

Which of the following will be most important to you in judging the success of the Labour Government after 5 years? Select up to three.



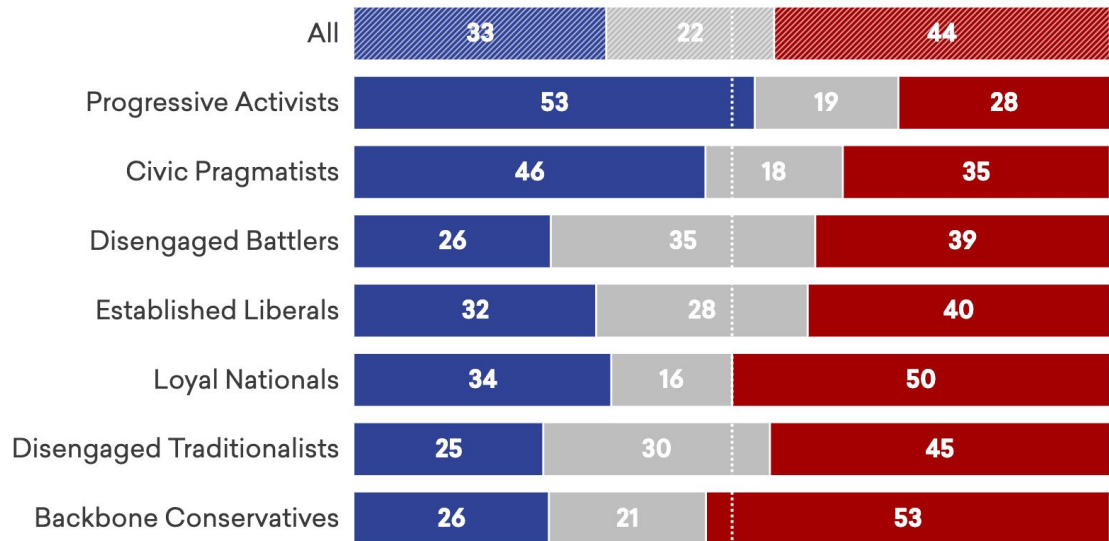
The key tests for Labour over the course of this parliament are on the extent to which they can deal with the NHS and the cost of living - few other issues hit the same level of salience.

In contrast, only 12 per cent say they will judge Labour on their ability to bring down carbon emissions, although this rises to 17 per cent for Labour voters and 18 per cent for Liberal Democrat voters.

Do people believe Labour on energy bills?

The Labour Party said during the election campaign that they will bring down people's energy bills. Do you believe or not believe this promise?

● I believe this ● Don't know ● I don't believe this



People tend not to believe that Labour will bring down their energy bills - with only Progressive Activists and Civic Pragmatists more likely than not to believe that Labour will deliver on this.

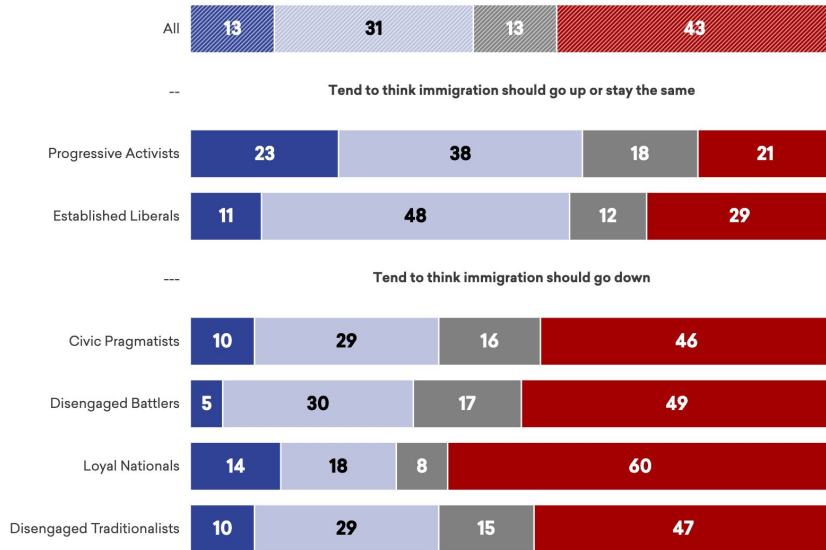
Even Established Liberals, who are typically a high-trust group, do not think that Labour will be able to bring down their bills.

A fragmented coalition of voters...

Labours' voters are split on immigration

Thinking about the number of immigrants the UK Government accepts into the country each year, which of the following comes closer to your view? [Labour voters only]

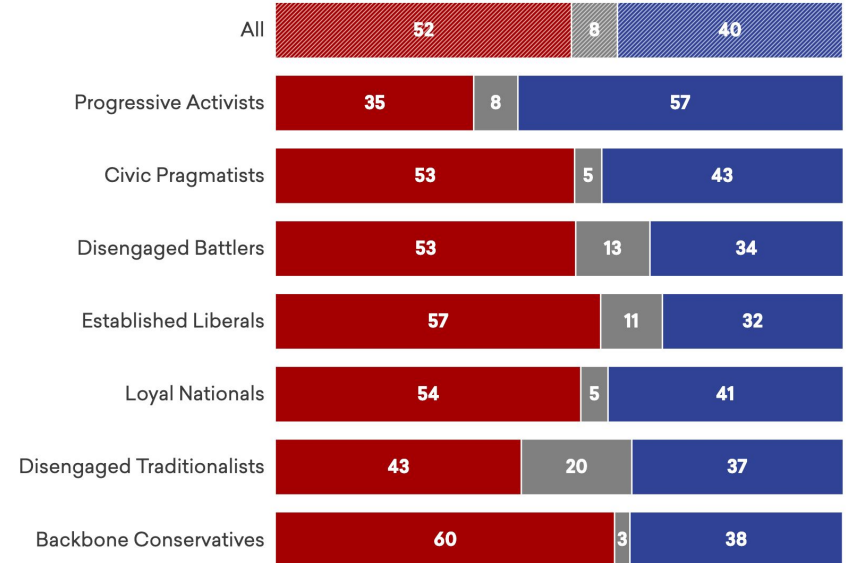
- Government should increase the numbers
- Government should keep the number the same
- Don't know
- Government should reduce the numbers



... and divided on how to fix the NHS

Which of the following do you think is most important for the government to do to improve the NHS?

