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UNDERSTANDING
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The Growth of the Green Party

Disillusioned progressive voters finding a new home

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RESEARCH PAPER
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UNDERSTANDING
THE GREANS' GROWTH
IN BRITAIN

Core Findings:

This paper explores the increase in support for the radical left in Britain by examining the growth of the Green Party.

To do this, it uses the British Election Study to identify which new voters supported the Greens in the previous parliament (2019 - 2024). It also analyses which voters have moved to them in the current parliament, which in 2026 led to their highest-ever poll ratings. In both periods, it explains the main factors that drove these voters to switch. In summary, our research finds that:

1. The Green Party's growth is being driven by younger, more educated voters who are more likely to rent their accommodation and live in more urban, ethnically diverse centres.
2. The voters that the Greens have secured since 2019 are predominantly left-liberal progressive voters. These people are mostly former Labour voters, with former Lib-Dem supporters also featuring. Few are former Tories and Reform voters.
3. Green supporters have different priorities and perceptions than the wider electorate. A key driver of their support is that their new voters trust the Greens on core issues, like the economy, more than the traditional parties of government.
4. Negative perceptions around Labour and the Tories (and their respective leaders') performance in government are contributing to the increase in Green support.
5. A feeling that the traditional parties of government, especially Labour, haven't represented their liberal preferences on Europe, immigration, and Gaza has allowed the Greens to secure disillusioned progressive voters.

6. Unhappiness over the Labour government's perceived unwillingness to redistribute wealth and tax and spend, alongside the Green Party advocating these policies, has led to the Greens securing many unhappy former Labour voters.
7. This paper's findings have been consistent since 2019. They were steady throughout the 2019-2-24 parliament and have gathered pace since Polanski became leader. The strength of feeling is strongest among former Labour voters, who tend to be the most left-wing and progressive.

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Introduction

The Green Party has enjoyed a rise in support in recent years. In 2019, the Greens only secured 2.7% of the vote. In 2024, this rose to 6.7%. After Polanski's leadership bid in May 2025, the party more than doubled its support, averaging 14% in the polls during the May 2026 local elections.

The growth of the Green Party raises interesting questions. Where has the surge in Green Party favourability come from? Who is driving this trend, and what is causing people to gravitate towards the Greens? The purpose of this research is to answer these timely questions.

An easy answer comes through the election of Polanski. His moving the Greens to the radical left may have created greater interest and support amongst a niche group seeking this alternative. Also, the rapid rise in Green membership and their ability to competitively contest more local council seats assisted in them gaining councillors. However, this ignores the growth the Green Party experienced in the previous parliament before Polanski's election.

As with Reform, a greater proportion of the electorate gradually gravitated towards a radical party. Rather than a specific leader or moment, this indicates wider dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties. However, the areas the Green Party won are very distinct from the areas Reform have enjoyed success. This indicates Reform's rise has different causes from the Greens' growth.

The Gorton and Denton by-election saw Reform as the main opposition, highlighting how the Green Party's contrasting approach won voters Reform can't reach. The focus on international issues, ethnic tensions and greater economic intervention allowed the party to supplant Labour. From this, the temptation is to argue that the Green Party's rise originated through a combination of the single issue of Gaza and a desire for greater economic radicalism. However, by-elections do not always reflect wider national trends.

Importantly, wider trends can explain the Green Party's gradual rise. This includes the rise in the cost of living encouraging voters to search for alternative representation. Also, it may have originated through perceived incompetence of the Labour government incentivising progressive voters to look elsewhere.

Yet, as the Greens' rise extends beyond the lifetime of the Labour government, this desire for a different politics could have originated from Labour's shift to the centre post-Corbyn. Additionally, as the conflict in Gaza started midway through the last parliament, disappointment with Labour's position on this issue could also have increased Green Party support. Therefore, the Gaza issue may not be restricted to by-election phenomena and could reflect a cause in changes of support.

Therefore, the explanation for the growth of the Greens remains heavily contested. This paper seeks to provide greater clarity by examining the 2026 British Election Study (BES) to determine which opinions best explain the rise in Green Party support.

Its core argument is that the perceived rightward shift of Labour under Starmer and incompetence on core issues progressive voters value have weakened Labour support. The Greens have exploited these weaknesses and gained considerable support, a trend that has gathered pace after Polanski's leadership bid. The paper also argues the Greens have gained progressive voters from other mainstream parties deemed to have failed on the core issue Green supporters tend to highly value.

Who are the Greens' new voters and where are they coming from?

Who are they & how do they differ?

Demographically, the Green Party has increased in popularity amongst younger, more highly educated voters who are more ethnically diverse.

These individuals disproportionately rent and are reflective of a range of occupational class groupings and average incomes.

Benefiting from a newer, more highly educated electorate

The Greens are clearly appealing more to a younger electorate; see Figure 1. Whilst only 23% of all voters are young (18-35), 35% of Green voters in 2024 and 50% of Green supporters in 2026 were young. This indicates that the Greens are appealing to younger voters who feel unrepresented by the mainstream. It could also reflect how poor outcomes for younger people regarding employment, housing and income are encouraging them to seek alternative progressive politics.

Alternatively, 38% of the electorate fit within older age brackets (55 and above). Yet, only 22% of Green voters in 2024 and 13% of 2026 Green supporters were in these age ranges. Therefore, the Greens' appeal is limited amongst the ageing electorate, suggesting that their appeal does not reflect the primary concerns of older voters.

The voters the Green Party has gained are not uniformly spread across age ranges. The voters they have secured from Labour from 2019-2024 and 2024-2026 are disproportionately younger. Yet, the individuals the Greens have gained from the Conservatives in this period are mostly older (48%). This would indicate the Greens are securing different types of voters from different parties. Therefore, the party's focus on both protecting the environment and providing a more radical economic alternative has allowed the party to broaden its appeal. It has allowed it to gain younger, frustrated former Labour voters unhappy with their economic position and older voters concerned about growing pollution and environmental destruction.

Figure 1 also shows Green voters are more highly educated, meaning they have more often accessed a university-level education. This trend was consistent regardless of what political party a voter had switched from. 48% of the electorate have experienced some form of university education. Yet, 66% of 2024 Green Party voters and 60% of 2026 supporters have gained this level of education. This demonstrates how the Green Party has

appealed to the concerns of highly educated voters across different age ranges. This may be because highly educated voters are more frequently concerned about the environment. Therefore, the main parties' inability to address concerns around pollution, loss of nature, and climate change may have helped the Green Party gain support. Also, because younger, more educated voters tend to live in urban environments, cost-of-living pressures around housing may have helped the Greens build a broader coalition of voters.

The Greens have also struggled to secure the support of voters with low or no qualifications. Only 15% of the Greens' support resides in this group, whilst 31% of the electorate falls within this category. Therefore, whilst the Greens' appeal amongst graduate audiences has been strong, it has been weak amongst others. Its inability to perform more strongly amongst voters who haven't accessed a university-level education suggests most of these voters do not see the Green Party reflecting their preferences. It could reflect how these voters do not trust the Green Party to improve their economic outcomes.

Consequently, whilst the Green Party has broadened their appeal, it clearly sits within a niche part of the electorate. The electorate tends to be younger and more highly educated. As this demographic reflects a small part of the UK electorate, this limits the Green Party's potential to grow further.

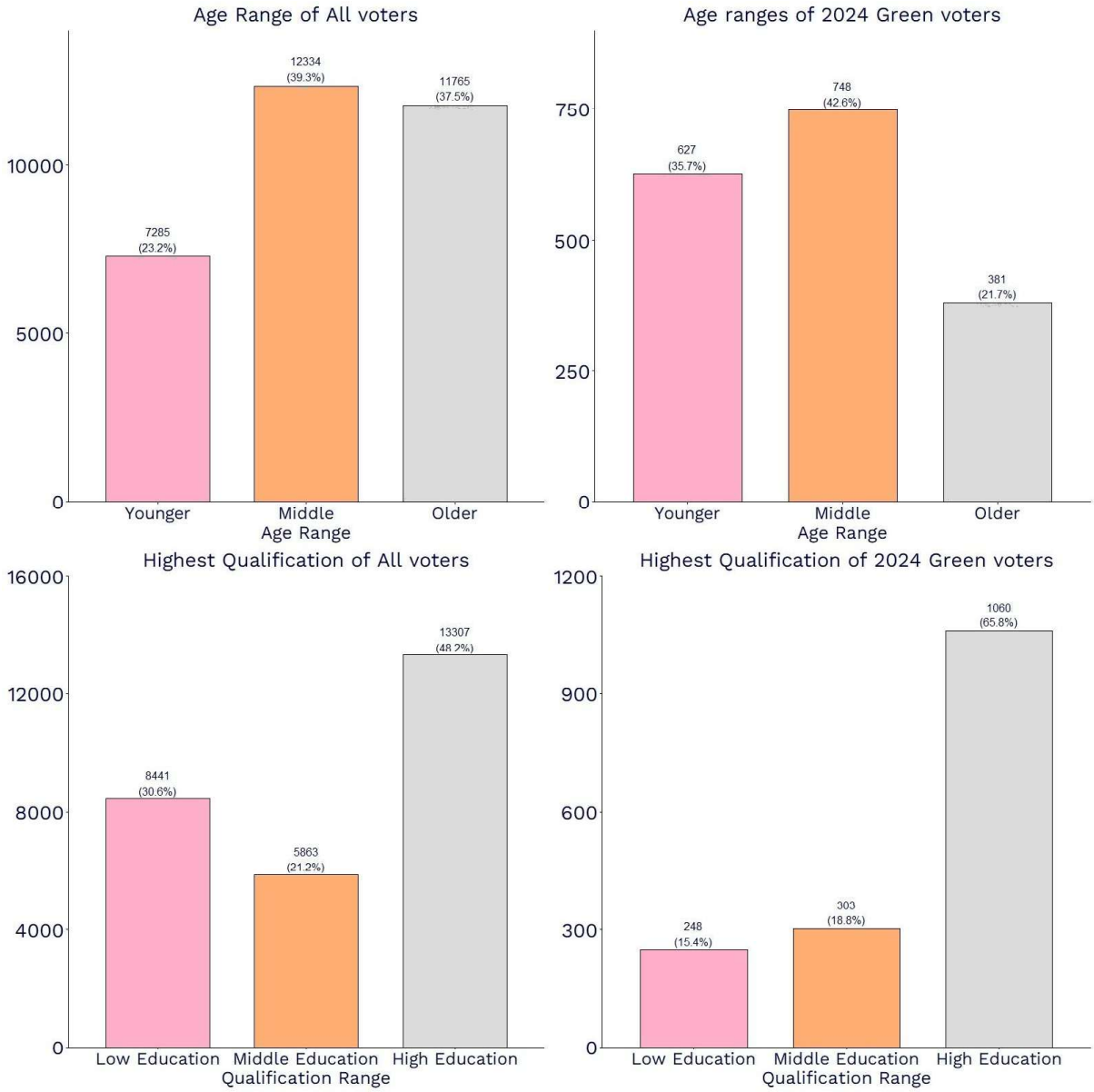

Figure 1: Age and Education background of Green voters (compared to the wider electorate). Green voters are younger and more highly educated. Source: BES 2026.

