



Mood of the Nation

Summer 2026

Thinks
— Insight & Strategy —

We put the people who matter to you at the heart of your thinking

Thinks is an international insight and strategy consultancy.



Our approach

4 x online focus groups with 2024 Labour voters

2 x groups with 2024 Labour voters considering Reform UK based in Pontefract and Thurrock

2 x groups with 2024 Labour voters considering the Liberal Democrats or the Green Party based in Bristol and Watford

24th June 2026

Nationally representative survey

Nationally representative survey of 2,079 UK Adults aged 18+

Weighted to be representative by:

- Demographics (age, gender, region, ethnicity, socioeconomic group)
- 2024 vote choice

24th – 25th June 2026

All fieldwork took place after the Makerfield by-election and Keir Starmer's resignation.

5 Things to know

1

Britain remains in permacrisis. For many, the Prime-ministerial revolving door is just another symptom.

2

The cost of living is the key totem of our failed politics.

3

As voters cast about for change (and hope), the electorate is becoming increasingly volatile.

4

Voters considering Reform or the Greens share a start point, but not much else. Labour >> Reform considerers seem a bit less convinced than previously.

5

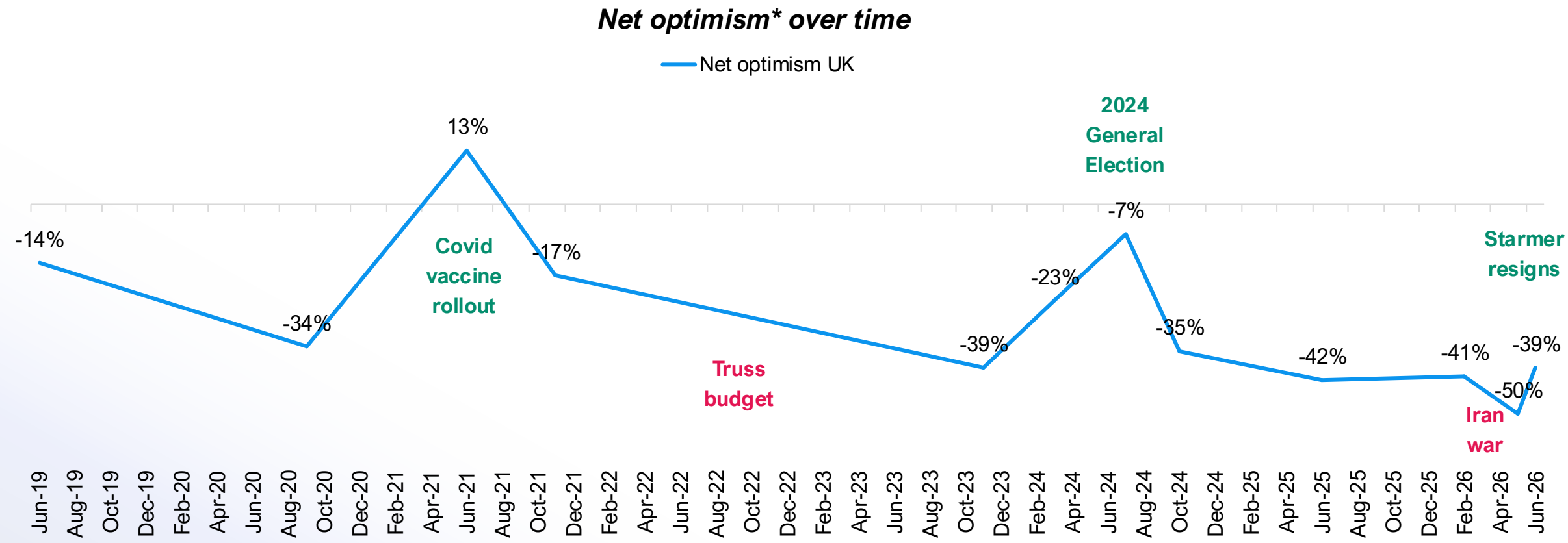
Burnham gives Labour a chance. But it's fragile, and fleeting.

Britain remains in permacrisis. For many, the Prime-ministerial revolving door is just another symptom.

“I am exceptionally pessimistic in probably all areas: socially, economically, politically. I genuinely don’t see how anything gets any better.”

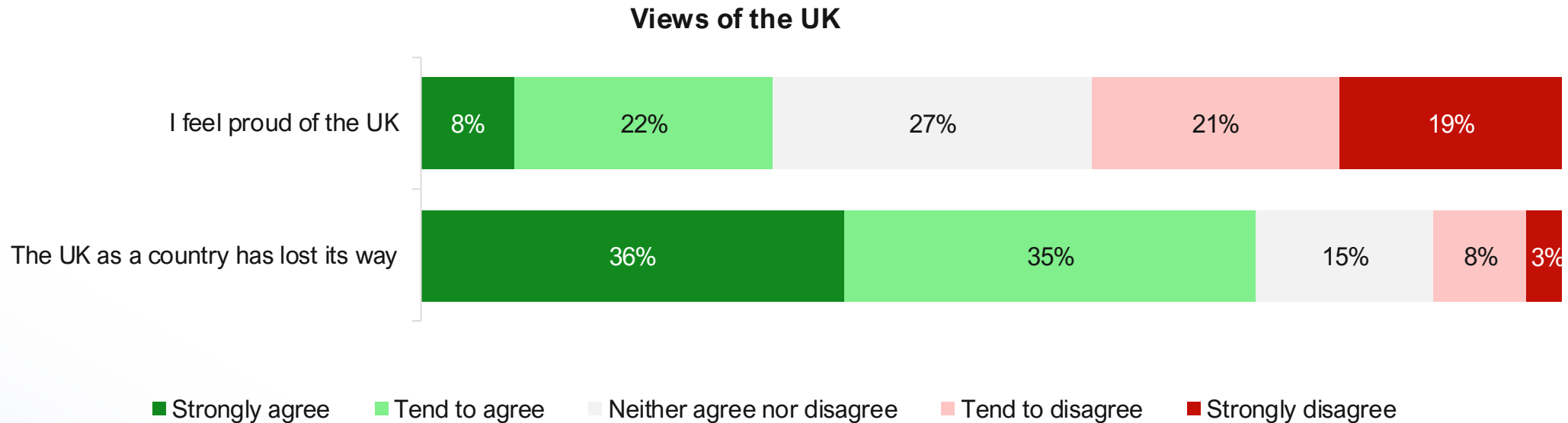
2024 Labour voter now considering Reform

Pessimism remains the default – but from an all-time low at the start of June, optimism for the UK ticked up after Starmer’s resignation.



Q1. Thinking about the next year or so, how optimistic or pessimistic do you feel about the following? Base June 2026: All respondents (n=2,079)
*Net optimism = those who are optimistic minus those who are pessimistic

Many feel that the UK has been limping from crisis to crisis at least since Covid, if not before. The country has lost its way.



"I've really noticed things getting worse since COVID but behind the scenes it probably was longer. I think it just feels more exaggerated since COVID."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

"I can't see any improvements... Whether it's picking up a prescription, the price of petrol, the cost of going out, it's unbelievable. I just feel like it's got worse and worse."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

The revolving door of Prime Ministers is seen as a symptom of a wider chaos. It's also embarrassing.

Lack of loyalty

This is felt to be particularly prevalent in increasingly adversarial politics, but reflective of a lack of respect and care in wider society.

"There's no loyalty, there's no... people can turn at the drop of a hat... can you guys just get your ducks in a row?"

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

Lack of delivery

Voters are tired of empty promises and see the churn in Prime Ministers as indicative of their lack of political effectiveness.

"They all say good things at the beginning, and then nothing ever happens... we just get a bit bored of hearing the same sort of thing over and over again."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

Lack of seriousness

A sense that politics has become ridiculous spectacle – more so than in other countries (or at least in Europe).

"It just takes away the seriousness for me... I feel like sometimes other countries don't take us seriously, and things like this just add to that."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

Many voters acknowledge that being PM isn't easy...

Being Prime Minister today is
no more difficult than it was in
the past

Being Prime Minister today
is **much more difficult** than
it used to be

40%

46%

Keir Starmer's replacement will be the UK's 7th Prime Minister since 2016. In comparison, the UK only had 5 different Prime Ministers in the 37 years before 2016.

Why?