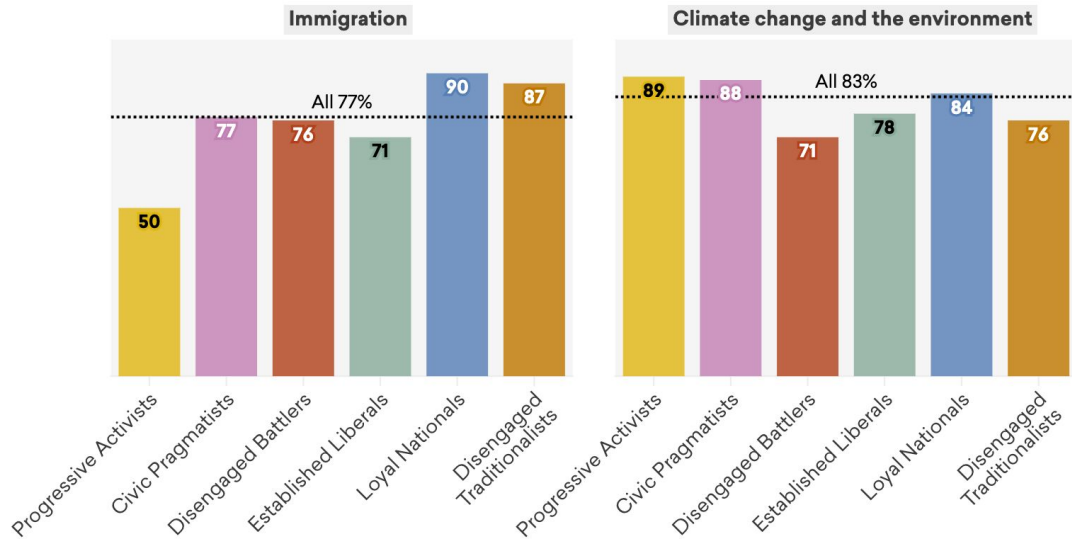
- Change the ways the NHS operates
- Don't know
- Provide more funding to the NHS



...united by climate change?

Labour voters are divided on immigration, but not on climate change

How important were parties' policies on each of the following areas when you decided how to vote at this election? [Very or somewhat important]



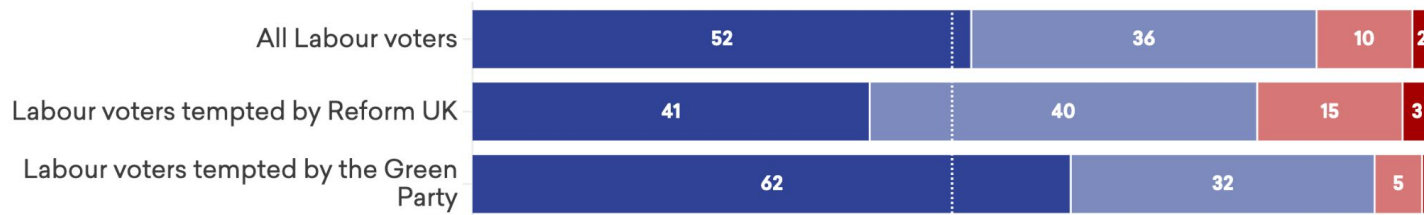
While Labour's voters are split on how to tackle issues such as immigration and the NHS, there is much more agreement that large-scale solutions are needed to tackle climate change.

With very few ideological threads now holding Labour's voter base together, it is possible to see how climate and energy could become the uniting narrative and story for Labour to tell over the course of this parliament.

The risk to Labour from both sides

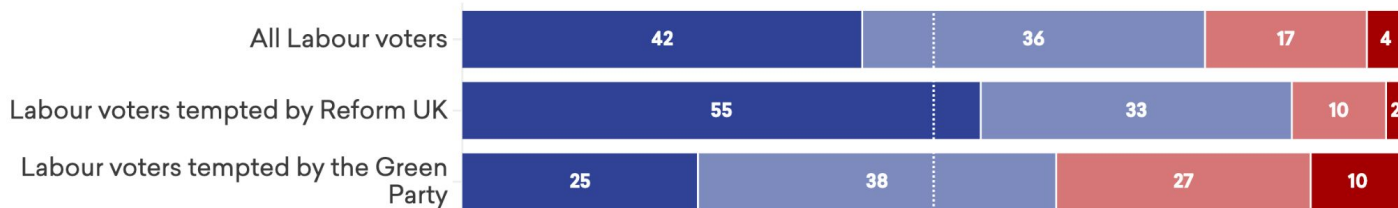
How important is it to you that the government cares about tackling climate change?

