

LABOUR TOGETHER

# RED SHIFT

Labour's Path to Power

April 2nd, 2023



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## **ABOUT LABOUR TOGETHER**

In Labour's wilderness years, Labour Together was built by a group of MPs fighting to make the party electable again: Steve Reed, Shabana Mahmood, Lucy Powell, Wes Streeting, Bridget Philipson, Jim McMahon, Jon Cruddas, Lisa Nandy and Rachel Reeves.

In 2020, with Morgan McSweeney as Director, Labour Together united the party behind Sir Keir Starmer's leadership campaign. Since then, Labour has come in from the cold, reconnected with the country, and aligned its priorities with the nation's.

Committed to seeing Labour back in power, Labour Together has now relaunched as a campaigning think tank, putting forward a new vision for Britain under a Keir Starmer administration. To do so, we are exploring Labour's path to power, proposing policies that both equip a Labour government and bring Labour together with the country.

## **FOREWORD**

JOSHUA SIMONS

For my whole adult life, the Labour Party has been out of power. As I studied, started my first job, got married and had kids, I watched successive Conservative leaders win elections despite bungling the activity of government. I watched many in my generation become disillusioned with politicians who promised much and delivered little, who appeared to live in a different era and inhabit a different country.

Instead of being tree-hugging, phone-obsessed, lazy radicals, many in my generation are hungry for a centre-left government with real ambition for our country and the talent to deliver it. We are tired of the Labour Party descending into narcissism, obsessed with its own history, while the country suffers.

We are - I am - tired of losing.

Labour Together is a rare thing on the centre-left: an organisation with a track record of winning. The politicians and strategists who built Labour Together share a simple goal: get Labour back into power. In the wilderness years, they understood that the first step was to win back the Labour Party from Jeremy Corbyn. By uniting Labour behind Keir Starmer, that is exactly what they achieved.

The task now is to win the country. Under my leadership, Labour Together will continue this focus on winning, helping to chart a path to victory in the country. That means shifting our focus away from Labour Party members to the values and attitudes of the voters we need to persuade to trust us with power. That is what this report aims to do.

One of the reasons we must treasure democracy is that it forces a kind of humility on those who seek power. To win an election, you must start by understanding the people whose votes you seek. Sometimes, that means grounding what you do in data and polling. Sometimes it means pausing to listen, even to feel.

Without a clear picture of the coalition you are trying to build, of the hopes and fears that motivate the people within it, you cannot prosecute persuasive arguments or develop effective policies. You must start by being humble about your knowledge of who you must persuade, open to what they have to say and what they want you to do.

That spirit of humility motivates Labour Together's segmentation of the electorate in England and Wales. To help Labour win, we have started by understanding the people whose support we must earn.

**FOREWORD BY JOSHUA SIMONS**

Over the coming months and years, the arguments we make, the ideas we advance, and the policies we develop will all be rigorously tested to speak to the voters we need to win. If they do not, we will not support them.

We hope that you too will gain from this journey through the values and attitudes of your fellow citizens. And we hope this helps all those working tirelessly to put Keir Starmer in 10 Downing Street and secure a Labour government again.



**Joshua Simons**

**Director, Labour Together**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report charts Labour's path to power. A little over three years ago, writing such a report would have been a laughable exercise. At that time, Labour had slumped to its worst defeat in 84 years. An electoral recovery looked, at the very least, like a two-term project. Today, the context is markedly different. Labour is consistently leading the polls by wide margins. While the journey between poll leads and poll booths is long, a Labour victory now looks possible. This report explores how that possibility might be realised.

To do so, it introduces six groups of voters who make up Britain's electorate. We show that two particular groups are critical to Labour's electoral success. To bring them to life, we present them as two characters – one who readers may be familiar with already, and another who is new to the political debate.

The first is the voter who Labour so catastrophically lost in 2019. That year, the centre-right think tank Onward called him 'Workington Man'. Socially conservative but economically interventionist, this long-time Labour supporter turned to Boris Johnson's Conservatives. His vote that year changed Britain's electoral map. Thirty key Labour seats - stretching from the Midlands, through the North West and North East - fell to the Conservatives. Labour's "Red Wall" collapsed. Today, the promises made to Workington Man by the Conservatives are ringing hollow, and the Conservatives' vote has cratered. In 2019, 49 percent voted Conservative. Now, 56 percent say they will vote Labour. Support for the Tories has dropped to 15 percent.

Rebuilding the Red Wall is only part of the challenge that Labour faces, however. In this report, we introduce a second voter, whose support could hand Labour a stable, working majority at the next election.

We call her 'Stevenage Woman'. She, and voters like her, live in towns and suburbs across the country. Young, hard-working, but struggling to get by, she feels that national politics makes little difference to her life and her town. Her attitudes aren't dogmatic, leaning a little towards social conservatism and a little towards a more interventionist state. In some elections she votes and in others she doesn't. But Stevenage Woman, and those like her, are the single biggest group of voters: she, above all others, holds the keys to Downing Street. In 2019, 44 percent backed the Conservatives. Now, that support has collapsed. Just over half (51 percent) now back Labour, more than double those who support the Tories (23 percent).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The old bellwethers are back, and Labour could win them. Since it was first demarcated as its own constituency in 1983, Stevenage has always voted for the governing party: Conservative until 1997, Labour until 2010, then Conservative again ever since. With voters like Stevenage Woman comprising the largest group in 430 of the 573 constituencies in England and Wales, a significant shift from the Conservatives to Labour would change the electoral map completely, amounting to our eponymous “Red Shift”.

This report closes with suggestions on how Labour can win the support of these voters. Doing so demands that Labour continues to speak to the country at large, and not just its most loyal left and liberal voters. That means taking a firm line on societal and cultural issues - like crime and immigration - to address the legitimate concerns that people have. It also means developing an economic platform that makes a tangible difference to people’s jobs and local communities. Perhaps most importantly, it means a politics that eschews grand abstractions and vague promises - of which we have had so many in recent years - and instead focuses on the things that really matter. We end this report by pointing towards a new politics that could do this: a politics grounded in providing ‘security’, in the form of secure work, safe streets, and a strong nation.

This report also relaunches Labour Together. Formerly, our gaze was turned inwards, fighting to make Labour electable again. Now, our focus is outwards, towards the country, the electorate, and the policies that could make Britain better under Labour. Before that, however, something else must come first: a Red Shift.

## INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the Labour Party collapsed to a defeat of catastrophic proportions. Labour's share of the vote fell to 32.1 percent, shedding 2.6 million votes and losing 60 seats. Defying the usual constraints of electoral gravity, the governing Conservative Party increased its share of the vote for a sixth successive election. Labour experienced its worst defeat since 1935.

In 2020, Labour Together published an incisive post-mortem of that election defeat<sup>1</sup>. *Red Shift* is a bookend to that story, charting Labour's path back to power. That such a report can be written, only three years later, is remarkable. Such an act of electoral resuscitation is unheard of: no party has overturned a defeat so great, so quickly, before.

That this is now possible is, to some degree, a reflection of the chaos of the last few years of Conservative rule in which we have seen three Prime Ministers, five Chancellors of the Exchequer, and a carousel of Secretaries of State. It is also an illustration of how significantly the Labour Party has changed since it ejected Jeremy Corbyn and elected Sir Keir Starmer.

In this report, we look at the journey from April 2023 to the next general election, which will be – at the very latest – in December 2024. To do so, we explore the electorate today: who they are, what they think, and how they may vote. We look at the ways in which they are united, and the ways in which they differ. Crucially, we show how Labour can, and must, build an electoral coalition that, after thirteen years in opposition, propels the party to power. This is the story of the Red Shift.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://labourtogether.uk/report/general-election-review-2019>



# PART ONE: The Voters

## Britain's Voters

Too much political analysis is conducted at the level of the average voter. Such analysis is a profound mistake and a gross oversimplification. A person with their head in the oven and their feet in the freezer is, on average, at a perfectly pleasant temperature. That does not make theirs an example to follow. To evaluate the electorate in its entirety, you must first explore the different groups within it. This is the only way to explore the true variety of views and values that exist across our nation, and so understand the characteristics of the coalition we must build to win.

In 2023, in partnership with YouGov, Labour Together developed a segmentation of all voters in England and Wales. This segmentation explores where we are united, and how we are divided, by our views of the world. Such an approach also ensures a degree of durability. While our circumstances or voting behaviour may change rapidly, our values evolve at a more glacial pace. A segmentation defined by values holds true even in a world as volatile as ours.

Two axes inform our analysis: voters' attitudes to societal and economic issues. On societal issues, we evaluated whether voters have attitudes that tend towards 'conservatism', with a bias towards tradition, or towards 'liberalism', preferring to promote individual freedom. On economic issues, we divided voters whose attitudes are to the 'left', desiring a more active state, or to the 'right', preferring a less regulated free market.

The approach produced a segmentation that included six groups of voters, united by their values, displayed in *Figure A*. By further analysing who those voters are – by their age, geography, income, education, and other demographic characteristics – we could complete the picture.

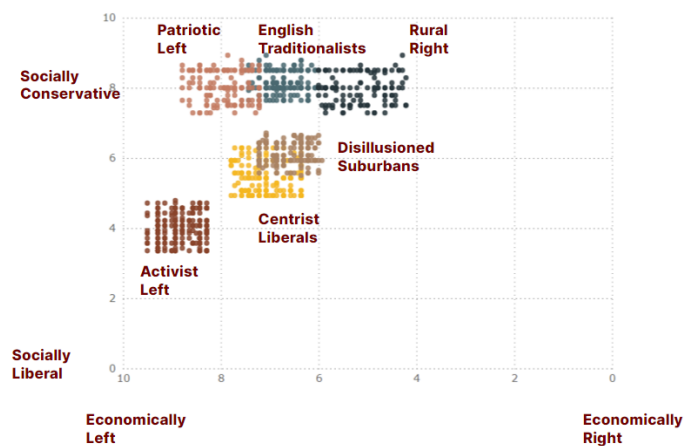


Figure A - Voter segmentation by attitude

## 1. The Activist Left

### Who They Are

The Activist Left are one of our youngest segments: a large majority have a university degree, and they are the most likely to be in full-time work. Concentrated in cities and university towns, many live in safe Labour seats or in Conservative and Liberal Democrat marginals. They tend to have above average incomes, and they are the most likely group to be renters or mortgage-payers (rather than owning their home outright). They represent 18.3 percent of the electorate in England & Wales.

### What They Think

The Activist Left are the most economically left-wing and socially liberal of our segments. On social issues, they favour increased migration, are the most likely to see tackling climate change as a personal responsibility and are the most likely to be embarrassed by Britain's past. On economic issues, they think Britain is unequal, enthusiastically back redistribution, and are profoundly distrustful of business. More politically engaged than any other group, they are the most likely to consume their news on social media.

### How They Vote

No segment more vehemently opposed Brexit in the referendum of 2016 with nine in ten (89 percent) backing Remain. In 2019, the Activist Left were the only group to back Labour over the Conservatives: 70 percent voted Labour, while 5 percent voted Conservative. Under Keir Starmer's leadership, Labour's lead has grown dramatically amongst even this group, now up 5 points to 75 percent. (This is a notable rebuttal to the view that those on the left prefer Labour's previous to its current leadership.) Of all our segments, the Activist Left are also the firmest in their decisions; just 7 percent say that they are currently unsure as to how they will vote.

## 2. Centrist Liberals

### Who They Are

Centrist Liberals are evenly spread across all age groups, though they are slightly more likely to be women than men. They tend to have university degrees and the highest household income of any segment, and are the least concerned about the cost-of-living. Spread primarily across London and the South, they are more likely to live in Conservative-Lib Dem marginal seats than in Conservative-Labour battlegrounds. They represent 16.5 percent of the electorate in England and Wales.

### What They Think

Centrist Liberals sit on the centre-left on economics and are liberal on social issues, though less so than the Activist Left. On societal issues, they believe that more must be done to improve inequality between sexes, although they are divided on the same question when applied to sexuality and race. They are concerned about climate change but don't tend to believe it should be prioritised over economic growth. On the economy, they are in favour of greater redistribution of wealth, but they are less willing to compromise a growth agenda to pursue this.

### How They Vote

Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Centrist Liberals backed Remain in the Brexit Referendum. At the 2019 election, they abandoned Labour, who fell one point behind the Conservatives to 36 percent. At 19 percent, they represented the highest Liberal Democrat vote of all our segments. Today, the 2019 Conservative vote has collapsed to 20 percent. The Liberal Democrat vote has also fallen to 16 percent and Labour's share has grown to more than half of the group (54 percent). Just over a fifth (22 percent) of all Centrist Liberals have yet to decide who they will vote for.

### 3. Disillusioned Suburbans

#### Who They Are

Disillusioned Suburbans are the largest of our segments, particularly well represented in the East of England, in London's suburbs, and in the North East and West. They are young, economically insecure, worried about their finances, and unlikely to own their own home. They are mostly women and, while 75 percent are White British, they have the highest ethnic minority representation. They represent 21.8 percent of the electorate in England and Wales.