#1

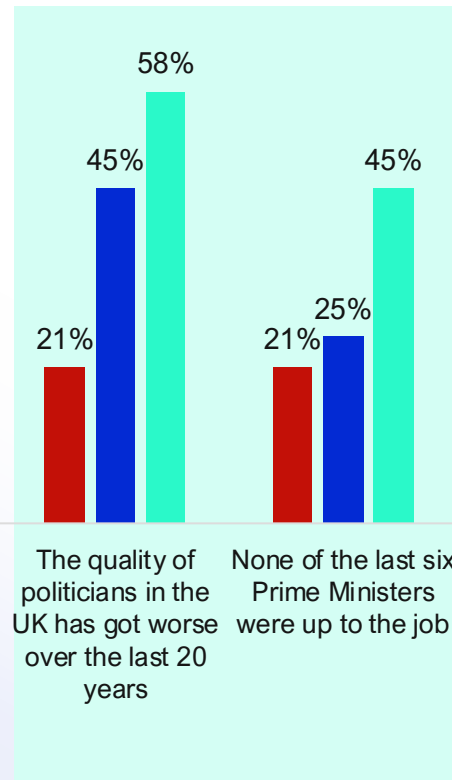
“The UK has become more divided and polarised in the last decade”
(selected by 36% of UK Adults)

Q11. Which of these statements come closest to your view? Don't worry if neither perfectly reflects your view, please just select which comes closest. Base June 2026: All respondents (n=2,079)

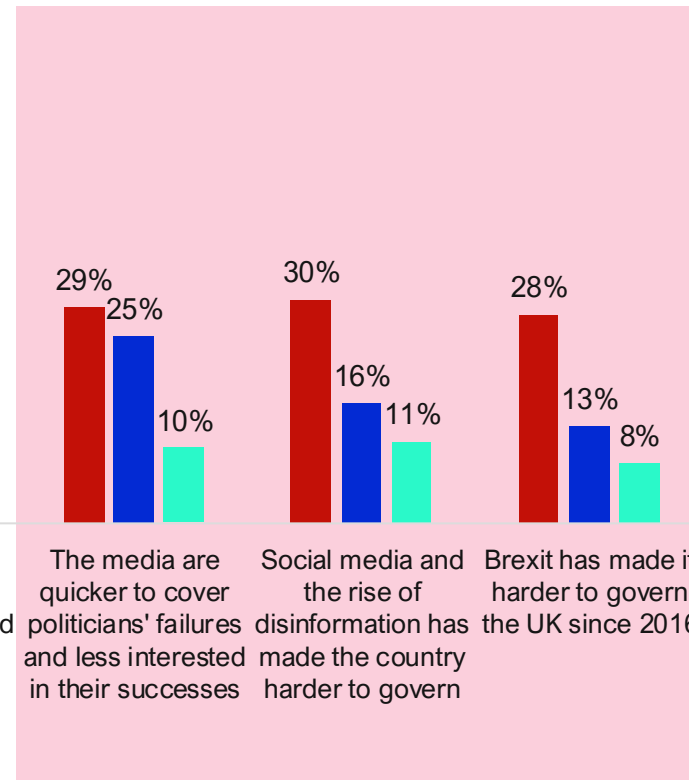
Q13. Keir Starmer's replacement will be the UK's 7th Prime Minister since 2016. In comparison, the UK only had 5 different Prime Ministers in the 37 years before 2016. Below are some reasons that people have suggested for this. Which if any of these do you think are the biggest reasons that recent prime ministers have been replaced more quickly than in the past? Choose up to three most important reasons and rank them. Base June 2026: All respondents (n=2,079)

...but voters (especially Reform voters) aren't letting politicians and leaders off the hook.

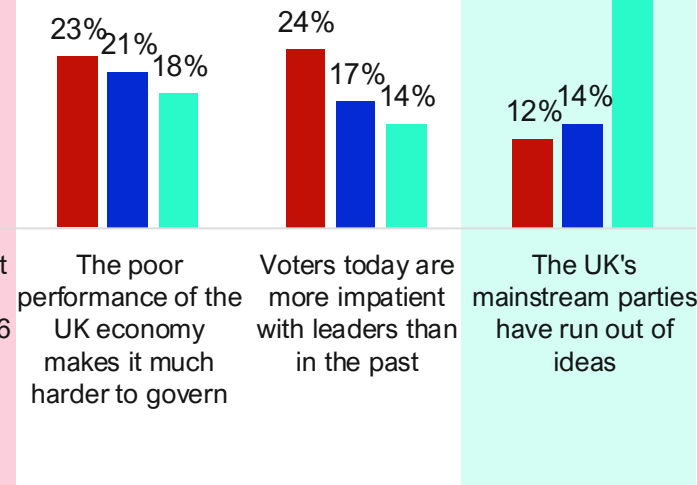
2024 Reform voters more likely to blame politicians



2024 Labour voters more likely to blame contextual factors



Definitely Not the Voters!

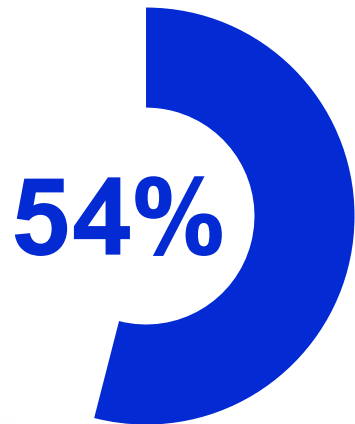
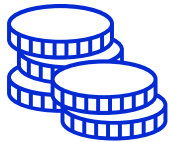


■ 2024 Labour voters ■ 2024 Conservative voters ■ 2024 Reform voters

A close-up photograph of a white paper cup. The cup is partially filled with a blue liquid. On the side of the cup, the text "£5" is printed in a large, blue, serif font. The background is a solid dark blue.

**The cost of living is the key totem
of our failed politics.**

Despite (some) signs of recovery, a majority feel worse off today than they did five years ago.



Agree that their household is worse off today than five years ago

(21% disagree)

“All of my friends, we’re all... no one can afford anything, so it definitely makes you feel nervous about the future.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

“We get paid, pay the bills... we might have one night out a month. Maybe. We might have a family takeaway once a month. And that’s it.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

Thinks tracks five groups within the public with different experiences of the cost of living crisis.



TOP of the WORLD

Very optimistic about the essentials and the luxuries



CAUTIOUS but COMFORTABLE

Optimistic about the essentials and fairly optimistic about luxuries



JUST about MANAGING

Optimistic about the essentials and pessimistic about luxuries



BEGINNING to STRUGGLE

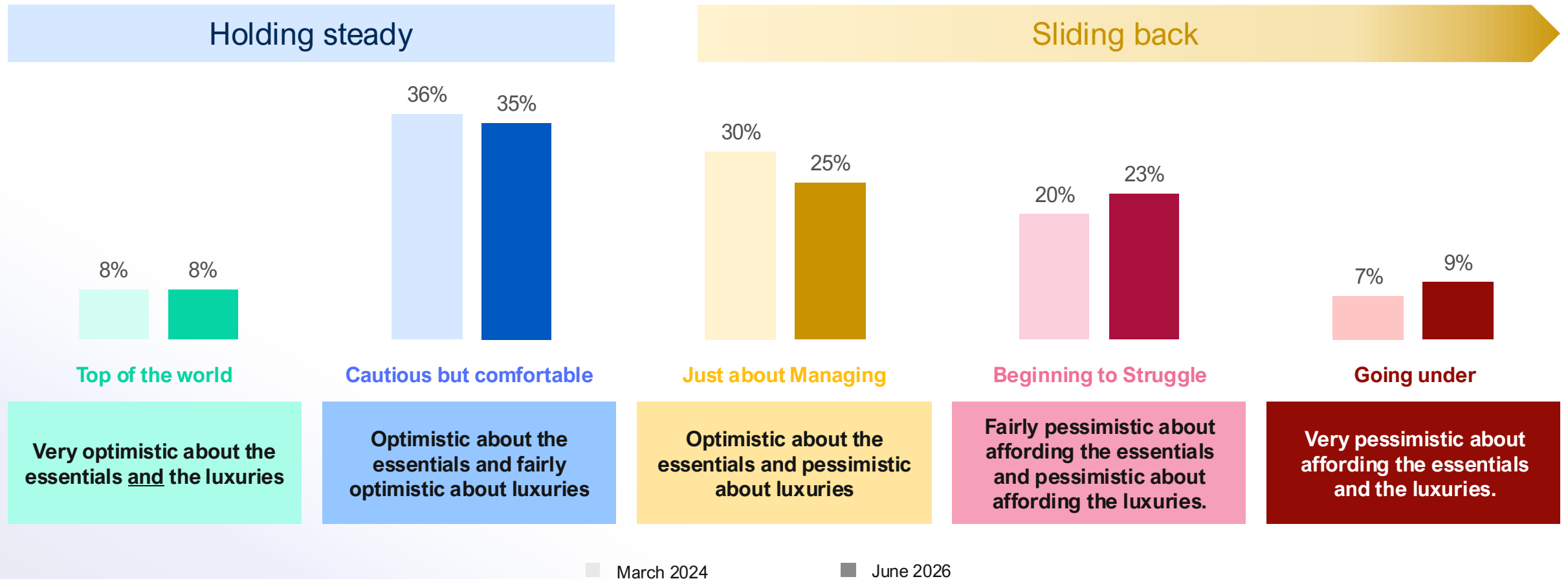
Fairly pessimistic about affording the essentials and pessimistic about affording the luxuries.



GOING UNDER

Very pessimistic about affording the essentials and the luxuries.