Diverse Renters - Ethnicity and housing:

2026 Green Party supporters are more ethnically diverse than the wider electorate. Only 78% of 2026 Green Party supporters are categorised as White British. This is 6%p lower than the national average. Also, the proportion of BAME voters amongst Green supporters is notably higher than the national average. As the BAME population tends to be higher in urban areas, this indicates that the Greens are securing more supporters in cities

and larger towns with more ethnically diverse populations. It also highlights how some voters upset with politically charged messaging against immigration and the Gaza conflict may be helping the Greens appeal to more ethnically diverse voter groups.

2026 Green Party supporters also differ in the type of housing they reside in. Collectively, forms of ownership are slightly lower than the national average, but only by 5%. The proportion of voters who own their accommodation through a mortgage is slightly higher than the national average (+3%p). However, Green voters less often own their home outright, with only 23% of their 2026 supporters owning property, compared to 32% amongst the wider electorate. This gap is largely accounted for by slightly higher rates of private sector renting. This indicates that the Green Party's support has originated in urban areas where housing is less affordable and private sector renting is more common. This indicates that the Green Party's growth is partly driven by younger, more highly educated renters in urban areas who are more adversely affected by growing housing costs.

Class and Income - mostly reflecting the national average:

2026 Green supporters broadly reflect the UK's class composition. 50% of all Green 2026 supporters work in professional occupations, whilst 45% of the country fit within this category. Just under 30% fall into the A/B social group, which is again reflective of the wider population. Around one-fifth work in routine occupations and 21% are placed in the D/E social class group, which is in line with the national average.

Green voters also reflect the country's income groupings. Around 30% of 2026 Green Party supporters are in low-income households, and 25% live in high-income households, which is the same proportion as all UK households. This indicates that class and income factors are not driving increased support for the Green Party.

Their political homes and ideology:

The polls and general election results have consistently shown that the Greens have gained wider support since the 2019 general election. But where was these voters' former political home?

By isolating individuals who said they would vote Green in an imagined general election in May 2026, we can see this group primarily supported Labour in the 2024 general election. 43% backed Labour whilst 27% supported the Greens and 12% had voted for the Lib Dems. The other parties received a very small proportion of these voters' support, less than 2%, including those who had supported the Brexit Party and Reform UK in this period. This would indicate that the Greens' recent rise in support has predominantly come from left-leaning liberal voters.

Yet, it is important to recall that the Green Party's growth has been gradual and across two successive parliaments. When analysing these people's 2019 support, the pattern is slightly different. These voters did still overwhelmingly support Labour (46%), but 11% supported the Conservatives. The gap between Conservative support and Lib-Dem and Green support is also smaller than in the current parliament, with only 24% having voted Green and 9% Lib-Dem.

However, Figure 2 clearly shows that since 2019, the voters the Greens had secured at their peak predominantly had come from Labour (61%), with only 14% of these voters having supported the Greens. Although 8% voted Conservative in 2019, with a further 11% having backed the Lib-Dems, it is again clear that the Greens' recent rise in support has predominantly come from left-leaning liberal voters. Specifically. It suggests their rise has come through these voters' disappointment in Labour as the party has shifted back to the centre post-Corbyn.

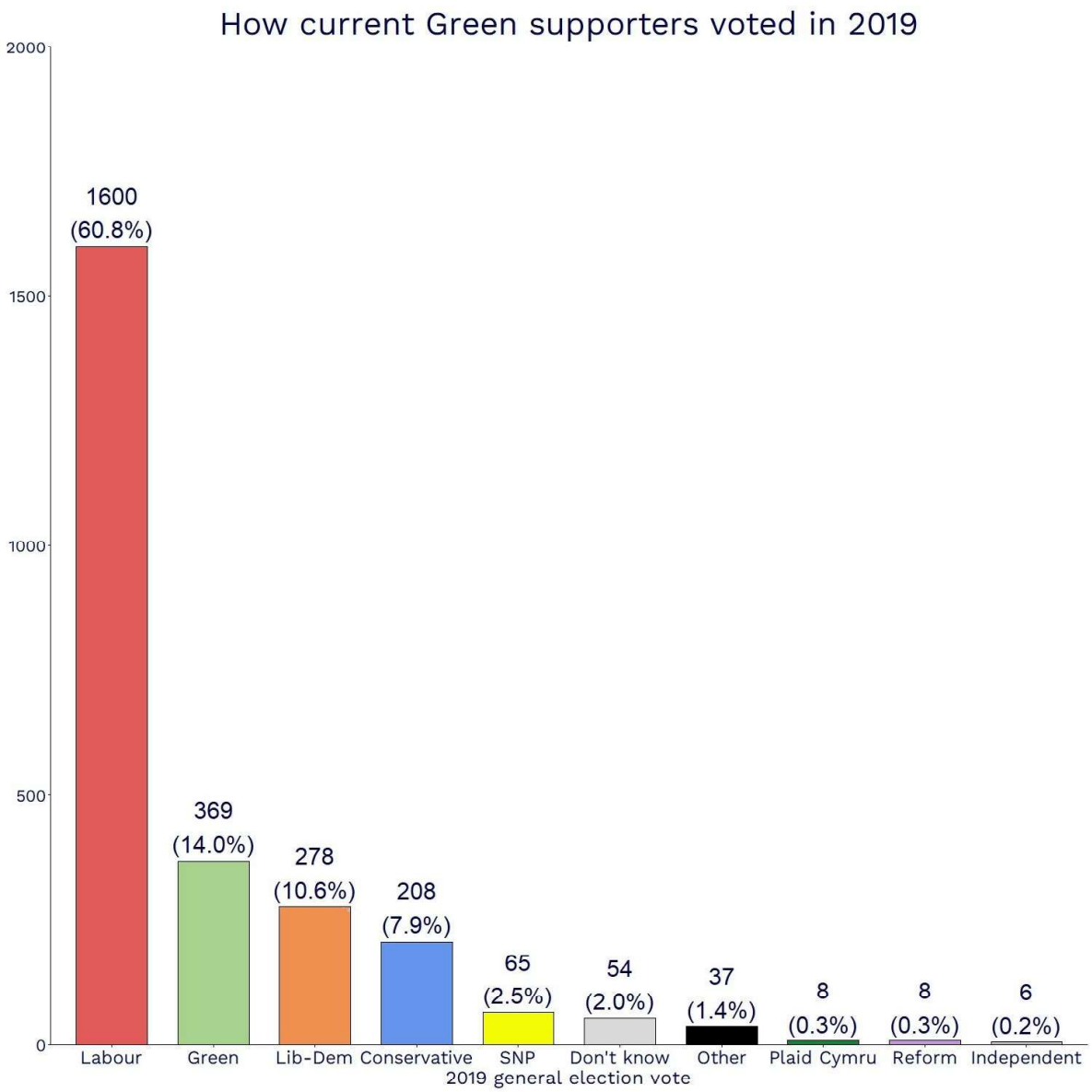

Figure 2: Voting history of Green Party 2026 supporters (by their 2019 vote). Source: BES 2026.

Ideological background:

The 2026 BES supports this theory. The voters the Greens have secured are skewed to the left. Only 25% of the electorate are scored as left-wing by the 2026 wave of the British Election Study. Yet, 72% of Green voters are allocated to this group. Only 19% of Green voters are seen as in the centre, compared to 28% of the electorate, and only 1% are categorised as right-wing, compared to 21% of all voters. Only 8% of Green voters can't be placed on this ideological scale, compared to 16% of the wider electorate.

This indicates that Green voters more often hold views firm enough to place them on the left of British politics.

They are also disproportionately strongly liberal in their outlook. 47% of all 2026 Green voters are identified as liberal, considerably larger than 15% of the wider electorate. Only 18% were identified as authoritarian, despite 48% of the wider electorate residing within this ideological space.

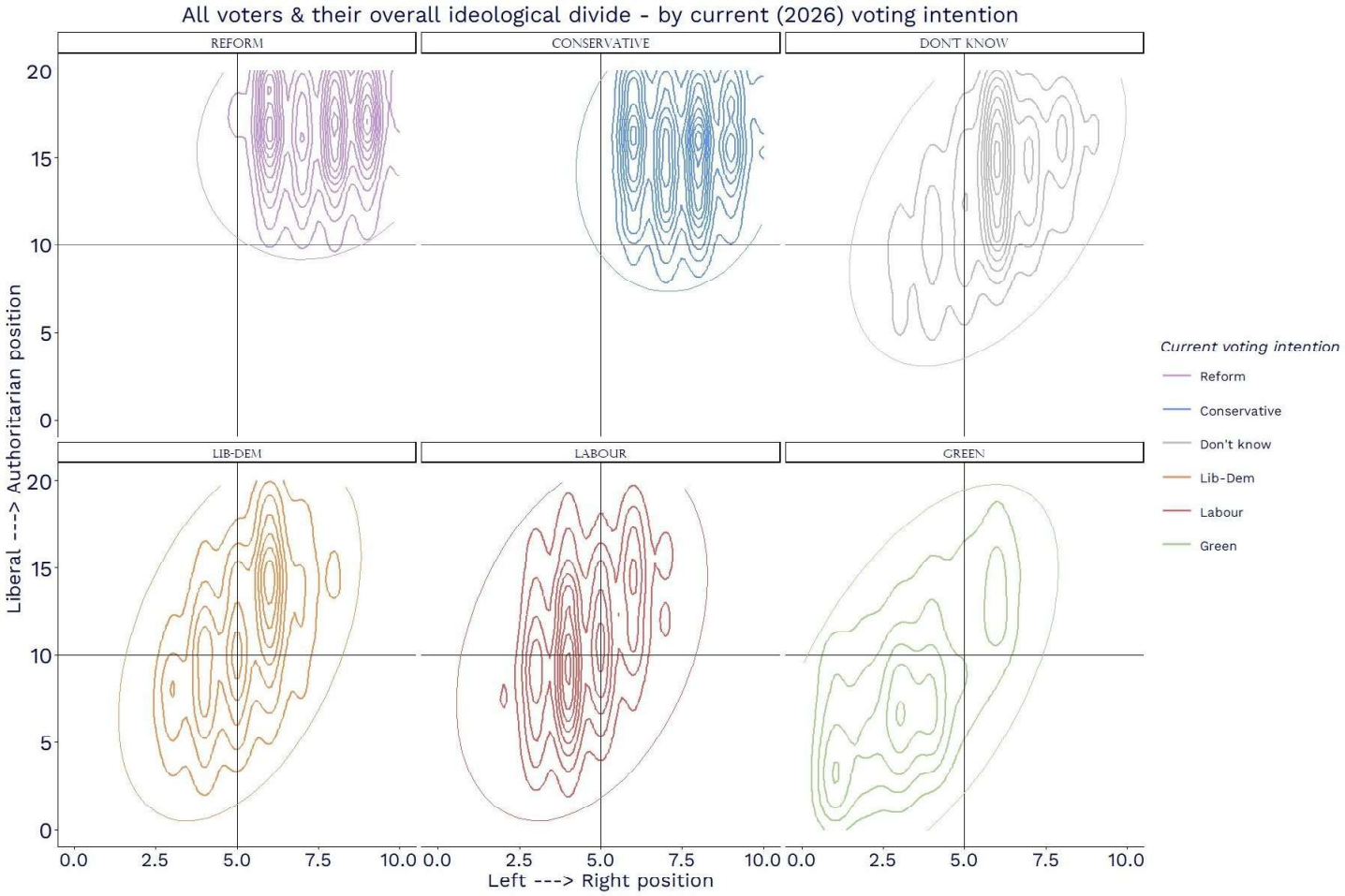

Figure 3: The ideological location of all mainstream English parties in 2026. Source: BES 2026.

