

# Babelfish

Reform needs reform Next Edition

March 2026

## REFORM PARTY'S HYPOCRISY LAID BARE

# WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE KIDDING MR CRYPTO?

INSIDE: How  
**YOU** can  
tackle Reform  
16-page special



Nigel Farage says he's on the side of British workers yet invests his riches in global crypto

THE British public demands change – but is far from sure it wants to roll the dice on Reform's new populist order.

Whilst the Gorton and Denton by-election result was the ultimate reality check for Labour as its 13,000-majority vanished, Reform has yet to convince a skeptical public it can run the country – or that its whingeing and revisionist approach is the answer.

So what can Labour do? How can the party redefine itself to a disaffected Britain?

Understand the country's struggles, get to know

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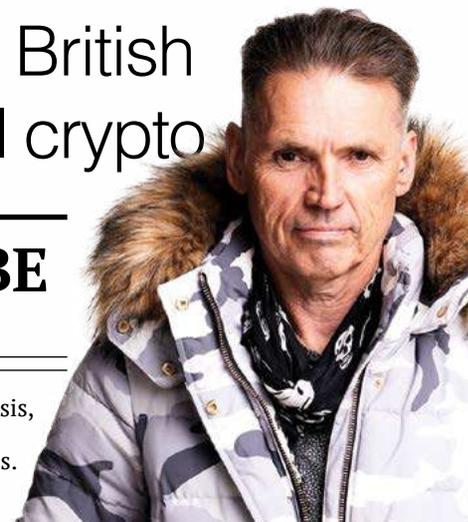
**By Dale Vince OBE**

*Green Industrialist*

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the challenges of a persisting cost of living crisis, and communicate assurance and action loud enough to be heard by those who feel voiceless.

**FULL STORY: PAGES 4&5**



# BABELFISH: Reform needs reform

We're Babelfish. Not quite straight out of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy - but in the same vein. A voice in your ear, making sense of the nonsense. Talking your language. Unspinning the spin. We're a pop up. New media, here to intervene - bearing facts, tongue in cheek, for fun, with purpose.

In this our third edition, we're taking a long, hard look at those who've fallen for Nigel Farage's forked tongue and pledged allegiance to Reform UK.

Farage may well be sizing up the No10 briefing room as a venue for his paid-for personalised messages, but we can reveal this is far from a done deal.

We've got some of Britain's sharpest minds to explain how to connect with those who've abandoned Labour's ship - and hope to persuade them to jump back in.

We are Babelfish. We are here to help.

Keep an ear out for us.



# HOPE HATE

# Thought you knew everything about Reform voters... WELL THINK AGAIN!

STRUGGLING ordinary people with legitimate concerns, or authoritarian racists one step removed from the organised far-right? Neither of these characterisations of Reform's voter base is satisfactory, because neither is true in its entirety: Reform's high support necessarily means a diverse coalition of voters.

HOPE not hate is one step closer to understanding the clusters of opinion, and how we persuade amenable groups away from Farage.

Our survey of over 11,000 people is the largest and most extensive study into Reform's voter base to date, and reveals factions with surprising views. Of course immigration is a key draw for many.

However, a lot of would-be Reform voters are at odds with the party on areas including employment rights, climate, public services and community cohesion.

These are all areas that this government is delivering on. However, delivery without effective communication allows Reform to compound the mistrust and frustration of its Labour-persuadable voters.

In brief, these are the five segments revealed in our data analysis:

**Working Right (26%):** Angry, economically insecure and alienated, they combine strong support for workers with a hard-edged anti-immigrant worldview.

**Hardline Conservatives (18%):** Comfortable, older, individualist and committed to shrinking the state, these voters are ideologically closest to traditional conservatism rather than Reform's populism.

**Squeezed Stewards (29%):** Middle-of-the-road and anxious about the future, they combine hostility to immigration with a genuine concern for nature, community and fairness.

**Contrarian Youth (9%):** Financially insecure and politically volatile, the diverse Contrarian Youth mix cynicism and conspiracy with flashes of optimism and a craving for belonging.

**Reluctant Reformers (19%):** Frustrated with political failure but driven by fairness, competence and a desire for stability rather than radical change. They back Reform out of frustration, not conviction, and are the most persuadable segment.

The segmentation adds nuance which



## AND HOW TO BRING THEM BACK FROM THE BRINK, BY ANKI DEO

HOPE not hate HEAD OF POLICY AND INSIGHTS

allows us to target specific voters on the issues that matter to them. HOPE not hate can even use data to suggest how the segments are spread across constituencies, ensuring we engage with the groups that can realistically change the outcome of an election.

This could be essential for turning over small margins at the ward/constituency level and drastically affecting election results.

In four separate September 2025 constituency MRPs, YouGov, Focaldata, More in Common and Find Out Now predicted at least 140 seats with margins of 5% or lower, and an average of 31 seats with margins of 1% or lower.

Small swings could guarantee or deny Reform UK the majority it needs to form a government.

We don't need to win over every Reform voter - targeting just a handful in key seats can make all the difference. The Reluctant Reformers emerge as the obvious choice

for Labour to target as they are only loosely affiliated with Reform and most aligned with Labour's policy platform.

They support measures in the Employment Rights Act and Renters' Rights Act and are in favour of businesses having to take accountability for their impact on the climate. Just a third (32%) voted for Reform UK in the 2024 General Election, the lowest proportion of any segment, whilst a quarter (24%) voted for Labour.

Many Reluctant Reformers are floaters who will make their decision close to polling day.

Multiculturalism and community cohesion are the buzzwords for drawing Reluctant Reformers away from Reform. 86% think that Britain should be either multicultural or multi-ethnic and 90% like mixing with diverse people in their local area.

At the community level, they have concerns about cohesion and a desire for greater power,

which is where they can either fall under Reform's spell or be won over by Labour's strong record in these areas. 73% agree that the Government should do more to improve community cohesion in some of the most divided communities.

This is a clear area for targeted communication on the new strategy and reassurance based around strong principles of fairness and safety for all, not "out-Reforming Reform" with hostility.

Digging into the nuances of Reform voters is important both as an intellectual and a strategic exercise.

It avoids pigeonholing a diverse cohort of fed-up voters, and ensures that Labour party strategy is oriented first and foremost towards the low hanging fruit.

There are gains to be made if the party is willing to realign itself to a new understanding of which Reform voters it can reach.

**TUC CHIEF PAUL NOWAK: 'LABOUR NEEDS RELENTLESS FOCUS ON LIVING STANDARDS TO STEM RISE OF FAR RIGHT'** (SEE PAGES 10-11)

# HERE, BOY!

## Why being branded Trump's poodle is Farage's Achilles heel



NIGEL Farage, you have a problem - especially one 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing 16 stone - that goes by the name Donald Trump.

You almost certainly won't hear Farage bragging about his "great relationship" with Trump any time soon such is the antagonism felt by the British public towards the supposed peace-loving President's reckless war against Iran.

Farage, ever the political shyster, moved quickly to condemn Keir Starmer's initial response to the war as "frankly pathetic" and "dithering" saying the UK should "do all we can to support the operation" - and that the "gloves need to come off".

The Reform leader argued the UK was part of the conflict "whether we like it or not" - until, that is, polling showed only 17% believe we should be involved in the conflict, with Reform voters fearing considerable negative consequences on their household finances and our economy.

So, with a big thumbs down to his impetuous response Farage backtracked saying: "There are differing opinions as to whether we should physically join the attacks. I, as leader, am saying to you, if we can't even defend Cyprus, let's not get ourselves involved in another foreign war".

Whilst in the past Farage has traded off his close friendship with Trump only 46% of Britons now see the US as a friend and ally - and 64% now have a negative view of America - and that was before Trump under pressure from Israel went to war.

A recent YouGov poll revealed eight-in-ten Britons have an unfavourable view of Trump with a mere 16% thinking positively about the 79-year-old.

So, even though Trump super fan Farage describes him as a "role model for government,, who is "restoring faith in the democratic system", the great British public very much begs to differ.

More in Common thinktank chief Luke Tryl said: "With Brits already saying that Nigel Farage's relationship with Trump is the biggest barrier to voting Reform, particularly women, and over half of the country describing Farage as Britain's Trump, there is a very real risk that the Reform leader's association with the U.S. president means that a Farage premiership is seen as a risk too far."



# Connect with Reform's five tribes to win back support for Labour

Continues from page 1

What we're trying to achieve with this latest edition of Babelfish - which is based on polling, research and analysis conducted by HOPE not hate and commissioned by Ecotricity - is to delve into the often conflicting and even contradictory views and attitudes of the five tribes we've identified as making up Reform's voter base.

Many Labour MPs will see the threat of Reform and know their seats will be in jeopardy come 2029. What our polling of potential Reform voters presents is hope.