#### What They Think

Disillusioned Suburbans are not highly politicised and tend to take a balanced position on most issues, which sees them leaning towards conservatism on societal issues and towards the left on the economy. On social issues, they are positive about migration's impact on society, though they don't want to increase the number of immigrants. They believe in addressing climate change, but don't want to harm the economy in the process. On the economy, they are supportive of redistribution and feel that people don't get their fair share, but want policies that are rooted in their everyday experience, not grand promises and abstract ideals.

#### How They Vote

Disillusioned Suburbans are the least politically engaged of our segments, with 40 percent not voting in the Brexit referendum. However, given their number, wide geographical spread, and presence in key marginals, their votes are extremely influential. In 2019, they backed the Conservatives by 44 percent to Labour's 35 percent. Now they back Labour by a wide margin: 51 percent to 23 percent. Of the total share of possible Disillusioned Suburban voters, 28 percent are yet to decide who they will vote for.

## 4. The Patriotic Left

### Who They Are

The Patriotic Left are an older voter, most highly represented in the West Midlands, Yorkshire, the North West and Wales. They are particularly prevalent in the seats branded the “Red Wall” at the 2019 election. They tend to not be university educated and they are the most likely segment to not be in work. They have the lowest income of all the segments and are the most likely group to be renting their home from the council or a housing association. They represent 15 percent of the electorate in England and Wales.

### What They Think

The Patriotic Left are Labour’s old core vote in industrial towns, whose attitudes to social issues are conservative, while their economic attitudes are firmly to the left. On social issues, they are profoundly patriotic, negative about the impact of migration on the country and want to reduce it, and likely to believe that efforts towards greater social equality have gone too far. On the economy, they are interventionist: they distrust businesses and favour nationalisation, they want greater investment in public services and they want to redistribute the nation’s wealth.

### How They Vote

The Patriotic Left backed Brexit by a wide margin, with around three quarters (74 percent) voting Leave. In 2019 they abandoned Labour with 49 percent voting Conservative to Labour’s 34 percent. Now they are backing Labour once more. Labour is polling 56 percent amongst this group, while the Conservative vote has collapsed to 15 percent. Nearly a quarter of these voters (24 percent) are yet to decide who they will vote for.

## 5. English Traditionalists

### Who They Are

English Traditionalists are the oldest of our segments, with most of the segment from the 'boomer' generation. They are, unsurprisingly, the most likely to be retired. Alongside the Patriotic Left, they are the least likely to be university educated. But they are less likely to be economically insecure and they are more likely to own their own home. They represent 17.8 percent of the electorate in England & Wales.

### What They Think

English Traditionalists are forthright social conservatives. They favour stiffer sentences for criminals and believe in censorship to uphold moral values. They are trenchant on immigration, believing it has had a negative effect on Britain's economy, society and life in general. On the economy, they are somewhat in the centre: they think businesses take advantage of ordinary people, but they are split on whether the government should redistribute wealth.

### How They Vote

English Traditionalists tend to be consistent Conservative voters. Eight in ten (81 percent) backed Brexit, and 77 percent voted Conservative in 2019. Now, that figure has fallen to 50 percent, and Labour's vote has doubled from 12 percent in 2019 to 24 percent today. In total, 31 percent of these voters - the largest share of any segment - are unsure of who they will vote for.

## 6. The Rural Right

### Who They Are

The Rural Right are older voters, a third of whom are retired. They live primarily in rural areas across England, particularly in the North East, South East, and Yorkshire and the Humber. Over a third of them are retired and they are economically secure, likely to own their own home outright. Our smallest segment, they represent 10.6 percent of the electorate in England & Wales.

### What They Think

The Rural Right are firmly conservative on social issues and to the economic right. On social issues, they believe that efforts to promote equality have gone too far. On economics, they oppose redistribution of wealth and believe that working people already receive a fair share. They want the government to reduce funding for public services and they think the UK should privatise as many industries as possible. One of the most financially secure of our segments, they expect the economy to improve in the year ahead.

### How They Vote

The Rural Right are the Conservatives' most loyal supporters. Of all our segments, they had the highest Brexit vote (85 percent) and the highest Conservative 2019 vote (85 percent again). The Conservatives still retain a comfortable lead in this group, though polling at a much reduced 55 percent share of the vote, with 28 percent now saying they will vote Reform instead of Conservative. Just under a fifth (18 percent) are yet to decide who to vote for.

## Voter Flows

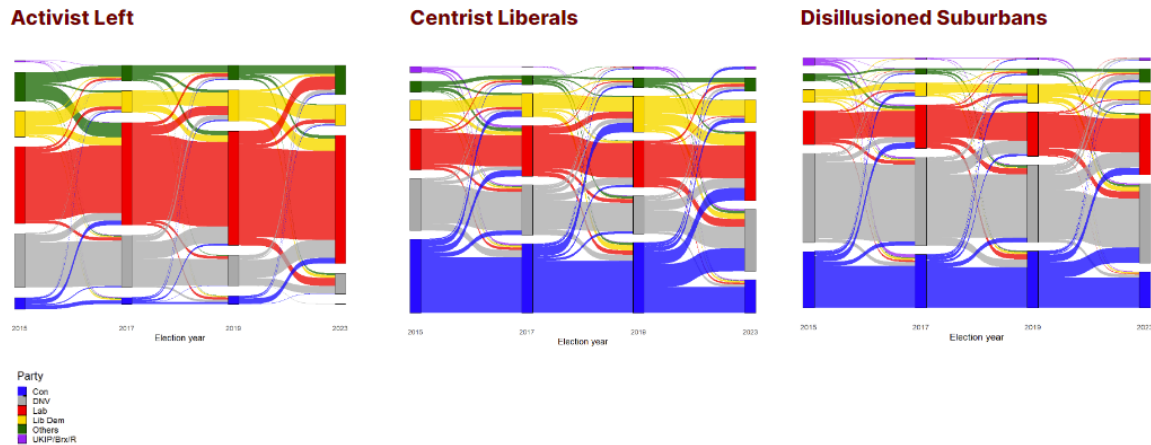


Figure B - Changing voter behaviour in three segments

Figures B and C illustrate the flow of votes between 2015 and 2023.<sup>2</sup>

The **Activist Left** are Labour’s most consistent supporters, backing Labour by wide margins at every election. Since 2019, there has been a considerable move towards Labour from those who did not vote in 2019 and those who voted Liberal Democrat, which outweighs a small shift towards the Greens.

The **Centrist Liberals** have historically been split three ways, between the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats. Since 2019, the Conservative vote has disintegrated, with some moving to Labour and others now unsure of their vote. Labour support has increased dramatically, with gains from the Liberal Democrats as well as the Conservatives.

The **Disillusioned Suburban** vote has always had a high share of those who do not vote (though, even with these excluded, the total number of voters still outweighs every other group). Historically they have been split between the Conservatives and Labour, with the Conservatives polling a greater share at each election since 2015. Now Labour leads as Conservative support moves in part to Labour, and mostly to undecided. Labour is also gathering support from those who did not vote in 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Due to a methodology which must account for new voters entering the electorate after 2015, they give an accurate representation of how voting behaviour has changed (the ‘flow’ of votes), but not a perfect representation of the actual proportion of votes at the election.



PART ONE: The Voters



Figure C - Changing voter behaviour in three further segments

Labour’s **Patriotic Left** vote eroded dramatically in 2019, with many Labour voters staying away from the polls and some voting Conservative. This Conservative support now appears short-lived, as former Tory voters are undecided, either choosing to stay away or moving back to Labour.

The **English Traditionalists** have always been strong Conservative supporters, with a huge share of the vote in 2019. Now that support is crumbling, with a large share unsure of if or who to vote for, a portion moving to Reform, and some backing Labour.

The **Rural Right** are the Conservative Party’s most loyal supporters. However, since 2019, even their support has shifted away from the Tories. Two large movements are evident: one towards Reform, and another to those who are unsure of their vote.

### The Red Shift

In the three years running up to 2019, it seemed like Britain could scarcely agree on anything. At the election that year, that stasis was broken. A nation exhausted by Brexit negotiations voted to “Get Brexit Done” with the promise of Boris Johnson’s “Oven Ready Brexit” ringing in their ears. Perhaps the greatest unifying factor, however, was that, across the country, the vast majority of British people agreed on one thing: that Jeremy Corbyn could, should and would never be their Prime Minister. The Conservatives’ electoral coalition was vast and disparate. Of the six voter segments set out in the section above, occupying a wide variety of views on economic and social issues, Labour only won amongst the Activist Left.

Just over three years after that devastating defeat, Labour’s recovery is little short of extraordinary. Today it has increased its vote within every segment, and now leads in all bar the Conservative’s two most loyal supporters: the English Traditionalists and the Rural Right. Even in these two groups, the Conservative vote has eroded dramatically.

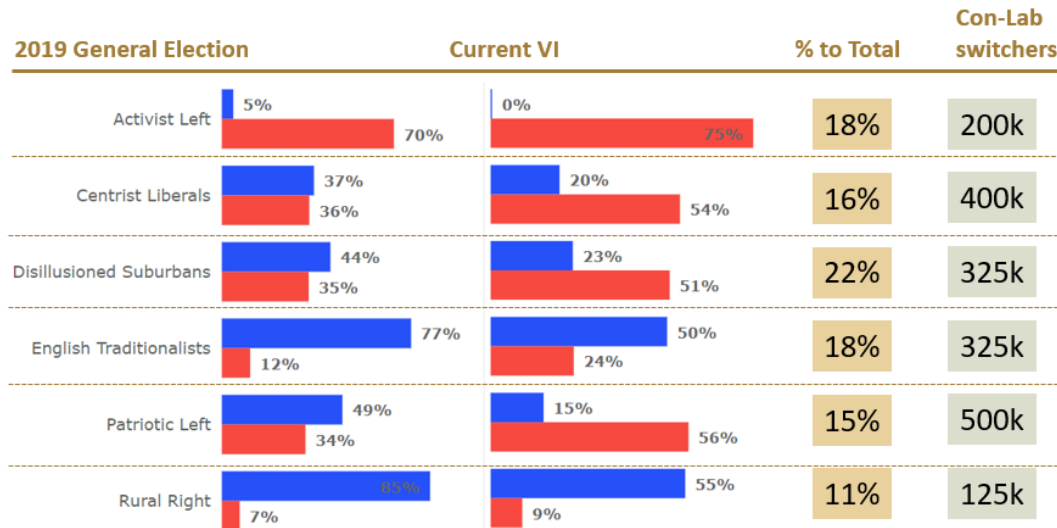


Figure D - 2019 votes and 2023 voting intention by segment

PART ONE: The Voters

In *Figure E*, we illustrate the recent reversal in Labour’s fortunes. The dotted line on the left-hand-side indicates Labour’s position in 2019, when they led only amongst one of our six segments. The dotted line to the right illustrates Labour’s polling position now, leading amongst four segments. The gap between the two is this report’s eponymous “Red Shift”. Many assumed that such a shift would take multiple electoral cycles. Instead, current polling indicates that it could occur in less than one. Labour’s challenge now is to defend, strengthen, and deepen its lead.

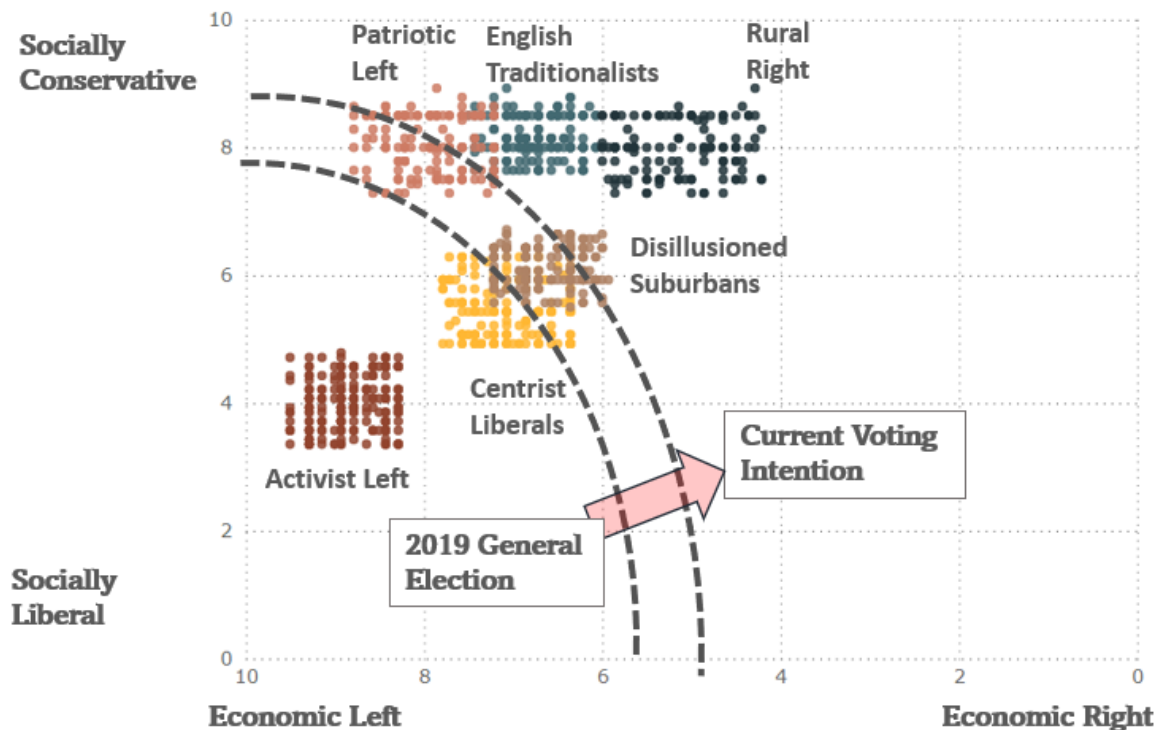


Figure E - The Red Shift

## The Critical Segments

When mapping the Red Shift across constituencies and examining the path to a parliamentary majority<sup>3</sup>, a rule of thumb emerges. Whichever party wins four of the six segments set out in this report wins the next election with a comfortable majority.<sup>4</sup>

Today, the Labour Party has the support of four of our six segments: the Activist Left, Centrist Liberals, Disillusioned Suburbans and the Patriotic Left. Labour's path to power depends on ensuring that this support in the polls turns into votes on polling day come 2024.