Figure 3 demonstrates that those who had gravitated to the Greens by 2026 were heavily skewed towards the liberal–left. This was the case regardless of which party an individual had supported previously. Voters gained from the Conservatives and Lib-Dems were slightly more centrist-liberal, but it is important to recall these comprised less than a fifth of all Green gains. Therefore, the gains the Green Party has secured again appear to be from disillusioned liberal voters who are unhappy with the authoritarian shift of the two main parties post-Brexit and post-Corbyn. Consequently, this

dissatisfaction has allowed the Green Party to gradually gain the support of these disillusioned voters who are seeking an alternative left-liberal message. As the Greens have provided this, especially post-Polanski's leadership bid, this can help to explain why they have secured large swathes of such voters.

Perception of politics

Green Party supporters perceive politics differently from the wider electorate. They have different policy priorities and value environmental and inequality concerns much more frequently than the electorate. They also have a much more favourable outlook towards the Green Party and its leader and have a much more negative outlook towards other party leaders. However, some Green switchers still hold positive views towards mainstream parties, although their leaders remain unpopular.

Different Priorities and trust in the Green Party

The most important issue for voters that the Green Party gained in both the 2019-2024 parliament and the current parliament was the economy. Roughly 40% of all supporters the Green Party obtained in 2024 and 2026 prioritised the economy. However, the key distinction between Green supporters and the wider electorate is the proportion who value the environment and inequality, with significantly fewer fixating on immigration. A greater proportion highly prioritised the environment (+10%p) and inequality (+7%p). Also, they more valued issues categorised as liberal (+5%p). This means that over 20% of Green supporters have highly prioritised issues that reflect either environmental or liberal thoughts. Also, whilst 22% of the electorate are strongly concerned about immigration, this is only the case for 2% of Green supporters, again making Green supporters clearly distinctive from the wider population. These priority differences are important as they suggest that Labour's willingness to appeal to voters on immigration may have lost them support to the Greens, as these voters want Labour to focus on other issues. This is confirmed by BES data, as

only 1% of those who switched from Labour to the Greens since 2019 value immigration whilst 32% highly prioritise the economy. Therefore, as Starmer's Labour began to focus on controlling immigration, voters who cared more about other issues may have been left disappointed. In contrast, the Green Party's increased focus on cost-of-living issues may have helped them secure these wavering Labour voters.

These differences go deeper than issue priorities. They also perceive party performance on these policy concerns differently. The electorate is greatly divided over which party they perceive as most competent on the big issues of the day. The most common response is that no party can handle their core concerns (27%), see Figure 4. The next most common response is to be unsure (19%), and Reform tops the party list at 17%. The Green Party are only viewed as able by 10% of the electorate, the same as Labour. However, amongst those who supported the Greens in 2026, 61% view the party as most credible on their core concerns. Only 4% perceived Labour as most able, despite a large block of these voters having switched from Labour.

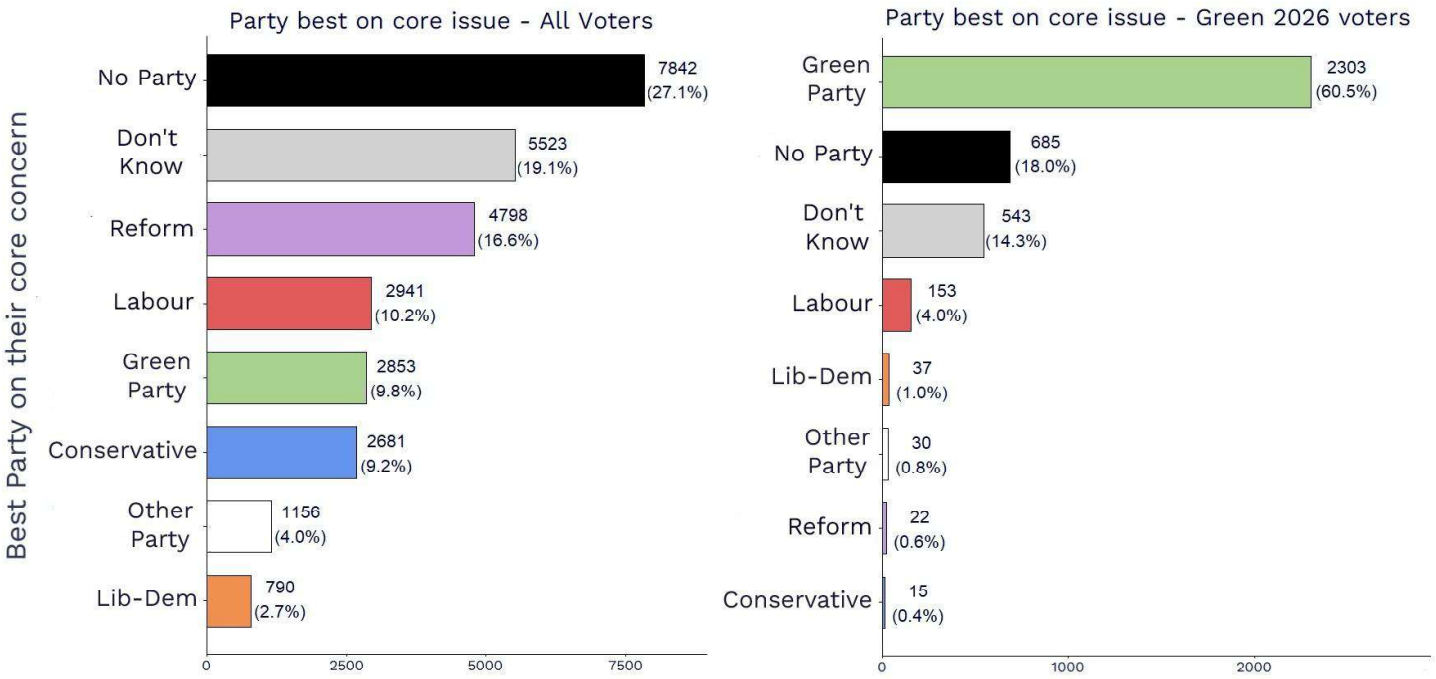

Figure 4: Voters' view of which party can best handle their primary concern compared to Green Party 2026 supporters. Source: BES 2026.

Out of those who switched directly from Labour, only 9% perceived Labour as most able, with 88% viewing the Green Party as performing best on their primary concerns. The most common concern cited by these lost Labour voters was the economy. This raises the possibility that Labour's shift rightwards to the centre under Starmer may have gradually lost Labour support. Disappointment over the unwillingness to engage in greater levels of taxation and spending may have allowed the Greens to win over these voters with a stronger left-wing economic message. Therefore, under Polanski, messages of a wealth tax, greater spending on public services and more government intervention may have resonated with these disillusioned left-wing voters and helped the Green Party take support from Labour.

Again, those switching from the Conservative Party were less enthusiastic about the Green Party. Only 27% perceived the Green Party as most able to handle their core concern, whilst the remaining 73% preferred other parties or no party. These voters' primary concern is the economy (43%). This indicates that liberal conservatives who may have more moderate, or even right-wing views, on the economy may not trust the Greens after their left-wing shift on economic policy. These switchers also focus more on immigration, with 18% citing it as their top issue. This indicates that these voters may not completely trust the Green Party's more liberal stance on the issue. Again, these doubts indicate that the voters gained from the Tories may not be strong supporters and may be choosing the Greens after being left disappointed by past Conservative governments. If the Conservatives start to convince these voters they can once again perform on these issues, these voters may abandon the Greens and go back to the Tories.

A positive perception of Polanski and the Green Party

Green Party supporters perceive politics differently from the wider electorate. Unsurprisingly, they disproportionately view the Green Party and its leader, Polanski, favourably. A clear majority (65%) gave a strong favourability rating (7 or more out of 10). This is compared to just 13% of the wider electorate. Very few have a negative perception of the leader (4%),

which is much smaller than the 49% of all voters. Interestingly, this trend occurred regardless of which party a voter had switched from and was strongest amongst Labour switchers. However, switchers from the Conservative Party hold a much more negative view of the Green leader, indicating they may not be at ease with the direction the party is going under Poalanski. This indicates that liberal conservatives may be supporting the party for different reasons than the larger group of Labour voters. It also highlights how their support may be weaker and may disappear if the Conservative Party improves or negative reaction to Green leadership continues.

In terms of wider party approval, they also disproportionately view the Green Party favourably. This disparity is even greater than with views on party leaders. Amongst 2026 Green supporters, 84% view the party favourably compared to just 20% of the voting population. Only 1% have a negative view of the party, yet 48% of the wider public looked upon the party unfavourably. This suggests that the Greens' message on the environment and the economy may be appealing to voters who are disillusioned by the mainstream and are looking for a party that reflects these values and priorities. Therefore, Polanski's move to rebrand the party and greatly focus on the economy may be helping the party appeal to a specific group of voters and, from this, increase their support.

A negative Perception of mainstream party leaders:

The Conservatives:

Individuals supporting the Green Party in 2026 also view other party leaders differently. They have a much greater dislike of Farage, with 97% of these voters giving the Reform leader a low favourability rating (less than 4 out of 10). This is compared to 64% of the electorate.

Again, in contrast, these voters had a significantly different view of Reform than other voters. 97% of Green supporters currently have a negative outlook on Reform, compared to just 63% of the electorate. This

unpopularity, whilst not extending to the Tory leader, did extend to the Tory party itself. A large proportion (89%) gave the Conservative Party a very low favourability rating, whilst only 53% of the electorate gave a low score. Those switching from the Conservatives to the Green Party also did not award the Green Party a strong score. Therefore, these disaffected liberal conservative voters may be switching to the Greens as they see the Green Party as the best amongst an unfavourable bunch.