● Very important ● Somewhat important ● Not particularly important ● Not important at all



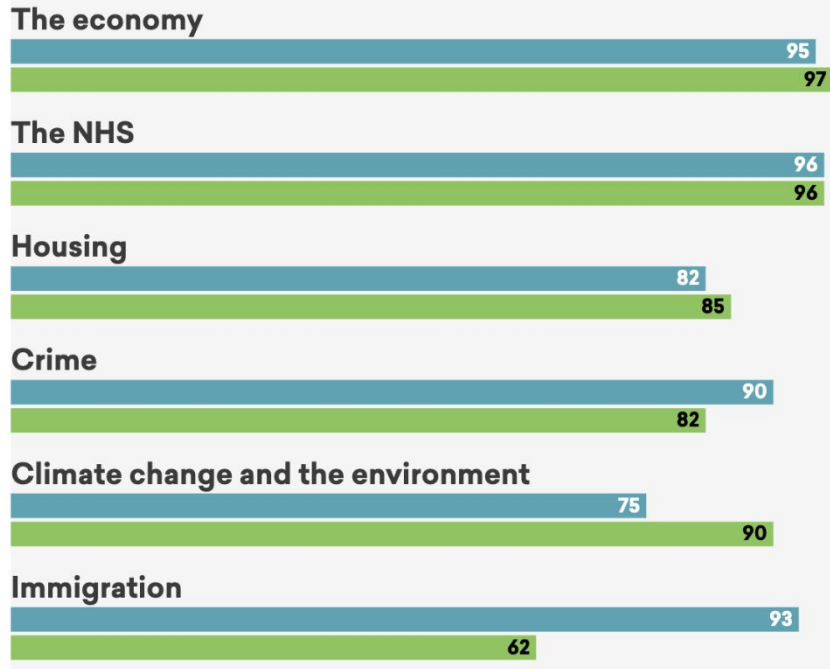
How important is it to you that the government is patriotic?

● Very important ● Somewhat important ● Not particularly important ● Not important at all



The risk to Labour from both sides

How important were parties' policies on each of the following areas when you decided how to vote at this election?



How important is it to you that the government...

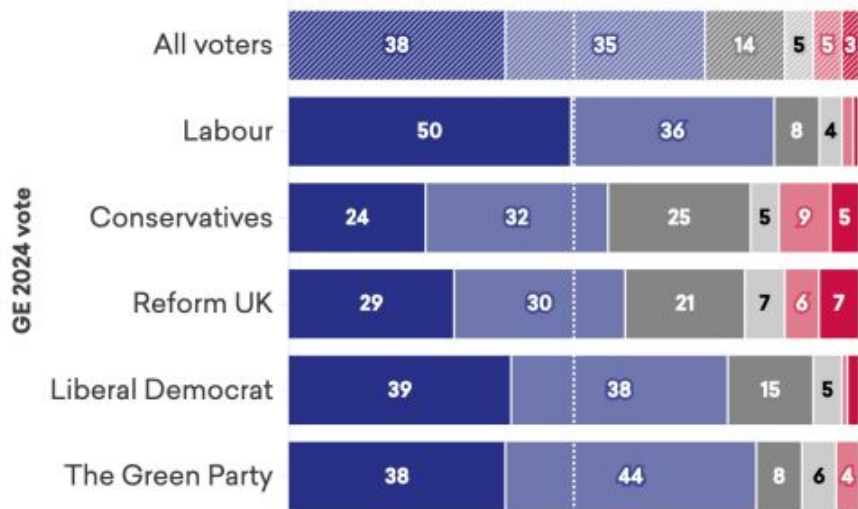


● Labour voters tempted by Reform UK ● Labour voters tempted by the Greens

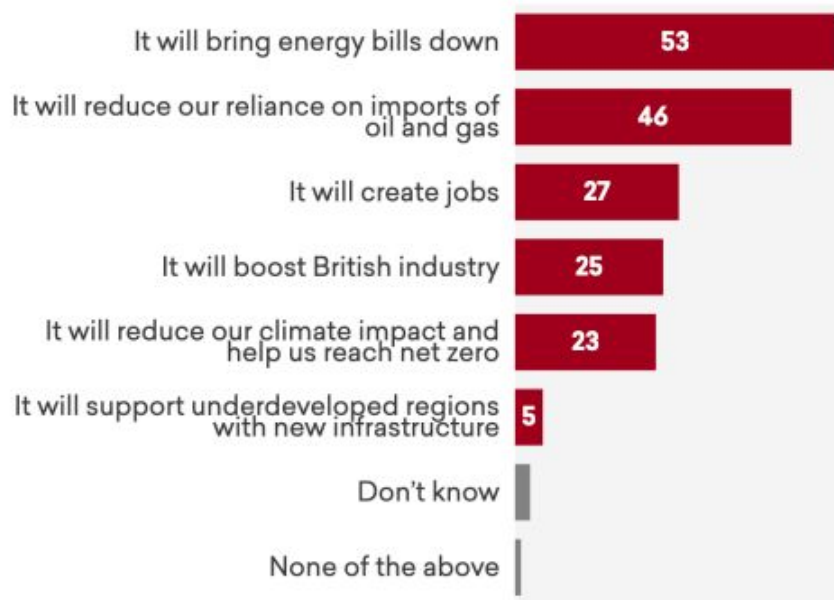
Labour won the argument on cost of living, climate and energy

Do you think Labour's pledge to set up Great British Energy, a publicly-owned clean power company will be...

- Very good for the country
- Good for the country
- Neither good nor bad for the country
- Don't know
- Bad for the country
- Very bad for the country



You said that Labour's policy to introduce Great British Energy would be good for the country. Why is that? Select the top two reasons.



Labour won the argument on cost of living, climate and energy

It sounds like a really good idea and something that would bring the control of an energy company within the public domain to benefit more people. Whether it happens in reality and whether there's the political will to follow through on that is another matter.