For the Conservatives, the challenge is greater. Today, they lead only amongst English Traditionalists and the Rural Right, with reduced majorities amongst both groups. Their task is to solidify this core vote and win back two additional segments.

To determine which are the battleground segments one must ask two questions. Firstly, how many voters belong to each segment? Secondly, and more importantly, where do they live?

By these measures, the **Patriotic Left** are an immediate and critical priority for both parties. They already represent the largest number of voters who have switched from the Conservatives to Labour (500,000). Our polling showed that, with 24 percent of those who intend to vote still unsure of who to vote for, they remain a contested group. They are also densely populated in many of the seats that matter most. Located disproportionately in the seats often described as the "Red Wall" (stretching from the Midlands, through the North West and out to the North East), the loss of 30 of these seats cost Labour dearly in 2019. Labour cannot win the next election unless it rebuilds its Red Wall.

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<sup>3</sup> Using a research methodology called "multilevel regression with poststratification", usually referred to as an "MRP"

<sup>4</sup> This was a consistent outcome across a range of scenarios Labour Together assessed. Conservatively, we assumed that in all segments there is a reduction in the dramatic improvement in voting intention we have seen since 2019, but that this is sharper in segments that are more plausible parts of a Tory coalition. So the Rural Right and English Traditionalists revert more quickly towards 2019 voting behaviour than the Activist Left and Centrist Liberals. In our MRP, we found that if both of the Patriotic Left and the Disillusioned Suburbans revert sharply towards 2019 behaviour, the Conservatives would win a majority. If we maintain most of the swing in these groups, Labour would win a comfortable majority; and if we only maintain the swing in one the election will be very tight.

**PART ONE: The Voters**

A second group, however, is even more important to Labour at the next election. A working majority depends on Labour's ability to convert their current support amongst **Disillusioned Suburbans** into votes at an election. Representing 22 percent of the electorate, they are the largest single group of voters and they are widely distributed across the country. Our research shows that, in 430 of the 573 seats across England and Wales, Disillusioned Suburbans are the largest group. Of the 42 Red Wall seats, they are the largest group in 34. In the 71 Conservative/Labour marginals that sit outside the Red Wall, they are the largest group in 63. Even accounting for the relatively low turnout in this group, their votes carry considerable weight. If the support Labour currently receives from this group were mirrored on election day, Labour would win back every one of its 30 lost Red Wall seats, and every one of the top 100 Conservative/Labour marginals in England and Wales.

Of the three segments who supported the Conservatives in 2019 but now back Labour, the Centrist Liberals are of less importance. This is primarily a question of where these voters live. Centrist Liberals are highly represented in London and the South, and less so across the rest of the country. They are a much less significant voting force in the top-100 Conservative/Labour marginals (and are, instead, far more influential in Conservative/Liberal Democrat ones). They are also not particularly competitive, having switched in large numbers to Labour already. This means that, while the Centrist Liberals have added a significant number of new Labour voters already (400,000), they should not be a focus for a Labour Party trying to win majorities in key seats across the country.

**PART ONE:** The Voters

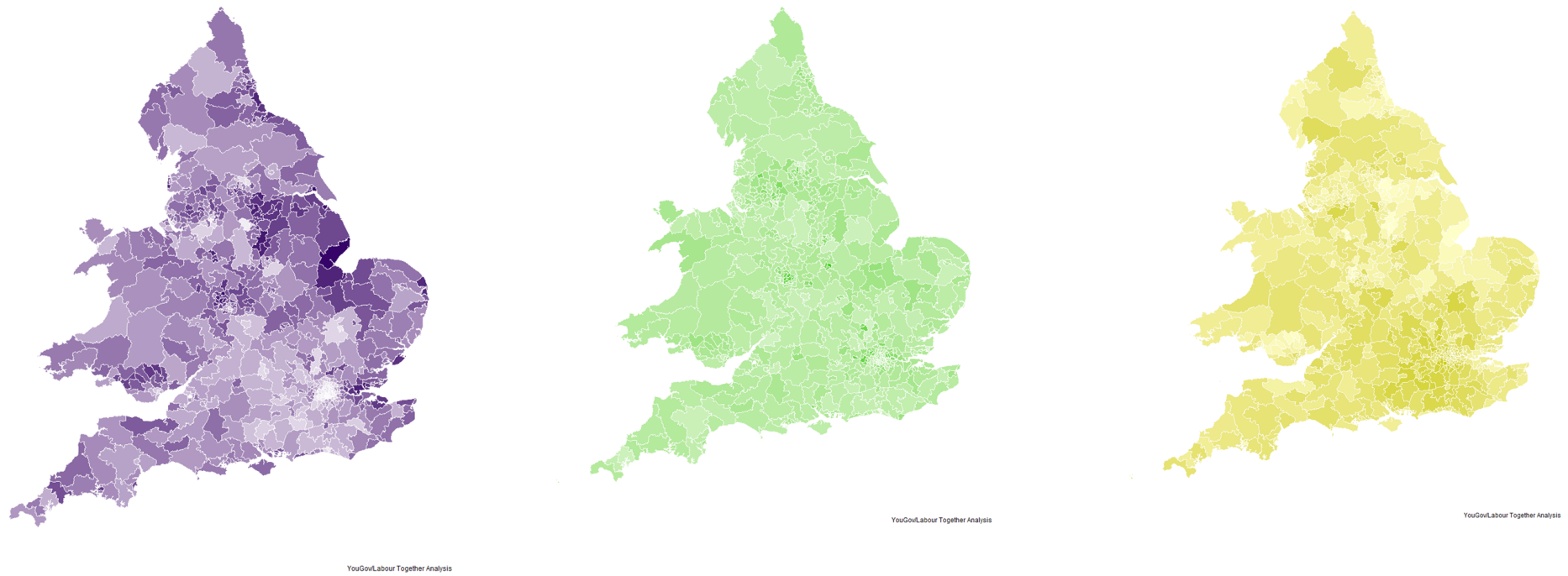


Figure F - Voter segments by constituency (left to right: Patriotic Left, Disillusioned Suburbans, Centrist Liberals)

## A Portrait of Our Voters

If Labour is to win the next election, it is vital that it understands these two segments more. To do so, it helps to picture them not as a group, but as an individual who evokes the whole. The purpose is less to describe the average voter within a group and more to identify what is politically, socially, and economically distinctive about them.

In 2019, the centre-right think tank Onward did this for the Red Wall voter who they said would determine the outcome of the next election. They called him **Workington Man**, placing him in the eponymous former industrial town in Cumbria, situated at the mouth of the Derwent, looking out across the Irish Sea.

A social conservative, who leans to the left on the economy, he is a proud patriot, voted Brexit in 2016, but had - until 2019 - been a consistent Labour voter. The choice of Workington was fitting. Between 1918 and 2019, it returned a Labour MP for all bar a three-year hiatus (1976-9). Onward predicted that, if Workington Man could be swung to the Conservatives, seats like Workington would fall, Labour's Red Wall would collapse, and the Conservatives would win. So it proved. In 2019, Workington returned a Conservative MP by a margin of over 4,000 votes, and the Red Wall crumbled, giving Boris Johnson his majority.

Our analysis finds that Workington Man still matters, representing our Patriotic Left segment: socially conservative, profoundly patriotic, economically interventionist. As such, his vote is critically important to the next general election. If Labour cannot win back the support of Workington Man, victory is near impossible.

In this paper, however, we suggest that there is a second archetype who will determine the next election. Representing the Disillusioned Suburban voter, we call her **Stevenage Woman**. In the aftermath of the 2019 election, many said that Labour's great failure was to forget Workington Man, and others like him, taking his support and vote for granted. If that was true of him, it is true of voters in towns like Stevenage too, for whom Westminster politics has delivered too little, for too long.

**PART ONE: The Voters**

Her story begins with her town. As a political entity, Stevenage has moved with the currents of the time. First becoming its own constituency in 1983, it voted for Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives in the year of her post-Falklands victory. For fourteen years, Stevenage continued to return a Conservative MP, but moved with the country in 1997, contributing to Tony Blair's landslide. Uninterrupted, Stevenage voted Labour until 2010, with diminishing majorities. Once again, in 2010, Stevenage moved with the country, returning a Conservative who still sits for the town today. Forty years after the seat was first created, it has always been represented by the governing party.

While Stevenage can trace its long history to the Anglo-Saxons, its modern incarnation owes more to the world of post-war Britain. The first of the "New Towns" prescribed by the Act of 1946, Stevenage swelled significantly to house escapees from poor and bombed-out London housing.

Our Stevenage Woman's parents would have arrived soon after, as children, amongst a flood of new arrivals in the 1950s and 60s. Stevenage Woman herself would have grown up there in the 1980s, as Thatcher's boom hit London and towns like Workington fell into the deep depression they have never recovered from. Stevenage itself caught a bit of both London's boom and the industrial bust.

Today, the town is a little wealthier than the average for the nation,<sup>5</sup> but child poverty is rising, with 15.5 percent of children now living in relative poverty, three percentage points higher than just six years earlier.<sup>6</sup>

While Stevenage Woman doesn't live in poverty, she certainly isn't finding life easy and she's worried about her household finances. She is a mum in her early 40s, bringing up her two kids. Her and her husband's salaries, though close to the national average, are consumed by rising bills and a newly stinging mortgage payment. More concerned with the travails of everyday life, she is not politically engaged. In some elections, she'll vote, and sometimes she won't. Stevenage Woman, like so many across the country, feels distant from the political class, whose promises so rarely seem to affect her life. To be persuaded to vote, she has to really believe that a politician will benefit her and her family.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-dashboard/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-child-poverty/>



**PART ONE: The Voters**

Her attitudes are not dogmatic. She's comfortable with immigration and thinks immigrants have benefitted Britain economically and culturally. But that doesn't mean she supports open borders. She's proud of Britain's past, and worries that kids these days don't respect British values. On the economy, she does think a bit of economic redistribution could benefit people like her, but not a lot. She favours a little more public spending, but she doesn't want her taxes to increase.

Stevenage Woman is, all in all, a balancer. She's not seeking radical or dramatic change, but she is worried about her life today, the state of public services, and life in her town. She did vote Conservative in 2019, but she's leaning towards Labour now. But for her, as for so many others, the question she is asking is: what difference will it make to her family and her town?

## **PART TWO:**

# The Election

### **An Election Tomorrow**

In December 2024, if not before, the Conservative government will be forced to call a general election. Were that election to be called today, Labour would enter the campaign in a position of considerable strength. According to our polling, conducted for this report in early February 2023, Labour holds a 25 point lead over the Conservatives, polling at 49 percent.

On the two indicators that are most often cited as being predictive of electoral success - the leader's personal ratings and the party's economic credibility - Labour leads comfortably<sup>7</sup>. While more recent polling has shown an increase in the Prime Minister's personal ratings, they still show a consistent and considerable lead for Keir Starmer. On the economy, according to our polling, Labour leads the Conservatives by a margin of 18 points.

The reversal in the Conservative Party's fortunes has been extreme. In 2019, 43.6 percent of voters chose Boris Johnson's Conservatives, the largest share of the popular vote since 1979. A little over three years later, the Conservatives are polling at 24 percent. To put that in some historical context, the Liberal Democrats placed third in the 2010 General Election with only one point less. In this report, we have described Labour's journey to victory as a "path" that must be followed. For the Conservatives, it looks more like a mountain to be climbed.

