

New data shows Britons demand political overhaul and fresh ideas, as trust in UK politics and politicians fall

- Three-quarters of people say the UK is on the ‘wrong track’
- Trust in government falls to a seven-year low amid economic pessimism
- 61% want a new type of political party, while 73% want new thinking, ideas and approaches

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Trust study finds Britons want a political shake up and new ideas

The UK is primed for a major political shake up, with a significant majority of people believing Britain is on the wrong track, according to new research from the Edelman Trust Barometer.

The annual trust study of 3,051 UK respondents finds people are deeply pessimistic about their economic prospects, and don’t believe that politicians can bring about change.

The survey, which measures trust in government, business, the media, and NGOs, paints a bleak picture of modern Britain, highlighting falling trust in government and its institutions, with a majority feeling unrepresented by the country’s political parties.

Overall, Edelman’s research indicates that Britain is deeply divided on many critical issues, but united in its negative economic outlook, its distrust of government, and its disdain for politicians, and is eager for new thinking and new ideas.

After a year of political disruption framed by party-gate, a succession of scandals on Boris Johnson’s watch, and the fallout from Liz Truss’s short-lived Premiership, the future currently looks bleak for the Conservative Party in particular. The Prime Minister’s personal trust ratings have been badly dented, down 10 points, since he entered 10 Downing Street, his party losing support in its heartlands, and nearly half of Tory voters thinking the country is on the wrong course.

This isn’t, however, just an issue for the Prime Minister and his colleagues. Even though trust in Keir Starmer is rising, up five points, it remains low at 31%. Despite support for the Labour party increasing, particularly in the South-East, the study suggests both main parties face challenges ahead.

Above all, people’s frustration appears to be driving demands for radical change, with nearly three-quarters of Britons (73%) believing that dealing with the country’s problems requires new thinking, new ideas and new approaches, compared to just 18% who are wedded to longstanding orthodoxy.

In addition, nearly two-thirds of respondents believe there is a need for a “completely new type of political party” – a majority sentiment broadly reflected across every generation, income bracket, and region.

Deepening sense of economic pessimism

Asked whether the country was on the ‘right or wrong track,’ 75% of people surveyed said the wrong track. This view was shared by a large majority across all generations and income groups. Even Conservatives were almost evenly divided on the question, with 52% saying the country was on the right track, down 17 points from last year, and 48% saying the wrong track.



For the first time in eight years, a majority of the British public (57%) think their standard of living will get worse in the next year – a 16-point rise from last year. Less than a quarter now think their economic prospects will improve over the next five years, again a record low.

This pessimism is accompanied by a pervasive sense that inequality is rising right across the country with over two-thirds of people (67%) saying it is increasing, a view held to very similar extents across regions of the UK. Meanwhile, one in five people (20%) say they are considering, planning, or have already used local foodbanks, rising to one in three amongst those with a lower income. With similar numbers considering other drastic money saving measures.

Trust in Government and politicians falls further

The study finds that trust in the institution of government fell to 27%, the lowest it has been since 2016 when it hit a low point of 26%. Trust in government to help alleviate issues caused by the cost-of-living crisis has also declined 9-percentage points from 30% in October 2022 to just 21% in January 2023.

Underlying this is a dire view of politicians, with 77% feeling politicians are making things in the UK worse (+14 points), 80% feeling the way politicians act is making society more divided (+7 points), 85% feeling the way politicians behave undermines people's trust in government (+5 points); and 68% feeling politicians are more likely to lie and mislead the public (+9 points).

Amid the mistrust, a clear majority has emerged (57%) saying that their interests are not represented in British politics – up 7 points since last year and a record high since the barometer began, while 70% of respondents say government prioritises its own supporters over those most in need.

Finally, with the Prime Minister this week staking his reputation on the renegotiation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, our research suggests there is an increasingly strong sense of regret over Brexit itself, with 54% saying they would now vote remain, and only 32% that they would vote to leave, down 9 points from when the UK left the EU in January 2020.

Commenting ahead of Wednesday's public launch of this year's Trust Barometer, Edelman's President and CEO Ed Williams said:

"This year's study exposes a public thirst for change and new ideas to restore trust, fuel optimism, and make a positive difference to people's lives. But if political leaders miss this moment and fail to grasp the opportunity to articulate an inspiring and galvanizing vision, and instead shy away from engaging people in inherent trade-offs and decisions, and resort to old answers to stale debates, then the data indicates that British politics is setting itself up for a seismic shock. If high demand for reframing and fresh thinking remains unmet among our political establishment, then we shouldn't be surprised if people look elsewhere for answers, with all the damaging consequences that flow from that."

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For the full results and analysis of the 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer, go [here](#).



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Notes for Editors - Edelman Trust Barometer

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer is the firm's 23rd annual trust and credibility survey. The research was produced by the Edelman Trust Institute and consisted of 30-minute online interviews conducted between November 1st and November 28th, 2022. The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer online survey sampled more than 32,000 respondents across 28 countries.

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer UK Supplement is a nationally representative survey of the UK adult general population. The survey consisted of 20-minute online interviews conducted between January 20th and January 30th, 2023. The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer UK supplement survey sampled 3,051 respondents across all regions of the UK.

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