

POLARISATION IN BRITAIN

Focus group findings for UCL Policy Lab

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GREENBERG RESEARCH



Background and methodology

- These groups were commissioned to help us understand the new polarised environment in British politics.
- The focus is on the large bloc of voters considering the progressive parties in England (Labour, Liberal Democrats, Green Party).
- All participants were likely voters (8-10 likely to vote on a 0-10 scale) and would currently vote for, or seriously consider voting for, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, or the Green Party.
- In addition, besides standard demographic splits (single-gender; defined age and SEG ranges), we split the groups across “Red Wall” and “Blue Wall” seats.
- To represent the “Red Wall” we used non-urban constituencies in the North and Midlands that switched Conservative to Labour at the 2024 election.
- “Blue Wall” were non-urban Con-Lab seats in the South.

Date	Group	Type	Location	Demographic
25 Feb	1	Blue Wall	Uxbridge & South Ruislip	Men, 45-70, BC1C2
	2	Red Wall	Newcastle-Under-Lyme	Women, 25-44, C1C2D
2 March	3	Red Wall	Altrincham & Sale West	Women, 45-70, C1C2D
	4	Red Wall	Leeds South West & Morley	Men, 25-44, C1C2D
4 March	5	Blue Wall	Bournemouth East	Women, 45-70, BC1C2
	6	Blue Wall	Reading West & Mid Berks + Earley & Woodley	Men, 25-44, BC1C2

Key findings (1/3)

National and political context strongly negative, disappointed and divided

- These voters are immensely disappointed in the Labour government due to their view that it is weak, failing to deliver what it promised, and an ongoing series of scandals. Frequent U-turns are the biggest evidence of weakness.
- The failures on delivery are around living standards – people feel the cost of living crisis is continuing – and public services, especially the NHS but also policing, justice and schools. Labour's increases to taxes are seen as another breach of trust and damaging to themselves as well as businesses and jobs.
- Views of the Prime Minister are bound up with those of the government, and highly negative: he is seen as weak, lacking backbone, out of his depth, and untrustworthy. Others, especially his own back benches, are seen as able to push him around.

Polarisation

- Polarisation of the country is evident from their initial views on Britain today – many say we are divided, angry and distrustful of each other. There is a lack of authority/clarity on what is true and what matters, and a lack of leaders we can trust.
- Polarisation is also clear in views of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage. Trump is received in a viscerally negative way. Reactions are often emotional. He is seen as morally contemptible and actively harmful: a profoundly negative model of behaviour and a serious danger on the world stage.
- Farage has a firmly negative reputation, with many blaming him for driving national divisions. He has some leeway, especially among men, for his charisma and ability to set the agenda.
- But these voters are not culture warriors themselves – they generally don't like to get drawn into discussions of “wokeness” or other hot topics like Israel and Gaza.

Key findings (2/3)

Migration views are positive overall but challenging on asylum

- Progressive voters' views on immigration are complex, combining warmth toward regular migrants and distaste for divisive attacks/protests against asylum seekers with big concerns about the government's control of the border, spending on hotels and safety/cultural issues. Many, especially in Red Wall seats, feel threatened by asylum seekers; many more are unhappy that the government gives out shelter and benefits to people arriving on small boats.

Messaging on immigration and asylum

- A government message on border control, higher barriers to permanent residence and deportation of criminals is generally received positively (mean score: 6.8; 73% positive score*), but the details will be a problem for this audience.
- They dislike that regular migrants would face longer waits for ILR, and especially discrimination on wages. This is unfair, fails to tackle the key issue of asylum, in their view, and limits the benefits Britain gets for it by discouraging integration.
- A new community sponsorship system (mean: 6.7; 80% positive) is attractive for offering control and proper vetting of potential migrants. However there are numerous challenges on the practicalities of the system, especially reliance on France for control of the channel, how community vetting would work and whether it would be fair on genuine refugees.
- While the government's current messaging and community sponsorship tested comparably, we might expect the latter to test better with non-progressive voters.

*Respondents rated each message out of 10. "% positive" means percentage rating 6 or higher.

Key findings (3/3)

Potential areas of growth for Labour

- The most positive message tested for Labour is on reducing child poverty by increasing Child Benefit and providing free, nutritious meals in schools (mean: 8.1; 95% positive). This is what they want from Labour and offers genuine differentiation from other parties.
- Increasing taxes on multinationals and wealth, and alleviating pressure on middle earners through increased tax thresholds, also gets a strongly positive response (mean: 7.8; 91% positive).
- Warm responses on GB Energy investment in renewables: this is a shift they want to see happen for the sake primarily of energy bills but also climate and energy independence (mean: 7.4; 90% positive). Their doubts are only on delivery.
- A shift toward Europe and away from Trump's USA is also endorsed (mean: 7.4; 84% positive). They believe closeness to the EU can alleviate cost of living pressures and make Britain stronger/safer in today's world. There is some wariness of antagonising Trump and Putin. A message focused only on the economic case may be stronger.

NATIONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

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The country is seen as a depressing, divided, expensive mess

- Progressive voters are extremely negative about the state of Britain. Asked to write a word to sum up the country the top choices are “broken” and “mess”.
- They describe a country where people struggle to pay their bills and “nothing works”, from the NHS to the courts and prisons.
- It’s depressing to not be able to afford holidays and luxuries that people remember being able to splash out on; and to see the number of working people who have to rely on food banks.
- This is accompanied by a public atmosphere of division and distrust. Many describe a country with less and less common understanding of our values, needs and challenges.
- They don’t know what information or authorities to trust, and see people on all sides fragmenting into mutually suspicious and angered subdivisions.

One word to describe Britain (counts)



The cost of living's gone up so much. Knife crime is up there. Interest rates, just everything like hospital waiting lists, just everything seems to be gone to pot a little bit.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

Nothing seems to work as well as it used to, whether it's trying to get an NHS dentist or trying to get a doctor's appointment.

Woman, Bournemouth East

Key problems are the cost of living, economy and jobs; the NHS; and immigration

For me, it's all about cost of living, and that obviously links to lots. So that's getting housing. It's still linked in with immigration. It's still linked in with the NHS as well.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

There's people that are working really hard and they still can't put food on the table for their families. They're still having to use food banks and stuff. And just I guess the whole cost of living, everything is more expensive, everything is a little bit harder to do and it's impacting so many people.

Woman, Bournemouth East

The NHS waiting times as well. My dad's waiting for a cataract surgery, which had been given to a private sector. He should have been seen in November, hasn't been seen. And then they told me today that they pulled funding and that won't be put in place now until at least April, but no one's told you.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

The economy, and just the state of how many unemployed people there is, and... I don't really know too much facts and stuff, but immigration's obviously an issue.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

NHS waiting lists, more and more people that I know are going private... The NHS, it's months and months, sometimes, for a routine appointment.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

Letting too many people in. And they've taken kids' school places and the jobs and all the houses. And different ethnic backgrounds of people who can afford to buy a house in cash and they've come over from China. I just think they should, was it Sandra said, sort us out, and then whatever's left sort everybody else out.

Woman, Altrincham

Voters feel let down by a weak Labour government that is failing to deliver

- Assessments of the government are almost universally negative.
- Keywords are dominated by weakness, disappointment and failure, with a further minority describing it as dishonest.
- The two big reasons for this are failure to deliver against manifesto promises to bring change and not raise taxes; and U-turns. The scandals that have surrounded the government, most notably the Mandelson/Epstein affair, underline a sense of incompetence and poor character.
- Most of these voters had significant hopes for Labour, and have been surprised at its lack of delivery and inability to see through reforms despite a big majority in Parliament.
- They have a sense that the government is following others rather than its own agenda and cannot stand up to resistance from within or without.

One word to describe the government (counts)



They promised so many more available NHS appointments, housing, lots of things, and haven't delivered on what they've said.

Woman, Altrincham

He's U-turned on every part of the manifesto. Every single thing they said they would do, they have turned around and not done it. And he changes his mind like the wind, and it is purely on public opinion.

Man, Reading

Perceptions of the Prime Minister are tightly bound up with the government's failures

- These problems are embodied in the figure of the Prime Minister. He is seen as weak, lacking a backbone, and apt to change his stance as circumstances shift, rather than to lead.
- He still suffers from a lack of definition among some voters, who find him bland and grey; by contrast others have developed a visceral dislike.
- Scandals that have affected the government, particularly over Peter Mandelson, affect views of the PM, suggesting weakness or poor character.

He's got no backbone. You can see he's controlled by the members of his party. It's just, again, slime ball. He's exactly like Farage, but just in a different cape. Just two different points. Untrustworthy. Gets walked all over.

Man, Reading

- *Unlikeable.*
- *He's sleazy.*
- *Untrustworthy.*
- *Wet lettuce.*
- *I actually hate the fact that I voted for him. It's the only time I've ever voted for someone and I really, really, really regret it.*

Women, Altrincham

He's the sort of bloke that you are like, "Come on, Keir, come on, you can do it." And then it's just, "Oh, disappointing." You think he's got a backbone, and then he hasn't.