Any application of a poll lead so far from an election to the makeup of the House of Commons should be treated with considerable caution. That is why we have refrained from using our data and analysis to grab headlines with seat projections. Doing so produces a Labour majority of such vast proportions that it goes far beyond what is credible. However, the broader message is clear: as things stand, Labour is a long way ahead of the Conservatives.

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<sup>7</sup> See appendices J-K

## If Things Change

As the old adage has it: a week is a long time in politics. By that measure, 21 months is a lifetime. When looking to that future, there is a good chance Labour's poll lead will tighten, not least because the past dictates this tends to be so. It is often forgotten, for instance, that Labour held a considerable polling lead (albeit less than the current lead) over the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition at the start of 2013, but went on to a clear defeat in 2015.

However, our research should temper the more upbeat estimations of the Conservatives' political position at this moment. As some have pointed out, a considerable share of the electorate - currently 31 percent - say they are unsure of if, or who, they will vote for. Many of these unknowns are former 2019 Conservative voters. Should these voters return to the Conservatives, the balance could shift away from Labour. Even if all of these 'unknowns' return to the Conservative fold, however, our polling shows that Labour would retain a lead of 9 points - enough to secure a majority Labour government.

Instead of offering an armchair prediction about how large chunks of voters could move over the coming months, the best way of thinking about the outcome of the next election is to ask a simple question of Labour Together's segments, set out earlier in this report: whichever party commands the support of four of six segments, wins the election.

The Conservatives look likely to lead amongst their two core constituencies - the Rural Right and the English Traditionalists - although it matters what proportion of those groups turn out to vote, and so does the sizable support for Reform amongst both. The question is therefore: who wins the Patriotic Left and the Disillusioned Suburbans? Or, in other words: who wins Workington Man and Stevenage Woman? Currently, Labour's lead amongst both is strong. The question for the Conservatives is whether they can reverse it.

## Cause for Caution

This report is not an argument for complacency or optimism. However large Labour's poll lead may appear today, the path between polling leads and polling booths is long. And there is cause for caution, of which two points are particularly important.

The first is that the British electorate is more volatile than ever. There was a time when people voted for one party, usually due to a deep cultural or class attachment, and rarely changed their vote. Entire families were "Labour people" or "Tory people", and swing voters, who oscillated between the two, were relatively rare. Today, that is not true. The number who consistently vote for the same party across elections has fallen, as illustrated in *Figures B and C* earlier in this report.

This is particularly true of the two target voter groups. No other groups have so quickly or so often changed their political colours over the course of the past eight years. They are also amongst the most undecided. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of Patriotic Left voters are currently unsure of how they will cast their vote. The Disillusioned Suburbans are less certain still, with 28 percent undecided. Even of those who say they will vote Labour, a quarter (25 percent) are not entirely certain that they will indeed do so (the highest of any group).

The second cause for caution is that the voters who have turned most enthusiastically to Labour in recent years have been those who are most economically insecure. In our polling, 40 percent of voters in both groups reported that they could not pay an unexpected £300 bill out of their current or savings account. Twenty percent of the Patriotic Left and 19 percent of Disillusioned Suburbans would still not be able to pay this bill, even if they were to sell something or borrow money.

This economic insecurity creates an important dynamic. No other voters will be feeling the cost-of-living crisis more acutely than these, and this drives them towards Labour. As illustrated in *Figure G*, the more economically insecure a voter is the more likely they are to support Labour. This is true for all voters, but it is particularly true for these two groups.

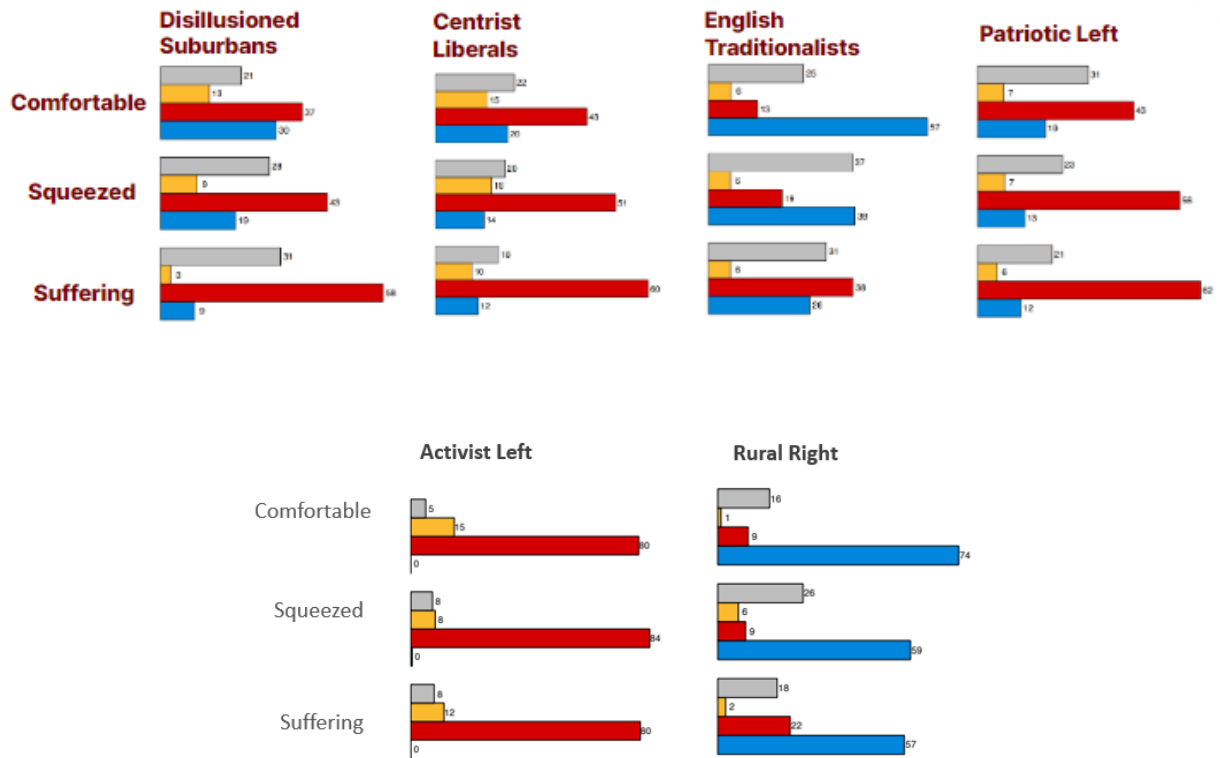


Figure G - Impact of economic insecurity on voting intention

While this might place Labour at an immediate advantage, it suggests that a shift in the economic weather could change these voters' behaviour. If a declining economy pushes them towards Labour, a suddenly resurgent one may have the opposite effect, leading them back to the Conservatives.

The two key segments identified in this report may favour Labour by considerable margins today, but no polling lead can be taken for granted. Elections are won at the ballot box on polling day, not in a poll 21 months before the ballots are printed. If the Labour Party is to win the next election, there is work still to be done.

## PART THREE:

### Lessons for Labour

A Red Shift amongst the two key voters - Workington Man and Stevenage Woman - would win Labour the next election. The polls suggest that one *could* happen, but the question now is how Labour ensures that one does. To do so, we think there are two areas for Labour to focus on.

#### 1. Labour must hold its line on social and cultural issues

The majority of voters in the UK are socially conservative. This is particularly true of the Patriotic Left, but also of the Disillusioned Suburbans, who are more socially conservative than Labour's 2019 voters. These voters believe that we should not increase immigration numbers. They believe Britain should be proud of its past. They believe that young people do not respect British values. They believe that certain places should be made safe by restricting entry by biological sex.

This is a particularly important lesson for Labour, because the vast majority of the voters that Britain needs to win are more socially conservative than Labour members, politicians, and activists. The one group within this segmentation who backed Labour in 2019 was the Activist Left. They are the segment most out of kilter with the rest of the UK electorate on social and cultural issues. Three quarters think we should increase levels of immigration. Just 20 percent of Disillusioned Suburbans and 2 percent of the Patriotic Left agree. They are ambivalent about Britain's past. Our two target voters, Workington Man and Stevenage Woman, are proud. They think prisons should exist to rehabilitate offenders. Our target voters think prisons should, primarily, punish criminals.

Since 2020, the Labour Party has significantly changed its course on social and cultural issues. With a former Director of Public Prosecutions at the helm, Labour is tough on crime, once more, and it believes in exerting a firm grip over migration. It supports robust military support for Ukraine against Russian aggression, is comfortable with the Union Jack, and sings the national anthem at its conference.

To say all this is not to say that Labour must be drawn to extremes. The Conservative Party will likely make social and cultural issues the cornerstone of their election campaign. But Labour should take positions which acknowledge that concerns about social and cultural issues are legitimate, that Labour will not fudge or waver on them, and that there is almost always a balanced and principled position to be taken. You must be tough on crime, not just its causes. You must control Britain's borders, not just create a safe route for immigrants. You must address inequalities that are geographic and class-based, not just those that are based on protected characteristics.

Some fear that taking positions like these might imperil the Labour Party's core support. We found no electoral case whatsoever that this is a concern that should worry the Labour Party. But more importantly, Labour's support among the two most liberal segments on social and cultural issues - the Activist Left and the Centrist Liberals - is 5 and 18 points higher respectively than in the 2019 election. Keir Starmer is winning more of Britain's most left-wing voters than Jeremy Corbyn ever did.

## **2. A bold economic programme focused on economic security could bind our coalition**

Our segmentation suggests that the majority of the electorate leans to the left on the economy. Specifically, a majority or plurality of voters in five out of six segments (all bar the Rural Right) think working people do not receive a fair share of the spoils of their labour. A plurality believe the government should redistribute wealth to make the country more equal. In every single segment, even amongst the Rural Right, a majority of voters distrust business.

While both of our target segments, the Disillusioned Suburbans (Stevenage Woman) and the Patriotic Left (Workington Man), lean towards the left on the economy, they do so to different degrees. While 42 percent of Disillusioned Suburbans want more redistribution and just 15 percent want less, they don't support an extreme change in the economic settlement, with 44 percent favouring the status quo. The Patriotic Left are far more trenchant: 77 percent want more redistribution, 18 percent favour the status quo, and just 5 percent want less. On other issues, they are more divided. Nearly half (47 percent) of the Patriotic Left want to nationalise a swathe of industries. Just 7 percent of Disillusioned Suburbans agree.

**PART THREE: Lessons for Labour**

This creates a delicate balancing act. While voters may want the government to become more interventionist, they tend to be divided on how far they want to hand the government the tools to do so. The question of funding, be that through taxation or borrowing, is therefore one that requires careful consideration (and will be the subject of future Labour Together publications). The good news is that a majority of switchers to Labour since 2019 trust Labour and Keir with the economy – but that trust must be maintained and expanded.

Even more than economic values, what unites our target segments is their high level of economic insecurity. They are the only segments where 40 percent would not be able to fund an emergency £300 expenditure through liquid savings. And within these segments, those who have switched to voting Labour are even more economically insecure: 63 percent of Disillusioned Suburbans and 72 percent of the Patriotic Left are worried about the future of their household finances.

We believe there is a clear and bold package that could hit the right notes for our target voters and provide the economic transformation the country needs. The challenge is that this offer must be described in terms that appeal to two groups of voters who are sceptical of abstract promises that have no bearing on their ordinary experience of economic insecurity. One way of making this tangible is by drawing inspiration from the plans for economic investment that are being introduced around the world, most notably the US “Inflation Reduction Act”, but adapting for a UK context. A British “Bills Reduction Act”, for instance, might have strong appeal to both our target segments.

**Specific promises, not abstract ideals**

Ensuring that Labour’s policies resonate with voters is vital. Disenchantment with the political class runs through every one of our segments. Every big and abstract promise has been made to them a thousand times before, whether that’s a “levelled up” country, or the promise of “control” over their lives. If politics is going to engage voters today, it must be rooted firmly in the reality of their lives. If there was ever a time when Britain was stirred by abstract ideals, then it is not this one. When the difficulty of day-to-day life feels so real, it is a time for specifics and not abstractions. Political promises that engage voters now are those that relate directly to them: to jobs near them, to better local schools and hospitals, to clean parks and safe streets. The impact of politics must be felt far beyond Westminster. It must make a difference in every home, on every street, and in every town.



## **PART FOUR:**

### **The Politics of Security**

Thus far, this report has been rooted in a relatively short time horizon: looking to the end of 2024, at the very latest, and no further. In the final section, we lift our gaze and ask: what do Britain's voters today tell us about where British politics will be located, not just tomorrow, but in the years to come.

#### **An Age of Insecurity**

Like a surfer catching a wave the moment before it crests, the great political movements must be just ahead of the wave of public sentiment. A little too soon, or a little too late, and the moment is lost.