## Opportunity

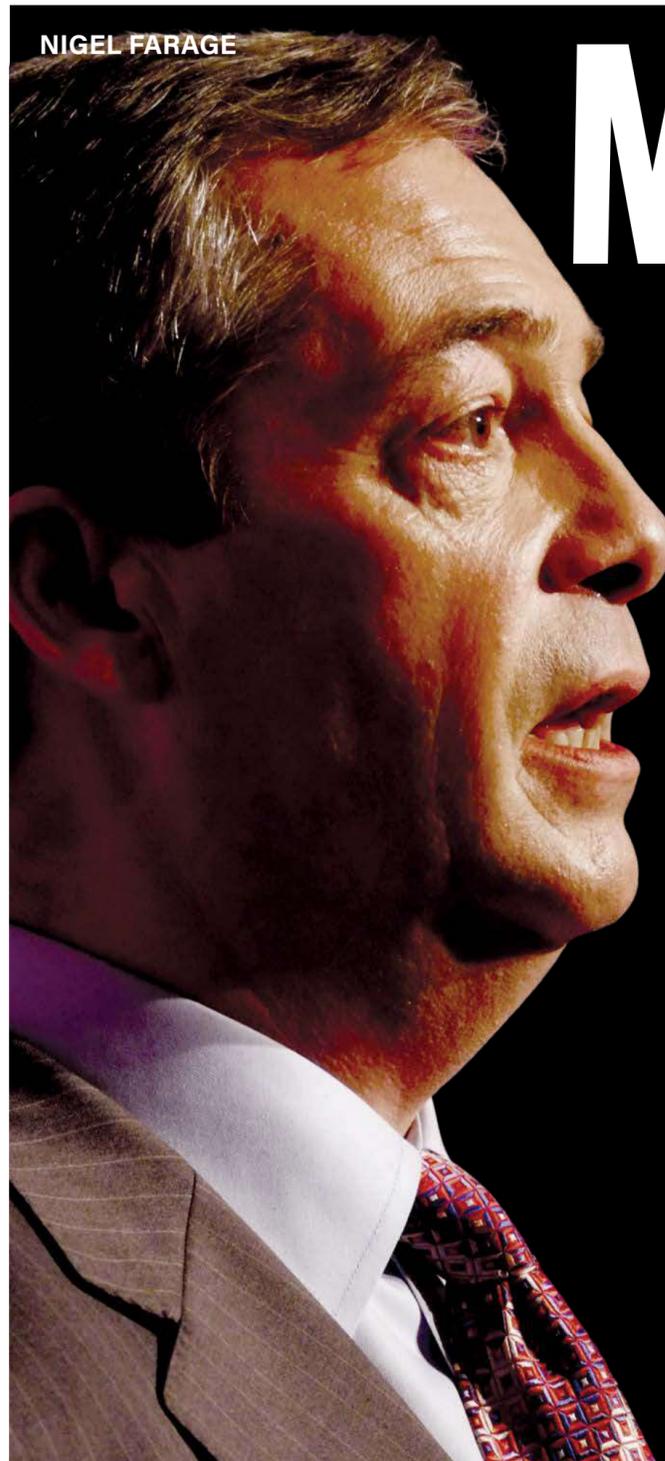
As things stand at least 140 seats will have margins of 5% or lower with 31 seats having a margin of 1%, which represents a challenge, but it also presents an opportunity.

Those seats are within Labour's grasp if the party can understand and act on the nuances of different would-be Reform voters and see the potential for alignment behind the vocal disconnect.

Significantly while Reform's rallying cry might be that immigration is to blame for the entirety of Britain's woes, and that it's only a policy of net zero migration that can solve our cost-of-living crisis, free up housing, and reduce crime, in reality, many of those drawn to Farage's dogmatism, especially younger acolytes attracted to his blokey charisma, disagree. Our polling shows this slice of Reform's support, the 'Contrarian Youth', with an average age of 33, understand that immigrants play a vital role in the public sector with just 20% listing immigration asylum as one of the top three issues facing them today.

There is also evidence of a route, albeit a narrow one, into the concerns of 'Hardline Tories', the traditional right of the Conservative Party now Reform disciples. Predictably, progressive issues are unlikely to prove appealing, but as a group they do demonstrate a deep commitment to Britain's defence and our global standing. This position and the strong dislike of Vladimir Putin it inspires can be leveraged with the government's support for the Ukrainian people especially when juxtaposed with Farage's description of the Russian dictator as the world leader he "most admired" as a political operator.

Our poll shows 'Reluctant Reformers', the most politically moderate segment, back the party more out of frustration than an ideological conviction with only one third having voted Reform at the last election. These are proud people, with a social conscience, who care deeply about



NIGEL FARAGE

# MIND THE GAP



BY DALE VINCE OBE GREEN INDUSTRIALIST

There's a lot to say about Reform. A lot of gaps to talk about.

Like the gap between what they say and what they do.

They make big, bold, simple promises - but they don't keep them. They promised to reduce our tax burden by £90 billion. A big-time announcement quietly dropped weeks later. They made campaign promises in local elections; In Lincolnshire they promised to save £10s of millions on IT spending, by mimicking Trump's ill-fated DOGE initiative, then claimed to have made them - only to be rebuffed by the facts - no savings were made at all. In Kent they campaigned and took control with a promise to cut council tax. Once elected they promptly put taxes up, by the maximum allowable amount.

Reform campaigns against green energy, claiming it to be bad for the country - while their deputy leader makes a business out of it. Richard Tice's companies, the ones that are not in tax havens, boast of their green energy and net zero initiatives - while he tells us it's all 'stupid net zero'. What's good for them is not good for us.

Then there's a fact gap. Immigration is a good example. They claim it's 'spiralling out of control'. The facts beg to differ. Immigration is down 80% from its post Brexit peak of about two years ago - and still falling. It is very much under control. Brexit was of course Farage's obsession, we should not let him forget the gap between what he claimed it would be good for - and what it actually turned out to be good for - absolutely nothing. Not even immigration. That took a Labour government.

Reform also creates reality gaps - gaps between the pictures they paint and actuality - without using numbers. The hysteria around small boat crossings is a great example. Polling shows that most Brits think this is how most immigrants come into our country - across the Channel. No surprise perhaps with the media coverage given to it. The truth is just 5% of immigrants enter the UK this way. The vast majority of immigrants come in on study or work visas - nearly 80%.

the NHS. With nearly six out of ten thinking immigration has actually been good for the UK and 35% stating they don't even "actively like Farage" this segment should be best primed for positive Labour messaging around the success of government reform and investment.

We find similarly frustrated sentiments in the group classified as 'Working Right'.

With many believing they've been abandoned and exploited in the name of austerity; they care deeply about workers' rights with many belonging to a trade union and supportive of changes in the Employment Rights Bill. It is still, however, Farage that they believe represents their best chance for a positive change. But with 81% agreeing that wealthy people are

getting richer while poorer people are falling further behind, they should be receptive to the reminder that multi-millionaire Farage and his MPs voted against those workers' rights reforms.

But it will take a message of real change to win back confidence as TUC general secretary Paul Nowak spells out in his comment piece inside: "If people

don't start feeling the change they voted for, their faith in mainstream politics to deliver will be shot - and it will be those on the far-right, who offer easy answers with convenient scapegoats while lining the pockets of their millionaire backers who benefit."

We see much greater opportunities for bridging the ideological gap in the

'squeezed stewards' denomination, the most politically disenfranchised of the segments with 87% agreeing politicians don't listen to people like them. They are vehemently anti-immigration and yet highly receptive to messaging around the environment. Nearly 99% agree climate change poses a threat to them and their families, and 82% believe climate change

is caused by human activity. A sharp contrast to Reform and Farage's messaging as he's previously dismissed the very concept of the climate crisis as "a scam".