Labour:

They also have a disproportionately negative view of the Labour and Lib-Dem leaders (+6%p and +15%p, respectively). Again, clear perception differences exist with the wider public, suggesting that the Greens are securing a niche support group.
However, 2026 Green supporters gave Labour and the Lib-Dems a more favourable rating than the wider population. Labour more often gained a strong favourability rating (+5%p) and was less often awarded a low favourability score (-16%p). This was also the case for the Lib-Dems. As leadership patterns substantially differed, this indicates that the election of Polanski compiled with the growing unpopularity of the Labour leader, could be driving greater support for the Green Party. Therefore, decisions made by Starmer since becoming Labour leader may have helped to gradual rise of the Green Party.

Consequently, decisions around shifting Labour back to the centre and the Gaza conflict can help to explain the growing appeal of the Green Party. This is because the Greens have taken distinctly different stances on these matters, giving voters with such opinions alternative leadership to support. Yet, these findings also highlight how Green voters can be regained by mainstream parties if they provide leadership that better matches these voters' preferences.

Perceive parties' ideological position differently:

As outlined earlier, Green 2026 supporters skew overwhelmingly to the left. This may skew how they view the other parties' overall ideological position, as they may view centre-left parties as too right-wing for their tastes. The BES confirms this possibility, as 21% of these voters viewed Labour as right-wing; see Figure 5. This was slightly higher amongst those who have switched from Labour to Green. Interestingly, only 7% of the entire electorate viewed Labour as on the right of British politics, indicating these voters see Labour as being more right-wing than most of the electorate.

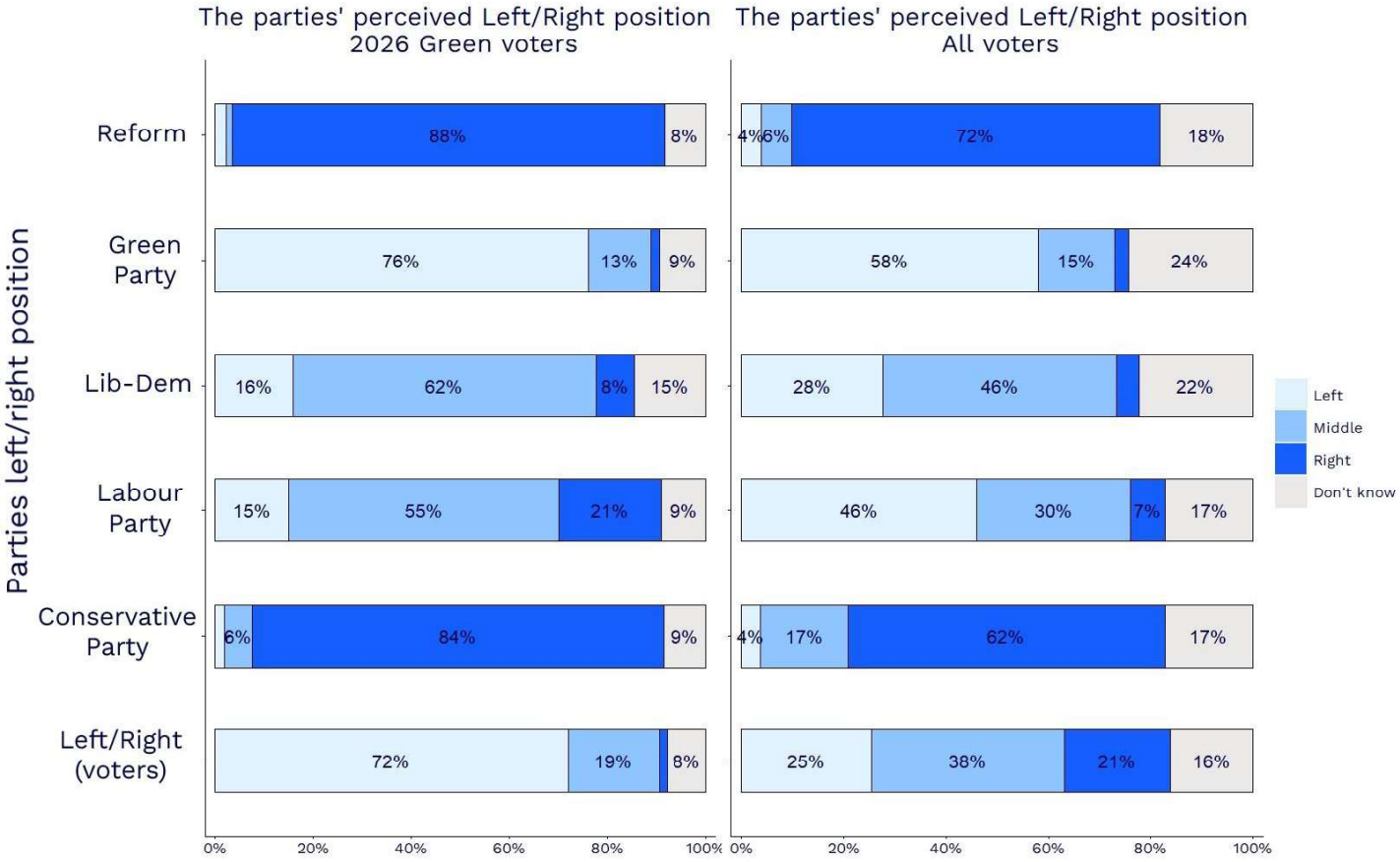

Figure 5: The parties' perceived overall ideological position on the left/right divide, 2026 Green Party supporters compared to all voters. Source: BES 2026.

Yet, Figure 5 shows that few of the voters the Greens have gained perceive the Lib-Dems as right-wing (only 8% - 4%p more than the wider electorate). This could mean that the left-wing voters Labour has lost to the Greens simply perceive Labour as too right-wing to represent their views, values and priorities. This indicates that Starmer's rightward shift to reclaim the centre of British politics may have alienated some of their progressive base.

In contrast, the voters flowing to the Green Party acknowledge the Greens occupy the left position that Labour vacated. Just over 75% of the Green 2026 supporters perceive the Green Party as left-wing, which is roughly in line with the 72% of these individuals who were identified as left-wing. Therefore, following Post-Polanski's leadership campaign, the shift of the Green Party leftwards has helped these voters feel that they are ideologically closer to the Green Party than Labour. Therefore, advocating policies like wealth taxes and having clearer stances on issues like Gaza, whilst Labour shifted rightwards, may have secured these voters' support. As these voters are left-wing and mostly supported Labour in 2019 and 2024, this loss has largely come at the expense of Labour.

Culturally Liberal views on Immigration & Europe

As Green voters are heavily skewed towards being liberal, it is not surprising to find that they have distinct opinions on issues relating to immigration and Europe. They tend to be strongly pro-immigration and mostly favour staying in the EU. They also tend to be more internationalist in outlook, so they value and take strong stances on foreign policy issues, such as the Gaza conflict. These clear preferences indicate that the Green Party's large gains amongst former Labour voters can be partially explained by dissatisfaction with a centrist Labour Party not reflecting progressive values on salient issues.

Pro-Immigration:

Current supporters of the Green Party have a clear and strong pro-immigration sentiment. The public is split on the perceived economic impact of immigration, with 28% feeling immigration undermines the economy and 19% believing it improves it. Yet, 2026 Green supporters are heavily skewed towards feeling the economic benefits of immigration, with 52% having this view. Only 3% believed it damaged UK economic output. Once more, former Labour voters moving to the Green Party reflect Green

voters' distinct preferences. The majority of these switchers (55%) believe that immigration improves the UK's economy, with 41% of former Lib-Dem voters sharing this view. This indicates the Green Party may have grown through securing progressive voters who became unhappy with mainstream parties' negative messages on immigration. In particular, Labour's decision to try and win back its socially conservative base from the Conservatives and Reform through harder messages on controlling immigration may have alienated these voters. It also may have encouraged these voters to think Labour would undermine the economy through excessive immigration controls. Such concerns may have incentivised these progressive voters to seek an alternative. As the Green Party promoted a strong liberal pro-immigration message, they were best placed to secure these wavering individuals.

The only exception amongst these new voters was those who had flowed from the Conservative Party. Only 12% felt immigration had improved the country's economy, whilst 22% thought it had undermined it. This again highlights how those gained from the Conservatives have differences from the majority of new support the Green Party has gained since 2019. Therefore, as the Green Party pursues a more progressive agenda on issues like immigration, this could cause these voters to flow to other parties. It also highlights how the perceived failure of mainstream parties may be driving some of the Green Party's gains rather than strong support for their policy positions.

Green Party supporters much more frequently perceived Labour as being a party that would allow fewer migrants into the UK (39% compared to 17% of the wider electorate). Across the wider electorate, this would not be a problem, but Green voters are disproportionately open to allowing more migrants into the UK. Whilst only 12% of the electorate would allow migration to increase, 39% of 2026 Green supporters would; see Figure 6. Therefore, the voters Labour lost to the Green Party from 2019 to 2026 often view Labour as not reflecting their views on immigration. As they also perceive immigration to benefit the UK's economy and culture, they may

view Labour as undermining these positives by seeking to restrict migrant numbers. Therefore, Starmer's stronger message on reducing immigration and having a hardline stance on refugees coming to the UK in small boats may have caused dissatisfaction amongst the voters.

After Polanski won the leadership contest, his stronger pro-immigration message gave an alternative option for these wavering progressive voters. BES data supports this assertion, where those who switched to the Green Party saw it as the only one willing to increase immigration. Very few of these voters identified any other party as reflecting their immigration preference, but 46% acknowledged that the Green Party shared their outlook. This feeling was strongest among the voters the Green Party has secured from Labour, with these voters more often feeling Labour did not represent their immigration preferences and that the Green Party did. Therefore, events around immigration policy help explain the growth in Green Party support, as they may have caused these voters to feel the Green Party was closer to them on a range of issues than mainstream parties.