In the 1930s, Winston Churchill saw that the British people could rise to the challenge of war. By 1945, Attlee, and not Churchill, understood the under-current that now called for a government that would “win the peace”. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher felt the malaise of a nation that had languished for a decade as “the sick man of Europe”, which she channelled into the bold new economics of Thatcherism. In 1997, New Labour channelled the optimism of Britain on the cusp of a new millennium. And in 2016 and 2019, the Leave campaign and then Boris Johnson gave voice to a profound sense of disconnection that had long been ignored.

If Labour is to overturn its worst defeat since 1935 within a single term, it must also anticipate, and then respond to, the prevailing national mood. To look at Britain today is to see a country experiencing a profound sense of insecurity. This begins at home, with the economic insecurity felt in so many families' finances. But it extends beyond our doors too, onto unsafe streets and a nation that seems unable to rise to the great challenges of our age.

Britain today lives in a new age of insecurity. To understand life in Britain, you must first understand the insecurity that it suffers in its three forms: economic, social and national.

## Economic Insecurity

The story begins with Britain's economic insecurity. Our economy is stagnating, with the lowest growth of any wealthy country. Business investment is persistently low and productivity has stalled for over a decade. All of this has filtered down to the finances of workers themselves. According to one recent estimate, fifteen years of wage stagnation means the average family now earns £11,000 less each year than they would otherwise have done.<sup>8</sup>

For many years, these persistently low wages simply meant that people weren't getting any richer. The precipitous rise in inflation that Britain has since experienced has now changed that. With prices rising at the fastest rates in forty years, people are now, very rapidly, feeling considerably poorer.

Speaking to voters today, their financial insecurity is immediately apparent. According to our polling, three in every five Britons have had to cut their spending to get by. If confronted by an unexpected bill of £300, almost a third (29 percent) would be unable to pay. Of those, half would cover the debt by selling something, borrowing from friends and family, or taking out a loan. The other half would be unable to foot the bill.

With their finances so delicately poised, it is no surprise that economic insecurity tops Britons' concerns. When asked about the issues that Britain faces, every age group and every region in the country put "inflation and the cost of living" top of their list.

## Social Insecurity

While insecurity in Britain is in part an economic story, it is not solely one. Stepping out their front doors, Britons are living in communities that feel profoundly insecure. Britain's streets feel more unsafe than they have been in many years. Crime is at twenty-year highs and struggling police forces are solving fewer cases than ever.<sup>9</sup> Our waterways are toxic, with water companies pumping raw sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas.

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<sup>8</sup><https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases/15-years-of-economic-stagnation-has-left-workers-across-britain-with-an-11000-a-year-lost-wages-gap/>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/21/recorded-in-england-and-wales-at-20-year-high-as-charge-rate-hits-new-low>

**PART FOUR: The Politics of Security**

Vital public services are grinding to a halt as Britain loses more days to strike action than it has since 1989.<sup>10</sup> The NHS is close to breaking point, with more than seven million awaiting treatment and chronic staff shortages disrupting services.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, the institutions that serve local communities – from youth centres to post offices – are shutting down. Our social fabric is being picked apart at the seams.

The British people know it. Three quarters (74 percent) of Britons believe that Britain’s national infrastructure is not fit for the future. 80 percent think that the NHS is unable to meet the challenges of the year’s ahead. Just 4 percent think that things are getting better in their local communities.

### **National Insecurity**

Looking beyond Britain’s borders, the world feels no more secure. A year ago, war returned to the European continent as Europe’s largest nation, Russia, invaded its second largest, Ukraine. A world beset by conflict has put millions on the move and brought a flotilla of small boats to Britain’s shores. In the Far East, China rises as a rival to America, disrupting the balance of power that has reigned since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Even if there is no ‘hot war’ between China and its neighbours, or with America itself, the economic choices we must make in our new ‘cold war’ are already evident.

New challenges, larger than any nation state, make the world feel more insecure still. The effects of climate change are already being felt, and will be felt further as the hopes of meeting global warming targets recede into the distance. New technologies, like quantum computing and artificial intelligence, threaten to upend the world as we know it.

What happens in global affairs filters through to how British people feel today. Two thirds (67 percent) think that Britain’s position in the world is getting weaker (and just 3 percent think it is getting stronger). Two thirds (68 percent) think Britain has lost control of its borders. When asked to describe their emotions as they survey the world today, “concerned” (57 percent), “pessimistic” (33 percent), “scared” (28 percent) and “sad” (26 percent) topped the list.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/timeseries/bb fw/lms>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/news-and-events/media-centre/press-releases/nhs-waiting-list-still-stuck-at-over-7-million/>

## An Insecure Nation

While this report has, up to this point, focused on Labour's need to win back Workington Man, and win over Stevenage Woman, electoral coalitions are - in truth - wider than that. Following the 2019 General Election, Labour Together's post-mortem report recommended that Labour's best chance of electoral success lay in assembling a coalition across its divides, rather than tacking to one side or another.

At the next election, insecurity is the one thing that unites every group of voters, wherever they lie on the political spectrum.

The Activist Left is the most likely segment to be private renters, struggling with unaffordable housing costs, living in expensive cities, subsisting without sufficient security and support to even think of starting a family.

Centrist Liberals are often mortgage holders suffering from interest rate hikes that resulted from Britain's short experiment with 'Trussonomics' - and they are also profoundly concerned about the precarious state of Britain's public services, particularly the NHS.

The Patriotic Left are the most economically insecure group, with over 70 percent worried about their household finances, and a quarter saying they have no way to make a payment of £300 for an unexpected emergency.

Disillusioned Suburbans are the next most economically insecure group, with over half worried about their finances, and a fifth having no way of paying for a £300 emergency.

English Traditionalists are the voters who are most concerned about insecurity in their community, more likely than any other segment to see crime as one of the most important issues in Britain today.

Finally, the Rural Right, even though they have relatively few economic concerns, see immigration as a major threat to Britain's way of life, and believe the Tories have failed to deal with this in their thirteen years in power.

## Securitarian Politics

In this age of insecurity, political parties must ask themselves how they can bring security to every worker, family, and community, and to the country itself. We call this ‘securitarian politics’, which takes us beyond the old divides of left and right, liberal and conservative, old and young, rural and metropolitan. Instead of choosing a course of action based on the ideological purity of a political creed, it forces leaders and their parties to ask themselves more challenging questions.

On economic security, for instance, securitarianism encourages leaders to ask how they are boosting families’ financial resilience by creating high-paid, high-skilled and secure work. It also forces them to consider how to promote Britain’s own economic resilience – by interrogating the security of supply-chains and industries that are vital to the nation’s economic strength. On social security, securitarianism means cutting crime, ensuring public services are delivered, and re-stitching our social fabric. On national security, securitarianism demands a firm commitment to defence, ensuring hard as well as soft power. It also demands a government that understands the contours of the world to come and has a plan for Britain to thrive within it.

## Labour and Security

The Labour Party has always stood on firm ground when addressing questions of economic insecurity. The British people know that the Labour Party cares about whether households are economically insecure. It is little surprise that, across every one of the six voter segments set out in this group, the most economically insecure are those most likely to have switched to Labour. Even amongst English Traditionalists, a group where Conservative support outweighs Labour’s two-to-one, the most economically insecure back Labour by a margin of 12 points.

While the perception that Labour is on the side of working people has always been strong, the view of Labour’s own handling of the nation’s finances has been more variable. After a decade of growth under New Labour, the 2008 crisis dented the party’s economic credibility. Under the catastrophic leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, trust in Labour’s financial prudence cratered. Perceptions have begun to recover. Trust in both Labour and Keir Starmer’s economic credibility now sits above that of the Conservatives and Rishi Sunak. However, credibility for secure management of the public purse is hard won and, as the promises of the Corbyn-era proved, easily lost.

**PART FOUR: The Politics of Security**

While on economic security, Labour may have advantages, the two other elements of securitarianism - social and national - have been less often associated with the party. While Labour is consistently more trusted to fund and manage public services, most notably the NHS, Conservative governments have historically been more trusted with issues like law and order, controls on immigration, and defence.

After thirteen years of Conservative government, that has begun to change. On crime and justice, Labour now leads the Conservatives. While the government retains a lead on defence, more voters now trust Labour to handle immigration and asylum than the Conservatives.<sup>12</sup>

While these are a reversal of recent trends, a politics rooted in the security of society and nation is not alien to the Labour Party and its history. It was a Labour Shadow Home Secretary who once declared that “society has a duty to bring those who commit... crimes to justice and to a punishment that properly reflects the seriousness of the crime.” In the same article, he promised that Labour would be “tough on crime” and its “causes”.<sup>13</sup> He went on to be the only Labour leader undefeated at a general election.

Fifty years before that, it was another Labour government that spearheaded the formation of NATO, under the inspired leadership of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin in the Attlee government. In doing so, they laid the foundations of the international security that held back the advance of Soviet communism. At the same time, they invested in developing Britain’s own nuclear deterrent, guaranteeing our security for generations to come.

## **The Political Wing of the British People**

At the Labour Party Conference in 2022, Keir Starmer - borrowing a line from Tony Blair - declared that Labour would become “the political wing of the British people” once more. This idea reflects what the Labour Party, at its best, has always been. Uniquely, the party was founded to represent working people and their concerns.

Today, working people are, rightly, concerned about the insecurity that they feel in their own lives, that they see on their streets and in their communities, and that they feel about their country and its place in a darker, more dangerous world.

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<sup>12</sup> YouGov trackers:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/trackers/which-political-party-would-be-the-best-at-handling-asylum-and-immigration>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.newstatesman.com/uncategorized/2015/12/archive-tony-blair-tough-crime-tough-causes-crime>

**PART FOUR: The Politics of Security**

To listen to these concerns and respond to them – particularly when they are about defence, or crime, or immigration – is not to betray some sacred progressive ideal. It is, instead, to acknowledge that these are real problems: that a nation must indeed defend itself, punish its criminals and control its borders. Doing so is to prove that Labour is the party that can govern in the national interest, making our nation stronger and more secure. Moreover, it is to prove that Labour can do these things better than the incumbent government, in a manner that combines control and compassion, strength and support, patriotism and positivity.

### **An Ordinary Hope**

Labour wins elections when it presents a positive vision of Britain and its future. In 1945, Clement Attlee’ evoked the New Jerusalem that would emerge from the shadow of total war. In 1964, Harold Wilson captured the excitement of a new age of modernisation and growth, promising that Britain would thrive in the “white heat of technology”. In 1997, after the long years of Conservative government, marked by a terminal descent into sleaze, Tony Blair promised a new “third way” and a modernisation of British politics that would move beyond left and right.

The politics of security can, and must, be positive and offer hope. We must not settle for the notion that securitarian politics is negative, regressive, unambitious. Indeed, we must not allow it to become that. Rather, it must present hope that responds to the challenges of the present moment. To embrace security as a motivation for modernisation, investment, and progress is not to dampen the embrace of a brighter future. It is to recognise the perils of false hope and abstractions that have plagued British politics in recent years.

The offer of security, in this context, is indeed a source of hope. The Britain that the next government inherits – be it a Labour or a subsequent Conservative administration – will be one that remains wracked by insecurity. Economic security would allow people to look beyond the immediate necessity of today and begin to plan for tomorrow. Social security would mean stronger and safer communities in which a life can be built. National security creates the space for Britain itself to thrive, at home and in the world.

While this might not be the near utopian hope of previous generations, it is a hope that is rooted in our time, not decades past. It is, to coin a phrase, an ‘ordinary hope’, suited to the insecure age in which we live today.

## CONCLUSION

In 2019, the Labour Party surveyed the wreckage of one of the worst defeats in British political history. Not only had the party seen its vote collapse, it had allowed this to happen against a government that had been in power for nine, tumultuous years. At that point, returning Labour to power seemed a challenge that would take at least two electoral cycles, and possibly more.

Now, a little less than three and a half years later, a one-term turnaround is possible. Voters are said to reward stability, and a Conservative government that has offered up three Prime Ministers in as many years cannot easily lay claim to that mantle. Meanwhile, Keir Starmer has brought stability, decency, and electability back to the Labour Party, after a long period in which such virtues have been absent.

At the time of publication, the Labour Party enjoys a wide poll lead. If that lead were to be replicated at an election, Keir Starmer would be on his way to Buckingham Palace, and Labour MPs would be switching one set of green benches for an opposing set, with their number vastly increased.

Today, that remains only a possibility. The road between now and the next election is long, and likely winding. This report has set out to help light Labour's path. To do so, we have outlined the contours of Britain's electorate: who they are, what they think, and what might inform their decision at the ballot box.

In the process, we have highlighted two voters whose support will be critical, and in whose hands the next election rests: Workington Man, so important to the Conservatives' extraordinary 2019 election success, and Stevenage Woman, whose impact on the next election might be even greater.

Today, both back Labour by a considerable margin, but they are volatile voters. Ensuring that Labour holds their support, not just at the next election but beyond it, is vital. In pursuit of that, we have set out a sketch of a new politics, which we call 'Securitarianism', that could define not just the next 21 months, but the years to come.