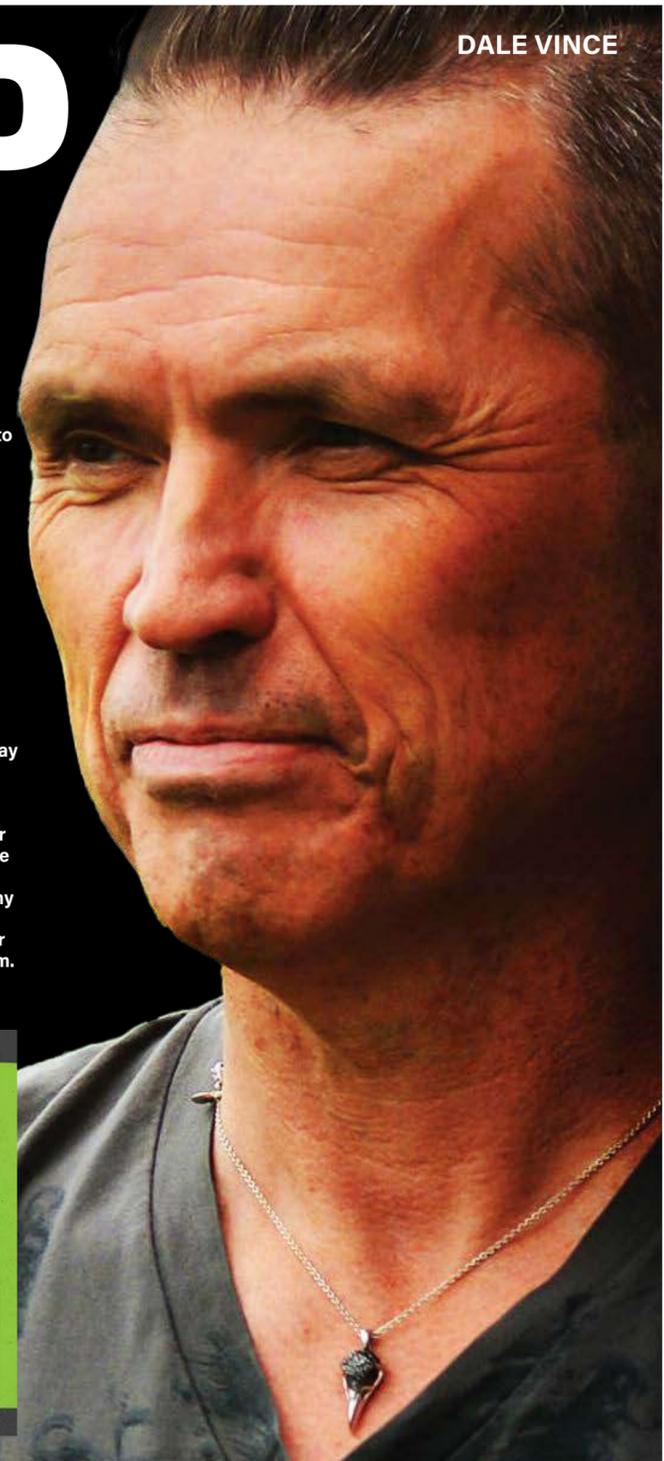
The picture is clear. The British people have lost confidence in Westminster politicians making the right choices for them while Nigel Farage has weaponized fear to capture a threatening portion of those frustrated with the status quo.

But Reform are just the symptom. Before the next election we need to tackle the root cause of Reform. Disaffection, disappointment, millions of people marginalised and struggling to live - in a country that prioritises wealth and wealthy people and big business interests over the people themselves. In a country that just voted for change after 14 years of Tory misrule and corruption. Millions of us expected more to change by now. Reform voters are angry, they reach for Reform instinctively, all else has failed. It's not logical, it's desperation, which in its own way is logical.

To fight Reform we need reform. A major reform, of our country.

Of our tax system, our energy market, our water industry - and many other areas of life where the balance has been lost - between the interests of big business and the wealthy - and those of the common people.

We need to transform people's lives, their grievances are real - we need to tackle them. We need to fight Reform with reform.

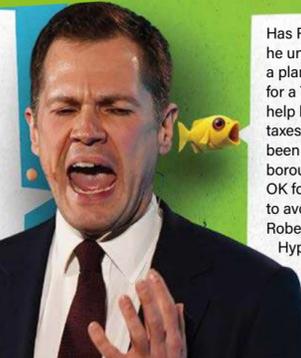


DALE VINCE

## FACT-CHECKING THE FIBBERS

### ROBERT JENRICK

Smug Robert Jenrick berated people for fare dodging in his old dead-end job as Tory Shadow Justice Secretary. He said he hoped to "shame people into action" and posted a message on X saying: "Sadiq Khan is driving a proud city into the ground. Lawbreaking is out of control!" (Fact: London has the lowest murder rate in over a decade)



Has Robert forgotten that he unlawfully approved a planning application for a Tory donor, to help him avoid £40m in taxes - which would have been paid to the poorest borough in London. Is it OK for your rich friends to avoid paying taxes Robert - we all pay them. Hypocrisy on steroids is what this stunt is (not a typo - stunt).



NIGEL Farage's hardline rhetoric on migrants has "misled" the public into thinking most immigrants arrive in Britain on small boats.

A new survey has revealed that nearly half of those polled believe migrants crossing the Channel "account for the largest share of people coming to live in the UK" when it is roughly 5%. Around 50% of people coming to the UK are on work and study visas.

The "big misconception" on small boats has skewed the public mood on immigration, according to the poll by Survation, which showed 53% of people think immigration over the last year has been higher when in fact net migration has fallen to 204,000 which is over three quarters lower than the peak of nearly 1 million when the Tories were in power.

Green entrepreneur and campaigner Dale Vince said: "Our poll shows that the constant drum beat against immigration by right wing media and politicians - has gaslit the British public, who think immigration is still rising and that small boat crossings via the Channel are the main route. And who can blame them, right wing politicians and media are a fact free zone on Immigration. This is how they want it."

"But this toxic narrative could push us to further economic self-harm - if as a result we reach 'net zero migration' - as Farage argues for. This could create a £37 billion economic black hole and higher taxes for us all - something half the people in our survey did not want. Gaslighting is a favourite tool of manipulators - I call on Farage and Badenoch and all right-wing media to stop the manipulation and start telling the truth on immigration."

"While the gaslighting on immigration is clearly having an effect, the British public are not buying the Reform in No10 story - despite their high poll showings right now, most Brits think Reform are not able to govern and that Farage is incapable of representing us all."

Nearly four-in-ten people polled said they would support 'net zero migration' even if it meant higher taxes to maintain public services. However, 49% would NOT support net zero migration if it meant paying more tax themselves.

The think tank National Institute of Economic and Social Research has predicted that if net migration falls to zero it would shrink the economy by 3.7% and leave a £37 billion hole in the budget.

Reform's Nigel Farage has declared that "net migration should be zero" but has so far failed to address the economic consequences. The Reform leader has backed a "mass deportation" policy dubbed Operation Restoring Justice aimed at deporting 600,000 migrants over five years if they win power at the next general election.

Interestingly, only 28% of those aged between 25 and 34 years of age want to see a decrease in immigration compared to 76% of those aged 65 or older. Our polling has revealed that younger voters do understand that immigrants are needed to ensure the smooth running of public services, especially the NHS.

In the past Reform has seen a surge of interest from young men in particular but recent data shows a sharp reversal. One YouGov poll shows support in this demographic fell from 21% in August 2025 to just 8% shortly afterwards, which can be explained by a shift to the Greens with a surge in support among the under-30s, with the party claiming 37% of this age group.

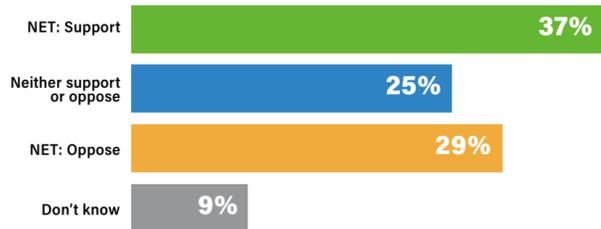
Britain's top polling expert Sir John Curice has said there is "no doubt" support for Reform is falling. The latest YouGov poll shows support was up two points to 25%, well off the peak of more than 30% last year.

# How Reform has warped nation's views on immigration



**£37bn**  
...that's the staggering economic blackhole Britain faces if migration hits net zero

**If net zero migration meant higher taxes overall to maintain current public services, to what extent, if at all, would you support or oppose this?**



In our own Survation poll there is more encouraging news for Labour, which reveals 48% of the public don't think Reform are ready to govern with 36% saying they are capable of running the country.

And when questioned 46% think Mr Farage is incapable of representing people of all ethnicities, backgrounds, and religions versus 36% who think he can.

A polling source said: "Reform is well-placed to trigger tactical behaviour. 32% name Reform as the party they would least like to win locally, making it a credible focal point for "stop Reform" messaging in seats where Reform is competitive."

Labour, however, cannot rely on tactical voting helping them to victory as "most won't switch" according to the polling,

with 39% saying they would stick to their original party even when their first choice cannot realistically win.

The top two issues that would make voters more likely to back Labour are reducing NHS waiting times and tackling the cost of living pressure. Immigration ranks 4th alongside bringing utilities into public ownership.

A new Labour bill that would stop 'dodgy front companies' from making political donations would be welcomed by the public, with 60% opposing foreign money going to parties. Gifts and hospitality for politicians supplied by foreign states or companies will also be severely restricted. The government also intends to stop donations in cryptocurrency because of fears of foreign interference.

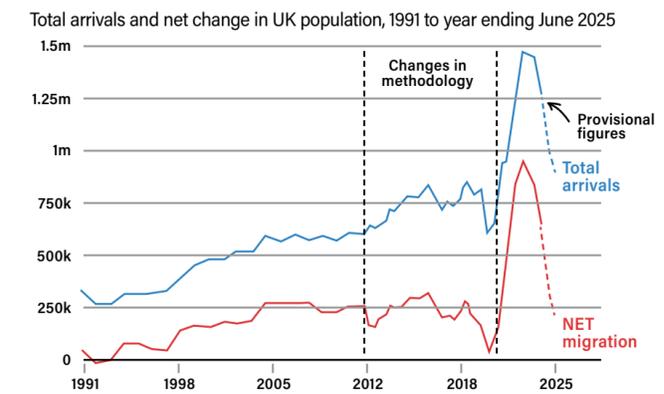
Reform received a record £9 million donation from cryptocurrency investor and aviation entrepreneur Christopher Harborne. Mr Farage said: "I've not promised him a single thing in return for his donation."

