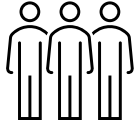


# **Governing in a fractured Britain – what do the public make of the Conservatives?**

A YouGov presentation and panel event in partnership with the  
Institute for Government

# Key Takeaways



## Kemi Badenoch outperforms the Conservative Party itself, with Tory brand still badly damaged

- Badenoch is tied for second highest net likeability among major party leaders.
- Badenoch seen as more pragmatic, strong, and confident than the party, which is seen as more out of touch, dishonest, and arrogant.
- Suggests strong Tory brand damage among the public, who are not yet ready to trust again.



## The economy, typically strong Conservative ground, is a hotly contested competence issue

- The economy continues to be a priority issue for voters – traditionally strong Conservative ground.
- While post-election Brits pointed at the Conservatives as responsible for the UK's economic struggles, they now point at both Tories and Labour.
- Kemi Badenoch and the Conservatives previously led on 'best government to handle the economy', but no longer.



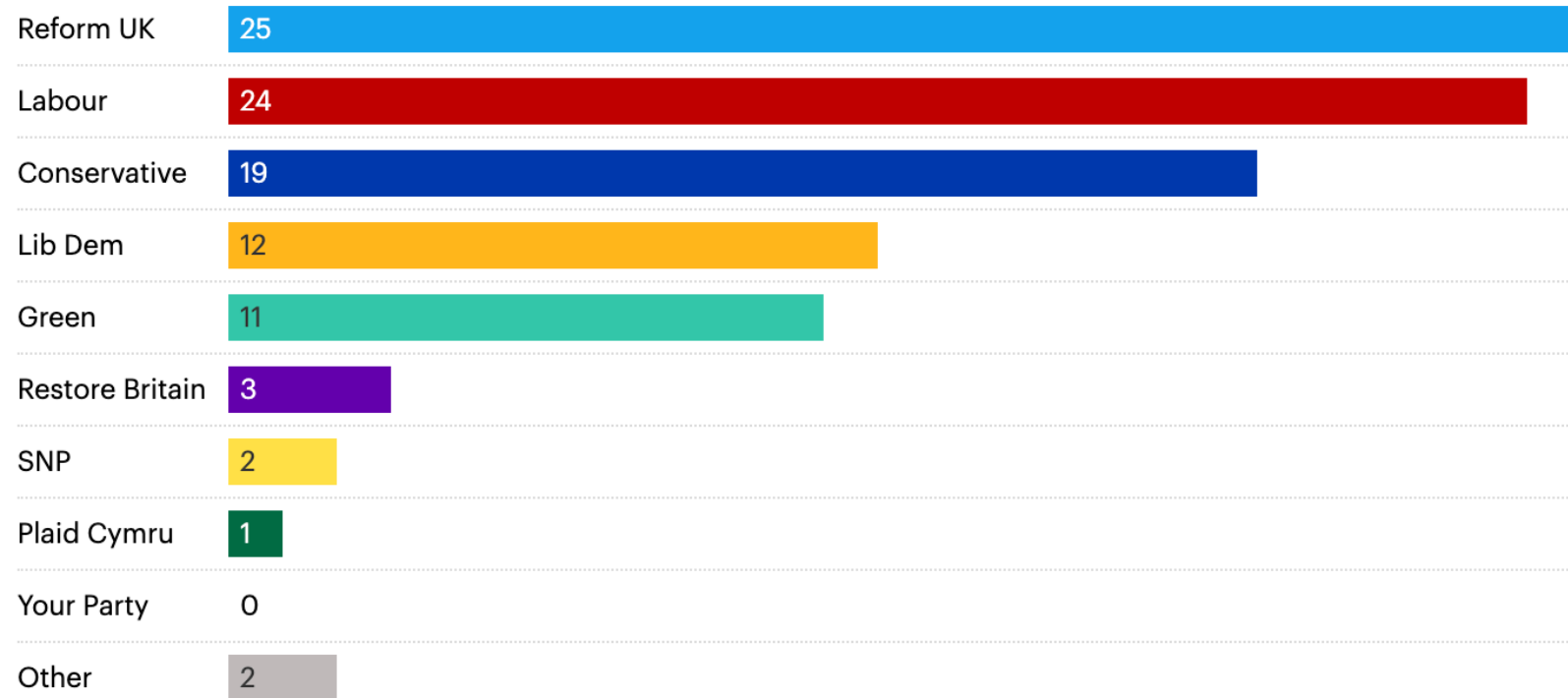
## Tories viewed as not yet ready for government, but could be given chances in coalition