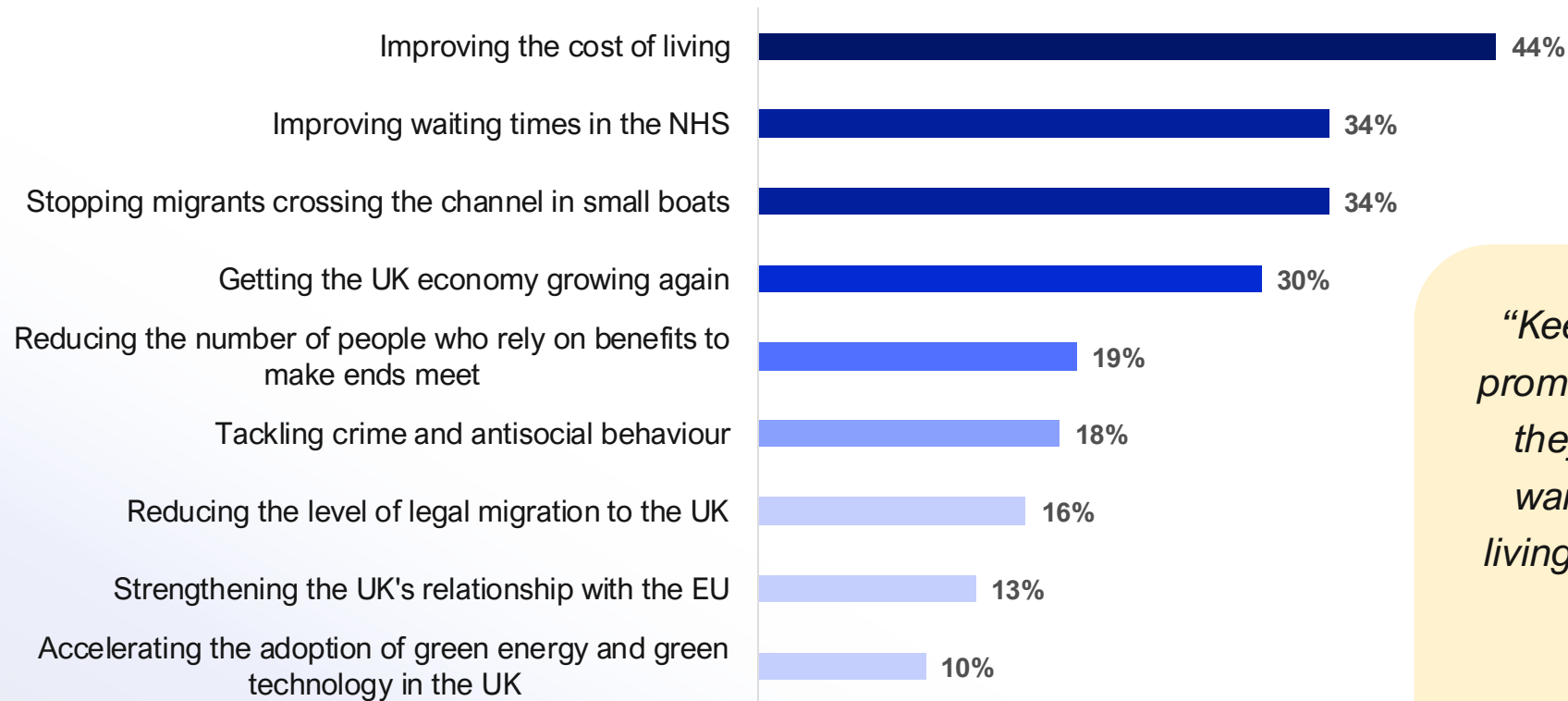
Whilst the most comfortable are holding steady, the last two years have seen an increase amongst the least secure groups.



Asked what Government should prioritise, improving the cost of living is most frequently selected.

Government priorities

Showing % selecting each in their top 3 issues.
List contained 18 items. Chart shows only issues selected by >10%

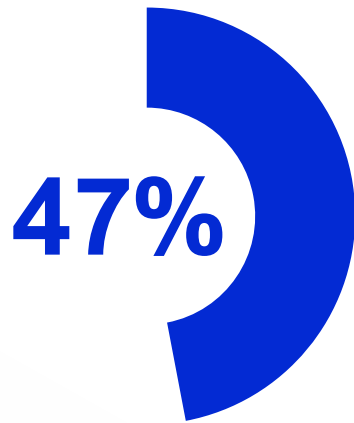


“Keep their promises. Keep their promises, and actually deliver what they’ve said they would... NHS waiting times... and the cost of living. That’s the main two issues.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

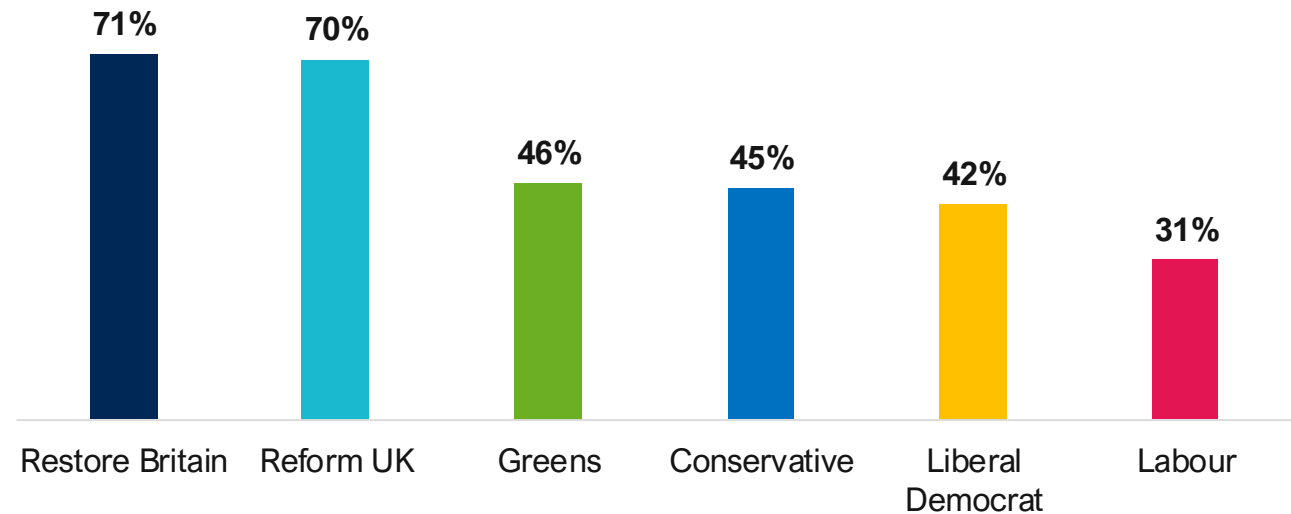
As voters cast about for change (and hope), the electorate is becoming increasingly volatile.

Political turmoil, financial pressures and a sense of stasis are fuelling openness to political alternatives.



Agree that neither Labour nor the Conservatives have managed to change the country for the better, we may as well try another party

(23% disagree)

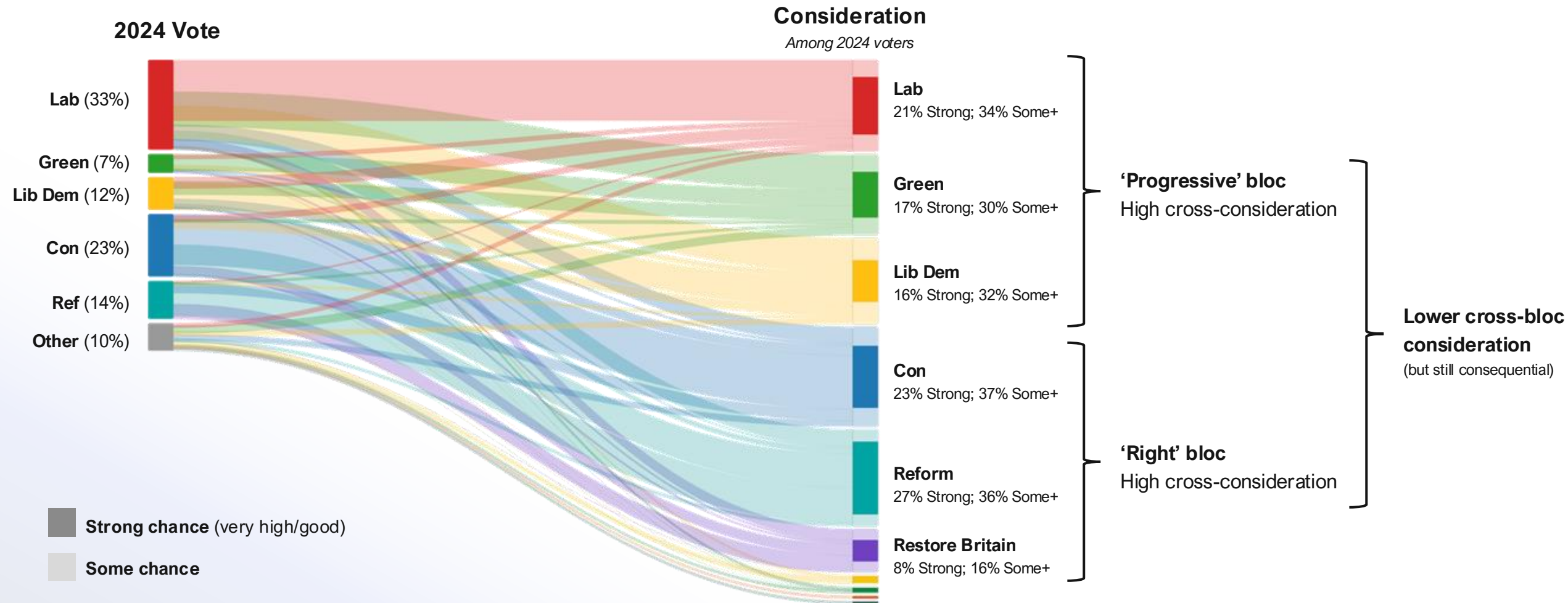


"We need someone just to come in and shake everything up, and literally turn it upside down... we need someone to think of the UK."