**204k**  
...Britain's net migration figure to the year ending June 2025

**49%**  
of people would not support net zero migration if it meant paying more tax themselves

**48%**  
of people do not believe Nigel Farage's Reform party is capable of governing Britain

## Net migration down by two-thirds



Note: Figures prior to 2012 are shown by calendar year. After 2012, figures are for the 12 months to the end of each quarter  
Source: ONS

## Home truths expose right-wing rhetoric

### IMMIGRATION

REFORM'S deportation fantasy would be catastrophic for the NHS. Farage has proposed plans to scrap Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and increase visa requirements. They've floated deporting 600,000 migrants. There are 325,000 migrants working in our NHS - nearly one-in-four key workers. The NHS would collapse under Farage.

Farage's "net zero migration" fantasy means higher taxes. Independent forecasts show zero net migration would shrink the economy by 3.7% and blow a £37 billion hole in public finances - meaning higher taxes or deeper cuts. Nearly half the public say they oppose personal tax rises to achieve it.

Immigration is falling sharply. Net migration is around a quarter of its peak level under the Conservatives - yet most people still think it's rising. Reform are campaigning against a picture that doesn't reflect reality.

But migrants are net contributors. Immigrants generate around £20 billion in tax revenue - roughly equivalent to the cost of running the entire civil service. Deportation on that scale would blow a hole in the public finances.

### EQUALITY

SCRAPPING the Equality Act would rip up basic protections overnight. Protections for disabled people, pregnant women, older workers, and ethnic minorities would be at risk. Employers could discriminate on race, sex or sexuality. You could be fired for being pregnant.

This isn't niche - it affects the majority. One-in-four people are disabled. Half the country is female. Rolling back equality law means rolling back rights for most of Britain. These are hard-won rights. Reform's agenda takes Britain backwards to the Victorian era - not forwards.

### FUNDING NEEDS REFORM

REFORM'S biggest backer Christopher Harborne gave £9 million - the largest political donation from a living individual in UK history. Voters deserve to know who is funding this project and why.

There are also serious questions about a £200,000 donation to Reform by churchwarden John Simpson, who works for the family of a secretive Kazakhstan-born billionaire, who sponsored Farage's Davos access. Farage says it's "above board" but transparency matters in politics.

### FARAGE ON TRUMP AND PUTIN

ON PUTIN: Farage has previously said Vladimir Putin is the world leader he most admires - praising his control over Russia.

ON TRUMP: He's described Donald Trump as "the bravest man I know" and "an inspiration," calling his victory the greatest political comeback of our lifetime.

Voters should ask: **Are these really the role models we want shaping Britain's future?**





BY NICK LOWLES  
HOPE not hate CEO

# HATE HOPE HATE

WITH Reform UK leading comfortably in the polls and people waking up to the very real possibility that the party could form the next Government, there has never been more urgency to properly understand who its voting base is and the issues that are driving them.

That's exactly what our research report Fed Up and Rolling the Dice, which examines the motivations of Reform voters, sets out to do.

Based on a survey of over 11,000 Reform UK supporters, this is the largest and most extensive study into the party undertaken to date.

We find that Reform UK is made up of a coalition of voters, many with quite different and contradictory views to each other.

These disparate voters can be divided into five distinct segments: **The Working Right, Hardline Conservatives, Squeezed Stewards, Contrarian Youth** and **Reluctant Reformers**. Each segment shares common characteristics amongst themselves and sometimes quite stark differences with the others.

The fact that Reform UK is made up of a coalition of voters should not come as a surprise. In fact, all major political parties comprise of coalitions.

Factions to the left and the right, those that speak to the more comfortable in society and those who focus more on the have-nots.

But, somewhat bizarrely, many people view Reform UK differently, almost exclusively through the prism of immigration.

They view the far-right populist party as owning that policy area.

Reform's political rivals believe that the way to defeat Reform UK and win back voters is to offer suitably hardline policies on immigration and asylum. In the Conservative Party, this led to the then Shadow Justice Minister Robert Jenrick - who has now defected to Reform - joining protesters outside hotels and clambering up lampposts to put up St George's flags, while Katie Lam MP has demanded that up to two million people with settled status be deported to ensure Britain remains "culturally coherent".

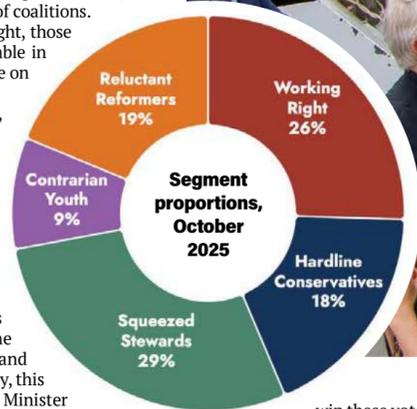
For the Labour Government, it has meant speeches from the Prime Minister talking about the "incalculable damage" of immigration, and a social media response to Nigel Farage's announcement of deporting up to 600,000 "illegal" immigrants that dismissed the Reform UK leader as a "moaner", while proudly showcasing that Labour was getting on with the job of deporting people.

However, this research suggests that immigration tunnel vision is preventing people from seeing other opportunities to reach and persuade voters who are enticed by Reform UK. Immigration is important to some Reform UK voters but not to others. Understanding the real motivation of what is driving people to Reform UK is the first stage to addressing the party's threat.

Different issues are important to different parts of the Reform UK coalition — there is no one strategy to

# When five tribes go to war Labour has to score\*

\*headline to be sung to the Frankie Goes to Hollywood tune



win these voters back. This report is far more than an interesting piece of research. It is a blueprint for action. If we accept that Reform UK is made up of a coalition of voters, then we also need to understand that different strategies, policies and messengers are needed to engage with each of the segments.

A strategy to engage with the Working Right, who are struggling economically and the most hostile to immigration and multiculturalism, needs to be quite different from that deployed to engage with the more moderate Reluctant Reformers, who care most strongly about the NHS and are worried about the failure of successive governments to deliver. HOPE not hate will use the findings of this vitally important report to guide our own campaigning.

We can now better understand the issues on which to engage with each of the different Reform UK segments, how best to reach them and — just as importantly — who is the best messenger to use.

Our data analysis can even suggest how our five segments are spread across constituencies, ensuring we engage with the groups that can realistically change the outcome of an election. This incredible research will guide our own campaigning over the next few years. We hope it will help yours too...



TAKING THE MIC:  
Nigel Farage speaks to supporters in Clacton, Essex



KERCHING!  
Farage coining it in by selling personal video messages

## Farage is NO champion of the workers



BY ANNA TURLEY  
LABOUR CHAIR

Nigel Farage likes to pose as the champion of working people. But scratch beneath the surface, and a very different picture emerges - one where the interests of the wealthy come first, and everyone else is left behind.

Take the case of Farage's deputy Richard Tice. For most people, £600,000 would be a life-changing sum of money. But it's a sum he openly boasts about having avoided paying in corporation tax through a very sophisticated tax planning scheme. I have written to HMRC to ask them to investigate this fully. Because at a time when families across Britain are struggling with the cost of living, the public deserves confidence that all of us - especially those at the top - are paying their fair share.

This goes to the heart of what Reform UK stands for. When given the chance to back working people, Nigel Farage and his colleagues have repeatedly chosen not to. Reform MPs voted against the Employment Rights Bill - legislation designed to strengthen protections at work, improve job security, and ensure fair treatment for millions. And they have pledged that if they ever get into government, they will repeal it.

That speaks volumes. You cannot claim to be on the side of working people while opposing basic rights that give them dignity and security. You cannot talk about fairness while boasting about complex ways of avoiding paying your fair share.

And the public can see it. There is a growing sense that the system is not working as it should - that while many people play by the rules, others are able to operate differently. That undermines trust and fairness. Reform UK is not challenging that problem; it is part of it.

Their politics offers plenty of noise, but little substance for those who need support the most. Behind the slogans lies an agenda that protects wealth, resists accountability, and blocks progress for working people.

Labour's position is clear. We believe in a country where hard work is rewarded, where rules are applied fairly, and where no one is above scrutiny. That means strengthening workers' rights, supporting families with the cost of living, investing in our NHS and public services, and ensuring that prosperity is shared - not hoarded.

The question for voters is simple: who is really on your side?

Because when you look at the record - on tax, on workers' rights, on fairness - it is clear that Reform UK is not on the side of working people.