This report re-launches Labour Together. In Labour's wilderness years, our focus was turned inwards, towards keeping people in the party, fighting for electability. Today, our focus is turned outwards, to understanding the country, its voters, and the political policies and ideas that could define a Britain that is better with Labour.

For that to happen, something else must happen first. Labour must earn its Red Shift.



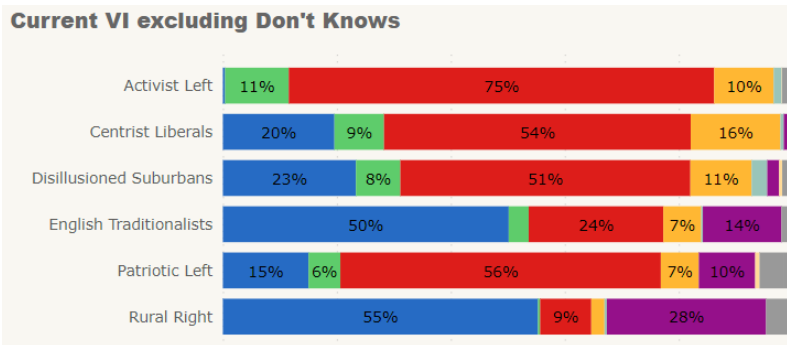
## APPENDIX

Unless otherwise mentioned, the data quoted in this report comes from two surveys, and additional statistical analysis carried out on those surveys.

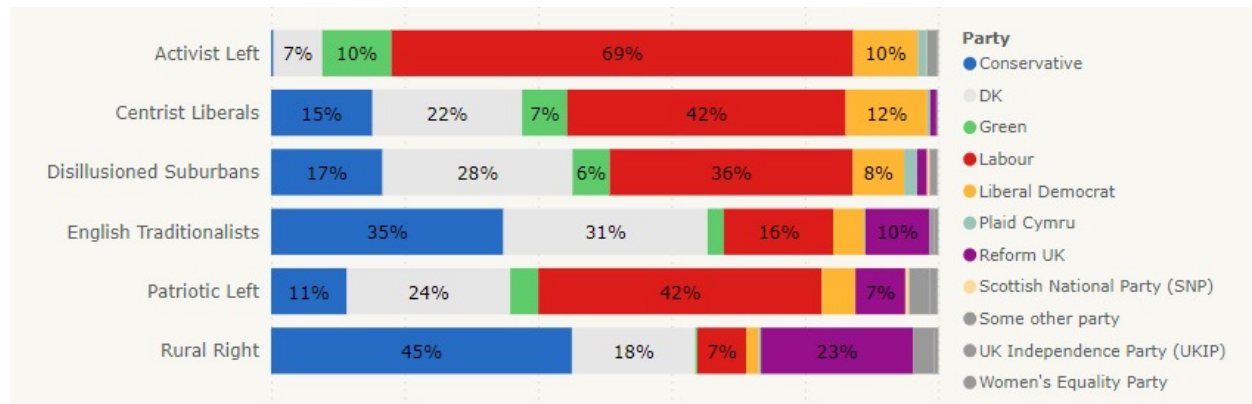
The majority of the report is based on polling conducted by YouGov, with a nat rep sample of 5,281 adults in England and Wales, with fieldwork conducted between February 3-8th 2023. Everything from Appendix A to K below comes from this survey, as does most of the research quoted in the report itself.

A few findings in this report are based on a subsequent poll, also conducted by YouGov, with a nat rep sample of 2,005 adults in GB, with fieldwork conducted between March 22nd-23rd 2023.

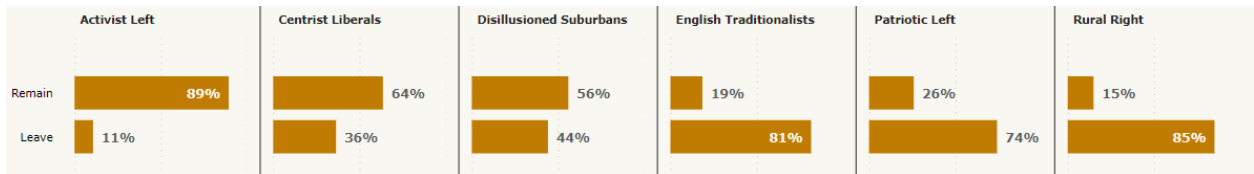
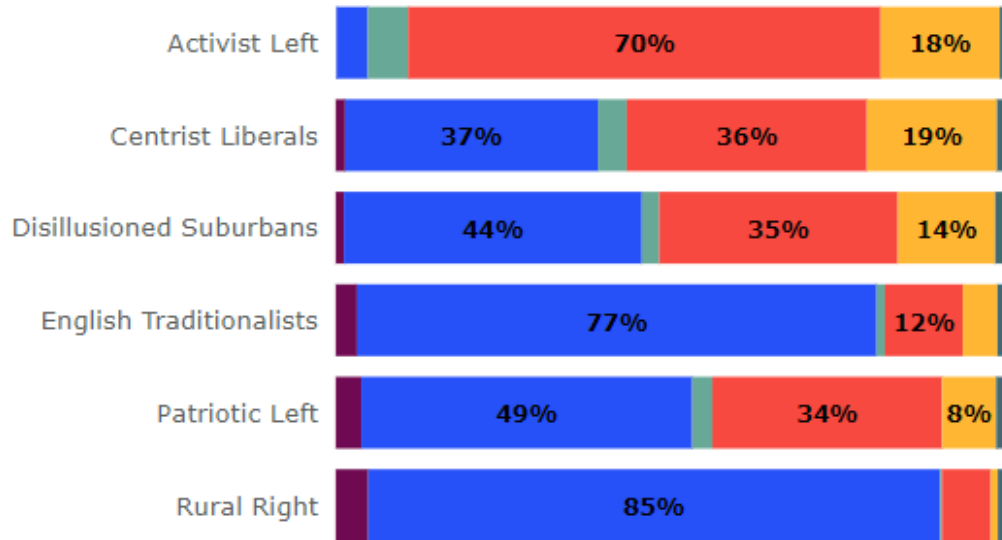
### A. Voting intention by segment (excluding “don’t know”)



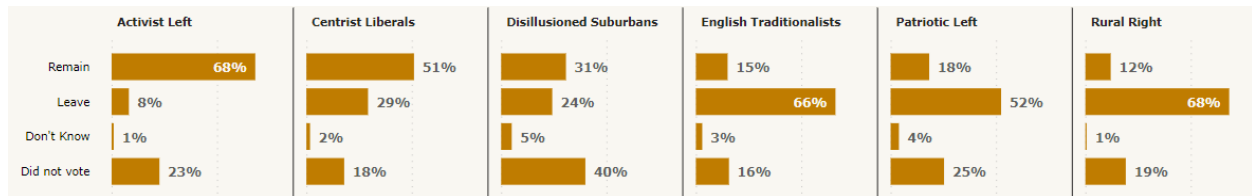
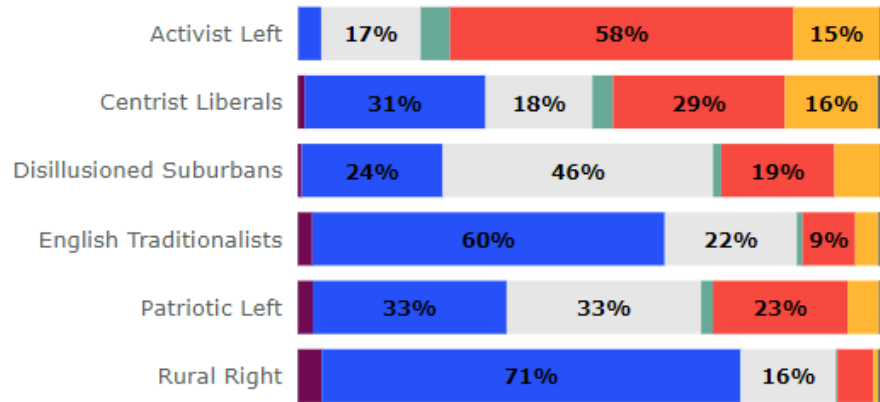
### B. Voting intention by segment (including “don’t know”)