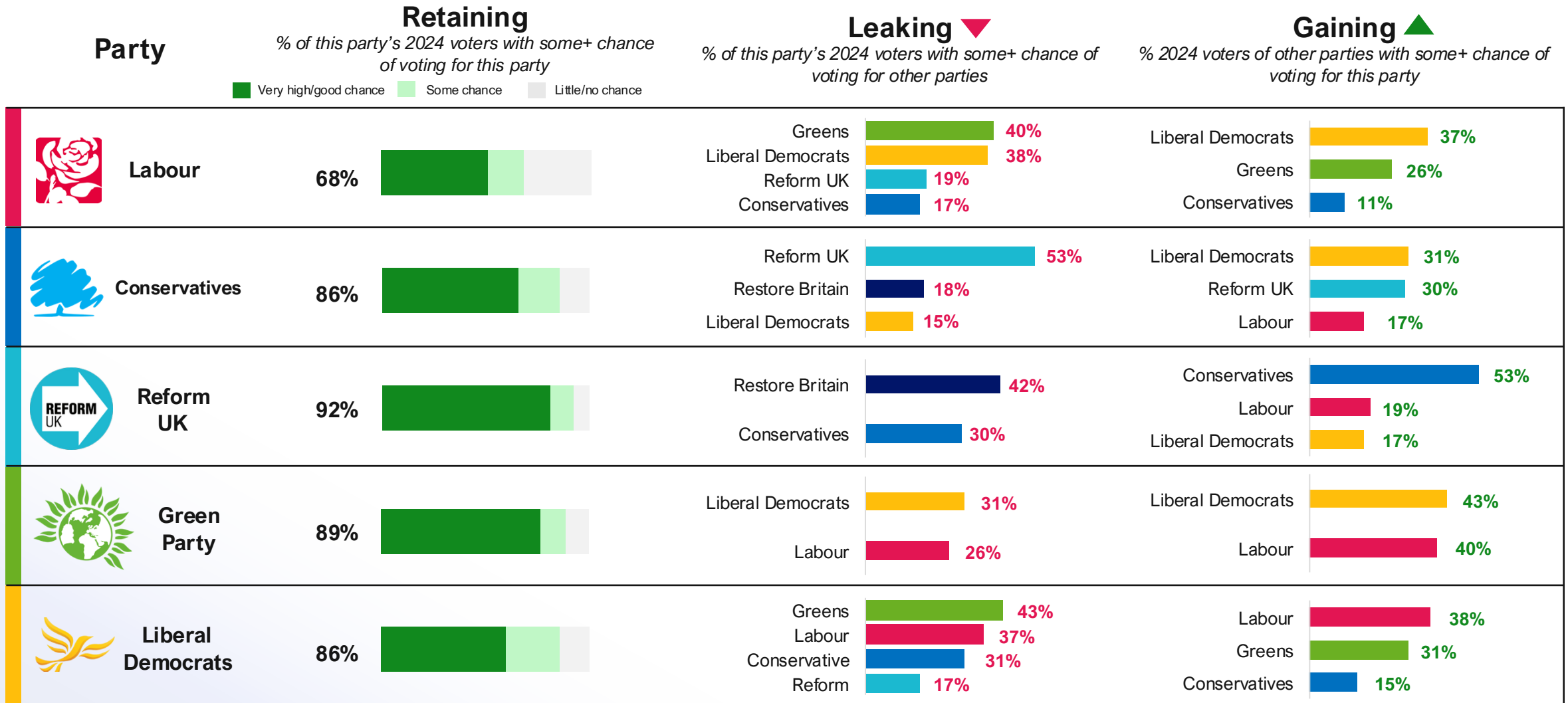
- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

Today's electorate is characterised by multi-party consideration.

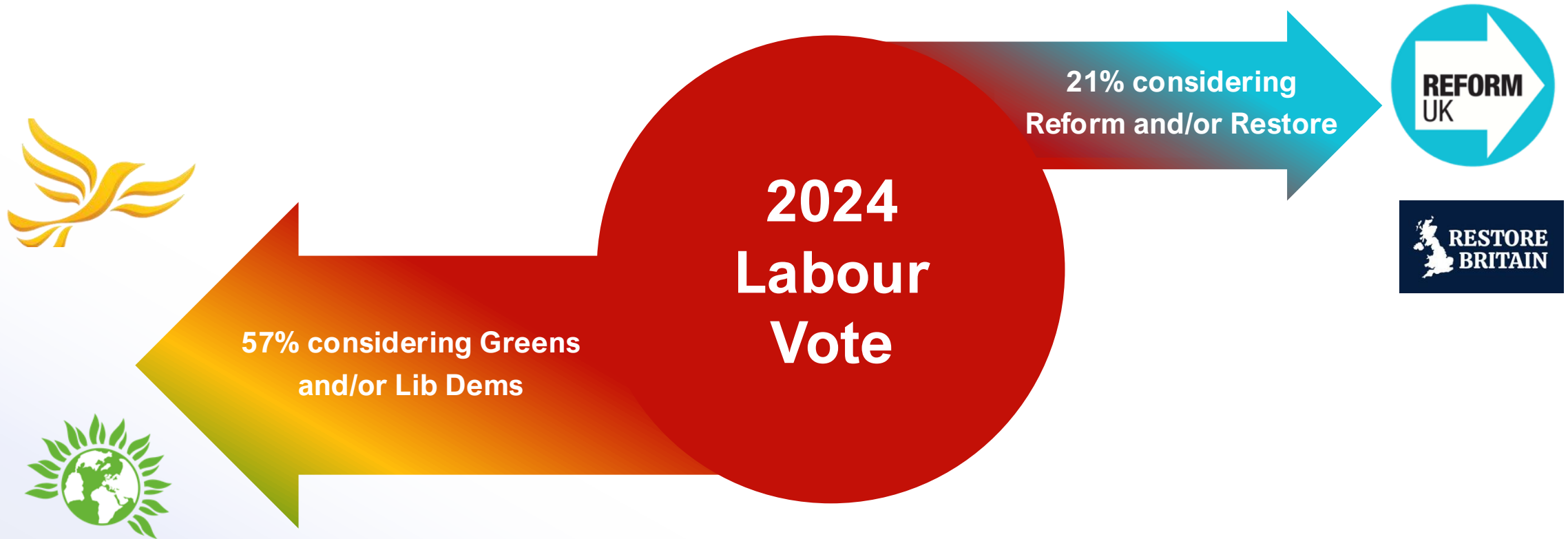
The historic 'main' parties are now (at best) one option in a 'bloc'.



Note: Respondents may express a high/good chance of voting for more than one party; flows represent consideration rather than exclusive vote transfer.



The challenge for Labour is particularly acute. A fifth of Labour 2024 voters say there is at least some chance they will vote Reform and/or Restore. More than half are considering Greens or Lib Dems.

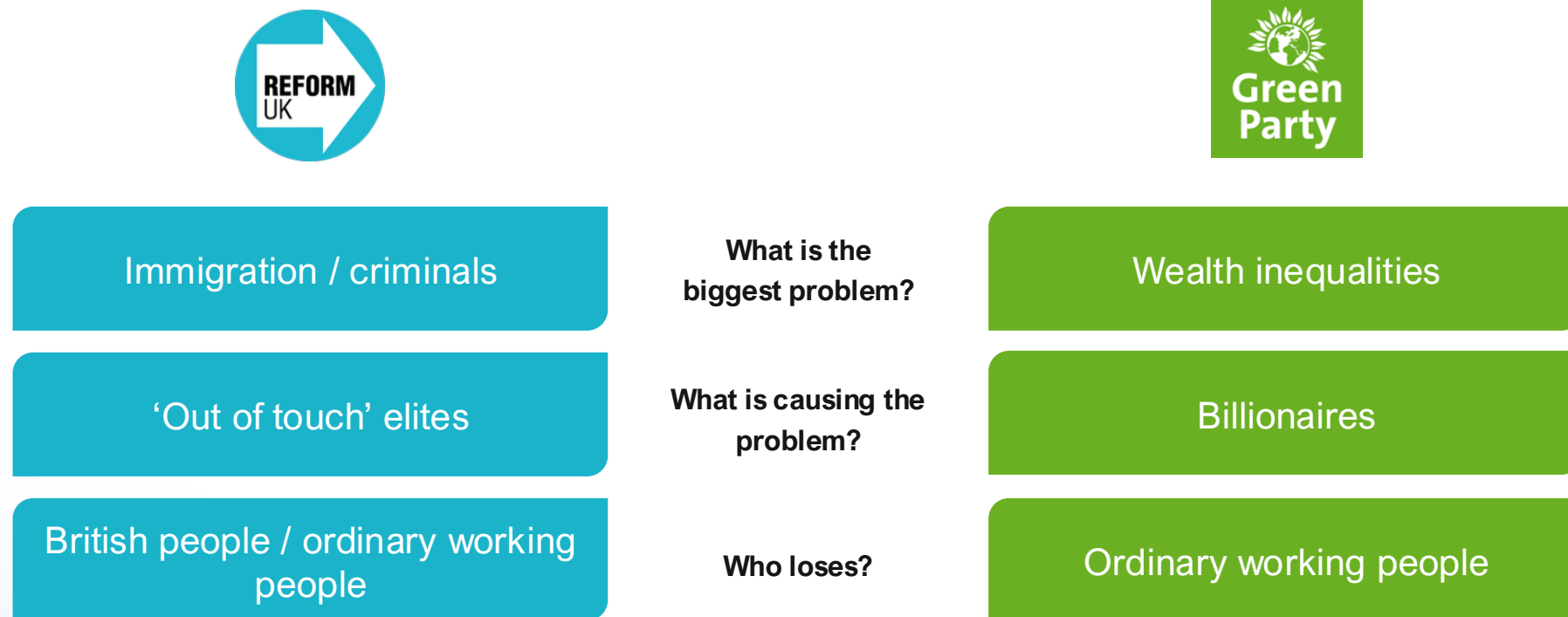


Voters considering Reform or Green share a start point, but not much else.