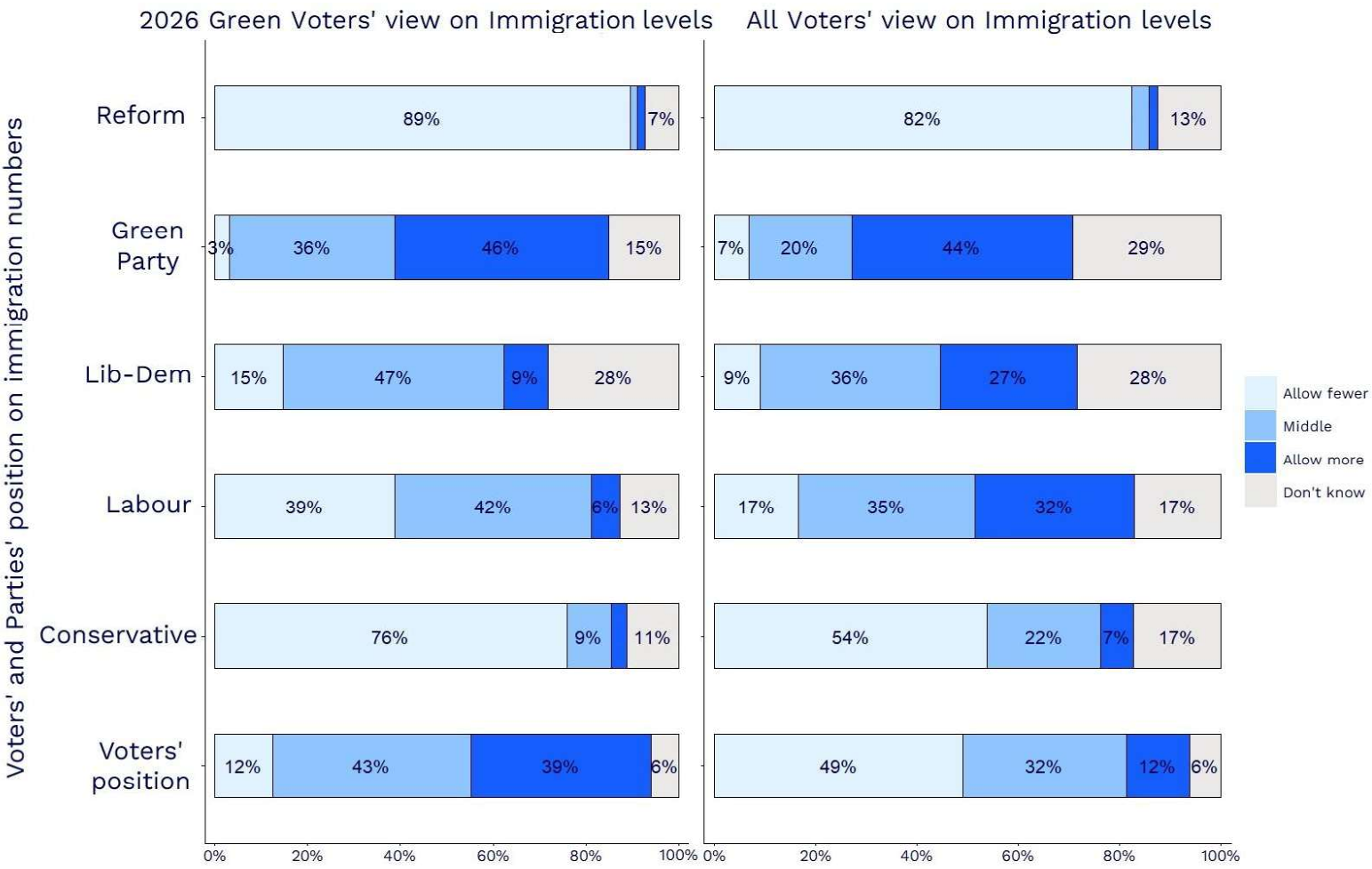

Figure 6: The voters' perceptions of immigration numbers and the parties' perceived position on the issue, 2026 Green Party supporters compared to all voters. Source: BES 2026.

Internationalist (Pro Europe - want closer connections)

Whilst the public was evenly split during the Brexit debate, Green voters heavily voted to Remain (76%). This divide has extended over time regarding the UK's future relationship with the EU. Individuals supporting the Green Party in 2026 would overwhelmingly vote to rejoin the EU (88%). This deepening may partly be due to a clear majority viewing Brexit as having damaged the UK economy. On average, 2026 Green Party voters gave a score of 25 out of 100 on its economic impact. Anything less than 50 represents a loss. This score doesn't just highlight that these voters feel Brexit has created an economic loss, but one bigger than the rest of the electorate perceives.

Only 5% would decide to stay out of the EU. This is true for every party voters had switched from apart from the Conservative Party. Former Conservative voters now supporting the Greens would mostly stay out of the EU (42%), with only 34% wanting to rejoin. This again highlights how individuals moving from the Conservatives to the Greens differ from other new Green Party supporters. Therefore, if the Green Party do persist with a stronger pro-EU message, this support may not last. However, this would mean that they would be appealing to the majority of new supporters they have acquired since 2019.

However, as the majority of the Green Party's new voters are clearly pro-Europe, this highlights how the Greens' growth may partly be due to unhappiness amongst internationalist voters with mainstream parties' reluctance to pursue a closer relationship with Europe.

BES data confirms this possibility. This is because 2026 Green supporters view Labour and even the Lib-Dems as not wanting closer ties with Europe. When asked whether the UK should move closer to the EU or maintain its independence, unsurprisingly, 82% of Green 2026 supporters preferred to increase ties with Europe. This is compared to just 45% of the wider public; see Figure 7. Green voters also view the parties' positions differently from the wider electorate. Only 22% perceive Labour as a party advocating closer relations with the EU, whilst 47% of the wider electorate view Labour as a pro-EU party. Further, only 40% view the Lib-Dems as a party wanting more EU ties, less than the whole electorate (-9%p). They also more often view the Conservative Party as wanting to keep the UK separate from EU institutions (+18%p). These trends were even stronger amongst voters who had left Labour, the Lib-Dems and the Conservatives since 2019. This again indicates that those increasing support for the Green Party post-2019 see the other parties as not reflecting their internationalist pro-European outlook. Therefore, this dissatisfaction over a lack of representation on this issue may be encouraging people to switch to the Green Party.

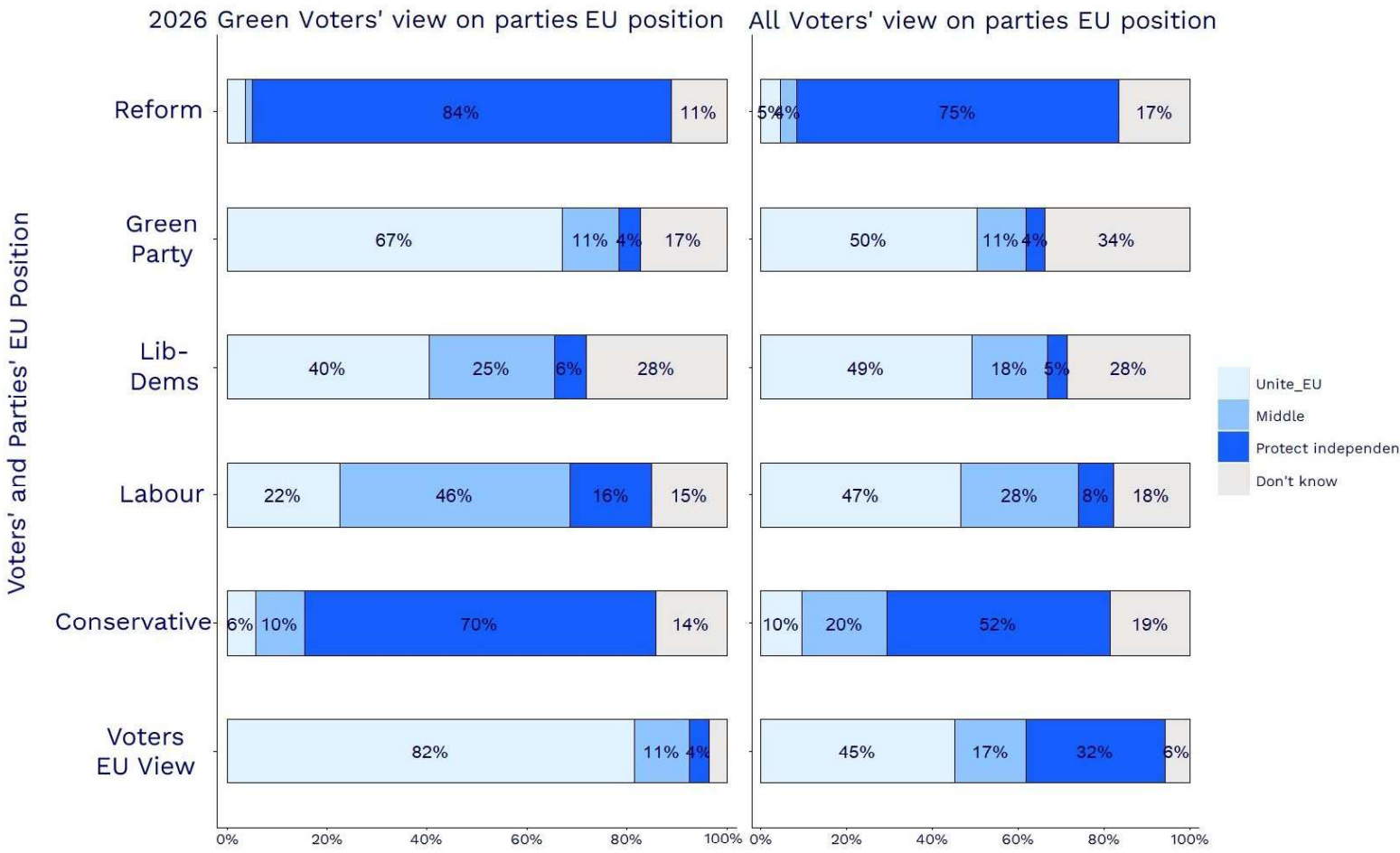

Figure 7: The voters' parties' perceived overall EU position, 2026 Green Party supporters compared to all voters. Source: BES 2026.

Gaza - a clear and strong siding with one viewpoint:

Dissatisfaction with foreign policy and international issues is likely not confined to Europe. It likely also extends to the Gaza issue. Individuals supporting the Green Party are mostly on one side of the debate on conflict in Gaza; see Figure 7. Nationally, the public does skew towards the Palestinian side of the debate (33%), but 15% support Israel's position and 25% don't view either side's claim as stronger than the other. Yet, 2026 Green Party supporters' views are much clearer, with 75% supporting the Palestinian side and only 1% supporting the Israeli view. Only 10% gave a neutral position; see Figure 8.

Further, the strength of feeling on this issue is much clearer. Just over 60% of Green 2026 supporters felt they sided significantly more with the

Palestinian cause than had sympathy with the Israeli position. This is compared to just 20% of the wider electorate. Also, fewer people had no opinion, with only 15% of Green supporters saying they were unsure compared to 27% of the wider electorate. Importantly, these trends indicate that the Green Party may have gained support from mainstream parties over their perceived failure to side with the Palestinian cause they feel very strongly about.