Shiza, Psychotherapist, Edington

I mean I think it's a step in the right direction. You want to be independent; you don't want to be relying on other countries and all that. So, I think it's a step in the right direction. Will they deliver? Hopefully, but we'll see.

Eunice, Pharmacist, Altrincham

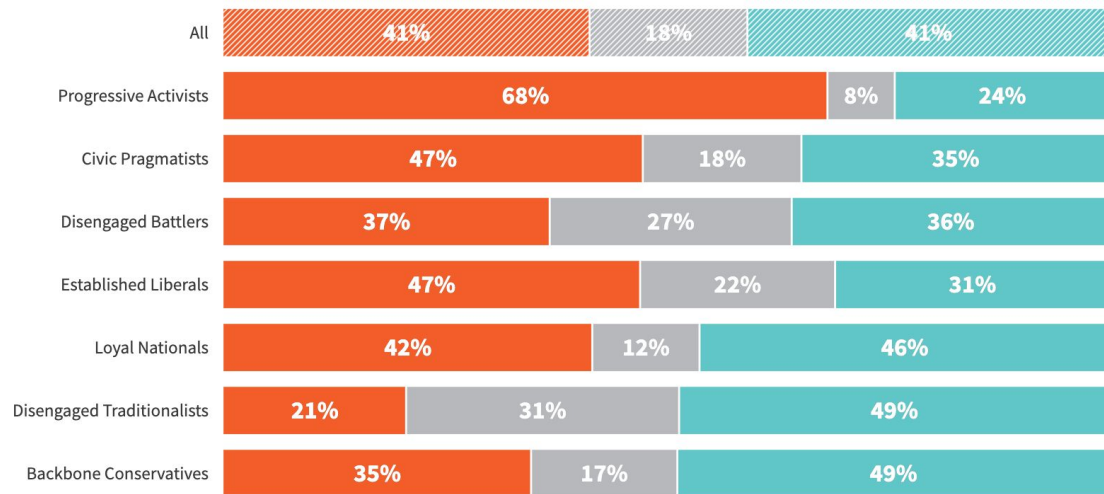
Nationalised energy companies and other utilities would definitely be a positive thing, especially how we've heard of the ridiculous amount of profit that these companies have been making.

Usma, Health Tech Company, Birmingham

Home insulation and heating

From the following statements, which comes closest to your view?

- The UK government should follow an ambitious climate change strategy, even if it means we all need to change the way we heat and insulate our home
- Don't know
- If it means we all need to change the way we heat and insulate our homes, the UK government should consider a less ambitious climate strategy



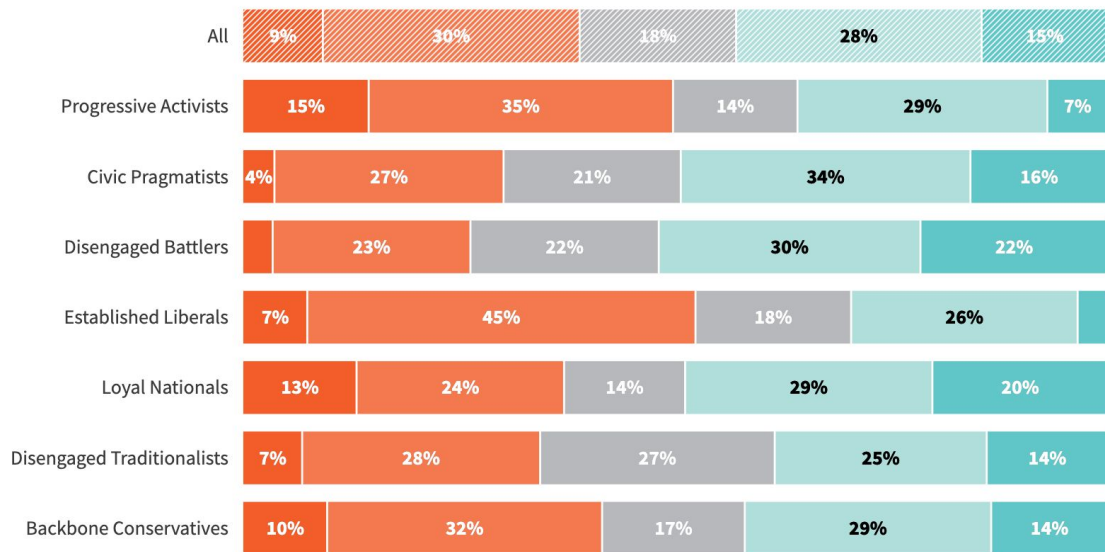
Home heating (and in particular heat pumps) can be one of the most divisive aspects of the energy transition.

Progressive Activists, Civic Pragmatists and Established Liberals are willing to make tradeoffs for decarbonising home heating, but Loyal Nationals are less willing to do so.

Home insulation and heating: the fairness test

Thinking about the policies relating to home heating that the government could put in place over the next 10 years to transition away from gas boilers, do you think they will...