**C. 2019 and Brexit Referendum votes by segment (excluding “did not vote”)**

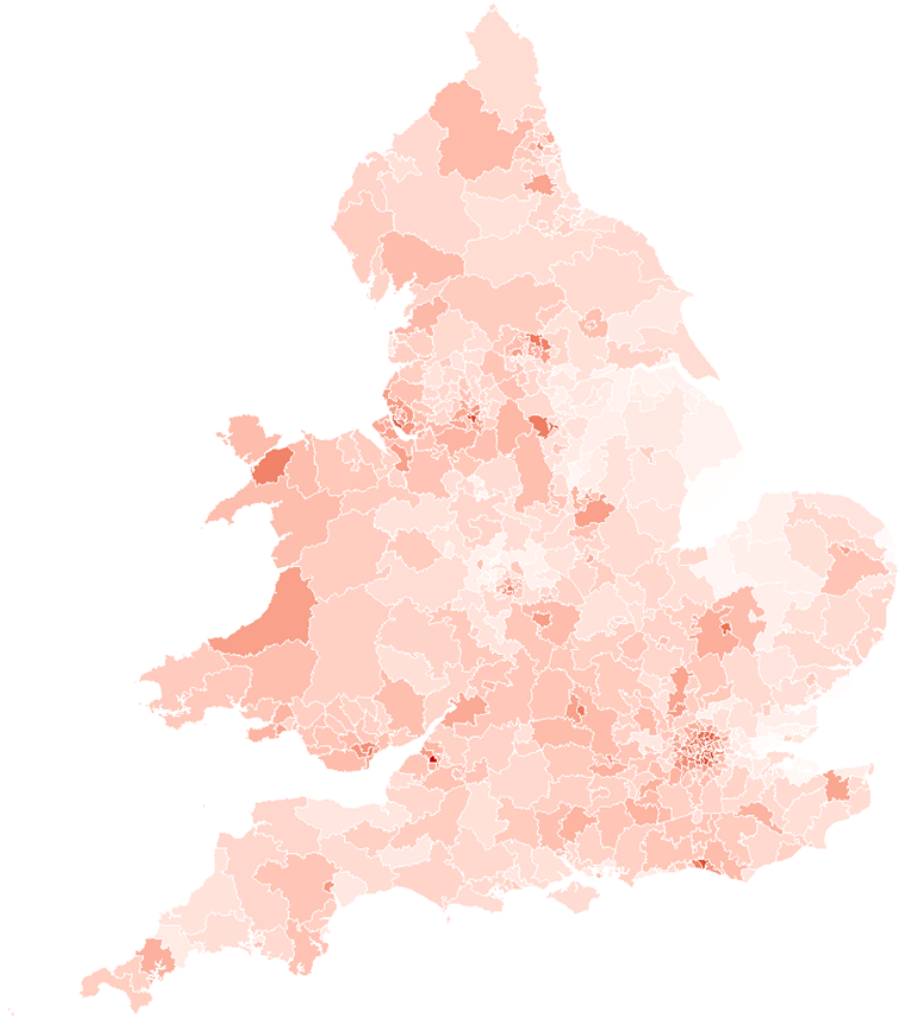


**D. 2019 and Brexit Referendum votes by segment (including “did not vote”)**

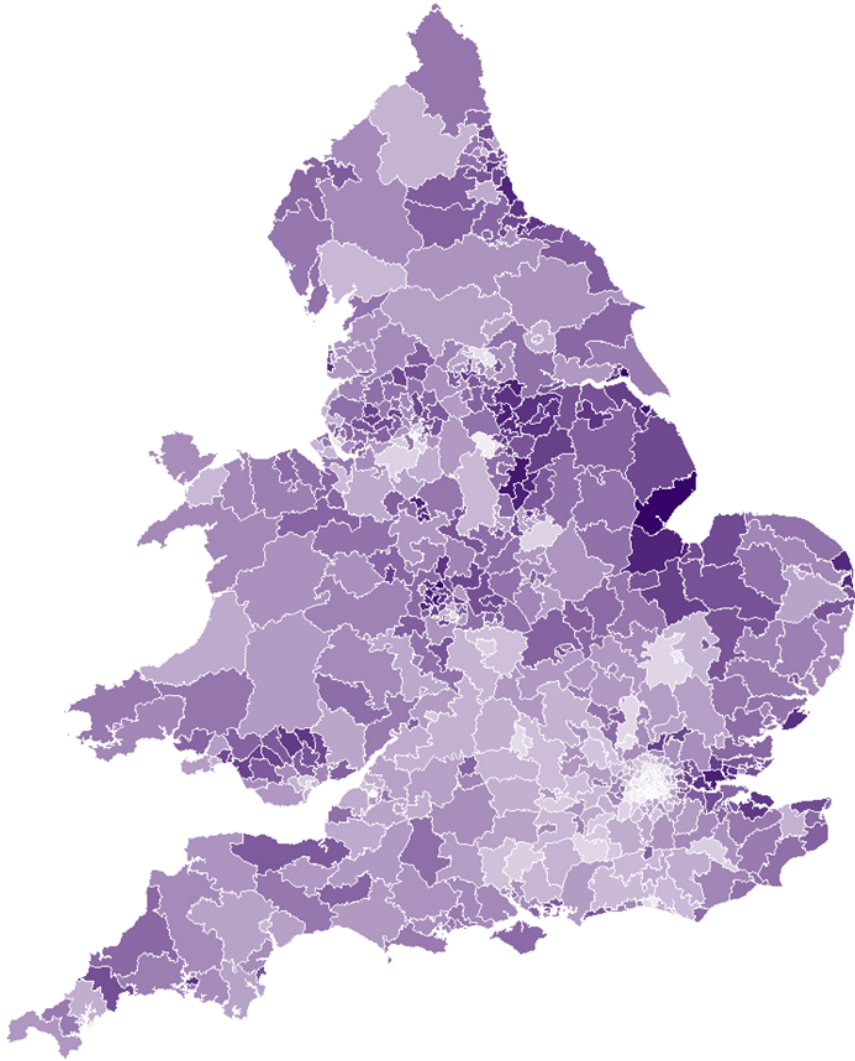


**E. Segments by geography**

*Activist Left*

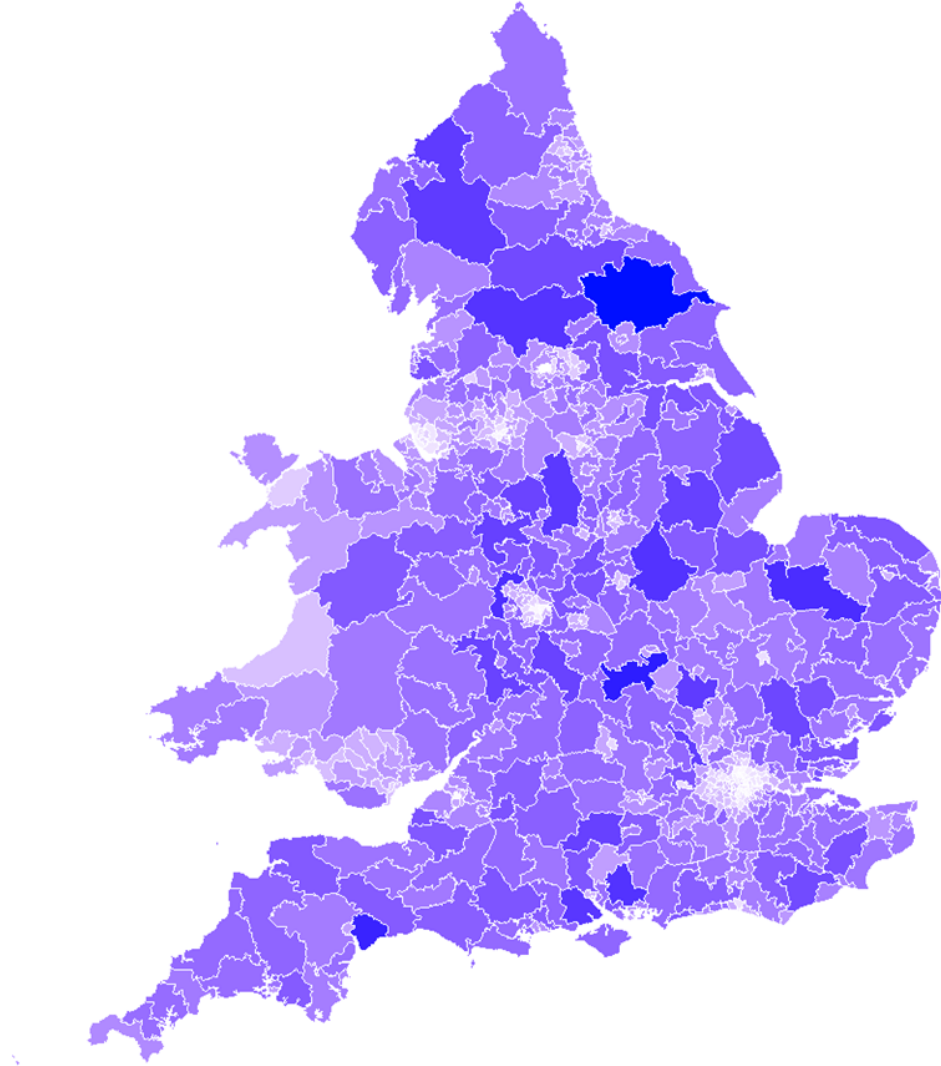


*Patriotic Left*



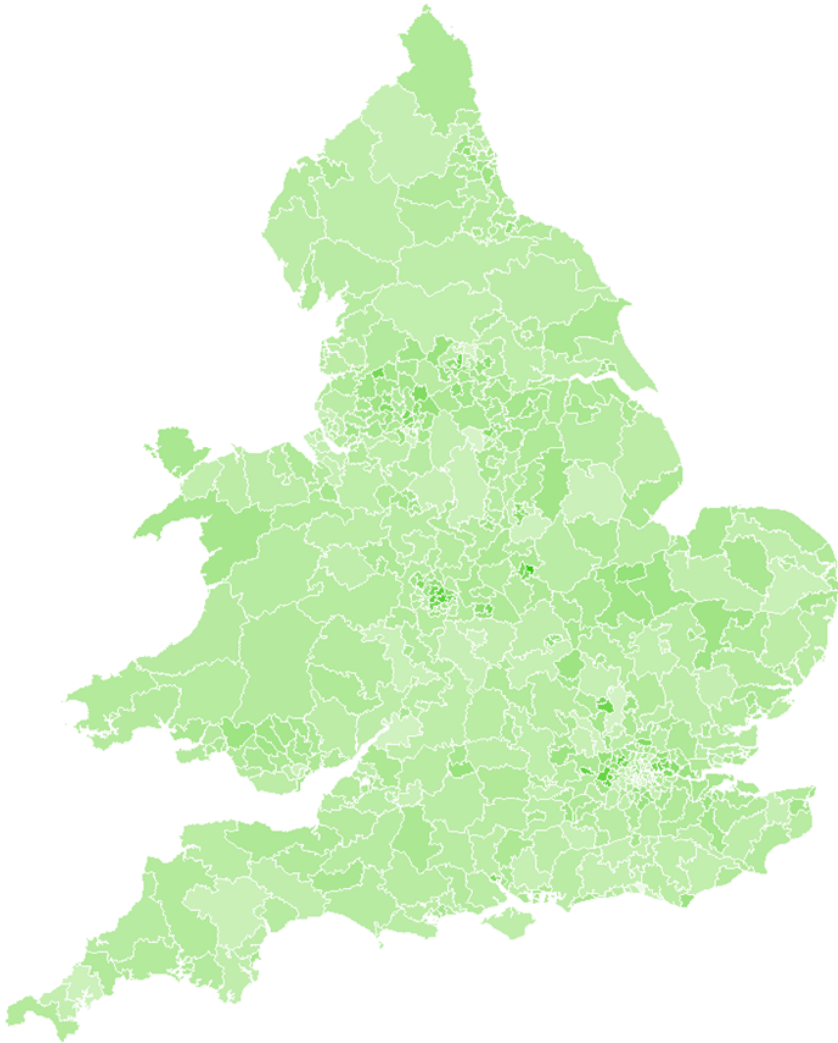
YouGov/Labour Together Analysis

*Rural Right*



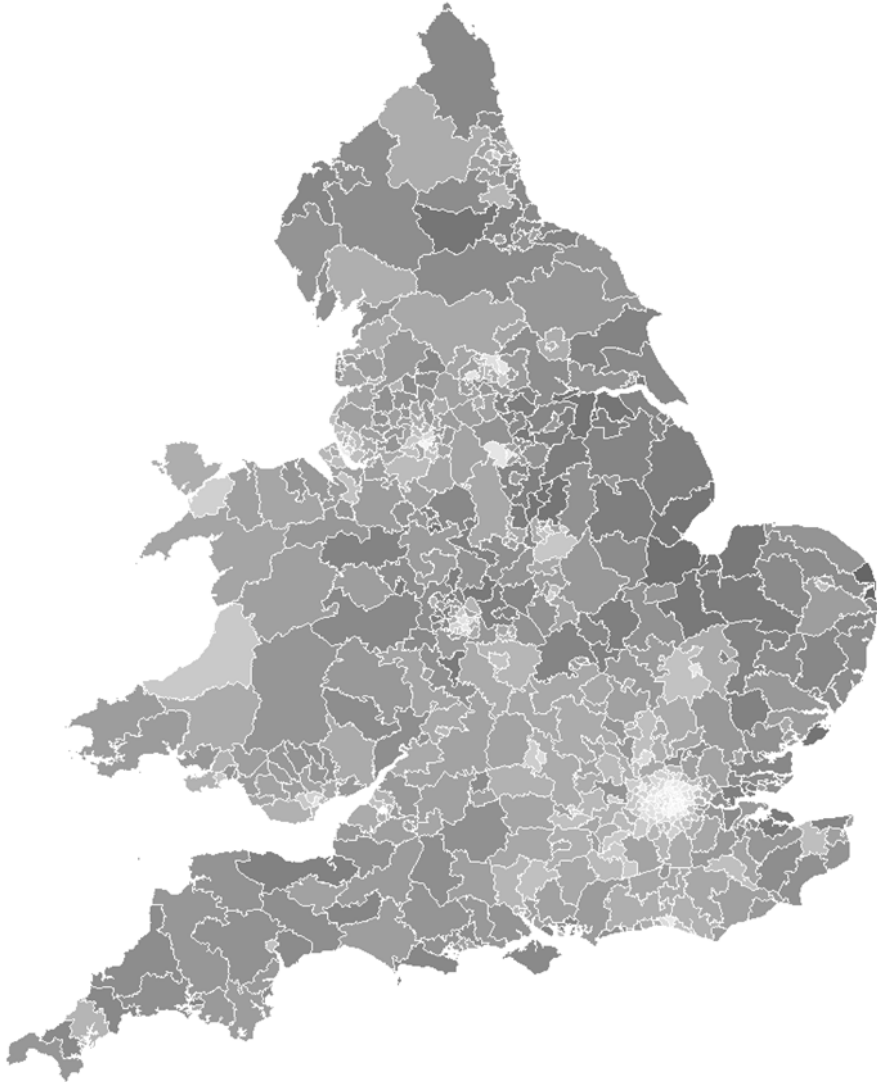
YouGov/Labour Together Analysis

*Disillusioned Suburbans*



YouGov/Labour Together Analysis

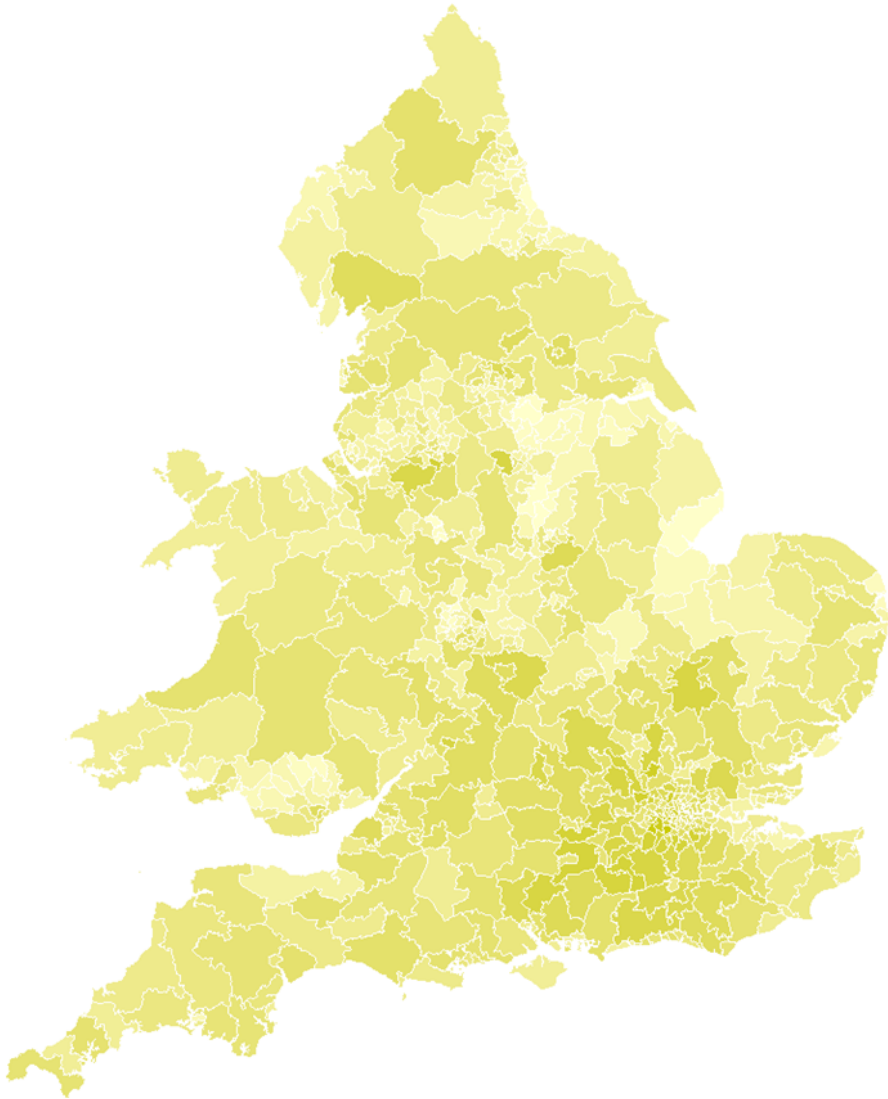
*English Traditionalists*



YouGov/Labour Together Analysis

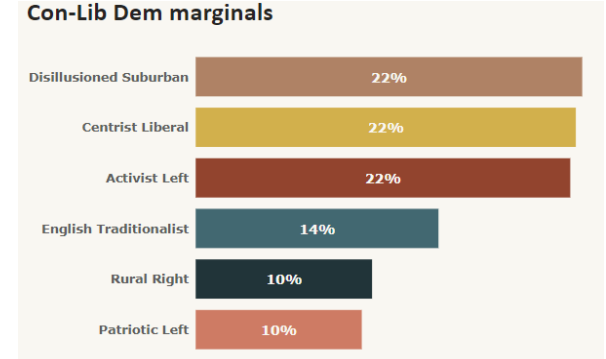
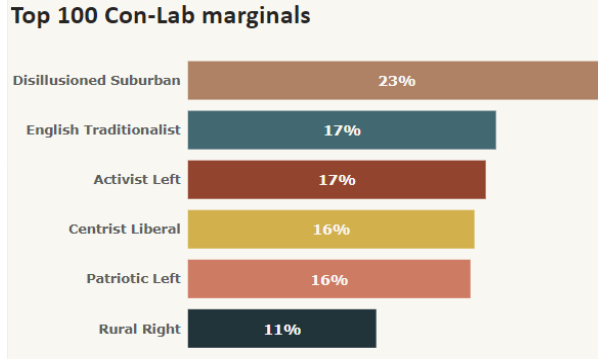
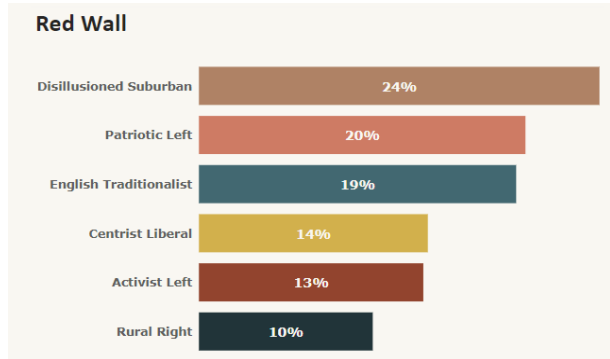


*Centrist Liberals*



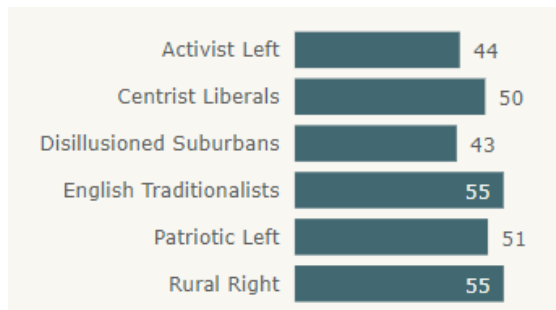
YouGov/Labour Together Analysis

**F. Key voter segments by type of seat**



**G. A selection of demographic data:**

*Average age*



*Level of education*

Cluster	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High	DK
Activist Left	8%	30%	60%	1%
Centrist Liberals	16%	36%	45%	3%
Disillusioned Suburbans	21%	40%	30%	9%
English Traditionalists	34%	43%	18%	4%
Patriotic Left	38%	38%	17%	7%
Rural Right	27%	42%	27%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Gender:*

Mixed	Cluster		Female	Male
	Other	White British	White Other	
	Activist Left		49%	51%
	Centrist Liberals		58%	42%
	Disillusioned Suburbans		55%	45%
	English Traditionalists		53%	47%
	Patriotic Left		51%	49%
	Rural Right		36%	64%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>

*Ethnicity:*

Cluster	Cluster				Afro-Caribbean	Asian
Activist Left	2%	4%	2%	1%	82%	7%
Centrist Liberals	4%	5%	2%	1%	82%	6%
Disillusioned Suburbans	3%	8%	3%	0%	75%	6%
English Traditionalists	0%	2%	0%	0%	94%	1%
Patriotic Left	2%	2%	1%	0%	91%	3%
Rural Right	0%	2%	0%	0%	93%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Household tenure:*

Cluster	Mortgage	Other	Own Outright	Private rent	Social Rent
Activist Left	33%	17%	21%	22%	7%
Centrist Liberals	33%	13%	33%	15%	7%
Disillusioned Suburbans	26%	24%	21%	17%	12%
English Traditionalists	26%	12%	43%	8%	10%
Patriotic Left	24%	16%	25%	14%	22%
Rural Right	25%	16%	42%	9%	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>11%</b>

*Work status:*

Cluster	Full time	Not working	Part Time	Retired	Student
Activist Left	52%	13%	12%	15%	8%
Centrist Liberals	45%	10%	16%	26%	4%
Disillusioned Suburbans	42%	18%	17%	15%	7%
English Traditionalists	35%	13%	15%	36%	1%
Patriotic Left	41%	22%	16%	22%	1%
Rural Right	36%	11%	13%	35%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>5%</b>

**H. An indicative selection of economic attitudes**

**Working people don't get fair share of wealth**

Cluster	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
Activist Left	0%	1%	8%	36%	55%
Centrist Liberals	5%	14%	36%	33%	11%
Disillusioned Suburbans	3%	12%	44%	31%	11%
English Traditionalists	9%	18%	39%	24%	11%
Patriotic Left	3%	2%	18%	35%	42%
Rural Right	28%	29%	29%	11%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>

**Big business takes advantage of people**

Cluster	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
Activist Left	0%	1%	5%	32%	62%
Centrist Liberals	2%	5%	18%	44%	30%
Disillusioned Suburbans	2%	6%	31%	43%	19%
English Traditionalists	1%	5%	21%	45%	29%
Patriotic Left	1%	1%	8%	36%	54%
Rural Right	4%	14%	28%	37%	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>36%</b>

**Government should redistribute income**

Cluster	1 Disagree	2	3	4	5 Agree
Activist Left	0%	1%	8%	36%	55%
Centrist Liberals	5%	14%	36%	33%	11%
Disillusioned Suburbans	3%	12%	44%	31%	11%
English Traditionalists	9%	18%	39%	24%	11%
Patriotic Left	3%	2%	18%	35%	42%
Rural Right	28%	29%	29%	11%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>

***I. An indicative selection of societal attitudes***

**Fewer or more migrants?**

Cluster	1 Fewer	2 Same number	3 More
Activist Left	2%	21%	77%
Centrist Liberals	21%	39%	39%
Disillusioned Suburbans	26%	52%	22%
English Traditionalists	96%	4%	0%
Patriotic Left	88%	10%	2%
Rural Right	85%	12%	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>

**Migrants good or bad for life in general?**

Cluster	1 Bad	2 Neither	3 Good
Activist Left	4%	13%	83%
Centrist Liberals	7%	29%	64%
Disillusioned Suburbans	12%	46%	42%
English Traditionalists	60%	29%	11%
Patriotic Left	56%	33%	12%