- Only a quarter think Tories are ready for government, with majority believing they are not.
- The majority of Conservative voters would support a coalition with Reform UK, followed by half supporting a coalition with Liberal Democrats.
- Public most likely to support the Conservatives getting the Chancellor and Defence Secretary positions in future coalition government.

## A fractured Britain – in both vote intention and issue attention

### YouGov Westminster voting intention (27-28 September 2026)

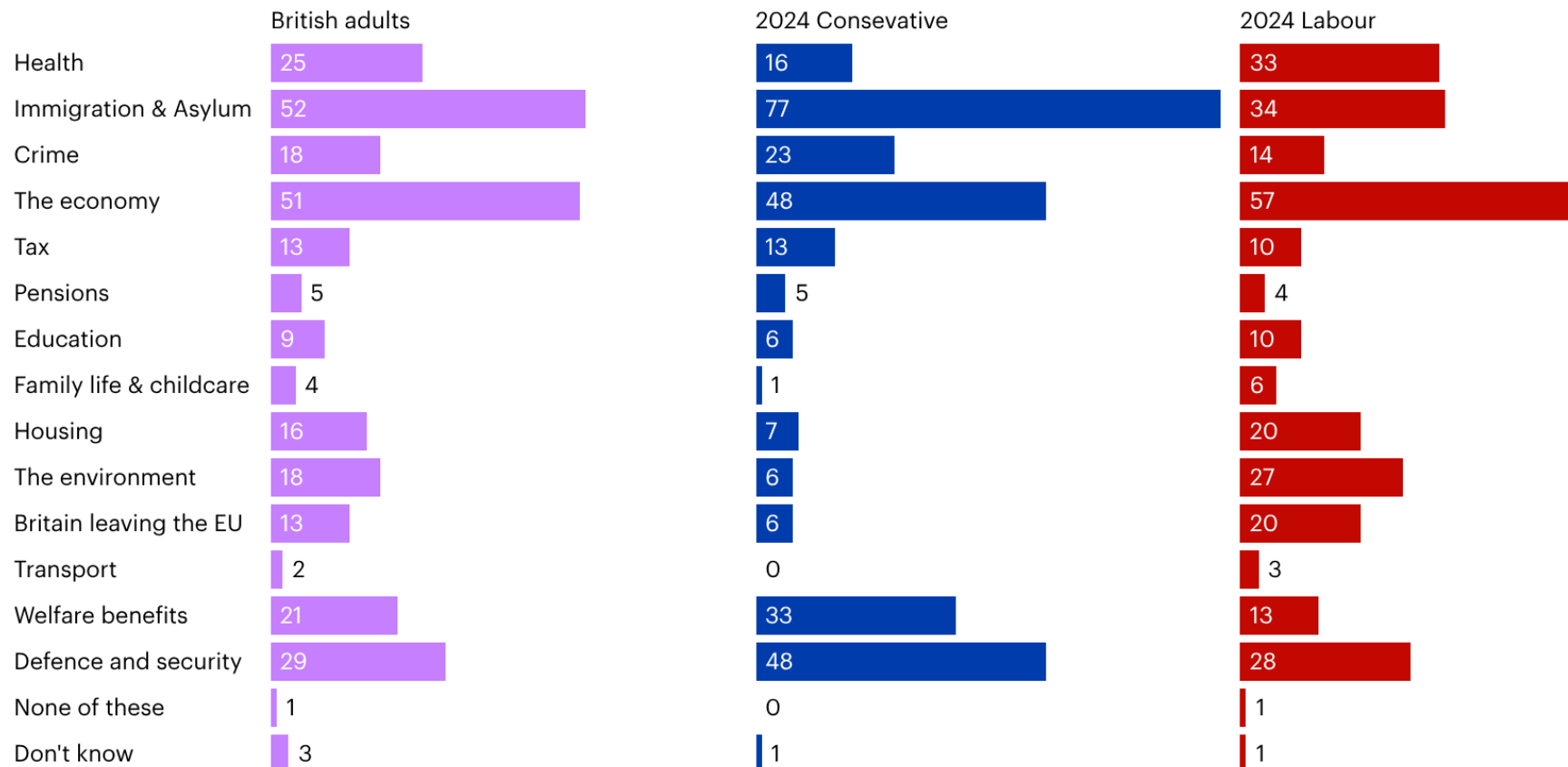
If there were a general election held tomorrow, which party would you vote for? %