Labour >> Reform considerers seem a bit less convinced than previously...

**Turning
Point**

Despite a shared belief that politics-as-usual is failing ordinary people, Reform and Green considerers' underlying analysis differs:



*"It [**immigration**] is putting a huge strain on our NHS and other services, when there's British people that need support as well."*

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform UK

*"The whole Reform culture is getting working-class people to turn on each other and blame each other... we've got all these **millionaires and billionaires** profiteering and causing all these issues."*

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

Reform considerers tend to be older, male, and much less likely to have a degree. Immigration is their top issue by far.

44%

Aged 55+

(compared to 39% of all adults)

55%

Male

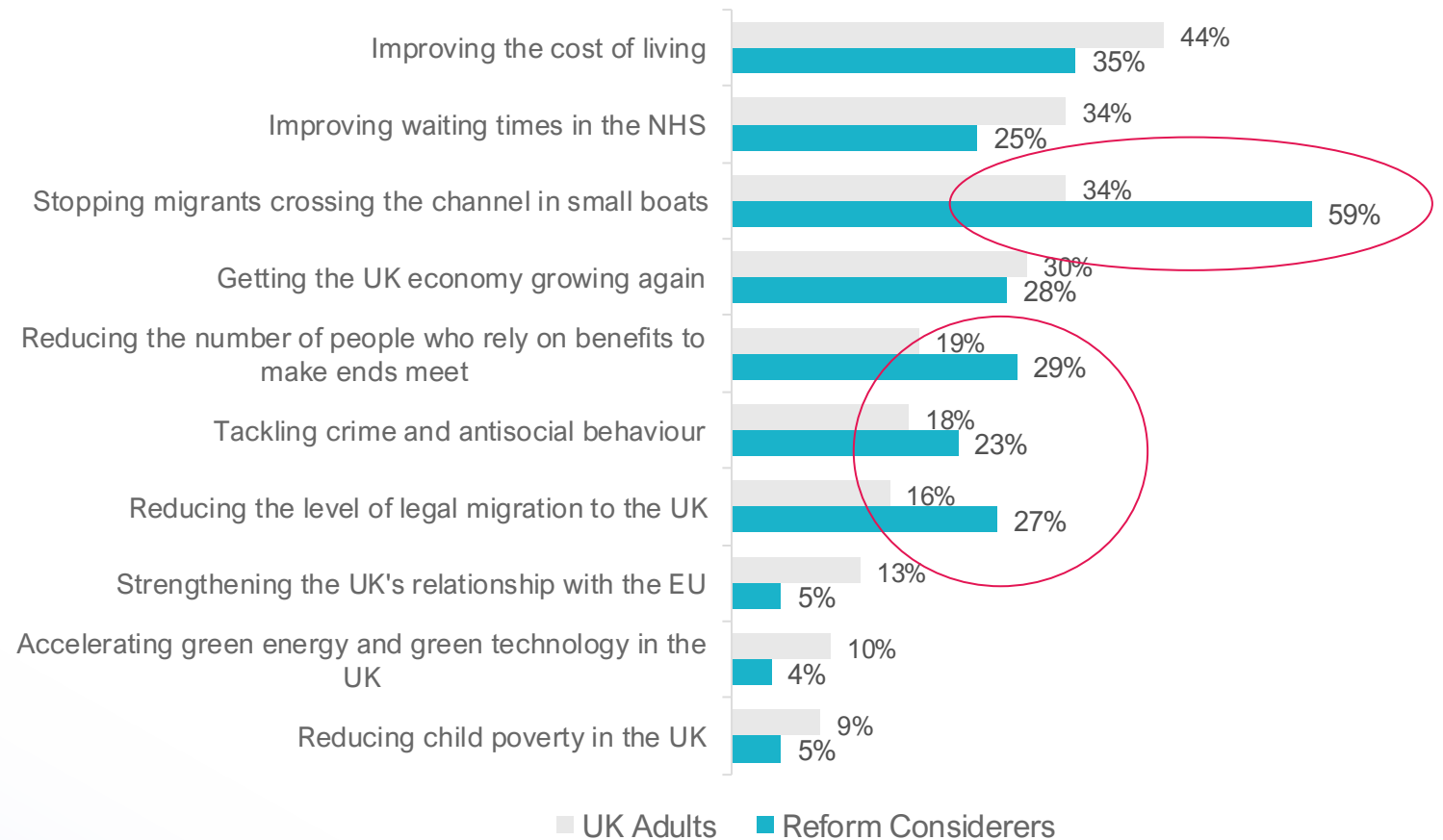
(compared to 48% of all adults)

78%

Non-graduate

(Persuasion UK data)

Top 3 priorities for the government



Green considerers tend to be younger and more ethnically diverse. They tend to prioritise poverty, the EU and Net Zero.

43%

Aged 18-34

(compared to 27% of all adults)

44%

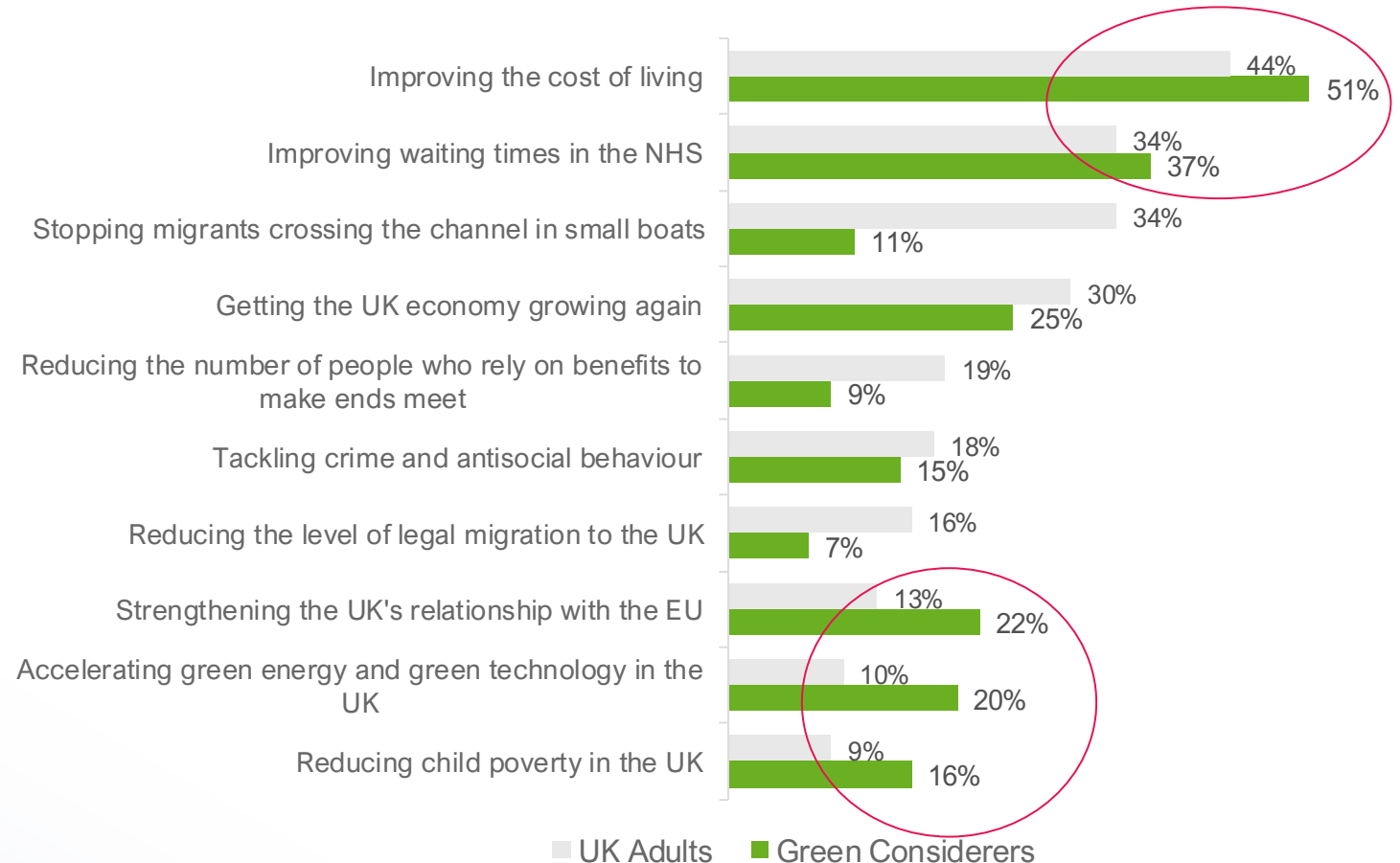
Ethnic minority respondents consider

(compared to 25% of white respondents)