Definitely be fair to people like me Probably be fair to people like me Don't know
Probably be unfair to people like me Definitely be unfair to people like me

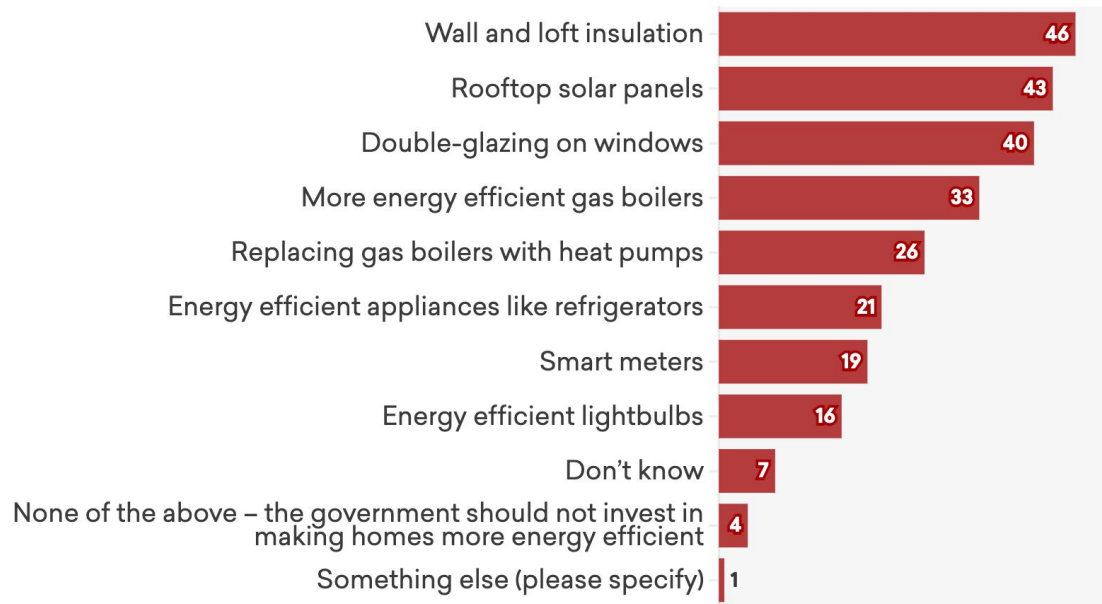


One key test for decarbonising home heating is whether people think the transition is done fairly.

Progressive Activists, and the more financially comfortable Established Liberals and Backbone Conservatives tend to think that the transition will be fair - but Labour's more economically precarious segments are more likely to think that the transition will be unfair to people like them.

Home insulation and heating: insulation a priority

Thinking about the ways the government could invest in making our homes more energy efficient, which do you think they should be prioritising? Select up to three.



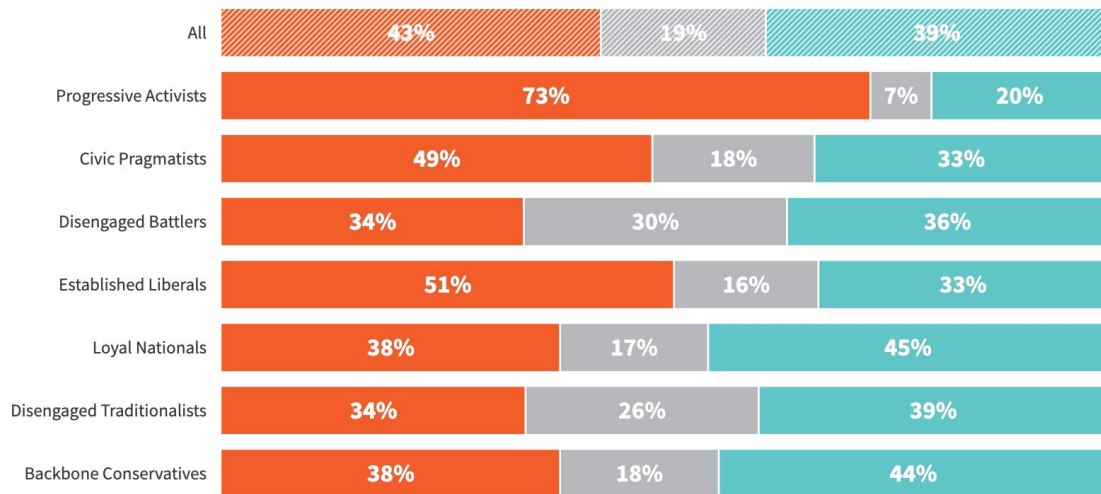
People's top priorities for home heating involve increasing the efficiency and quality of home insulation - which ranks much higher than improving or replacing gas boilers.

In focus groups, people see home insulation as a no-brainer and do not understand why more resources are not dedicated towards it - however, there are serious concerns about "cowboy builders" and low quality installations that need to be addressed.

Electric cars

From the following statements, which comes closest to your view?

- The UK government should follow an ambitious climate change strategy, even if it means we all have to embrace new technology, like electric cars
- Don't know
- If it means we all have to embrace new technology, like electric cars, the UK government should consider a less ambitious climate strategy