## A fractured Britain – in both vote intention and issue attention

### The 'most important issues facing the country' vary a lot by past vote

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three. (%)



1794 GB adults, 26th-28th September 2026

## Kemi Badenoch outperforms the party; Badenoch is more well-liked than the Conservative Party as a whole



19% Britons like, 41% dislike

**-22**

net likeability

- Tied for second highest net likeability among major party leaders
- *Favourability* has risen since becoming party leader in 2024

20% Britons like, 52% dislike

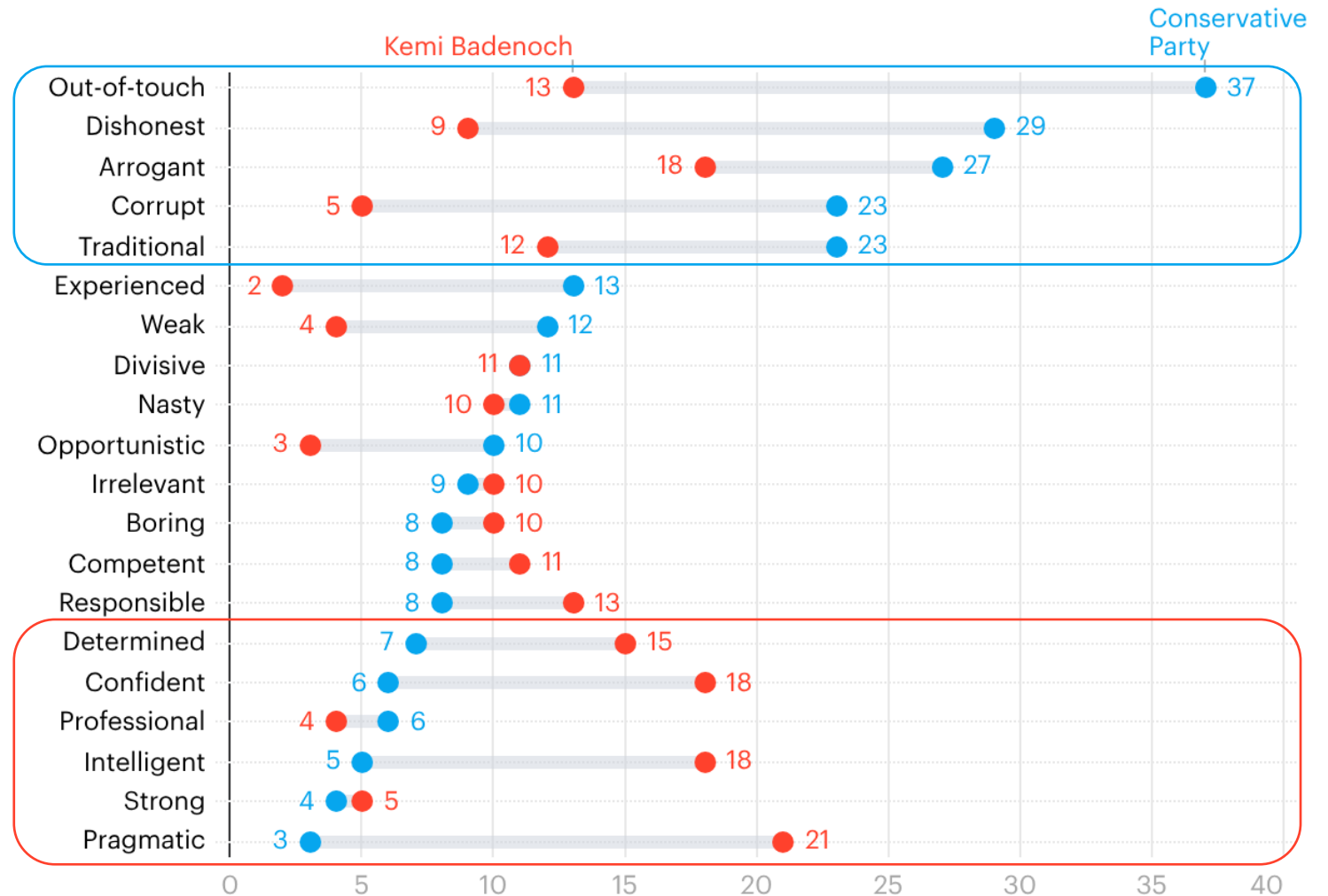
**-32**

net likeability

- Net rating 10 points more negative than Badenoch
- Key metric is a far higher number of people who 'disklike' the party compared to the leader.