WORKING RIGHT	RELUCTANT REFORMERS	HARDLINE CONSERVATIVES	CONTRARIAN YOUTH	SQUEEZED STEWARDS
<p>What might be described as the hard core of Reform UK, the Working Right is a group of largely older voters (42% aged 35-54; 42% 55 or over) who work or have worked in lower paying jobs. More than half have a pre-tax income under £40,000. A quarter live in council housing. More than half voted for Reform UK at the last election and a fifth backed its predecessor the Brexit Party in 2019. Many are pessimistic about the economy. Just 15% have a degree or higher qualification. They live predominantly in the north and east of England - with many in the red wall seats that Labour held before 2019.</p>	<p>RELUCTANT Reformers are by some distance the most moderate of the party's supporters - and seem to have been drawn to Reform because of their frustration with the existing political system. Only a third voted Reform in the last election and many have moved to the party from previously supporting Labour or the Tories. They are the most likely to see healthcare and the NHS as a top three priority and think it urgently needs more funding. It is the only segment that has more women than men (56%-44%). It has the widest range of ages. They are evenly spread across the UK.</p>	<p>This group of politically engaged voters are both socially and economically conservative and among the most anti-migration and anti-Muslim of Reform's voters. Nearly all have defected from the Tory Party. They are predominantly male (65%), nearly three-quarters are aged over 55 with the majority retired, and they are wealthy, with 79% owning their home and 45% feeling either comfortable or well off. They are the most likely to vote and being concentrated in the Midlands, South East, South West and East of England, they can be influential in seats where Reform is competing with the Conservatives and the Lib Dems.</p>	<p>THESE Reform supporters are notable for their average age (just 33) and their varied and at times incomprehensible mix of opinions. Men make up nearly two-thirds and they are more likely than the national average to have degree level or above education (41%). It is also the only segment with any real ethnic diversity - ethnic minority members making up 15%. The group is a mix economically - some are very successful but others are struggling - however, more than half feel financially worried or even desperate. One of the reasons may be the difficulty this age group have getting on to the housing ladder.</p>	<p>Welcome to Mr and Mrs Reform - the average supporter of Farage's party and in many ways an average voter. They split 50-50 men and women, hit the national norm or are very close on many fronts including housing, financial experience and income. This gives them "squeezed" status - many are unlikely to meet the thresholds for support but will have experienced a decline in quality of life over the last five years. The biggest segment, representing just under 30% of Reform's electorate, the Squeezed Stewards could make a big impact on Reform's electoral performance.</p>

Britain is a land of neighbours and proud of it!



BY KEVIN MAGUIRE  
POLITICAL COMMENTATOR

THE devil is said to find work for idle hands and divisive Nigel Farage and Reform UK are a political machine cynically manufacturing despair in the hope of reaping rich dividends by turning folk against each other.

Headed by the grinning snake oil salesman and leading UK opinion polls, Farage and giddy Hard Right acolytes contemplate high office and enforcing iron rule, yet many of Harold Wilson's long weeks of Harold Macmillan's unexpected events await before a General Election unlikely before the first half of 2029.

So Nige may never peek through curtains he's mentally measuring for No 10 because victory is, mercifully, far from assured as accountability starts and skepticism rises.

Reform's ramshackle electoral coalition is already showing signs of fracturing, one recent poll putting the party down to 24% – barely ahead of the Conservatives on 20 and Labour 19.

Everything is to play for and Reform, as Lance Corporal Jones in Dad's Army would yell, won't like it up 'em.

Trump fan boy Farage's love for deranged Donald is an Achilles' heel in a Britain revolted by the White House madman's economic punishment beatings for the USA's democratic long-standing allies.

Ditto applause for Vlad the Invader, Farage once naming Putin as the politician he most admired. Then there are the local authorities run by Reform, proving no good advert for the party by hiking council tax they vowed to freeze or cut while slashing services.

His Kenneth Williams' infamy, infamy, they've all got it in for me reaction to mounting evidence Farage was a revolting schoolboy, the wailing leader dismissing 34 contemporaries from Dulwich College alleging youthful Hitler veneration, prompt worrying thoughts about adulthood.

The two areas where Reform are most vulnerable, however, are the economy and hope. The economy because the city slicker isn't credible on wages, taxes, living standards, spending, trade and debt as he busily ditches and distances himself and Reform from his and their own wealthfare-for-the-rich policies.

And hope is kryptonite for a party peddling grievances, expert at inciting hate and playing the race card. Rivals preaching decency and presenting a compelling, vivid future are Reform's worst enemies.

Farage may look as if he has one foot in No 10 but he's there to be tripped up and pushed out. We're a land of neighbours, not an island of strangers.

# Protect living standards or faith in politics will be shot



BY PAUL NOWAK  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TUC

A MEAL out at the weekend. A trip away once a year. A treat or two for the kids in the weekly shop.

Not much to ask for, but many of the people who used to be able to afford a few small pleasures now worry whether the pay cheque will stretch to the end of the week or month.

Yet another poll, this time from YouGov, puts affordability top of the list of most important issues to Brits. Four in ten are struggling to

pay for food. Almost as many say the same about their energy bills.

That's why I said at the beginning of the year Labour needs to have a relentless focus on living standards, to make people better off and – crucially – to stem the rise of the far right.

We are already seeing just how difficult this will be. Crises around the world threaten to blow the Government off course at every turn. With a volatile US



president and ongoing wars across continents this doesn't look set to get easier. And it was never going to be an easy ask. Nearly 15 years of the Tories failed experiments in austerity, mean it's no surprise the economy will take time to turn around and for people to feel better off.

Public services have been pushed to breaking point, having a real effect on people's quality of life, and how they feel about their communities. But despite the

challenges, there has undoubtedly been progress. Boosting the minimum wage will put money directly into the pockets of working people.

Cuts to energy bills, scrapping the two-child limit, record investment in the NHS, and the Employment Rights Act will make a big difference. But we need more.

The Government should continue to do all it can to continue to tackle the affordability crisis – not least as



getting pounds into people's pockets is essential to boosting growth. New employment rights will make work pay, but the government must deliver on its promises in full – ensuring all workers benefit from new rights to predictable hours, notice of shifts and opportunities to join a union – with no loopholes.

We also need to keep investing in our schools and hospitals and our creaking public infrastructure.

The TUC has long called for a new package of wealth taxes. When the

wealth of billionaires is now at its highest level ever, there is certainly more we can do.

And a reset of our relationship with Europe, securing the best possible economic deal for Britain, will help lower supermarket prices and help insulate us from the arbitrary whims of the US president.

Finally, alongside government action, the Bank of England needs to go further and faster on interest rate cuts – making it easier to invest, spend

and launch our economy out of the doldrums. A living standards turnaround is possible. At risk is not just the health of our economy, but also our democracy.

But if people don't start feeling the change they voted for, their faith in mainstream politics to deliver will be shot – and it will be those on the far-right, who offer easy answers and convenient scapegoats while lining the pockets of their millionaire backers, who benefit.

1 in 3 are cutting back on using their heating every day or most days

## Two Reform tribes who will be the easiest to win over...

RELUCTANT Reformers' support for Nigel Farage's party is born out of frustration with the politics of the last decade and not out of a great ideological belief.

This segment of Reform support is not attached to the party's more right-wing policies and has limited support for the leader himself.

Their concerns and interests, according to the Fed Up and Rolling the Dice report, make them by far the most likely to be persuaded that a vote for Reform is a mistake. Although they make up more than 10% of the voting population in just 15 seats, leading them away from Reform could make a difference in dozens of constituencies across the UK.

In almost every policy area, there are strong arguments to make to Reluctant Reformers on why they should return to backing Labour. Even on immigration – the territory that Reform most want to fight – there is reason to believe that appealing pro-migration arguments can land favourably with these supporters.

Reluctant Reformers have concerns about integration and how multiculturalism plays out in communities. But half support the UK's role in an international system that offers people fleeing war or persecution

### The Reluctant Reformers

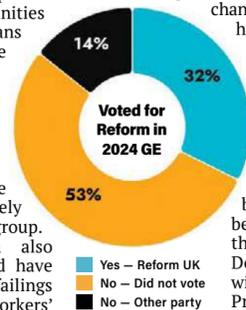
asylum while nearly two-thirds think overall immigration has been a good thing for the UK.

Handled sensitively it should be possible to make clear that immigration to the UK is an inevitable and positive part of our country's culture, communities and economy. Reform's plans to abolish Indefinite Leave to Remain, for example, might go too far for these softer voters. Stories that humanise and provide context – especially local context – to communities working together despite their differences are likely to land well with this group. Reluctant Reformers can also be shown why they should have real concerns about the failings in Reform's offering on workers'

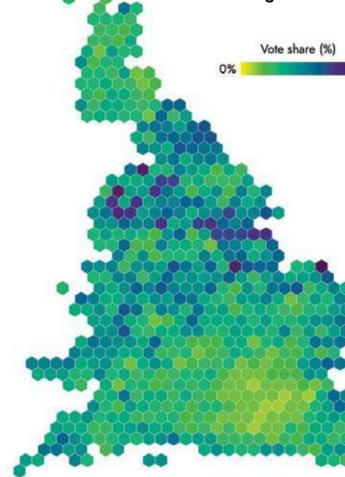
rights. Among the segments of Reform support, the group is only marginally behind the Working Right in terms of its support for policies such as statutory sick pay being paid from the start of an illness, making the minimum wage a real living wage and protection from unfair dismissal from day one of a job.