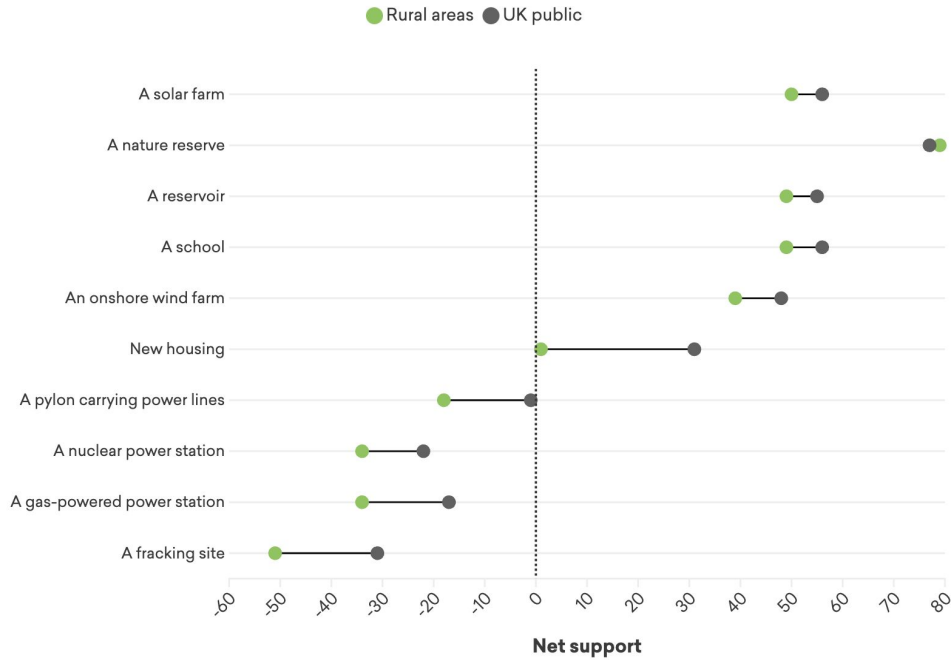


Electric cars are the side of the energy transition that people interact with most in their daily lives, and many people have heard stories about electric cars that have toxified all potential policies in the move to net zero.

While EV scepticism does not hold across people who actually own EVs, there is a growing sense in particular from low-income low-engagement groups that EVs are a cash-grab strategy that people cannot afford at the moment.

Solar farms, pylons, and planning

For each of the following, would you support or oppose them being built in your local area?

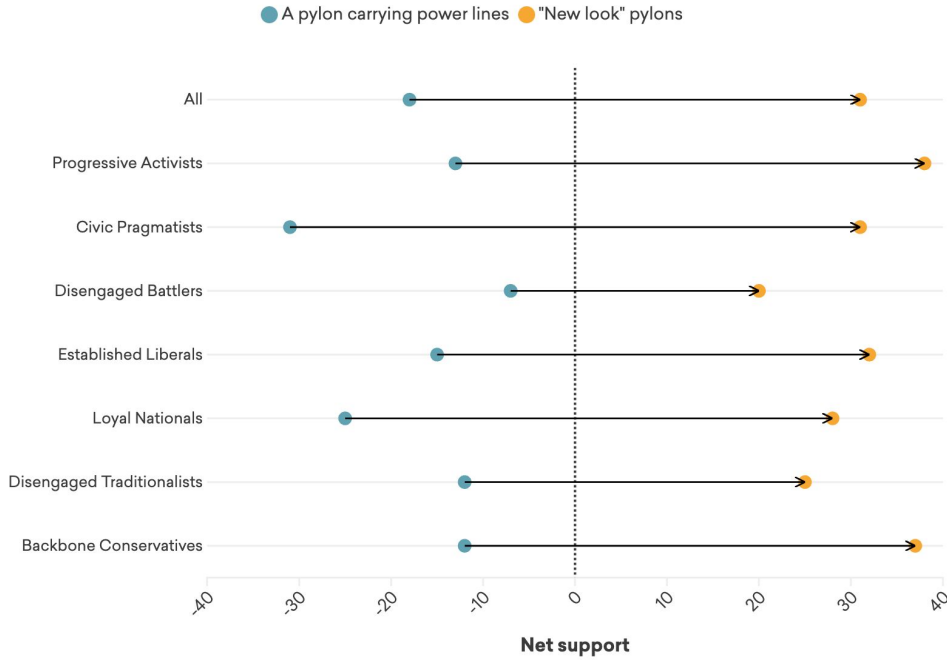


Rural communities say they support the introduction of nature reserves, solar farms, reservoirs, schools, and onshore wind farms in their areas. They tend to oppose the construction of power lines, nuclear or gas power stations, and fracking sites.

Compared to the UK public, the instincts of rural communities are more to block new developments than to back them. This is particularly true on housing, where there is a 30 point gap in net support between rural communities and the UK public.

Redesigning pylons

For each of the following, would you support or oppose them being built in your local area?



While rural communities say they oppose electricity pylons in general, when showed images of the national grid's "new look" pylons, it was enough to switch opposition to support for every segment.

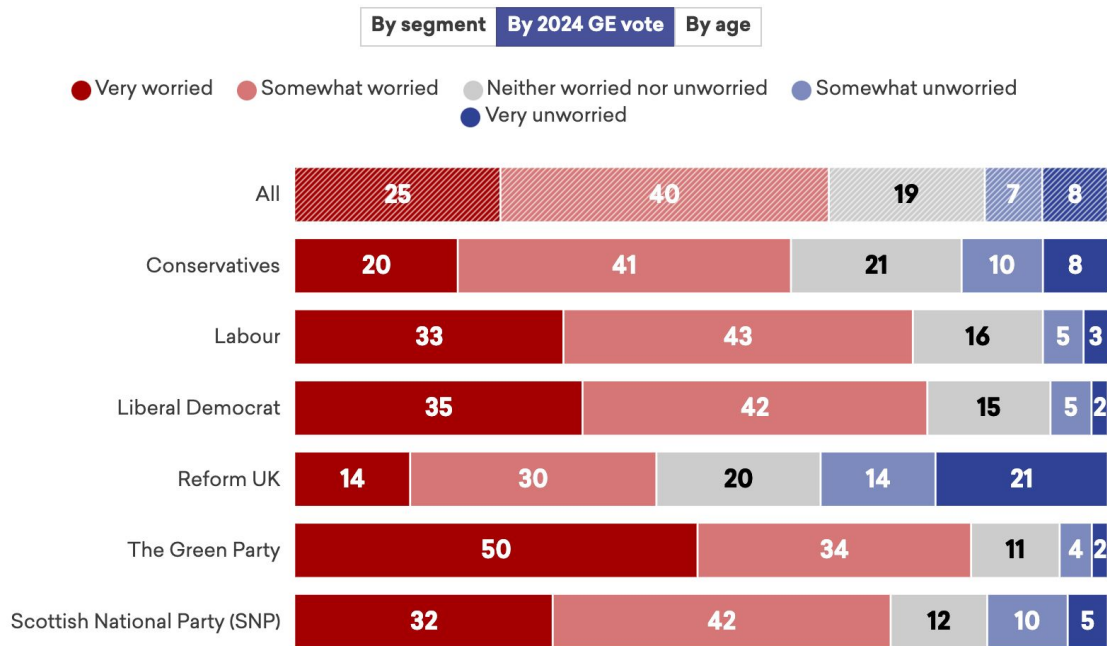




Reform UK

Reform UK supporters are less concerned about climate change

How worried are you about climate change?