**Over-index in lower middle
graduate roles**

(Persuasion UK)

Top 3 priorities for the government



2024 Labour voters now considering progressive alternatives remain open to Labour. Especially if it will stop Reform.

Chances of voting Labour

■ Very high chance ■ Good chance ■ Some chance ■ A small chance ■ No chance at all

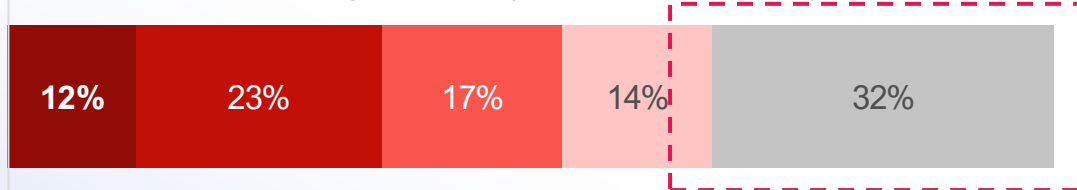
2024 Lab
Considering
LD/Green

Some chance or higher: 74% (up from 70% in 2025)



2024 Lab
Considering
Reform/
Restore

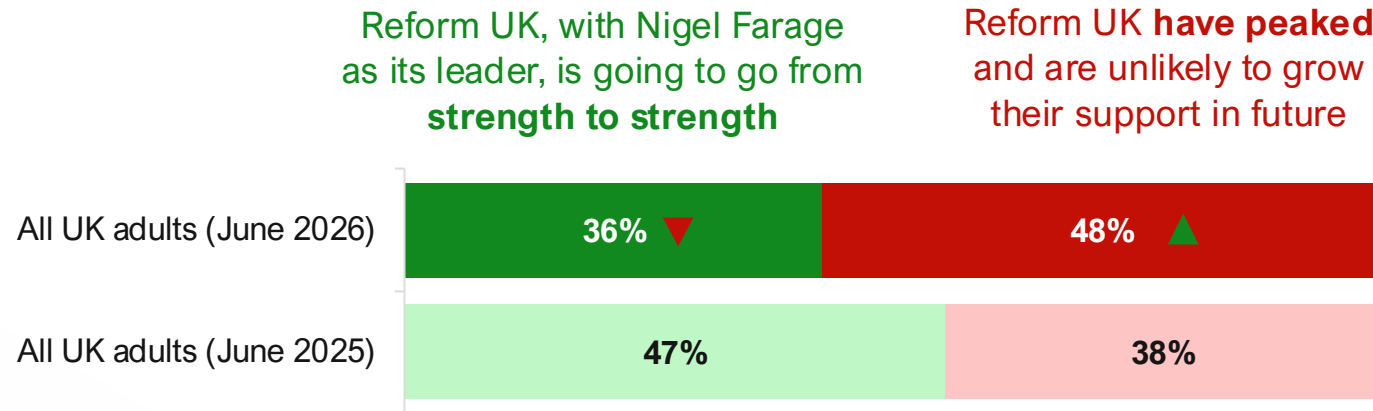
Some chance or higher: 52% (up from 48% in 2025)



60%

Of Green/Lib Dem
considerers who voted
Labour in 2024 agree they will
vote for whichever party will
stop Reform from winning
(12% disagree)

The public feel Reform is losing momentum. Even among Reform considerers there are hints the shine might be coming off the party and its leader.



Nigel Farage and his £5m “gift” have left a bitter taste in some considerers’ mouths.

Some even think Reform may be better off with a different leader.

“I’m not a fan, to be perfectly honest... the party could do good... let’s give Reform a chance, but yeah, maybe they should have someone else in charge .”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

“He got a £5 million gift from a donor ... I don’t know who it was. It was it some businessman based over in Thailand or something, and he said it wasn’t for anything, and he said ... it was for his own security. And, well, you know, come on, man, you can’t say that you’re a man of the people whilst getting £5 million gifts. It’s just not on.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

42% Of 2024 Reform voters say at least some chance they’d vote **Restore Britain** in an immediate election

We dropped our focus group participants a WhatsApp to gauge their responses to the “Clacton Gambit”...

“I think he’s just creating a big fuss and trying to constantly keep himself in the limelight. I don’t think its about the party anymore – it’s all about him.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

“I think he’s a charlatan. He’s been caught doing wrong and he’s trying to get out of it, instead of graciously accepting that. Nobody donates 5 million as a thank you. Not unless they’ve got something big in return.”

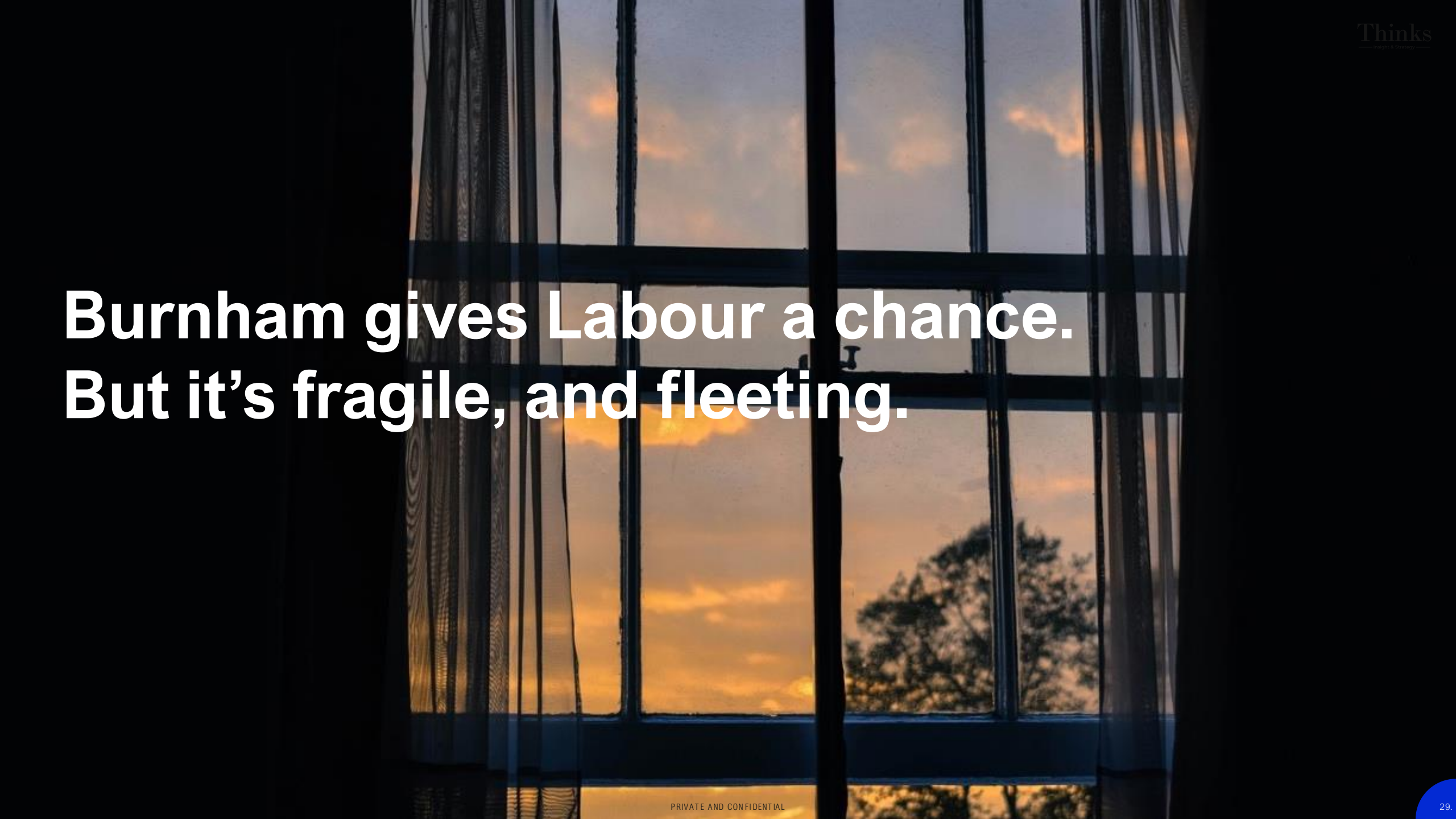
- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

“[It’s] Puzzling. He says it shows that if he’s re-elected that the people of Clacton want him. Only one candidate standing against him – Count Binface – so he’s more than likely to get back in.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

“I have no issue with Reform as a whole, but they should be walking away from him ASAP if they want any chance of getting on the other side of the aisle. If Farage had any care at all for the country instead of himself, he would understand this and walk away altogether too.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