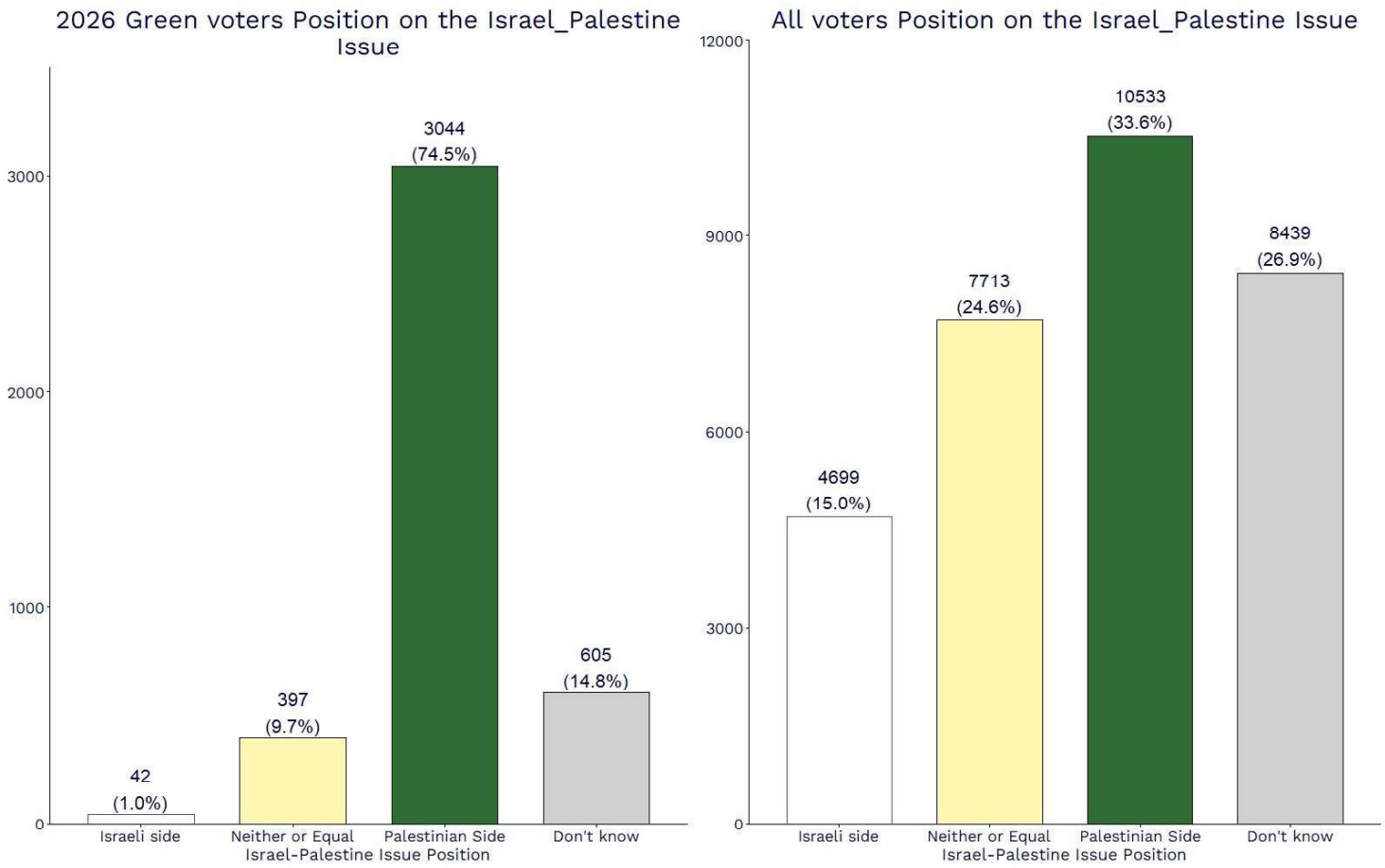

Figure 8: The voters' position on the Israel-Palestine Issue. Green 2026 supporters compared to all voters. Source: BES 2026.

BES data supports this assertion. The group that most clearly takes the Palestinian side are the voters Labour has lost to the Green Party since 2019. More than 8 in 10 (85%) of these voters display clear support for the Palestinian point of view. Yet, notably, this was also the case for 59% of individuals gained from the Lib-Dems and the voters the Greens have kept in successive election cycles. Importantly, this strength of feeling was highest amongst voters the Green Party have gained from Labour, with 71%

saying they sided with Palestine much more than the Israeli cause. This again highlights disappointment with mainstream parties' unwillingness to represent strongly held positions and views on foreign policy issues may be helping the Green Party to increase its support. Therefore, Starmer's decision to back Israel's military actions in the early phase of the conflict may have caused progressive voters to feel Labour did not share their values. The ongoing decision to back Israel may have caused strong disillusionment and caused voters to feel Labour was not internationalist and left-wing in its outlook. This may have increased willingness to find a new party to support, and with the Greens strongly siding with Gaza, especially after Polanski became leader, the Green Party was well-placed to secure this support.

Concerned with public services and limited government intervention

The voters who have moved to the Green Party since 2019 have strong concerns about the mainstream parties' ability to manage the economy and vital public services. They also tend to more often favour greater government intervention, such as supporting greater taxation, spending and the redistribution of incomes.

Concerns around delivering a better economy and public services

As with most of the electorate, 2026 Green Party supporters are concerned with the state of public services. A similar proportion of these voters and the wider voting public feel that the economy is getting worse (70-75%) and believe the NHS is in decline (56%-53%). The same proportion also feel that schools and education are in a worse state (46%). The only real difference is

on immigration, where fewer Green supporters feel the situation is worsening than the general public. This may be because this issue is less salient for Green voters and they hold different views on the subject. Yet, overall, nearly every service was seen as in decline. This means that how parties are understood to perform in these areas of perceived decline may be important in shaping these voters' support.

Crucially, Green 2026 supporters tended to disproportionately feel that the Green Party was competent in areas of decline and that the Labour government could not improve things. The majority of the electorate feel that the Green Party would handle the economy poorly. Yet, a majority of those showing support for the Green Party in 2026 felt that they would handle the economy well (54%), and a similar proportion felt Labour was handling the economy poorly (55%). A large proportion of these voters also doubted that the other parties would be able to manage the UK's economy. For instance, 80% believed that the Conservative Party would handle day-to-day management of the UK economy badly and 92% felt this way about Reform. This would indicate that the rising cost of living and failure of the mainstream parties to reverse the decline in living standards may have caused disillusioned progressive voters to seek an alternative party that could provide better returns. This would indicate that past governments' unwillingness to intervene on cost-of-living issues, whilst Polanski's clear message of greater government intervention, may have changed these voters' support.

Yet, this feeling goes deeper than economic management and spreads to a range of public services. For instance, despite a large proportion of the electorate feeling the Green Party could not handle the NHS (38%), a majority of Green supporters believe the Green Party would handle the service well (63%). Again, these voters felt the Labour government was not handling the service well (43%), and a disproportionately large proportion felt the Conservative Party would not be able to handle the service (87%). This trend was repeated in perceptions of how the parties would manage

education and schools. This again shows how these voters have lost trust in the mainstream parties' ability to deliver in government on a range of important issues. Therefore, the Greens' rise is partly due to their new voters not feeling the current or former Conservative government has been unable to improve public services. With the Green Party advocating greater spending on these services, voters looking for improvements may have believed the party would more effectively deliver on core services. These coinciding events could have caused these voters to switch to the Green Party.

The BES reinforces the claim that voters who have supported the Green Party since 2019 favour greater spending. Figure 9 shows that the individuals the Green Party have obtained disproportionately favour greater taxation and spending (59% compared to 33% of the wider public). Importantly, the only party these Green voters perceived to reflect their preference was the Green Party, with 59% of these voters feeling the party would increase taxation and spending. Interestingly, their opinion of the Labour Party's policy on taxing and spending differed from the wider public. Just over a third of the electorate (35%) felt that Labour was a pro-tax and spend party. Yet, only 15% of 2026 Green Party supporters perceived Labour to have this position, and this was even smaller amongst the voters Labour has lost to the Greens.

This disparity also occurred amongst views on redistribution. Again, the voters the Green Party has amassed since 2019 were disproportionately left-wing and favour redistribution (66% to 31% of the wider electorate). Again, the voters supporting the Green Party viewed the Green Party to be the only party reflecting this preference, with 58% of these individuals believing the Greens would favour greater redistribution. This group also less often view Labour as a pro-redistribution party, with only 14% holding this view compared to 35% of the wider public. Once more, this feeling was stronger amongst the voters the Green Party had gained from Labour.

Again, a feeling that mainstream parties, particularly Labour, don't reflect this group's desire for greater investment in public services and wealth

redistribution may be encouraging these voters to switch to the Greens. Consequently, Starmer shifting Labour to the centre and ruling out greater taxation and spending, whilst the Green Party adopted policies like Wealth taxes, could have caused voters to switch from Labour to Green.

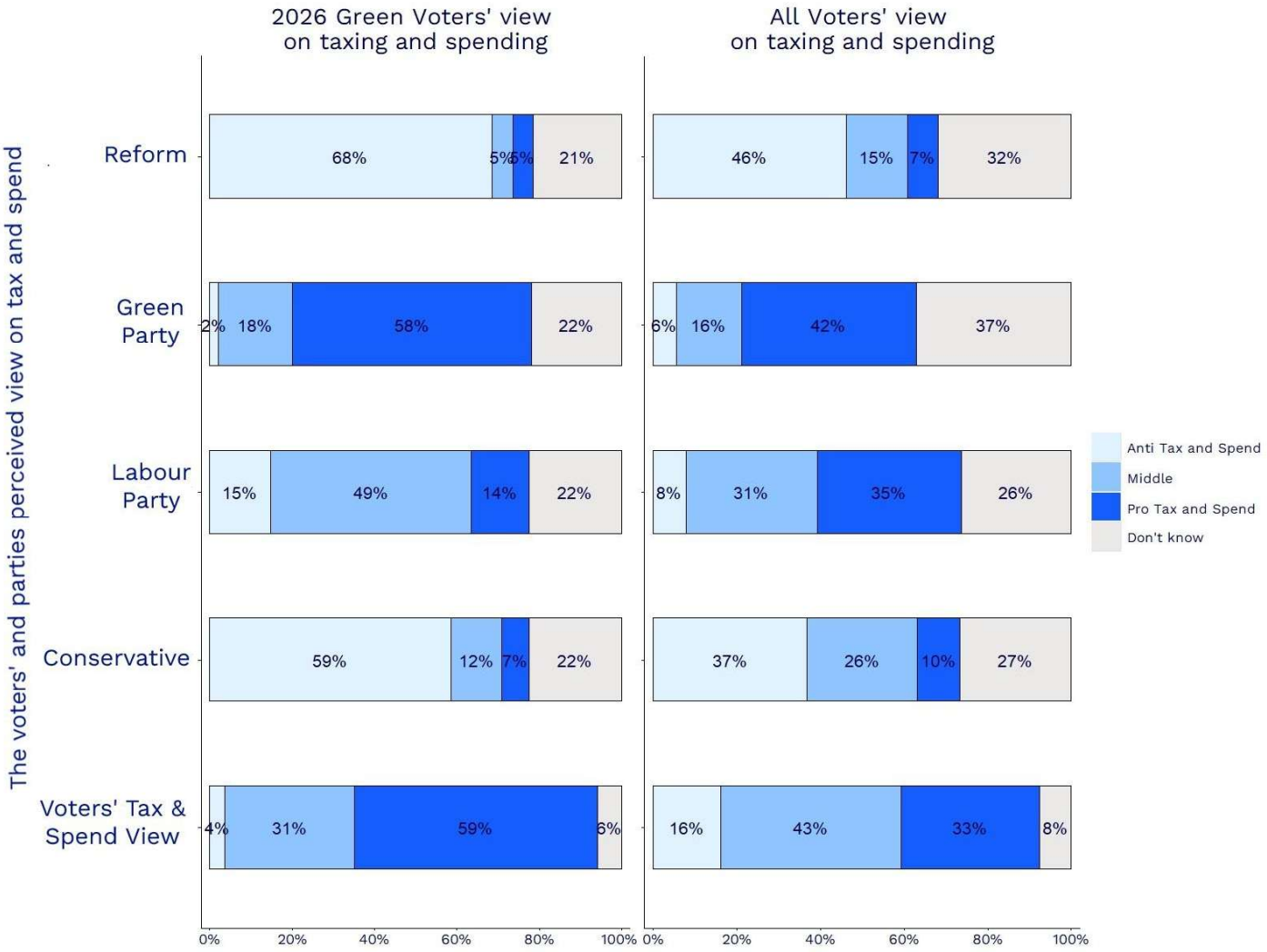

Figure 9: The voters' and the parties' perceived position on the government taxing and spending. Green 2026 supporters compared to all voters. Source: BES 2026.