# Kemi Badenoch is much more likely to be viewed as determined, confident, intelligent and pragmatic than the Conservative party as a whole

- The Conservative Party is most likely to be described as out-of-touch, dishonest, and arrogant by Britons



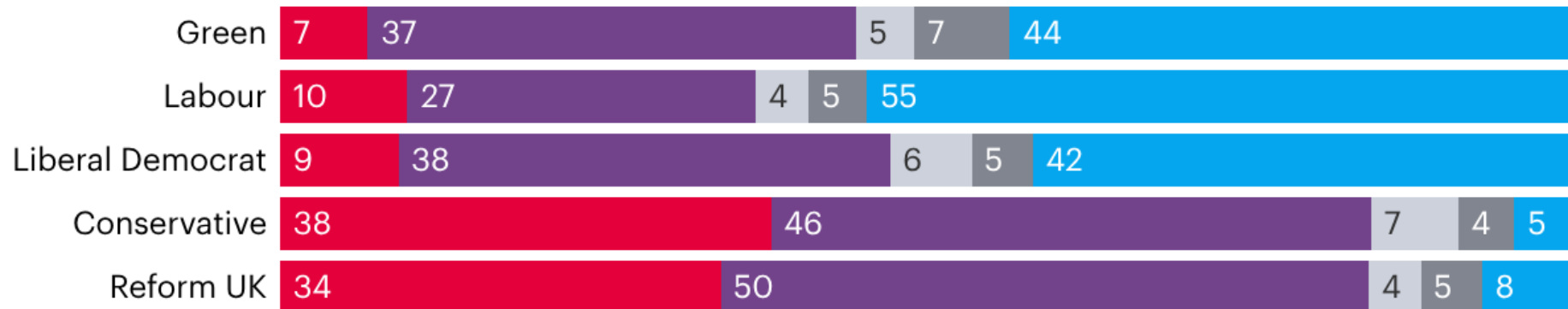
## No forgiveness just yet: Brits still more likely to blame Tories than Labour for the economic situation in 2026, though plurality blame both equally

**"Who, if anybody, do you think is **\*\*most responsible\*\*** for the current economic situation in the UK?"**

■ The current Labour government
 ■ Both parties are equally responsible
 ■ Something else
 ■ Don't know
 ■ The previous Conservative government