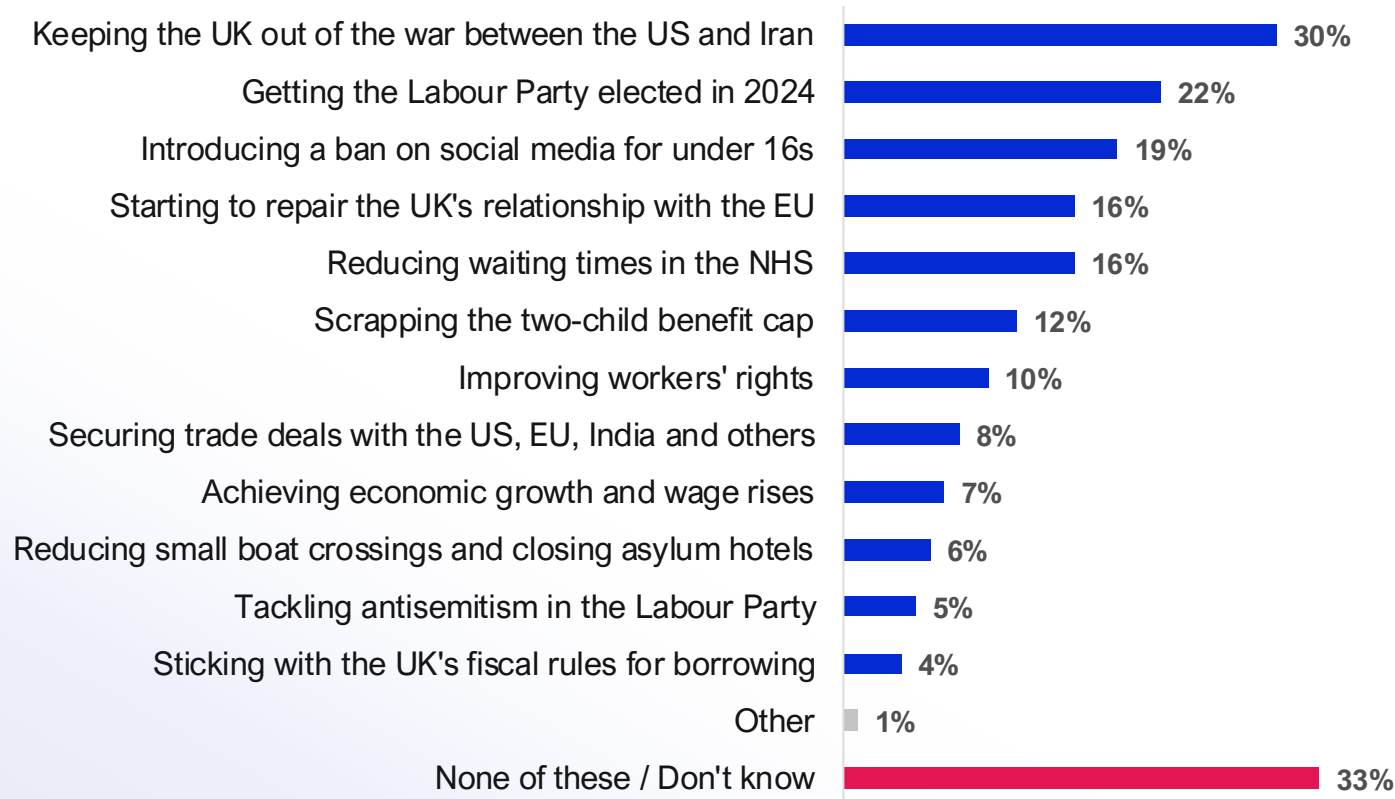


**Burnham gives Labour a chance.
But it's fragile, and fleeting.**

There is a strong sense that Starmer has failed to deliver. Getting Labour elected may be his most tangible legacy.

What will historians consider to be Keir Starmer's greatest achievements?

Showing % selecting each in their top 3



"They have really disappointed me... whoever you think, oh, they're gonna do something, they don't do nothing. It's just the promises that have been made."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

"Labour had so many good promises... I'm not gonna say I fell for it, but... they've not really kept to their word."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

There is cautious optimism that Andy Burnham could shake things up in a positive way – but also a healthy dose of scepticism

What, if anything, is making you feel optimistic?

Showing a selection of “Andy Burnham” mentions

"Andy Burnham will save us from Reform."

"The removal of Starmer... Whether Burnham, who I like as a person, will supply positive change is the great unknown."

"Nothing is making me more optimistic... with Andy Burnham likely to be PM things are going to get worse."



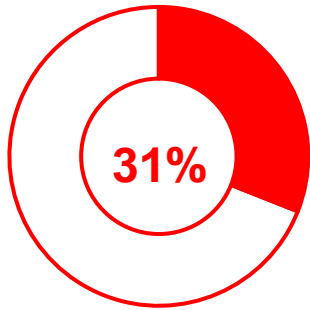
"Hopefully Andy Burnham will become PM and make positive sweeping changes!"

"Andy Burnham replacing Keir Starmer - he seems to have more vision, and will hopefully inject some optimism into things and be more daring, and take the radical steps needed to improve public services and open up opportunities across the country."

"We are going to very soon have a new PM in Andy Burnham who is basically Keir Starmer with a personality."

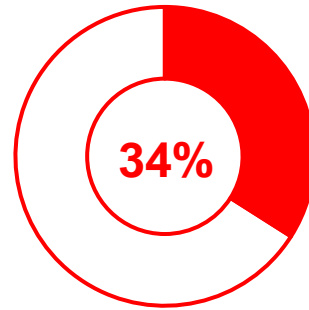
"Nothing, the UK will get worse and much worse if Burnham PM."

Among 2024 Labour voters, Andy Burnham is still an unknown, but they expect him to bring at least *some* change



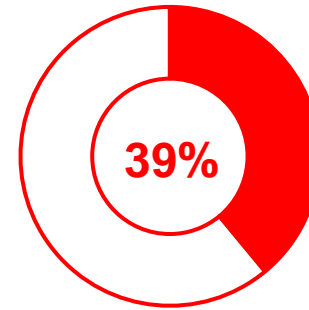
Agree that he is **different from other politicians**
(21% disagree)

20% UK adults agree



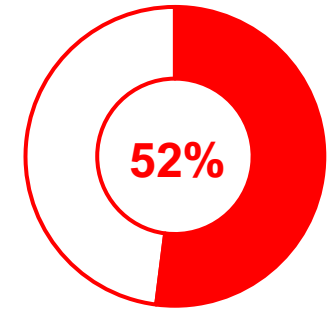
Agree they **know what he stands for**
(30% disagree)

23% UK adults agree



Say that he will be a **better Prime Minister** than Keir Starmer
(10% say he will be worse)

27% UK adults say he will be better



Expect him to make very **different policy choices** from Keir Starmer
(35% expect them to be similar)

44% UK adults expect him to make different choices

"I don't know too much about Andy, to be fair... but I know people say, how much worse can they get?"

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

"I don't actually know much about him, but I'm interested to hear more, and see more, and see what he can bring."

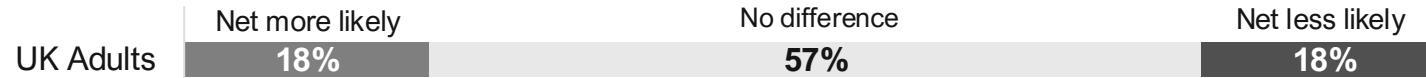
- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

"Even just someone with an accent... is quite refreshing to hear."

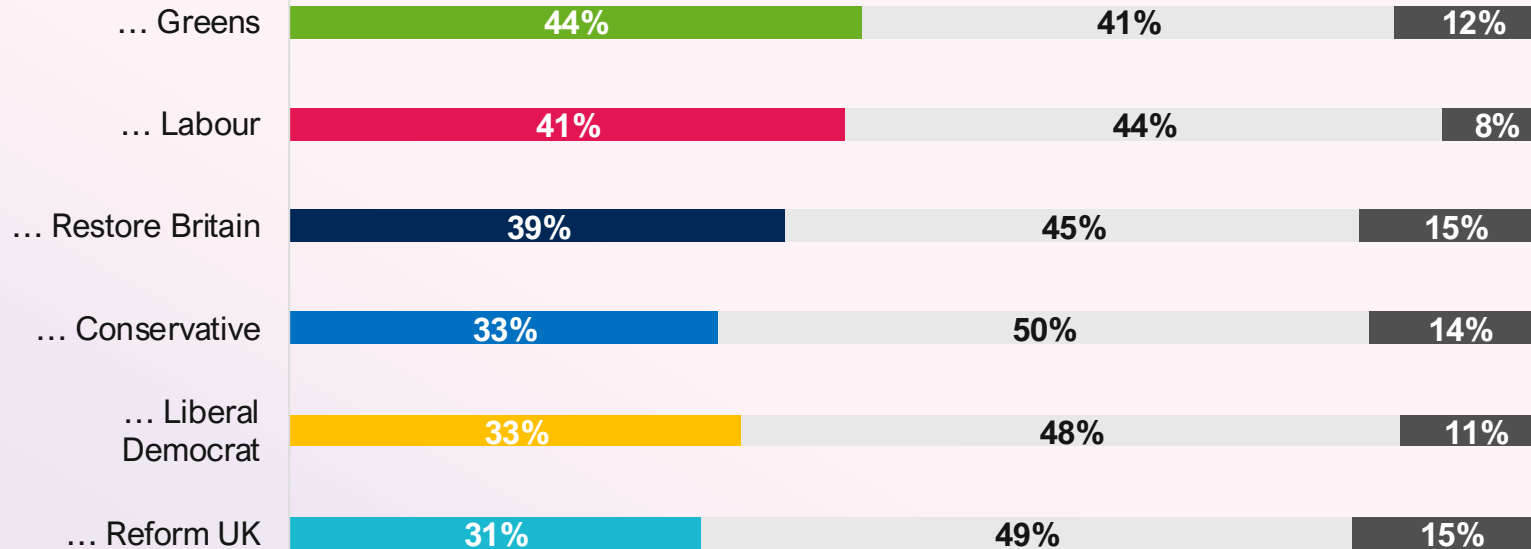
- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

Across the board, potential Labour switchers are more likely to consider sticking with Labour if Andy Burnham succeeds Starmer.