Drivers of Green Party support

So far, the report has outlined key trends that have shaped the Greens' growth. Yet, the question remains: which of these trends have driven this growth? To help answer this vital question, a logistic regression model estimates the probability of supporting the Green Party over the other mainstream alternatives.

The model takes a voter's current voting intention as the dependent variable. First, the model filters for those who would vote Green in 2026 and those who would vote for Labour, the Conservatives, the Lib Dems, or Reform. A value of 1 is assigned to those who would support the Green Party, with a 0 allocated to all others. Then, to determine what has motivated support for the radical right, the model includes independent variables representing key trends.

Firstly, to account for perceived favourability and competence, it includes measures of party and leadership ratings. Specifically, it includes how well a voter felt the main parties could handle their most pressing concerns and their favourability of the Labour and Green Party leaders. After this, it includes views on foreign affairs. Precisely, it includes a voter's view on the Gaza conflict and their EU-UK relationship preference. The model also includes a voter's view on the economic impact of immigration

The model then accounts for views on the economy and public services. It asks how they feel the economy has changed under recent Labour and Conservative administrations and how they anticipate a Green administration would handle the economy. The same questions for the NHS are also added. Finally, a voter's view on redistribution is added to the model, and it also accounts for a voter's overall position on the left/right ideological spectrum.

The largest increase in Green Party support has come from a feeling that the Green Party can handle core issues; see Figure 10. When a voter felt that the Green Party was most able to address their primary concerns, they were significantly more likely to support the Green Party over other options. When voters felt that Labour was best placed to handle such issues, they were significantly less likely to support the Greens. This would indicate that dissatisfied Labour voters now believing that the Green Party could better handle their main concerns has been a key factor in allowing the Green Party to increase its support. As the most pressing concerns for Green Party

voters are the economy, the NHS and the environment, this indicates that perceived Labour government failings on these issues have allowed the Green Party to increase its support.

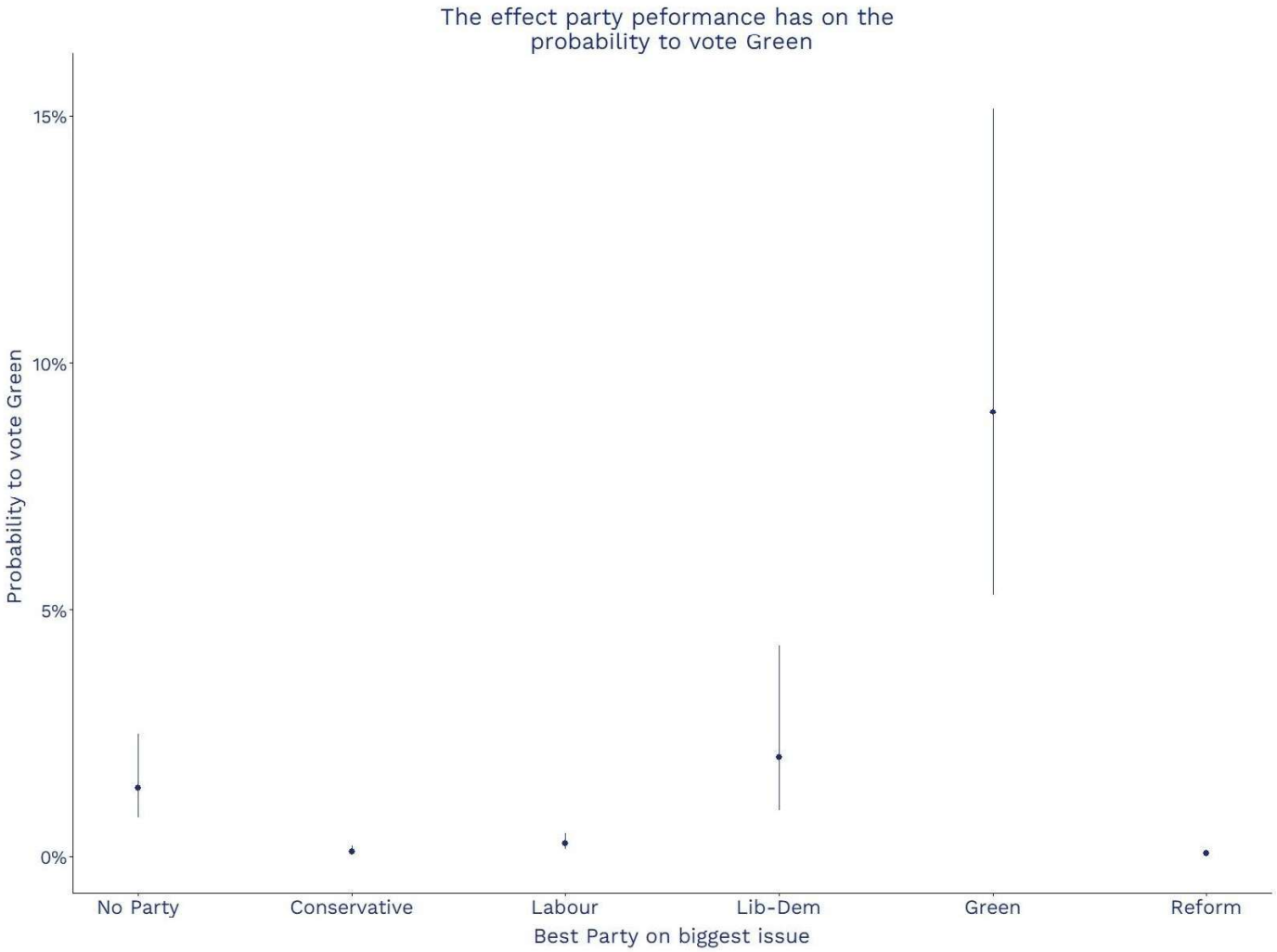

Figure 10: The effect of which party was perceived to perform best on a voter's biggest issue on the probability to support the Green Party in 2026. Source: BES 2026.

This assertion is confirmed in the model outlined in the appendix. When a voter felt that the economy had worsened in recent years, they were significantly more likely to support the Greens. Yet, when they felt things had either stayed the same or improved, they were less likely to vote for the Green Party. Importantly, as many voters have felt that recent Conservative and Labour administrations presided over a worsening economy, this would indicate that this development has helped the Green Party gain support. Therefore, the ongoing cost-of-living squeeze has likely

increased negative economic sentiment and, as a result, increased support for the Green Party. This further increase has also originated from a growing belief that the Green Party can handle economic matters. When a voter believed the Green Party could manage the economy well, the probability of supporting the Green Party increased significantly. Therefore, whilst confidence in the mainstream has declined, trust in the Greens has increased. This may have originated through the election of Polanski and the advocating of more interventionist economic policies, such as the wealth tax. This again demonstrates that perceived failures of mainstream parties to deliver good returns have led to a willingness to trust radical alternatives, thus helping the Green Party to increase its support.

Importantly, this trend extended to perception around the quality of public services. When a voter felt that the NHS had improved, they were less likely to support the Green Party. Yet, when they felt the services had worsened, they became significantly more likely to support the Green Party. This was the case for a range of public services. Those who trusted the Green Party to handle a service well, in this case the NHS, were considerably more likely to support the Green Party over the other alternatives. Again, this indicates how perceived failures by recent Labour and Conservative administrations to manage and improve worsening public services have increased the appeal for radical alternatives. Therefore, Polanski's pledge of higher taxation and greater spending on public services likely has increased support for the Greens.

The theory that the Greens' move to the left has increased support for the Green Party is also strengthened by the model. When an individual was placed on the left side of the divide, they were significantly more likely to support the Green Party. Additionally, when Labour was perceived as right-wing, they were also more likely to support the Green Party. They were also more likely to support the Green Party when they perceived the Greens as left-wing. This would again indicate that Labour's move to the centre under Starmer and the Green Party's leftward shift under Polanski have increased support for the Greens. It also shows how left-wing voters were

looking for a viable progressive alternative. The model finds further evidence of this. It demonstrates that those seeking more redistribution were considerably more likely to vote Green. They were also significantly more likely to support the Greens when Labour was not seen to be pro-redistribution. The Green Party's perceived position was not significant, but this does signal that progressive voters unhappy with Labour's lack of economic intervention under Starmer were prepared to back progressive alternatives partly because of this.

The model also highlights how the liberal-authoritarian divide is key in increasing Green support. Divides around immigration were significant in increasing support for the Green Party. When a voter believed migration to be economically beneficial, they were considerably more likely to support the Green Party. Further, when a voter was prepared for immigration to stay at current levels, or even increase, they were also more likely to support the Green Party. Also, when they perceived the Labour Party as a party of reducing immigration, they also became more likely to support the Greens. Therefore, Starmer taking a stance of wanting to control immigration, with the Greens under Polanski taking a more liberal position, likely increased support for the Greens.

Also, liberal positions on the EU increased support for the Green Party. When a voter wanted greater EU-UK integration, they were more likely to support the Greens, especially when they perceived Labour as anti-EU and the Greens as pro-EU. Therefore, Starmer's position to maintain the UK's separation from the EU alongside Polasnki's message of greater EU-UK integration likely helped the Green Party increase its support.

The largest increase in Green support has come from those who side with the Palestinian cause. Therefore, again, those with a more liberal and internationalist outlook have become significantly more likely to support the Green Party. It also again highlights the importance of leadership and overall party direction. Starmer has taken Labour in a more authoritarian direction on the Gaza issue, by restricting protests and initially taking a pro-Israeli position. Yet, at the same time, Polanski clearly signalled the

Greens were going in a Pro-Palestinian direction and campaigned for fewer restrictions around demonstrations on the Gaza conflict. These parties moving in opposite directions on this issue has likely significantly increased support for the Green Party, mostly at the expense of Labour.