Woman, Bournemouth

Polarisation is evident in assessments of the country and reactions to leaders

- Division is a big theme in overall views of the country.
- Views of Donald Trump embody that division and fragmentation. Reactions to him are extreme and emotional. He is seen as morally contemptible and actively harmful: a profoundly negative model of behaviour and a serious danger on the world stage.
- Views of the US are damaged by his having been elected twice, although it is recognised as an important and enduring ally.
- Nigel Farage is also viewed with strong negativity. Many dislike him deeply and personally, and hold him partly to blame for the angry mood in the country. His association with Trump is a firm negative.
- He gets some leeway, especially among men, for a strong personality, charisma and ability to set the agenda, although they disagree with his politics.
- Putin is the perfect example of a wicked tyrant, while Zelenskyy is seen as a hero and miracle worker.

People are trying to divide us... no matter where you turn, there's always political debates and everyone wants to be falling out with each other and you can't have an opinion on something because someone wants to attack you for it.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Farage

Oh, I can't repeat it here... Rhymes with "anchor".

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Opinionated / British / He can hold the audience.

Men, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

I just think if he got into power, I think he'd cause a war. I'd feel sorry for any legal immigrants or any other immigrants.

Woman, Altrincham

Trump

A disgusting man. Evil man. I can't stand him.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

He's a bigger danger than Putin, I think.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

It's strange. He's almost like an evil genius.

Man, Reading

Other polarising issues, “woke” and Israel/Gaza, produce a more muted response

- These voters are not on the extremes, not culture warriors, and they do not rise to the controversies associated with “woke” or the war in Gaza.
- “Woke” is understood as part of the culture-war battlefield, but they are not interested in fighting.
 - They see it as a pejorative term used against the young and the left.
 - Although many agree they share “woke” attitudes, they don’t get animated by it.
- On Gaza, there is deep sadness and distress at the suffering of ordinary Palestinians, and a firm sense that their treatment by Israel has been unjust.
 - Voters are sad that Britain hasn’t been able to affect this meaningfully.
 - But they are also reluctant to discuss the conflict overall, feeling they are not well enough informed to judge it or say what should change.

If someone called me woke, I'd be like, "Yeah, great. I am. Nice." But I guess when I hear it, because it's very much right-wing press, and it feels a bit belittling like, oh, with your woke ideas that the world should be fair. It just feels, it's always done in quite a patronizing way.

Woman, Bournemouth

It's just a media terminology to try and click bait articles, wind up 60-year-olds on Facebook, telling them that teenagers are weak and pathetic.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

Sad. All the deaths, it's sad, isn't it?

Woman, Altrincham

Brexit is seen as a national error that is costing us money, hurting living standards

- While views toward the EU as an institution are lukewarm, Brexit is clearly seen as a major mistake, both in the original decision and its execution.
- Many talk about misinformation, particularly the £350M/NHS bus, and think of Brexit as “mis-sold”.
- They are firmly in favour of a closer relationship with the EU, to achieve economic benefits and hopefully reduce food and other prices.
- Full membership is on the table for most, due to the financial incentive, travel convenience, social and work opportunities, greater strength in trade negotiations, and sense of security and solidarity in a dangerous world with an unreliable US.
- Some further note that leaving has failed to have an impact on immigration, and is a contributor to the small boats issue.

For me, working in food retail, our food prices, what seems to be coming from our company is the reason for the rises is because we've left the EU... that's one of the reasons why our food costs are going up as well.

Man, Uxbridge and South Ruislip

Economically it's almost ruined the economy. Overnight it was suddenly a lot more expensive to trade with with your partner... And every time I go on holiday I've got to join the longest queue... when you used to basically walk through... I'd rejoin just to get the queues down when I got to Benidorm.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

I voted to leave initially and I was probably misinformed, like... on how this new sort of regime for us, that we could benefit from it and it's doing the opposite really.

Woman, Altrincham

I don't think Brexit helped [immigration] matters neither, by the way. So most people that want to stop the boats, the vast majority of people that are loud online are the same people that wanted Brexit, and now we don't have any control. We don't have any partnerships.

Man, Reading

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IMMIGRATION AND PROGRESSIVE VOTERS

Polarisation in Britain | March 2026

Progressive voters have deep concerns about border control and asylum policy

- Left wing voters' views of immigration and asylum complex and include serious concerns.
- As seen among other voter groups, discussion of "immigration" blurs legal migration for work and study with asylum seeking and border control; concerns about small boats and asylum hotels always come up.
- Views of irregular migration and asylum are often negative and controversial:
 - They feel the government is failing and must get control of the Channel and end use of hotels.
 - Many are worried about the safety of local women and children and highlight rates of young men among asylum seekers.
 - Concerns also raised about culture, e.g. role of women in some foreign societies.
- There is also broad recognition that this issue is complex, misinformation is prevalent, and right wing press/politicians deliberately amplify concerns.

I'm not far right, I'm probably somewhere floating in the middle anyway, but there's definitely an issue with illegal immigration. You need to differentiate between the two. And I think that's probably our biggest issue is how we're not handling the illegal side.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

I think the way we do things for the people that come in and do it in the right way, I think is right. It's the illegals that I think is causing the issue. And then of course the media gets hold of it, puts 20 different spins on it and makes it worse.