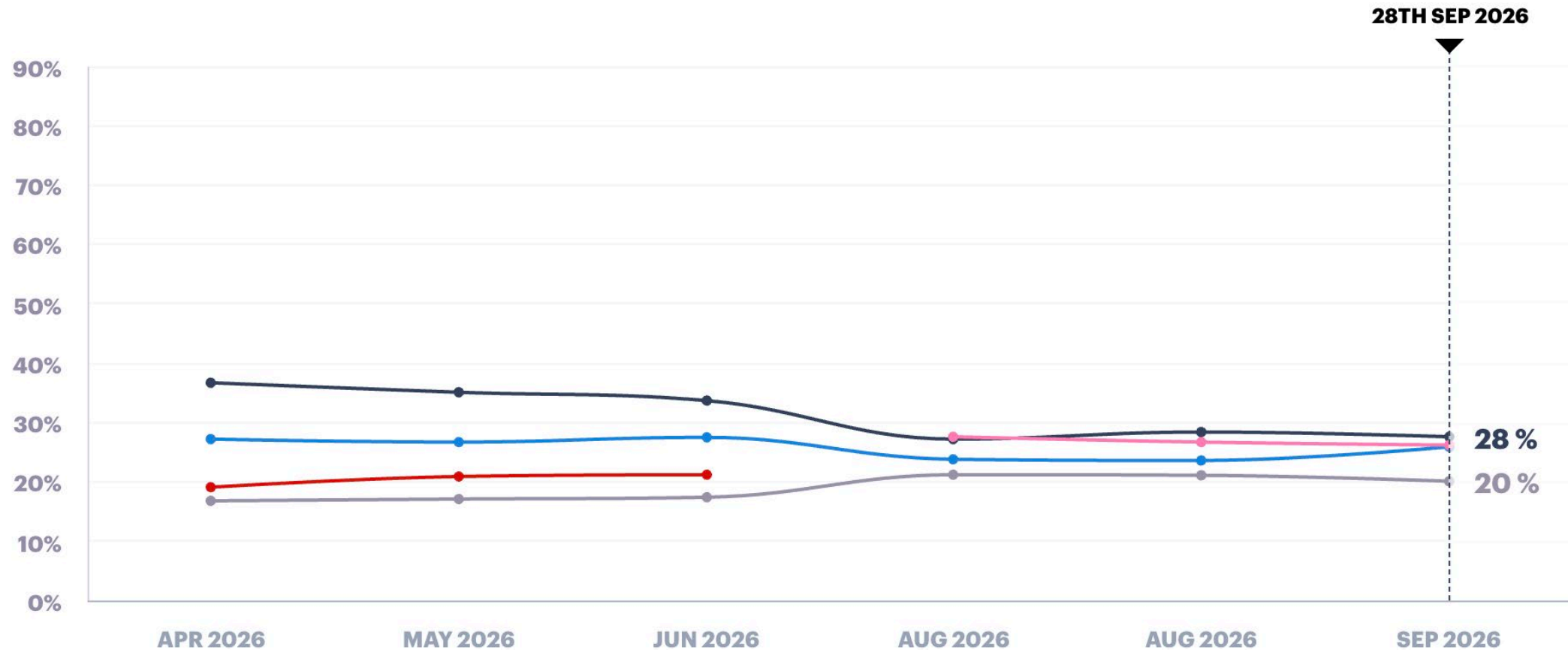
### 2024 GE Vote



## The Conservatives previously led the Labour government in terms of managing the economy, but they're now level with Burnham's administration

"Which government do you think would be better at managing the economy?"

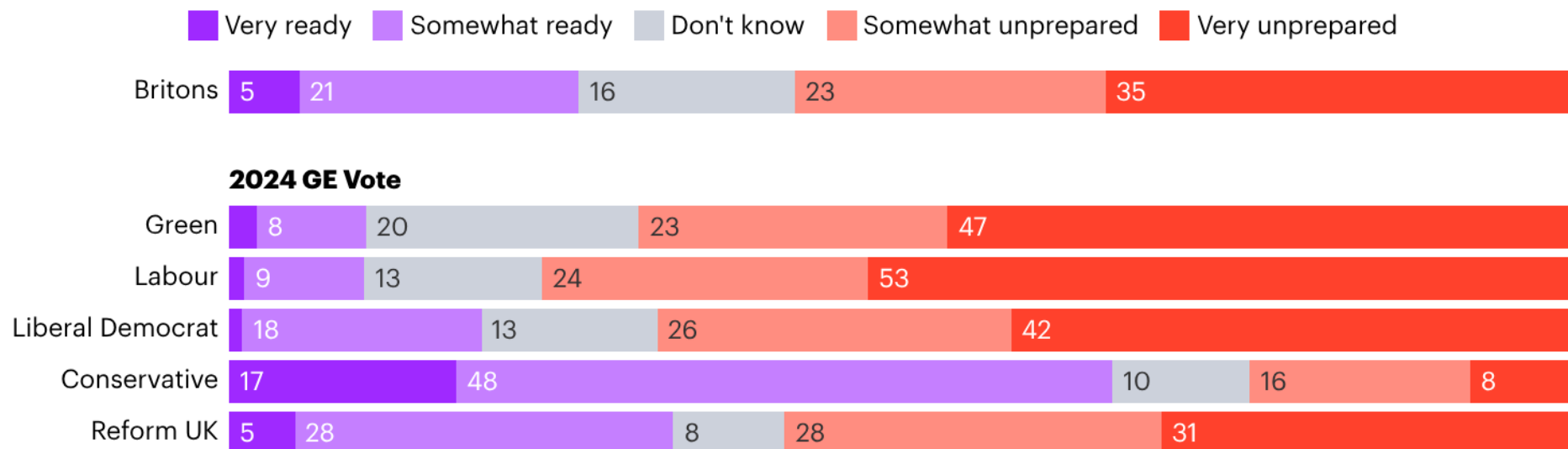
● Conservatives under Badenoch   ● Labour under Starmer   ● Labour under Burnham   ● Neither   ● Don't know