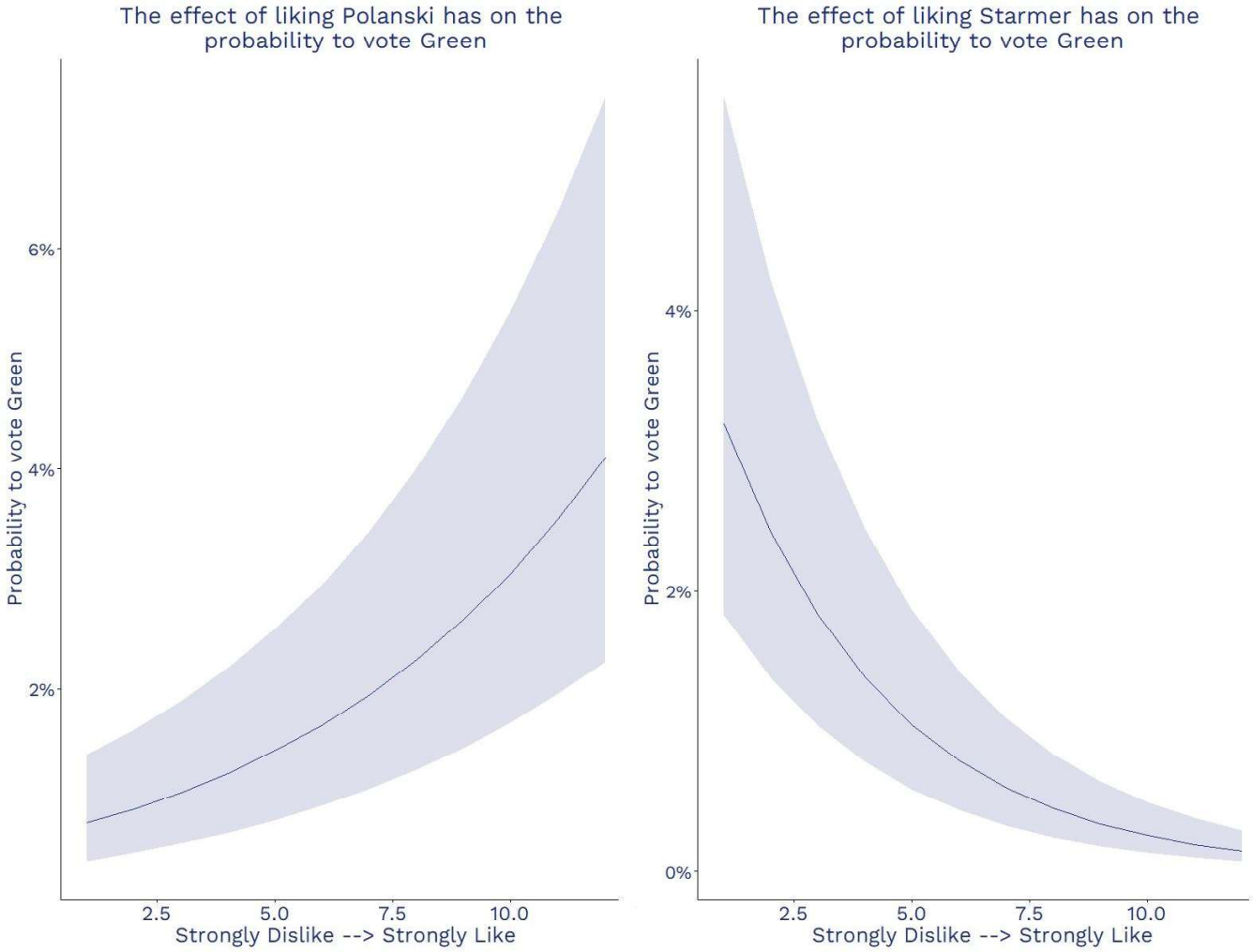

Figure 11: The effect of liking Starmer and Polanski on the probability of supporting the Green Party in 2026. Source: BES 2026.

The model supports the argument that Starmer and Polanski's leadership helped increase Green Party support. Specifically, the model highlights how, when a voter reacted negatively to Starmer and positively to Polanski, the Green Party was significantly more likely to gain support. Figure 11 shows this effect to be strong, showing leadership has likely altered support in favour of the Green Party. As many Labour voters who have switched to the Greens viewed Starmer negatively and Polanski positively, leadership has been significant in increasing Green support. Specifically, the model

highlights that Starmer being perceived as moving Labour rightwards to the centre, while Polanski moved the Greens leftwards, has been significant in increasing Green support.

Conclusion

The Green Party has increased its share of the vote amongst younger, more educated left-leaning liberal voters who are more likely to live in urban, diverse areas and rent their accommodation. Whilst they have gained from all parties, they have predominantly gained from former Labour supporters. This trend has been gradual since 2019 and has gathered pace in the year following Polanski becoming leader.

The perceived rightward shift of Labour under Starmer and incompetence on core issues progressive voters value have weakened Labour support. The Greens have successfully exploited these weaknesses by appealing to left-leaning progressive voters' neglected concerns. This has allowed them to gain considerable support from mainstream parties (particularly Labour), a trend that has gathered pace after Polanski's leadership bid.

Primarily, the Green Party has gained this support partly because it convinced wavering progressive voters that it can be trusted on the core issues of the day. The Green Party has particularly convinced former Labour voters that it can perform on the economy. This has likely originated from disappointment in Labour's unwillingness to intervene in the economy, redistribute wealth and spend greater sums on public services. With the Green Party's strong message on redistributing wealth and spending greater sums on public services, this gained the Green Party support, as these values strongly agreed with this position. As this strength of feeling is strongest among former Labour voters, the Greens made significant gains from Labour.

This disillusionment extended to immigration, Europe and the Gaza conflict. Progressive liberal voters were repelled by negative messages on immigration as it conflicted with their more positive viewpoint. Further,

their more internationalist outlook of wanting greater EU-UK integration was also not reflected by either Conservative or Labour administrations. Most powerful, their strongly held belief that the Palestinian cause deserved support from the UK government was not reflected by the traditional two parties of government. This was particularly powerful when progressive voters felt Labour did not share their progressive internationalist outlook.

This disappointment in mainstream parties on a range of policy issues has likely incentivised disillusioned progressive voters to seek an alternative. With the Greens drifting leftward and taking strong liberal positions on salient issues, such as the Gaza conflict, this has allowed the Green Party to attract these voters' support. Further, their more positive message on Europe and immigration allowed them to convince voters they shared their values more than the mainstream parties they had previously supported. This was particularly the case when they compared the Greens' position on vital issues to Labour's stance. By the 2026 local elections, the Green Party had gained a considerable amount of this disillusioned group, allowing them to rise in the polls and secure many new councillors.

This trend has clearly been partly driven by changes in leadership favourability. Starmer's unpopularity with this group after he took Labour rightwards towards the centre, both in opposition and in government, has given the Greens a chance to win over new supporters. Polanski winning the Green leadership has also helped win over disillusioned left-wing Labour supporters whilst Labour has been in office. This is signified by the Greens winning over larger numbers of former Labour voters once Polanski became leader and took the party leftwards.

Crucially, the trend of the Greens gaining disillusioned progressive voters developed throughout the 2019-2024 parliament. Therefore, this demonstrates a long-term development of left-wing progressive liberal voters seeking a party that better reflects their distinct preferences and values. The Green Party has filled this perceived political void.

Consequently, the Green Party may have carved out a niche that will give it a solid electoral base going forward.

Yet, some of these gained voters are already wavering. This is clear amongst more centrist former Conservative voters who do not share the Greens' strong liberal outlook towards immigration flows and the EU. Also, some former Labour voters have switched partly because of disappointment in Labour and Starmer, not necessarily because they wish to sign up to the full Green Party agenda. Indeed, some of these voters are more moderate than many Green Party activists and may not like some of the party's social policies. Therefore, the Greens' growth may have reached a ceiling and could recede if they are deemed to have become too fringe by some of their less radical new supporters.

Appendix

Coeffcient	The probability of voting Green			
	Odds Ratios	*std. Error*	*Conf. Int (95%)*	*P-Value*
Intercept	0.03 ***	0.01	0.02 – 0.07	**<0.001**
Best on biggest issue: Conservative	0.07 ***	0.02	0.04 – 0.11	**<0.001**
Best: Labour	0.18 ***	0.02	0.14 – 0.23	**<0.001**
Best: Lib-Dem	1.44	0.41	0.81 – 2.52	0.207
Best: Green	6.97 ***	0.89	5.44 – 8.96	**<0.001**
Best: Reform	0.04 ***	0.01	0.03 – 0.07	**<0.001**
Rate_Starmer	0.75 ***	0.02	0.72 – 0.78	**<0.001**
Rate_Polanski	1.17 ***	0.02	1.13 – 1.20	**<0.001**
Israel_Palestine: Neither	1.94 **	0.49	1.21 – 3.22	**0.008**
Israel_Palestine: Palestinian Side	2.20 **	0.54	1.38 – 3.62	**0.001**
EU_Integration position	0.96 **	0.02	0.93 – 0.99	**0.007**
Labour EU position	1.08 ***	0.02	1.04 – 1.12	**<0.001**
Green EU position	0.96 *	0.01	0.94 – 0.99	**0.012**
Past Economy: Stayed the same	0.71 **	0.09	0.56 – 0.91	**0.008**
Past Economy: Got Better	0.55 ***	0.09	0.40 – 0.76	**<0.001**
Green_Handle_Econ: Neither	3.43 ***	0.45	2.66 – 4.45	**<0.001**
Green_Handle_Econ: Well	5.08 ***	0.76	3.79 – 6.83	**<0.001**
Change_NHS: No Change	0.70 **	0.08	0.57 – 0.87	**0.001**
Change_NHS: Getting Better	0.48 ***	0.06	0.37 – 0.62	**<0.001**
Green_Handle_NHS: Neither	2.41 ***	0.44	1.68 – 3.47	**<0.001**

Green_Handle_NHS: Well	5.39 ***	0.99	3.77 – 7.77	**<0.001**
Immig_Econ: Middle	1.83 ***	0.31	1.32 – 2.56	**<0.001**
Immig_Econ: Good for economy	1.75 **	0.35	1.19 – 2.58	**0.005**
Immigration position: self	1.34 ***	0.09	1.18 – 1.52	**<0.001**
Immigration position: Lab	0.87 *	0.05	0.78 – 0.98	**0.024**
Immigration position: Green	0.92	0.06	0.81 – 1.03	0.160
Left/Right: position	0.94 **	0.02	0.90 – 0.98	**0.003**
Left/Right position: Lab	1.14 ***	0.02	1.09 – 1.18	**<0.001**
Left/Right position: Green	0.92 ***	0.02	0.89 – 0.96	**<0.001**
Redistribution: position	0.93 ***	0.02	0.90 – 0.96	**<0.001**
Redistribution position: Lab	1.10 ***	0.02	1.06 – 1.14	**<0.001**
Redistribution position: Green	0.97	0.02	0.94 – 1.01	0.105
Observations	14754			
R^2 Tjur	0.766			
log-Likelihood	-1836.631			
Signficance:	** p<0.05*	*** p<0.01*	**** p<0.001*	