Woman, Bournemouth

If they're coming over and like I say, they can work for us, then fair enough, we'll take them in with loving arms. But if they're just going to come in and obviously take up this space in these hotels, taking basically more money out of our paycheck, then it's no good really.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

I do feel a bit unsafe with some of them around. You don't know what kind of lives they have, what they're doing or anything else. / They have different beliefs. They treat families different. I know there's some people that don't treat women in the same way.

Women, Newcastle-under-Lyme

These views are combined with positivity toward regular, working migrants

- Across all these groups, voters are keen to stress their appreciation for migrants who have come through legal routes and who integrate, work and contribute to Britain.
- Many emphasise the role of migrant nurses, doctors and social care workers in keeping health and social care going in Britain.
- They are looking for leaders with plans that ensure Britain continues to benefit from legal migration.

So the legal migration of people I think is essential for services and the like, but the illegal immigration is a bit of an issue.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

Without immigration, for example in the NHS from the bottom up, where would we be? From the porters, to the nurses, to the doctors, all the way through to the GPs and the consultants, the dentists, so many of those jobs are immigrants.

Woman, Altrincham

I think immigration in the whole is brilliant. I think we need it for our society.

Man, Reading

Labour's shift toward firmer border control seen as positive, but specifics carry risk

*... We are frank about having stricter policies for asylum and work routes. We are doubling the standard waiting time for legal migrants to gain permanent residence from 5 to 10 years, with longer periods for those who earn less. We are also requiring all refugees to return home after 30 months if their country becomes safe... We're increasing the number of foreign criminals to be deported and raising English requirements for dependents seeking citizenship. We are fighting the gangs...**

Mean rating in test: 6.8/10

Positive (6+): 73%

- The government's message on asylum and immigration is often well received as it indicates a tougher system with more control.
- Voters like deportation of criminals and tackling the channel gangs. They are also receptive to the broad concept of longer waits for settled status.
- But, specifying 10 years for settled status, and longer waits for lower earners, gets push-back. They emphasise that key issues are asylum and border control, not legal migrants.
- Longer waits would be seen as unfair and likely to harm integration and therefore the value to Britain of migrants coming for work.

The acknowledgement that they do need to do something about it and enforce these rules is a good start, but it depends on how long it's going to take and when they're going to enforce them really.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

If you know you aren't going to get settled, then they haven't really got that commitment to the UK in the same way. "You might kick us out, you might kick us out". And people who come, they want to settle down, have a family.

Woman, Bournemouth

I think the doubling the waiting time for legal migrants. I think it almost sounded like it had a potential to impact people just genuinely coming over, partners of people and things like that. So you wouldn't want it to impact legitimate people in a wrong way.

Man, Reading

Message on community sponsorship has some attractions but raises major questions

*... We have an ambitious plan that uses the quota of 10,000 to 40,000 legal refugees who will be vetted where they are living... Money saved from asylum hotels will be used to help. It will follow the successful examples of Hong Kong and Ukraine... With us accepting legal, vetted refugees and France needing to cut the numbers passing through on the way to Britain, it will want to make a deal to police the channel and allow no boats to cross. **

Mean rating in test: 6.7/10

Positive (6+): 80%

- Ratings of each migration message are comparable with these voters but may diverge on the right.
- The community sponsorship message benefits from:
 - Specificity on numbers and comparator plans.
 - Offering hope on control of the borders and end of asylum hotel spending.
 - Including “legal, vetted refugees”.
- But raises some doubts:
 - How integration tests would work in practice.
 - Whether France can be trusted on the Channel.

With Ukraine... there were host families involved, which actually had a really positive outcome, I think, for people being able to integrate... children came more prepared to slip into schools.

Woman, Bournemouth

I think the asylum hotels is a big thing now in a lot of communities. So a way of managing that and modelling on successful ways of doing things such as Hong Kong, Ukraine sounds positive to me as well. If there's a successful model that we can lean on, then great.

Man, Reading

How's this going to be monitored? Whether the integration's right, who's going to check their English language? It's quite a sweeping statement really that. And France has let us down beforehand.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

*Full message text is in the Appendix

Detail on community sponsorship allays some concerns but big questions remain

- The community sponsorship policy detail tested* has strong attractions:
 - Ending use of asylum hotels with significant cash savings, plus control of the border.
 - Job matching, English language and integration are seen as strong aims.
 - Modelling on past successes builds confidence.
- But it raises significant concerns that would need to be addressed:
 - Most importantly, feasibility of border control by the French. They are seen to be uncommitted now, and reasons for change unconvincing.
 - “Community” sponsorship and vetting provoke significant doubts about how they work.
 - A system where refugees have to “sell themselves” to British communities turns many off.