Rural Right	50%	31%	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>41%</b>

**Should prisons punish or rehabilitate?**

Cluster	1 Rehab	2 Neither	3 Punish
Activist Left	66%	20%	15%
Centrist Liberals	38%	32%	30%
Disillusioned Suburbans	24%	47%	30%
English Traditionalists	13%	24%	64%
Patriotic Left	16%	24%	60%
Rural Right	14%	28%	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>41%</b>

**Young people don't respect British values**

Cluster	1 Disagree	2 Neither	3 Agree
Activist Left	55%	33%	12%
Centrist Liberals	17%	37%	45%
Disillusioned Suburbans	14%	40%	46%
English Traditionalists	2%	11%	86%
Patriotic Left	5%	16%	80%
Rural Right	5%	18%	77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>55%</b>

**J. Favourability**

**Do you have a favourable or unfavourable opinion of...**

**The Conservative Party**

Very favourable	5
Somewhat favourable	20
<b>TOTAL FAVOURABLE</b>	<b>25</b>
Somewhat unfavourable	16
Very unfavourable	49
<b>TOTAL UNFAVOURABLE</b>	<b>65</b>
Don't know	10

**The Labour Party**

Very favourable	11
Somewhat favourable	29
<b>TOTAL FAVOURABLE</b>	<b>40</b>
Somewhat unfavourable	21
Very unfavourable	28
<b>TOTAL UNFAVOURABLE</b>	<b>49</b>
Don't know	11

**Keir Starmer**

Very favourable	7
Somewhat favourable	27
<b>TOTAL FAVOURABLE</b>	<b>34</b>
Somewhat unfavourable	22
Very unfavourable	29
<b>TOTAL UNFAVOURABLE</b>	<b>51</b>
Don't know	15

**Rishi Sunak**

Very favourable	4
Somewhat favourable	21
<b>TOTAL FAVOURABLE</b>	<b>25</b>
Somewhat unfavourable	25
Very unfavourable	38
<b>TOTAL UNFAVOURABLE</b>	<b>63</b>
Don't know	12

**K. Economic trust**

**How much would you trust each of the following to manage Britain's economy?**

**The Conservative Party**

A lot	4
A fair amount	20
<b>TOTAL A LOT / A FAIR AMOUNT</b>	<b>24</b>
Not very much	22
Not at all	45
<b>TOTAL NOT VERY MUCH / NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>67</b>
Don't know	9

**The Labour Party**

A lot	7
A fair amount	25
<b>TOTAL A LOT / A FAIR AMOUNT</b>	<b>32</b>
Not very much	27
Not at all	30
<b>TOTAL NOT VERY MUCH / NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>57</b>
Don't know	11

**Keir Starmer**

A lot	6
A fair amount	24
<b>TOTAL A LOT / A FAIR AMOUNT</b>	<b>30</b>
Not very much	25
Not at all	30
<b>TOTAL NOT VERY MUCH / NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>55</b>
Don't know	15

**Rishi Sunak**

A lot	4
A fair amount	22
<b>TOTAL A LOT / A FAIR AMOUNT</b>	<b>26</b>
Not very much	27
Not at all	35
<b>TOTAL NOT VERY MUCH / NOT AT ALL</b>	<b>62</b>
Don't know	11

**L. Public attitudes to insecurity**

<b>Which of the following best describes how you feel about **Britain's future**?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>And which of the following best describes how you feel about the **future of the world** as a whole?</b>	<b>%</b>
Concerned	<b>58</b>	Concerned	<b>57</b>
Pessimistic	<b>38</b>	Pessimistic	<b>33</b>
Sad	<b>28</b>	Scared	<b>28</b>
Scared	<b>23</b>	Sad	<b>26</b>
Optimistic	<b>11</b>	Optimistic	<b>9</b>
Relaxed	<b>4</b>	Relaxed	<b>4</b>
Happy	<b>2</b>	Happy	<b>2</b>
Excited	<b>2</b>	Excited	<b>2</b>
None of these	<b>3</b>	None of these	<b>3</b>
Don't know	<b>6</b>	Don't know	<b>8</b>

<b>How well or badly prepared do you think the NHS is to cope with the demands of the future?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>And how well or badly prepared do you think Britain's infrastructure (such as roads, trains and broadband) is to cope with the demands of the future?</b>	<b>%</b>
Very well prepared	<b>1</b>	Very well prepared	<b>1</b>
Fairly well prepared	<b>10</b>	Fairly well prepared	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL WELL PREPARED</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>TOTAL WELL PREPARED</b>	<b>16</b>
Fairly badly prepared	<b>43</b>	Fairly badly prepared	<b>42</b>
Very badly prepared	<b>37</b>	Very badly prepared	<b>32</b>
<b>TOTAL BADLY PREPARED</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>TOTAL BADLY PREPARED</b>	<b>74</b>
Don't know	<b>9</b>	Don't know	<b>9</b>

<b>Do you think Britain's position in the world is getting stronger or weaker, or staying much the same?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>At the present time, do you think Britain is, or is not, in control of our borders?</b>	<b>%</b>
Getting stronger	<b>3</b>	Is in control	<b>14</b>
Getting weaker	<b>67</b>	Is not in control	<b>68</b>
Staying much the same	<b>22</b>	Don't know	<b>17</b>
Don't know	<b>8</b>		