Campaigners can highlight Reform's mixed record on caring for employees. They will also have concerns about Reform's plans for the NHS and similarly, will be open to arguments about the links between climate change and health. Highlighting how neglect of the climate can affect children's health, the price of food and clean air will present Reform's position as "anti-future" and in opposition to these people's values, the report says.

Reluctant Reformers might well admire Reform for being plain-speaking but will be uneasy with extremism in the ranks – and their dislike of Donald Trump will be at odds with Farage's closeness to the US President.



The Working Right are concentrated in seats in the north and east of England and outside big cities



NOT surprisingly, as the group facing the most financial challenges and likely to be most concerned about the cost of living, workers' rights and the economy are key areas for the Working Right.

But despite Reform claiming to be the party of working people and pledging "good wages for a hard day's work", there are flaws in their policies that can hit home.

The report shows that the Working Right strongly supports statutory sick pay from first day of sickness, making the minimum wage a real living wage, protection from unfair dismissal from day one of a new job, guaranteed-hours contract after 12 weeks on zero-hours and the ending of the practice of fire-and-rehire on lower pay or worse terms and conditions.

Significantly their support for such typical Labour policies is higher than the general population. The group feels it traditionally belongs to the left of politics and although the research shows the group has supported Reform for some time – it does suggest that they may have been put off voting Labour by Jeremy Corbyn in the run up to the 2019 general election. So how do you get the message across on the economy and workers rights to this group? One obvious way is to

### The Working Right

highlight the contrast between what Reform promises and its leading politicians' track record. All four of the party's current MPs have, at every stage, voted against the Employment Rights Bill which promised workers protection from unfair dismissal, an improved minimum wage, and other significant rights.

Reform has also proposed that businesses pay a higher National Insurance rate for employing foreign workers, to incentivise them to prioritise Britons when hiring. However, that also highlights the dangers. Firstly, drawing attention to the way Reform has attempted to take on the role of the workers' party becomes increasingly risky as the party's base diversifies. The report suggests restricting criticism to known hypocritical figures is better than labelling the whole party.

Secondly, this group has some of the strongest views on the threat of rising immigration to employment opportunities, access to GPs and availability of school places. Their economic pessimism has fuelled a perception of competition, not just with wealthy elites but also with immigrants.

Allowing Reform to form an association between good pay and tougher action on immigration will appeal to the Working Right and others, so a critical question is how dignity in work and a decent wage can be encouraged for everyone in a way that avoids communities feeling they are in competition with newcomers.

There are inevitably going to be some difficult decisions to make for Reform. The research shows a wide disparity on certain topics between the different groups that back the party. One of the most obvious is this group's enthusiasm for workers' rights in contrast to the extremely low support from the hardline Conservatives who have moved to Reform from the Tories.

Another key area where the Working Right appear persuadable is on the NHS. Farage has questioned their funding. Fears healthcare may no longer be free at the point of use for everyone could be an unappetising prospect for them. However, the face and tone of these messages will be vital as The Working Right largely have a low trust of politicians.

# Farage's tight grip will be hard to break (but there is a way)

## Hardline Tories

THE Lady wasn't for turning – despite high unemployment and the recession, but that was Margaret Thatcher to a T.

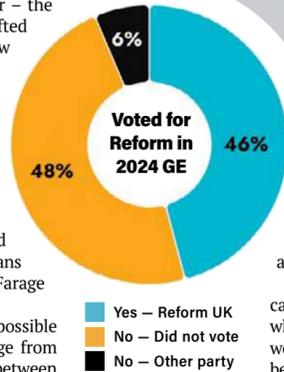
Many of those who slavishly adored her – the 'Hardline Tories' have turned or rather shifted even further to the right – and are now firmly in the bosom of the dysfunctional Farage family.

The stark reality is that the Hardline Conservatives are very unlikely to cross the divide to left wing politics.

The strength of their feeling about migration – they are significantly more likely to consider immigration and asylum as a top three issue facing themselves and their family than any other group – means prising them away from the grip of Nigel Farage will be difficult.

However, that does not mean it is impossible to show them where their interests diverge from Reform – and there are clear dividing lines between this group and other supporters of the party.

One is on employment rights. The clearest observation from the data on improving workers' rights was the stark contrast between extremely low support from the Hardline Tories and the broader support from others – particularly the Working Right. Just 7% support doubling the minimum wage – 22% less than any other group. Only 14% believe in increased taxes for the wealthiest and less than one in five want to cap rents.



The group are similarly underwhelmed by plans to introduce statutory sick pay from first day of sickness and protection from unfair dismissal from day one of job. They are, however, at odds with many Reform supporters who will be unhappy Nigel Farage and fellow MPs voted against the Employment Rights Bill.

Many of the issues that progressive parties care about have no impact with the 'hardliners', who have little time for how climate change would affect their families while less than half believe the government should put more money into the NHS (56% say NHS costs are going up too much, too quickly and we should move to a US-style insurance system). As far as migration goes, they want the toughest policies possible.

One issue Hardline Conservatives deeply care about is defence and the UK's standing in the world.

The survey showed they have a strong dislike of Vladimir Putin and this could be exploited. Exploring the potential of

narratives around Reform being inexperienced and even untrustworthy on foreign policy could be an interesting way to target this segment – particularly Reform has consistently been accused of being soft on Russia. The party leader in Wales, Nathan Gill, even pleaded guilty to accepting bribes in return for making positive statements about Russia as a member of European parliament.

It feeds into another potential area of weakness for Reform is their political competence.

Reform's lack of concrete policy and track record on managing budgets makes it challenging to lay out what is at risk. Evidence of Reform mismanaging finances at local level, particularly tax rises where the opposite was promised as in Kent, could become national arguments that would appeal to all the segments, but particularly Hardline Conservatives.

Tax rises and more traditionally left-leaning economic policy would also alienate the Hardline Conservatives.

Reaching out to this group is also difficult because of their commitment to the right-wing media. Around 45% get their news from the GB News while 35% read the Daily Mail.

## Task ahead: Sort the cost of living crisis and

ACROSS the country, families are still feeling the strain of high prices, rising energy bills and wages that have not kept pace with rising costs. The latest 45,000-sample poll conducted by Ecotricity with HOPE not hate gives us a clear picture of the terrain we are operating on and of Reform UK's strengths and vulnerabilities.

First, cost of living remains the dominant public concern. Among almost every voter group, it is the top issue. The exception is Reform voters, for whom cost of living is tied with immigration, telling us that Reform's coalition is both cultural and economic.

The wider mood is bleak. Economic pressure, institutional distrust, and pessimism about the future is



BY LUKE MURPHY  
MP FOR BASINGSTOKE, FOUNDER MEMBER  
OF LIVING STANDARDS COALITION

the oxygen feeding right-wing populism, with Reform supporters most pessimistic of all.

But the same dataset identifies that Reform's voter base is not a monolith. The modelling identifies five distinct segments that differ significantly in outlook, economic position and policy preferences and in several cases are at odds with Reform's leadership. On

economics, there is a striking opportunity. Seventy-five per cent of the public agree that wealthy people are getting richer while poorer people fall further behind.

Majorities across voter groups, including parts of the Reform coalition, back reducing inequality, stronger workers' rights, and measures like taxing extreme wealth or limiting speculative foreign investment in housing.

This is where the gap between Reform's rhetoric and its policy platform becomes most exposed.

Majorities, including many Reform supporters, also accept the reality and risk of climate change, and back practical environmental regulation when it is framed around fairness, cost and local impact. The battleground

# CONFUSED? YOU WILL BE!

## Contrarian Youth

THE quote falsely attributed to Winston Churchill starts 'if you are not a liberal when you are young, you have no heart' is very much out of date in today's febrile political environment.

You would think today's younger voters – what we're calling the Contrarian Youth – would hang their hat on Labour improving their life chances – but that's far from the case.

The good news is that by and large this group – with an average age of 33 – have drifted away from Reform. The bad news is they've now set up camp with the Greens.

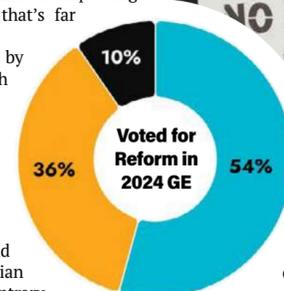
There are so many surprising contradictions about the views and attitudes of the Contrarian Youth that simply run contrary to their own interests. For example, they are less likely to support workers' rights policies such as making the minimum wage a real living wage and are not in favour of capping rent increases.

Engaging these younger workers on the importance of employment rights and the power of collective bargaining positions is an important long-term goal that would help to strengthen the future of the workers' rights movement.