It sounds like refugees would be at least integrated into a community, and they could feel like could belong and build a life, which has got to be positive. There'd be less of a divisive attitude. I think there would be probably less hate.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

I was pleased that the numbers were lower than what my expectation was. And yeah, working with the organizations I thought was good. [But] about the vetting of the communities... It feels a weird statement to say because they're not going to just get a room full of us sitting there going, "Well, you can come and you can't." And what's value to one community might not be to another.

Woman, Bournemouth

Do I think that France would monitor their borders and take people back? Probably not. I think they would still be coming over just the same.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

If these people are genuine refugees fleeing war zones who have had family murdered and blown up and so on, do we really want to make them jump through hoops to get in this country? Or "I'm sorry, your story's not sad enough you're not allowed in."

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

*Full policy detail as displayed to respondents is in the Appendix

SHIFTS THAT DRIVE WARMTH TO LABOUR

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Government action to reduce child poverty is the most positive message tested

The Blair-Brown governments lifted over half a million children out of poverty, but Tory austerity left 4.5 million children in poverty. Child Benefit was historically paid to all households to help with the costs of raising children, but it has since lost over 20% of its value. Some households no longer receive payments. We should restore the value of Child Benefit to its 2010 levels and greatly expand access to proper, nutritious school meals as part of an ambitious plan to tackle child poverty.

Mean rating in test: 8.1/10

Positive (6+): 95%

- Voters warm to this message. It shows a strongly positive side of Labour in government, helping deserving children. It provides a dividing line against the right wing parties.
- Nutritious meals at school is a strong hook that people take up and repeat as a key benefit.
- Many react positively because they think the average family benefits, as well as cutting child poverty.
- Some hope it would tackle “cliff-edge” problems in tax/benefit thresholds that disincentivise earning more at higher levels.
- Also reminds of lifting the 2-child benefit limit, a change that most of these voters agree with.

This is where I think you see the difference between the two parties, and this is where I think Labour is for the working man, your average family.

Man, Reading

I do think all children should have access to nutritional meals while in school, and that isn't always the case. And I do think you should have child benefit for all children you've got, although I do believe it's now increased again because it was capped, wasn't it?

Woman, Altrincham

I feel like that statement would benefit a lot of people.

Woman, Bournemouth

Taxes on wealth and multinationals to relieve burden on lower earners also wins plaudits

Labour must lead again on making Britain fairer to help families with the high cost of living. We will introduce a wealth tax of 1 percent on fortunes in excess of £5 million and get Amazon and social media companies to pay fees. We will use it to raise tax thresholds once again with inflation and raise Child Benefit by 20% to restore its previous level under Labour. We are helping working people with the impossible cost of living.

Mean rating in test: 7.8/10

Positive (6+): 91%

- Voters immediately latch on to the intention to have multinationals and wealthy individuals pay their share as a key aspect of justice in the tax system.
- It would tackle inequality that they see as having grown during the Tory years.
- Increasing the thresholds is a strong positive.
- Some doubts raised over the possibility of capital flight and impact on older people with valuable homes. Overall, more comfort with the corporate than the individual taxes.

I like it. I feel like certainly from when I was growing up to now, the gap has increased so much that it almost needs some claw-back from Labour to undo some Conservative way of thinking.

Man, Reading

I absolutely agree that companies that are based in this country, your Amazons, your Starbucks, et cetera, where are their tax contributions and why are they not being enforced to pay their allocated fair share amount of tax? I think that's such a massive thing.

Woman, Altrincham

It's what we've said all night about the economy, and it just sounds very positive. Yeah, Amazon should be paying. They're probably, what, the most richest company, whatever it is, worth most in the world, so why shouldn't they be?

Man, Leeds SW & Morley



Great British Energy brings together positives on bills and carbon reduction

We created GB Energy, the state-owned clean power company making big investments in wind power, solar, cutting-edge nuclear plants, energy infrastructure and the Warm Homes Plan. We now prioritise reducing bills and achieving energy security. We will need natural gas, but the goal of net zero gets us to advance innovative research in our universities, new nuclear, geothermal, renewables and a modernised, more efficient electricity grid. This clean energy superpower will produce secure and affordable energy.

Mean rating in test: 7.4/10

Positive (6+): 90%

- Almost all these voters agree in principle with investment in renewables. Strongest reason for support is the potential impact on energy bills, although many doubt lower prices would come.
- They also like energy independence and the principle of cutting carbon from power generation.
- State ownership is a positive in light of negative views of the big privatised utilities.
- Key doubt is on delivery. Most assume this is a future plan, not already realized. A minority had heard of GBE before, but assumed it was not moving forward; most are sceptical that Labour will deliver.