Likelihood to vote Labour if Andy Burnham becomes leader



2024 Labour voters now considering...

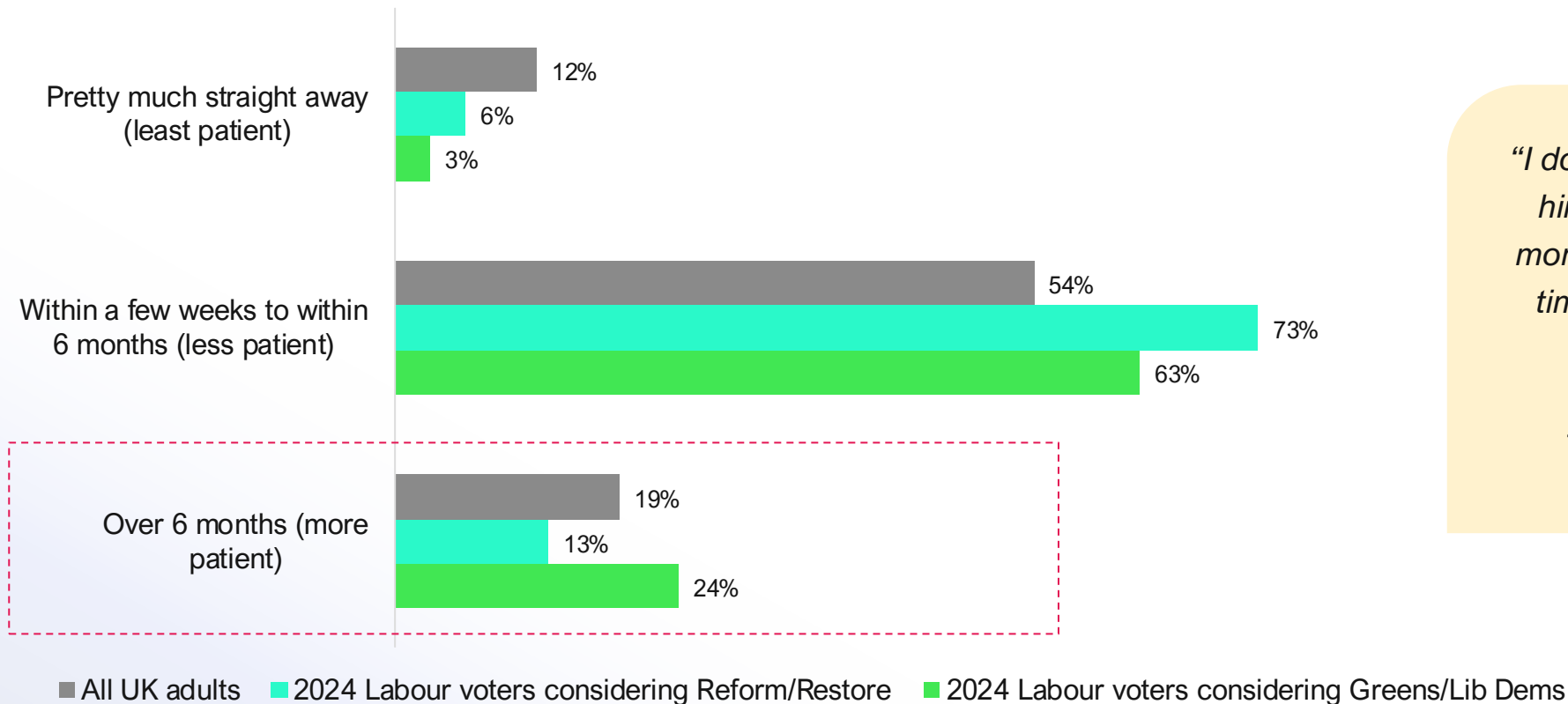


"He did well in Manchester... Burnham seems to be a little bit more finger on the pulse... maybe it's because he's been up here for a long while. He's heard more people, he's been on the ground more than Starmer has."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

But voters expect to make their minds up about “Andy” fairly rapidly.

Imagine Andy Burnham becomes Prime Minister, how long will it take you to decide whether he is doing a good job or not?



“I don’t really know much about him, so... I think six to eight months would be a reasonable time to see how someone is doing.”

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

Voters are more impatient for impact than they were in 2024.

If Andy Burnham is an effective Prime Minister, I would expect to see **real improvements in our country within the next year**

June 2026



Even if Andy Burnham is an effective Prime Minister, it will take **a year or two** before we start seeing much improvement

Past waves

June 2025



If this government were effective, we would have seen **real improvements in within the next year / by now**

July 2024

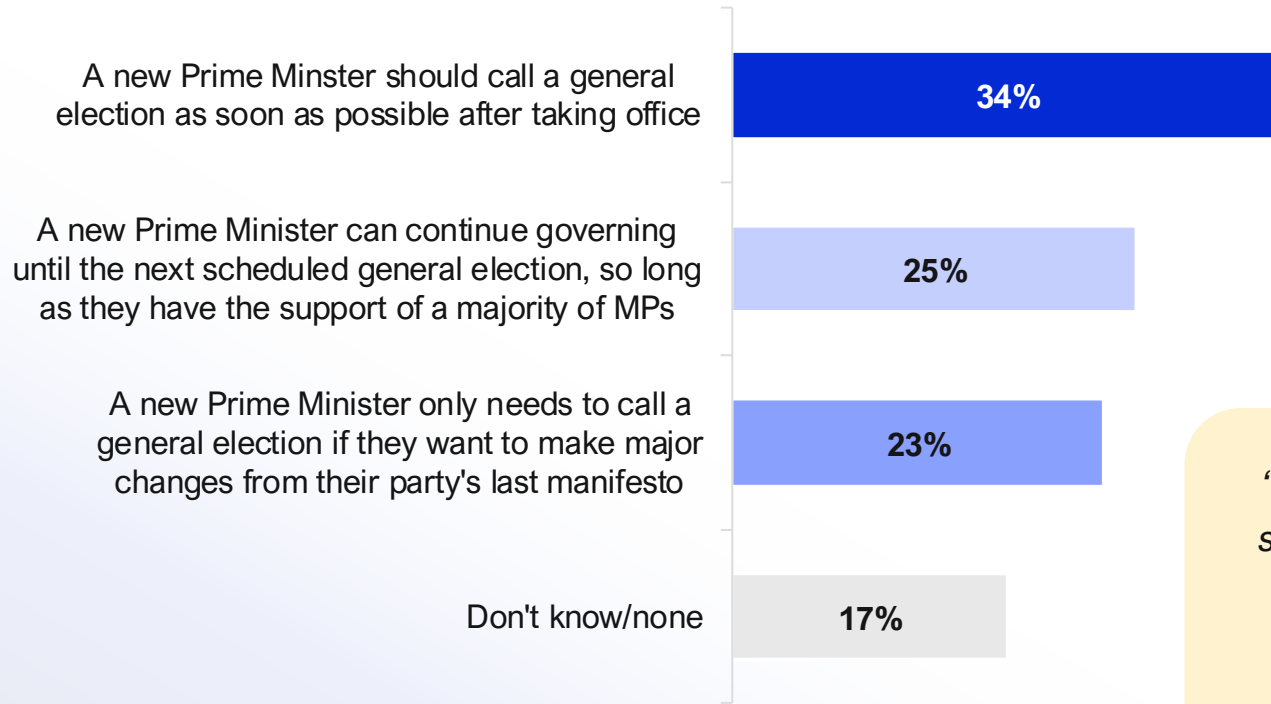


Even if this government were effective, it would take **a year or two / take longer than a year** before we see real improvement

While a third think that a new PM should call a general election after taking office, many are content for them to keep governing.

Should a new PM call an election?

Showing % selecting each option



Preference for an immediate election is greater among those who **already oppose** the governing party (this was also the case in past Conservative mid-term switches).

"From a principle point of view, it feels like there should be some sort of democratic process involved, but from a practical point of view... it feels like it makes sense to just crack on with it."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

Despite a theoretical preference for sticking to the manifesto, voters prioritise change.

The new Labour Prime Minister **should be bound by the manifesto** that Labour put forward at the 2024 General Election

The new Labour Prime Minister **should be free to break from the manifesto** that Labour put forward at the 2024 General Election

46%

35%

Andy Burnham's government **must stick to the promises** Labour made at the 2024 general election, even if this means they **can't deliver change**

Andy Burnham's government **must deliver change**, even if this means **breaking some of the promises** Labour made at the 2024 general election

36%

46%

"Change quick... even no matter how small the difference is, at least he can give us some hope, and that's what the country needs."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

"Cherry-pick some of the things from the manifesto... make a couple more promises, and if he actually sticks to them... then he's got a good chance."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Reform

"I feel like they should have the same principles that people agree to initially, but, ... if something they've tried isn't working out, then it makes sense to naturally evolve things to improve them."

- 2024 Labour voter considering Greens/Lib Dems

“Make a difference and prove us wrong. Make a difference to the people so they can breathe a little bit. That’s all we need.”

2024 Labour voter now considering Reform

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As voters cast about for change (and hope), the electorate is becoming increasingly volatile.

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Thank you

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