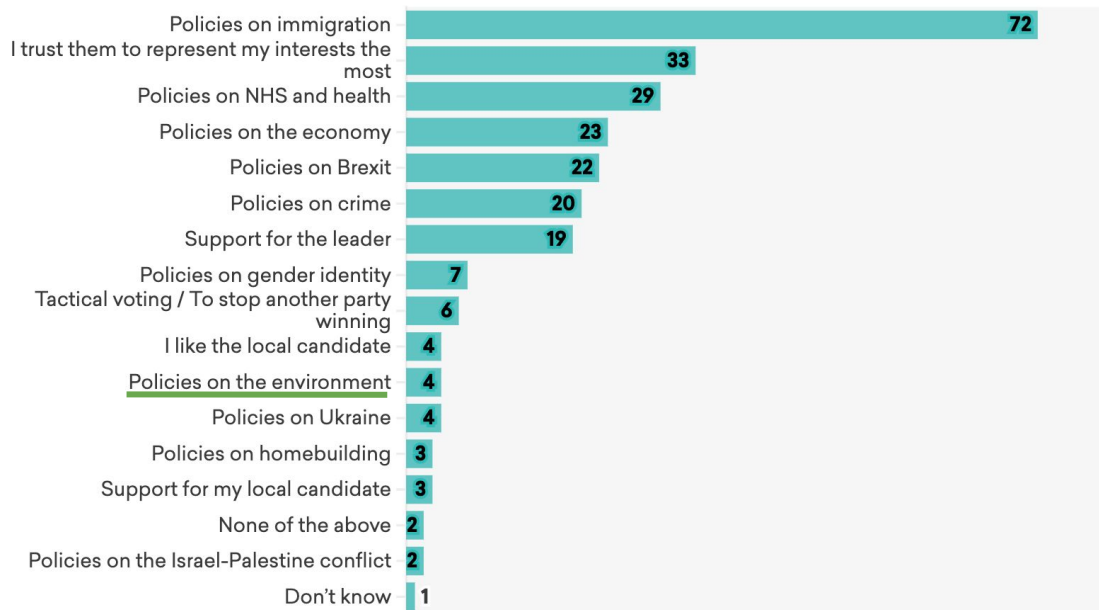
Reform UK voters consistently say they are less worried about climate compared to other voter groups - although 44 per cent of them still say they are worried, so this should not be overstated.

Reform voters are also more likely to say that renewable energy would make their bills cheaper versus oil and gas, and they can be strongly convinced by energy security measures when it comes to net zero.

But climate change is a low salience issue for Reform voters

Immigration tops the list of reasons for voting Reform UK

You said you voted for Reform UK. What made you vote for that party? Select up to three reasons.



Even if Reform voters are more opposed to climate action than the general public, they are not hugely motivated by the issue at the ballot box - only 4 per cent of Reform voters voted for the party because of their climate policies.

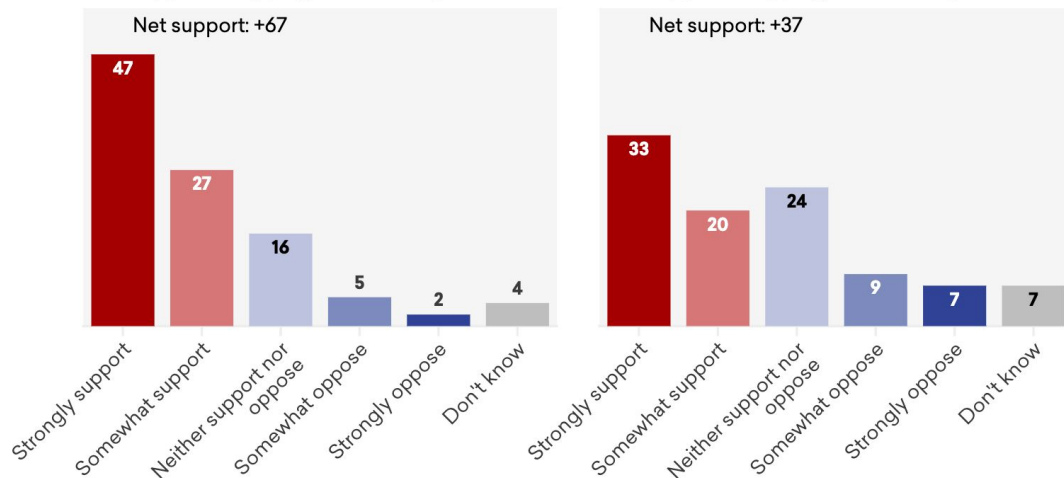
Essentially, Reform voters are a single-issue group - far more concerned about immigration than any other issue, and Conservative failures on immigration were what drove the rise of Reform this election.

Support for scrapping net zero is driven by Farage's personality as a leader...