My energy bills will be a lot lower, hopefully, if that's how I've read it right. My gas and electric bill is absolutely ridiculous. So I'm thinking if that's true and that happens, then it'll cut the energy bills.

Woman, Altrincham

I think we do need to think outside the box from natural gas and look at sustainability of sources, and having it state-owned rather than private means the money gets funded back in as opposed to going to the shareholders or the fat cats that sit in their offices. You can reinvest that money into more research.

Woman, Bournemouth

It all sounds very good. You're going in the right direction, green energy and so forth, but the actual practical side of it, can you see that happening? Probably not, in all fairness.

Man, Uxbridge & South Ruislip

Closer EU relationship is warmly welcomed, but doubts over antagonising Trump and Putin

Brexit and Trump's trade war brought us falling growth and incomes and higher prices. We need a customs union and to start to rejoin the EU. Trump's embrace of Vladimir Putin betrays Ukraine, a country that is battling for its freedom. Britain must ally with Europe to lead the battle for freedom, raise our living standards and address the cost of living.

Mean rating in test: 7.4/10

Positive (6+): 84%

- Most of these voters would endorse rejoining the EU, and almost all want a closer relationship.
- They agree Brexit has cost Britain and themselves money and hope for some relief on COL from a closer relationship.
- They also endorse the idea that we would be stronger/ safer as part of a union, important in today's world.
- Trump's volatility is a reason to ally with Europe, but causes some doubts about potential retaliation. They also don't want us to be a target for Putin.
- A message only on the economic benefits may have tested stronger.
- Other doubts are on feasibility and timeline for a closer relationship/rejoining.

I think we should join the EU again. If that helps with our cost of living crisis, then I'm all for it.

Woman, Newcastle-under-Lyme

I don't think now is a good time to be on your own. And I think now is the time that we need to be standing with other countries who have similar beliefs to us, similar morals to us. We've stood together with Ukraine since the beginning of the Russian invasion.

Woman, Bournemouth

I think we need to more align with Europe because America's proven it's untrustworthy and we can't really rely on them. And we're stronger with Europe. They're our nearest allies and they're more steady economies and countries rather than America, which is going mental at the minute.

Man, Leeds SW & Morley

Recap

- Highly negative feelings on the country and government due to ongoing cost of living pressures, poor state of the NHS and other public services, and perceived broken promises to bring change and keep taxes down. Views of the Prime Minister particularly poor.
- Strong perception that the country is divided and there is no one to trust. Views of Trump are viscerally negative and of Farage, strongly negative. The US now seen as an unreliable ally, but the long-term relationship remains important. Brexit a mistake.
- Challenging views on migration – government lost control of asylum, resentment at spending on asylum seekers, and some cultural and safety worries.
- Messaging on increased control is positive, but they dislike punitive measures on ILR for working migrants who arrived by regular routes.
- Potential community sponsorship system for refugees is welcome for offering border control and proper vetting, but runs into trouble on delivery (especially French control of the channel), and how community sponsorship/vetting would be run in practice – who would have a say.
 - The poll will produce important results, since we know Reform and Conservative voters do not believe current migration policies have any chance of success. They may be more open to community sponsorship to address the crisis of small boats and asylum hotels.
- Strongly positive reactions to messaging on child poverty reduction and shifting burden of tax on to multinationals and wealth.
- GBE message highly positive, especially bills impact, but with doubts on delivery.
- They want us closer to the EU, for cost of living relief and safety/solidarity.

The background features two large, overlapping circular shapes. The top shape is a vibrant orange, and the bottom shape is a bright pink. They overlap in the center, creating a darker, reddish-orange hue. The overall design is modern and minimalist.

APPENDIX: CONTENT TESTED

Narratives tested (1/2)