More immediately, the question of housing ownership remains alive for the Contrarian Youth – and as finances are such an important issue to this group it may be a key attack point for them. It is easy to argue that not only do Reform UK lack a well thought out housing plan, but their economic plans are likely to



Reform's 'Contrarian Youth' believe migrants are needed in the NHS



Yes – Reform UK  
No – Did not vote  
No – Other party

drive up mortgage costs. The other significant element is this group's support for strong leaders and politicians. The survey shows Contrarian Youth have a higher than-average support scores for key right-wing figures, including Tommy

Robinson and Andrew Tate. That could appear an insurmountable problem – except for the fact that Contrarian Youth also had above average approval scores for Labour party politicians such as Angela Rayner and Jeremy Corbyn as well. Indeed, at 27% they have a higher approval rating for Keir Starmer than any other group.

It suggests this group may be susceptible to strong messengers and charismatic influencers, with the data suggesting that as a group they are more trusting of religious leaders and celebrities.

Beyond these factors, this group is a mass

of contradictions. More than half of this segment agree that Reform is a far-right populist party, with 19% strongly agreeing. Whilst it seems some are open to deeper radicalisation, with 45% saying they would be likely to support an anti-immigration and anti-Islam street movement led by Tommy Robinson, and 53% agreeing that violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe in.

The Contrarian Youth grouping also differs from both the UK population and the average for Reform UK voters considerably on women's rights, with a majority saying feminism has gone too far and it makes it harder for men to succeed.

Nearly half think abortion is morally wrong and should be illegal in most or all circumstances. The survey suggests this view may reflect the higher religiosity of this group of voters. More than 55% think that British men are less masculine than they used to be.

More alarmingly, there is also higher than average support for conspiracy theories. More than half claim to believe that Jewish people have unhealthy control over the world's banking system, and 52% that the official account of the Nazi Holocaust is a lie and numbers have been exaggerated.

They do, however, support anti-racism efforts much more than other segments – for example 57% agree that footballers should be supported in taking the knee in opposition to racism.

They also believe more than other Reform voters that migrants are needed in public services and they are optimistic about politics even though they are less likely to be engaged electorally.

The report points out that it will be interesting to see how government efforts on devolution and building community ownership can be translated to this audience to reduce feelings of political impotence and further a sense of togetherness.

## get real on things that truly matter to people

is framing and demonstrating material impact, rather than whether voters care about the environment at all.

Reform's record already exposes the gap between rhetoric and reality.

For example, where Labour has passed the historic Employment Rights Bill, Reform MPs have opposed stronger workers' protections, and where Labour have cut NHS waitlists to record post-pandemic levels, Reform threaten to privatise our health service.

As the party of British DOGE, Reform-led councils that campaigned on tax cuts have imposed the maximum council tax rises once in office.

The same pattern appears on immigration: concern is

real, but views are conditional and pragmatic rather than absolutist. Reform's advantage comes from silence and narrative, not from an unimpeachable policy platform.

In short, across policy areas Reform is vulnerable where their leadership, their rhetoric and their policy platform are contradictory.

It is our responsibility to make clear that Labour is taking tangible action to improve lives, where Reform are pedalling lies and contradictions.

There are three key takeaways. First, Reform's coalition is broad but shallow. It is unified by pessimism and distrust more than by a coherent policy platform.

Second, large parts of that coalition hold economically interventionist or pro-environment views that directly oppose Reform's leadership line.

Third, the electoral map is volatile, meaning that mobilisation of core and swing voters is central. The route to beating Reform is not to echo its grievance politics or rely on abstract moral critique.

Our task is to reduce insecurity, rebuild trust, and prosecute the economic case with discipline.

If we can narrow the gap between people's lived experience and political promise, particularly on cost of living and economic fairness, the space Reform occupies becomes significantly smaller.



**TURBULENT TIMES:**  
Dale Vince warns of 'Faragian' policy

## Time to help Reform voters take a Farage reality check

BY DALE VINCE OBE  
GREEN INDUSTRIALIST

REFORM leaning voters believe in climate change and want something done about it. They believe in green energy. But in both cases they don't want to pay for it - who does, most of Britain feels the same.

We have other priorities, like the cost of living. Most Reform voters also believe in the benefits of immigration - they just want it under control. Again who doesn't.

What we have here is a reality gap. A gap between what's real and what Reform tells people.

Take immigration for example - our poll shows most people think small boat crossings are the biggest cause of immigration - when in fact it's only 5% of the total.

Take overall migration, most people think it's still growing, from its post Brexit peak of one million a year - when in fact it's down 80% on that figure.

And we're fast heading for 'net zero immigration' - something Farage seeks.

### Deficit

But ask voters if they are willing to pay more tax in return for net zero migration and they say no. No surprise.

But again a reality gap. Net zero immigration means fewer people paying tax and a £37billion annual economic hit - leading to higher taxes.

Like Brexit before it - this Faragian policy is sold to us under false pretences and if we buy it - great economic harm will follow.

We have a fact deficit, and a communications one.

We need to do better, but we face the usual headwinds of a hostile and dominant right-wing media.

Owned mostly by tax exile foreigners...arguing for a Britain that suits their purposes - not ours. If I were Keir Starmer, part of my reset would be to change media ownership laws - for the sake of our national security. And to protect our democracy.

These are the immigrants we should kick out. They pay no tax here, have no life here and serve only themselves at the cost of us all.

# Frustrated but ready to listen

'YOU'VE lost the dressing room' sums up the feeling of these disenchanted voters - the Squeezed Stewards - who've given up on believing Labour can deliver the change they want.

In many ways they encapsulate the problems Labour faces in the run up to the next general election.

They have abandoned mainstream political parties out of a belief that the politicians they previously voted for lack the ability or the will to tackle the issues that matter.

Rightly or wrongly, they care about immigration - it is their number one concern. Nearly 90% of this group think migrants don't do enough to integrate and 97% think that an increase in migration has put more pressure on public services such as schools and hospitals. Both figures are the highest among Reform voters.

Only one in four Squeezed Stewards say they think Britain should be multicultural, although 58% say that they like mixing with people of other ethnicities, religions and backgrounds in their local area.

Squeezed Stewards might like the way Reform are plain-speaking about the world's problems although they might be uneasy with extremism in the ranks.

If this group continue to decide immigration is the key electoral issue, it may be hard to persuade them to move away from Reform. But there is hope - not least because of their voting history. Although half of this segment voted for Reform in the last general election, a significant 86% have switched their vote at some point since the 2019 General Election (mainly from the Conservatives

## The Squeezed Stewards

but a large number from Labour in 2024).

This high rate of volatility suggests they might be willing to hear other parties out.

One interesting area that may be worth pursuing is around climate and the environment.

The Squeezed Stewards are significantly more likely to see the climate as something relevant to their lives - 99% agree that climate change poses a threat to themselves and their families, and 82% agree that climate change is caused by human activities.

But their interest is nuanced and they are also concerned about the economic cost of net zero. Their interest in regulating water companies to clean up rivers, lakes and seas in the UK (64% support this policy) suggests an interest in climate from a homegrown perspective, focused on nature and conservation.

Although not a top three priority for them, perhaps nature can be used as an immediate wedge between this group and Reform where the party is weak locally. Drawing connections between the cost of living and health and climate is crucial if we are to get the Squeezed Stewards' softer views on climate to marry up with the issues that they feel the most strongly about.

Fighting on climate denial might not work but the Squeezed Stewards might be open to hearing about the opportunities provided by the green energy transition such as lower energy bills, job opportunities and training.

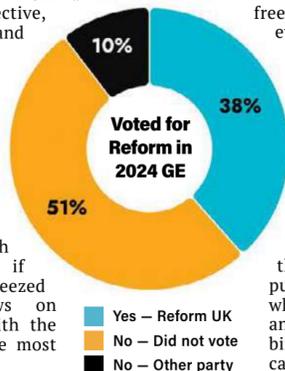
Economic policy also offers opportunities to engage with this group.

In the survey Squeezed Stewards were most supportive of rent caps and a new tax for the wealthiest in the country indicating they are on side with some of the progressive left's key policies.

The NHS is also in play for this group - 78% say it urgently needs more funding and the Government should increase its budget, by far the highest of Reform voters and almost identical to the national average. Like other groups, combined with tax rises and the risk that healthcare is no longer free at the point of use for everybody this issue has potential to upset this group.

It means there are many issues where Squeezed Stewards could more naturally fit with other parties.

But the question remains whether a commitment to the environment or public services prevail or whether the influence of anti-immigration rhetoric binds them to the Reform cause.



BY DAVID WOODING  
POLITICAL COMMENTATOR

IMITATION is the sincerest form of flattery, according to Oscar Wilde. But the Irish poet and playwright forgot to add that in politics it can also be suicide.

Which is why Labour must resist the temptation to mimic poll-topping Reform UK - or lurching to the Left to match the by-election victors of the Green Party.

Copying the policies and rhetoric of Nigel Farage would merely give legitimacy to his agenda and could backfire drastically.

It is unlikely to lure back former Labour voters who leapt aboard the Reform bandwagon, and risks alienating those who continue to stand by the party.

After the seismic by-election result in Gorton and Denton, Sir Keir Starmer must face up to a new reality: Britain now has a five-party system and he is under threat not only from the radical Right but also the energised Left.