Reform UK voter's net support for scrapping net zero increases by 30 points when Nigel Farage calls for it

Nigel Farage has called on the UK to end our commitments to net zero policies, saying they will hold back economic growth and put more costs on working people. To what extent do you support scrapping our net zero policies?

Some politicians have called on the UK to end our commitments to net zero policies, saying they will hold back economic growth and put more costs on working people. To what extent do you support scrapping our net zero policies?



Using specific question wording, it is possible to find net support among Reform UK voters for scrapping net zero, but a large part of this support is actually support for Nigel Farage.

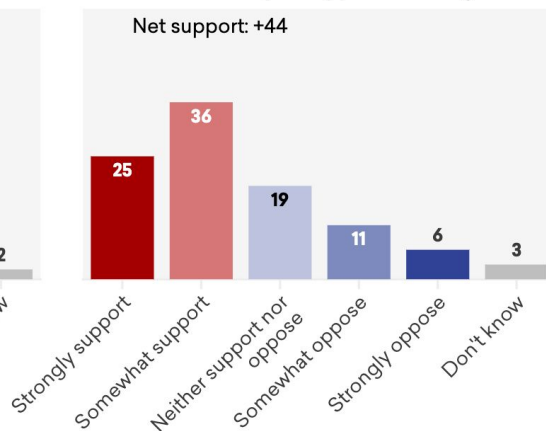
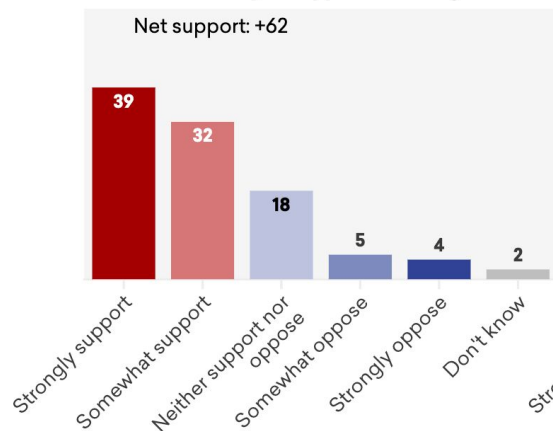
Mentioning that Farage supports scrapping net zero increases support among Reform voters by 30 points.

... Reform voters could back net-zero if Farage supported it

Reform UK voters would be much more likely to support renewable power investment if Nigel Farage supported it too

Nigel Farage has called on the UK to invest much more in the transition to wind and solar power, saying it will decrease our energy bills and make us less reliant on other countries for power. To what extent do you support investing in more...

Some politicians have called on the UK to invest much more in the transition to wind and solar power, saying it will decrease our energy bills and make us less reliant on other countries for power. To what extent do you support investing in more...



It is also possible to make the case to Reform voters that we should invest much more heavily in renewable power.

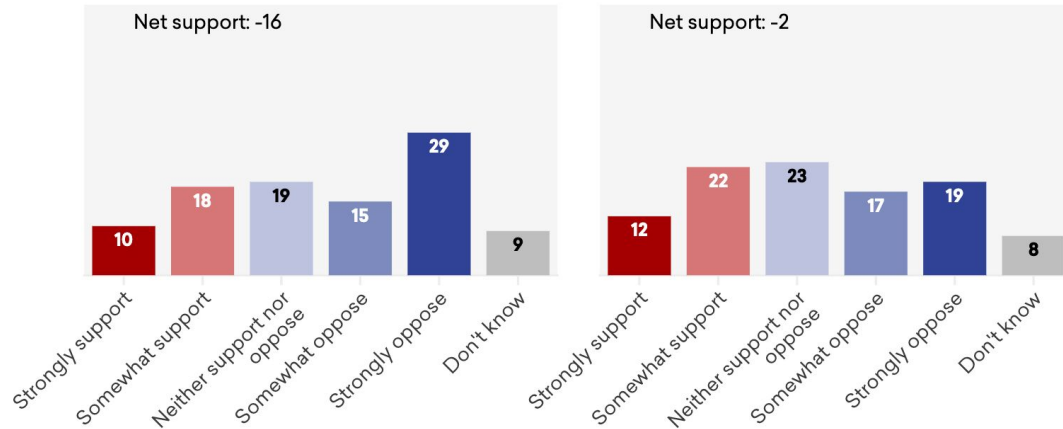
If told that Farage supports investing more in renewables, support for this policy increases by 18 points, suggesting that Farage's appeal as a leader has strong ability to pull Reform voters in any direction.

... although Farage has the opposite effect on the general public

With the wider public, support for scrapping net zero falls if Nigel Farage is not mentioned as someone who endorses it

Nigel Farage has called on the UK to end our commitments to net zero policies, saying they will hold back economic growth and put more costs on working people. To what extent do you support scrapping our net zero policies?

Some politicians have called on the UK to end our commitments to net zero policies, saying they will hold back economic growth and put more costs on working people. To what extent do you support scrapping our net zero policies?



With the general public, the mention of Farage has the opposite effect - opposition to scrapping net zero increases when Farage is mentioned as someone who has proposed that.

In summary

The Conservatives lost the election because they were no longer seen as a competent party of government, and climate reversals did not help that

Labour's GB Energy was a popular policy with voters across the political spectrum - including those less concerned about climate change

The majority of people are worried about climate change in every constituency in the UK - there is no immediate electoral benefit in an anti-climate politics

People have high expectations for the Labour government - particularly in bringing down energy bills

Labour's new voter base is broad, but agree on many of the fundamentals when it comes to climate and energy

The rise of Reform UK was not driven by significant backlash against net zero

Read more at <https://www.moreincommon.org.uk/general-election-2024/>

Ed Hodgson
Research Manager
www.moreincommon.com



More in
Common