Name	Full text	Mean rating (/10)	% positive (6+/10)
POVERTY	<i>The Blair-Brown governments lifted over half a million children out of poverty, but Tory austerity left 4.5 million children in poverty. Child Benefit was historically paid to all households to help with the costs of raising children, but it has since lost over 20% of its value. Some households no longer receive payments. We should restore the value of Child Benefit to its 2010 levels and greatly expand access to proper, nutritious school meals as part of an ambitious plan to tackle child poverty.</i>	8.1	95
FAIRER COST OF LIVING	<i>Labour must lead again on making Britain fairer to help families with the high cost of living. We will introduce a wealth tax of 1 percent on fortunes in excess of £5 million and get Amazon and social media companies to pay fees. We will use it to raise tax thresholds once again with inflation and raise Child Benefit by 20% to restore its previous level under Labour. We are helping working people with the impossible cost of living.</i>	7.8	91
CLIMATE	<i>We created GB Energy, the state-owned clean power company making big investments in wind power, solar, cutting-edge nuclear plants, energy infrastructure and the Warm Homes Plan. We now prioritise reducing bills and achieving energy security. We will need natural gas, but the goal of net zero gets us to advance innovative research in our universities, new nuclear, geothermal, renewables and a modernised, more efficient electricity grid. This clean energy superpower will produce secure and affordable energy.</i>	7.4	90
EUROPE	<i>Brexit and Trump's trade war brought us falling growth and incomes and higher prices. We need a customs union and to start to rejoin the EU. Trump's embrace of Vladimir Putin betrays Ukraine, a country that is battling for its freedom. Britain must ally with Europe to lead the battle for freedom, raise our living standards and address the cost of living.</i>	7.4	84
TRUMP	<i>We must keep our long-standing ties with the United States, but Britain must be honest with Donald Trump. Our leaders must say: Vladimir Putin is a tyrant that must be opposed. We will ally with the democracies of Europe. Climate change is not a hoax. We reject the violence and divisiveness of people like Tommy Robinson, who is now hosted and funded by Trump's MAGA groups. We do not accept this intervention our politics.</i>	7.0	88

Narratives tested (2/2)

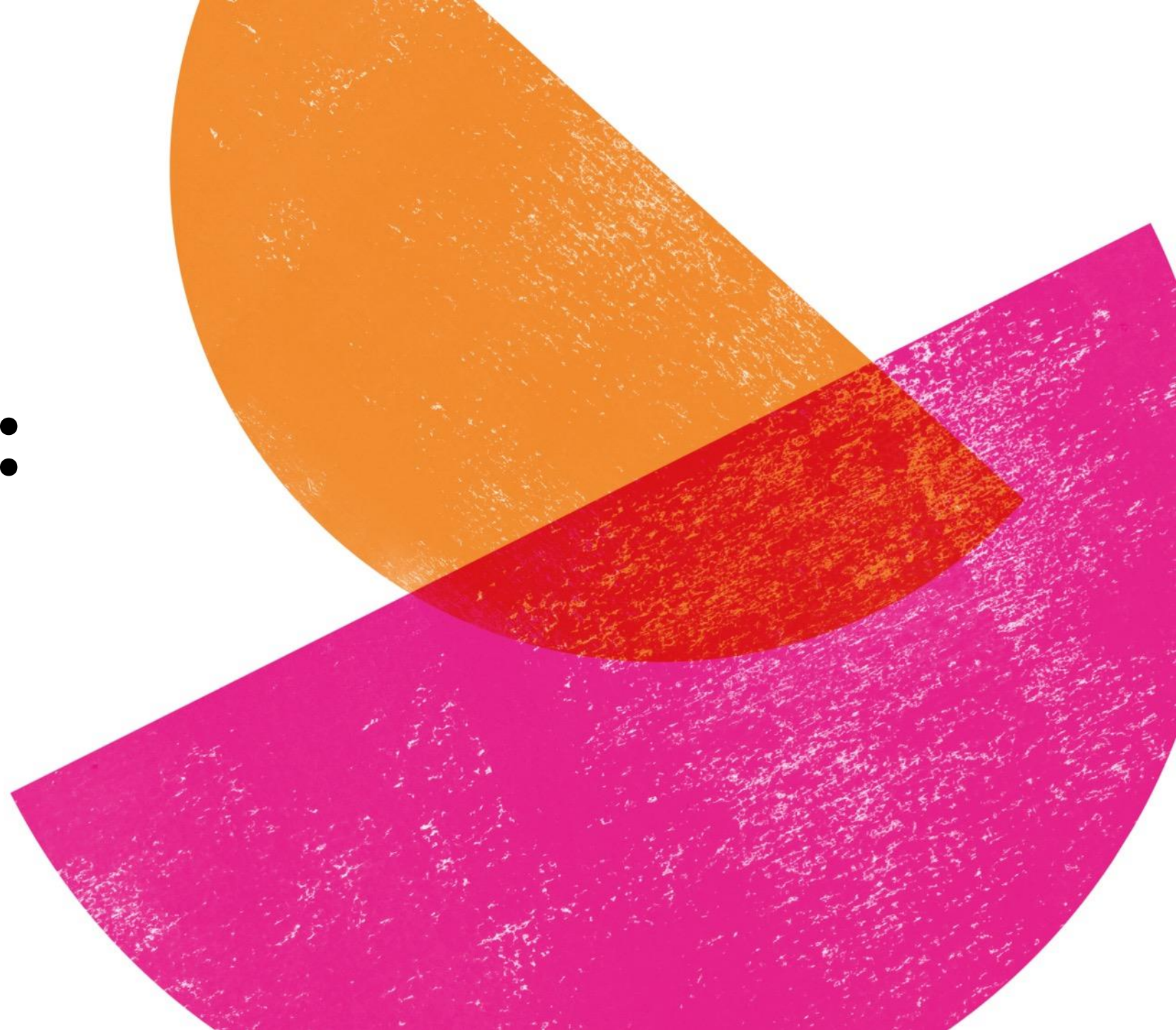
Name	Full text	Mean rating (/10)	% positive (6+/10)
GOV IMMIGRATION	<p><i>We know that the government must get a grip of the refugee crisis that has left so many uncomfortable. We are frank about having stricter policies for asylum and work routes. We are doubling the standard waiting time for legal migrants to gain permanent residence from 5 to 10 years, with longer periods for those who earn less. We are also requiring all refugees to return home after 30 months if their country becomes safe. Rules for employers and universities bringing people from abroad will be enforced more strongly, with bigger fines. We're increasing the number of foreign criminals to be deported and raising English requirements for dependents seeking citizenship. We are fighting the criminal smuggling gangs here and globally to get our border secure.</i></p>	6.8	73
REFUGEES IMMIGRATION	<p><i>We face a crisis in immigration and asylum hotels. We have an ambitious plan that uses the quota of 10,000 to 40,000 legal refugees who will be vetted where they are living. They will be prioritised based on their ability to integrate into host communities and ability to learn English. Money saved from asylum hotels will be used to help. It will follow the successful examples of Hong Kong and Ukraine when many more of the refugees were integrated into Britain. Britain needs legal immigrants for the NHS and social care. France has already accepted one legal refugee in and one illegal out. With us accepting legal, vetted refugees and France needing to cut the numbers passing through on the way to Britain, it will want to make a deal to police the channel and allow no boats to cross.</i></p>	6.7	80