One in eight of the voters Labour has lost since the 2022 election have gone to Reform but two in eight have switched to the Greens and Lib Dems.

This gives the Prime Minister a clear path forward - right through the middle. Labour has won its biggest majorities by campaigning in line with the mainstream of the general public.

If Sir Keir is to have any hope of turning things around, he needs to focus on economic growth to make hard-working families feel better off.

Perhaps the biggest impact of aping Farage, would be to convince voters that he was right all along. The more he is copied, the more he will be believed.

Labour's migration policies will only cut through with doubting voters once there is a sizeable and discernible reduction in the number of people arriving on boats and being accommodated in our communities.

Putting it simply, you can't out-Reform Reform on migration. To quote Oscar Wilde once again: "Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken".

Labour should heed the lessons from other European countries, where the Left has responded to the rise of the populist Right by changing its stance on migration.

In Germany, Social Democrat leader Olaf Scholz shifted to a harder position on immigration in a bid to see off the rise of AfD. He threatened mass deportations and adopted more urgent language on national security following the collapse of the "traffic light" coalition.

But it turned off traditional support and led to his party achieving its worst result in history, with 16 per cent of the vote, while AfD scored its best ever with nearly 21 per cent, a rise of more than 10 per cent.

A major battle now raging on the Right of British politics has given Labour a golden opportunity.

Robert Jenrick's defection to Reform - the 25th Tory to jump ship - has taken mud-slinging between the two parties to

# We need reform (but not this kind of Reform)



CRACKDOWN: Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood, above, has promised to get tough on migrants arriving in Britain on small boats

new depths.

Instead of attacking the government, they are busy attacking each other. Labour's best strategy is to stay out of it and watch them tear each other apart. Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake, as Napoleon declared.

Yet on the day that the Conservative and Reform were tearing lumps out of each other over the Jenrick defection, rival factions within Labour were involved

in a briefing war on their own leadership crisis. This is madness.

There's already signs that Reform's popularity and recent polls have shown a slight slip in support. Many supporters of the insurgent party are unhappy that Mr Farage is welcoming so many ex-Tories linked to 14 years of failure.

With so many crossing the floor, there's an increased risk of them infecting

the Reform brand by turning it into a convalescence home for clapped-out Conservatives.

Sir Keir and his team would be wise to let them fight over who has the tougher immigration policy or whether Britain is broken or not. Echoing the language of Reform won't attract many new supporters, but merely turn off existing ones and drive them into the arms of the Green party and Lib Dems.

Better for Labour to set its own agenda for debate and move the fight on to its own territory.

There are only two issues which can compete with migration as a vote-winner - the NHS and the economy.

Labour has three years to deliver improvements in these areas but there isn't a moment to lose and thanks to the far from peace-loving Donald Trump that window of opportunity is going to be even shorter.

Action will speak louder than words, but ease the squeeze on hard-working families and voters may start to think again come election day.

Sir Keir needs to renew Labour. Not turn it into a reformed Reform.

## FACT-CHECKING THE FIBBERS

### SUELLA BRAVERMAN

She jumped ship to Reform describing immigration as "out of control" and the country on its knees (must have been a flashback to her time in government). Latest figures show the net figure for migration around 200,000.



When Braverman was responsible for immigration just two years ago it reached a post Brexit peak of one million. Begging the question, if 200,000 is out of control, what did Braverman call it when it was one million. The hypocrisy knows no limits.



# Mission possible



BY **MARK BORKOWSKI**  
PR GURU

“WINNING is easy, son. Governing’s harder.” Even Hamilton Lin-Manuel Miranda’s rapping fantasy of George Washington offers a lesson the Labour Party should probably pin above the Cabinet table. Power isn’t won by performance alone. It’s exercised through command.

I’m not suggesting Starmer & Company were under any illusions about the difficulty of governing an ultra-polarised Britain.

The Gorton and Denton by-election should function as a small but instructive alarm bell. Labour’s instinctive response to such tremors is the familiar Westminster reflex: drift left to soothe progressive activists while nervously glancing right at Reform’s prowling vote share. That is the strategic equivalent of trying to plug two leaks in a boat using the same finger.

But something else lurked in that result. Hannah Spencer the Green victor did not arrive draped in the usual Westminster theatre of ideological slogans and factional choreography. She felt oddly... human. Relatable in a way professional politics increasingly struggles to simulate. In an age when voters are highly attuned to the synthetic — the rehearsed anecdote, the algorithm-tested smile, the identity box dutifully ticked — authenticity has become the rarest currency in public life. What voters in places like Gorton and Denton appeared to respond to was something far simpler — a candidate who looked less like a Westminster trope and more like a person who might actually live down the road.

The lesson for Labour is not ideological migration but authority. Voters flirting with Green/ Reform are not auditioning for a seminar on progressive purity; they are expressing impatience with a political class that looks permanently uncertain of itself. Drift left and you confirm their suspicion that Labour governs by internal committee. Drift right and you merely look opportunistic. The only viable route is conviction — the unfashionable act of deciding what you believe and governing accordingly.

And then there is the Trump problem — not simply a man but a communications weather system. When a U.S. president cheerfully sidesteps legal conventions in pursuit of military action, the reverberations are not confined to Washington. They ripple through

## You can do it Keir, but only if you find your inner Tom Cruise



**ACTION, MAN!** Keir Starmer could learn some lessons from Tom Cruise

“**Labour should stop playing the HR rep and act like the boss**”

MARK BORKOWSKI

every allied democracy that still pretends international rules are something more than polite suggestions.

Keeping a grip on the political narrative amidst almost constant chaos and crisis caused

by the man across the pond has been a challenge to say the least.

But Labour’s first 20 months in office suggests a government struggling to shed the adrenaline of the campaign and take charge.

And it isn’t just me saying it. That perception of hesitancy, nervous energy, a leadership permanently half-explaining itself now sits at the core of Labour’s communications problem.

Nervous. Jittery. Irascible. Labour’s uncertain public posture has been worsened by a familiar catalogue: policy U-turns, internal theatrics and uneven attempts by both Starmer and Reeves to connect with the public.

Every sentence sounds as though it has been pre-approved by three committees, a comms adviser, and a wellbeing officer. Authority, once filtered through that many hands, emerges apologetic by default.

In an attritional environment like this, there

is only one antidote: certainty.

Labour needs to project the courage of its convictions and govern for its convictions and its majority, not for opinion polls that won’t matter for another three years.

“If you set out to be liked, you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing.”

Even for those who recoil from her politics, Margaret Thatcher’s warning echoes through every splutter of uncertainty from the current Labour machine.

Government as a popularity contest is a Sisyphean exercise, and the numbers bear it out.

Hope not hate research shows that only 5% of the public trust politicians to tell the truth. Yet that same public increasingly says it would prioritise a “strong, decisive leader” over a “liberal democracy.” This is not hypocrisy. It is exhaustion.

This is the Britain we’ve built: a country that distrusts politicians roughly as much as it distrusts estate agents, yet still yearns to be told what to do firmly and confidently.

It’s not authoritarianism so much as national fatigue. Democracy, but with a snooze button.

In this climate, indecision is fatal. So the lesson is brutally simple: stop trying to make

everyone like you. So Labour should stop playing the apologetic, over-cautious HR rep and start acting like the boss.

If Labour can deliver lower bills, growth people can feel, shorter waiting lists and tangible improvements in healthcare - and then make damn sure everyone knows about it - the electorate will, with a sigh, accept them as the least-worst option in 2029.

Not good enough? Then get out of politics.

Get out of public life altogether. Universal acclaim, even broad tolerance, is a myth.

So, how do you achieve the realistic goal of “better the devil you know”? If Thatcher is a hard pill to swallow, look away now.

The answer, uncomfortably, lies with Donald Trump. He has turned himself and those amplifying him into the most dominant, disruptive communications channel on the planet. He has the biggest drum, and he bangs it relentlessly. There isn’t a person in the English-speaking world who doesn’t know how many wars Trump claims to have ended - even though he has started one with Iran he doesn’t know how to finish. How many Labour achievements can even the most informed Brit reel off with the same confidence? Labour must drastically professionalise its own platforms and turn them into megaphones for success.

The same applies to its handling of the traditional media. The relationship is already antagonistic; limiting access or playing punitive games will only convert irritation into outright hostility.

The answer is performance.

Attack remains the best form of attack.

And there’s the rub. If Labour wants to swing momentum, it must end its crisis of confidence and usher in a politics of conviction. Less explanation. Fewer caveats. More certainty.

History, after all, has never been kind to leaders who confuse caution with wisdom.

It remembers those who act - and quietly shelves the rest under well-intentioned, but sadly irrelevant.

### FACT-CHECKING THE FIBBERS

#### RICHARD TICE

Companies he leads extol the virtues of solar energy and emissions reductions and even boast of net zero building. Tice has been a green champion for 15 years - through business.



Net (not so) stupid zero is the real view of Tice we reckon - but in pursuit of power any price. He rubbishes even the fact that we are in a climate crisis. Shame on him!