Policy detail tested on community sponsorship for refugees

Immigration and Protection Bill

- This urgent plan addresses the twin crises of Channel crossings and asylum hotels.
- The solution lies in a radical shift: transferring the power to welcome refugees from the hands of smugglers, courts and Whitehall to British communities themselves. By coupling zero Channel crossings with large-scale community sponsorship — beginning with 10,000 places and expanding to 40,000 in coming years.
- Communities possess greater capacity for welcome than centralised, bureaucratic systems — but that is only when communities control selection. Canada's experience proves this: over 368,000 refugees have successfully integrated through private sponsorship since 1979.
- In return for the UK accepting 10,000 to 40,000 refugees, France too will prioritise comprehensive cooperation, intercepting and returning boats safely to French ports.
- Community sponsorship will allow the closing of asylum hotels and would save £2-3 billion annually.
- Sponsorship enhances security since all will undergo rigorous multi-stage vetting, biometric screening, medical examinations and cultural orientation programmes. Refugees are selected by British communities.
- We will partner with UN refugee organizations, other governments in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere. There would be skills assessment and job matching with UK employers. Communities will participate virtually in final interviews.
- Parliamentary approval will come after pilot tests and cross-party consultation will be sought for this comprehensive Immigration and Protection Bill.

APPENDIX: WRITTEN ANSWERS



Words to describe Britain

Group 1 Men, Uxbridge	Group 2 Women, Newcastle-under-Lyme	Group 3 Women, Altrincham	Group 4 Men, Leeds SW & Morley	Group 5 Women, Bournemouth	Group 6 Men, Reading
Struggling	Expensive	A mess	Divided	Troubled	Broken
depressing	Mess	mess	Broken	Divided	Worried
depressing	mess	fragmented	Broken	Broken	confused
stagnant	over priced	mess	Mess	Broken	disjointed
shambolic	expensive	Broken	sound	concerning	Undecided
divided	chaotic	sad state	Mess	Broken	Pessimistic
fast changing	change	Devastating	dispressed.	Decline	Overpopulated
	struggle	Over-populated	dissapointing	Fragmented	

Words to describe the government

Group 1 Men, Uxbridge	Group 2 Women, Newcastle-under-Lyme	Group 3 Women, Altrincham	Group 4 Men, Leeds SW & Morley	Group 5 Women, Bournemouth	Group 6 Men, Reading
indecisive	scandal	weak	Idiots	trying	Weak
indecisive	disappointment	disappointing	Disappointing	Trying	Weak
indecisive	Useless	Shit excuse my French	labour	Muddled	Joke
embarrassing	unhelpful	Poor	dishonest	Weak	pressure!
disappointing	mess, untrustworthy,	liars	greedy	Disconnected	shambles
	contradictory	disappointing	Useless	trying	Stable (relatively)
	back trackers	Out of its depth	unknown	Weak	indecisive
	better for young children with children centres but disappointing unfair system	Need to do better and stand up to the job	Inept	Out of touch	

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Peter McLeod and Stanley Greenberg

March 2026

GREENBERG RESEARCH