## Only around one-quarter of Britons say that the Conservatives are ready for government, but the majority of 2024 Conservative voters disagree

### The majority of Conservative voters say that the Conservatives unprepared for government

To what extent, if at all, do you think the Conservatives are ready or unprepared for government? %

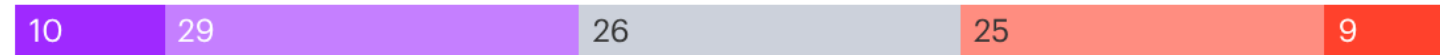


## Four in ten Britons (39%) say Kemi Badenoch's party is different from Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party

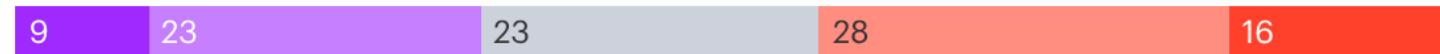
**"How different or similar do you think Kemi Badenoch's Conservative Party is to..."**

Very similar   Somewhat similar   Don't know   Somewhat different   Very different

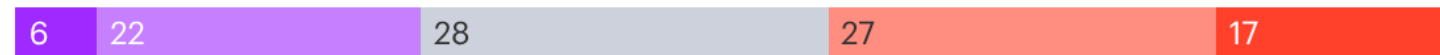
### Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party



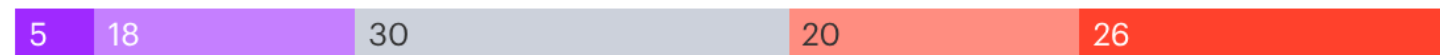
### Boris Johnson's Conservative Party



### David Cameron's Conservative Party



### Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party



**63% of  
2024 Con Voters**  
say that Badenoch's  
party is different from  
Johnson's

## The majority of 2024 Conservative voters (63%) support forming a coalition with Reform UK

- Around half (46%) of Conservative voters also support joining in coalition with the Liberal Democrats
- Very little appetite for a 'grand coalition' with Labour.

### Support for or opposition to various potential coalitions among 2024 Conservative voters..

Strongly support   Somewhat support   Don't know   Somewhat oppose   Strongly oppose

#### Conservatives and Greens



#### Conservatives and Labour



#### Conservatives and Liberal Democrats



#### Conservatives and Reform UK



## In the case of a coalition, Brits are most likely to want Conservatives to hold the role of Chancellor, Defence Secretary, Home Secretary, and Foreign Secretary

- Work and Pensions, Business and Trade Secretary follow behind
- However, the share of Britons that want a Conservative Chancellor is on par with the share that don't want Conservatives to hold any top position

*Imagine that following the next general election, the Conservatives have formed a coalition government with another political party. Which three of the following cabinet positions, if any, would you most prefer to see the Conservatives be given in such a coalition? Please select up to three positions.*  
2090 GB adults, 28 - 29 September 2026

### Top Cabinet positions Britons would want Conservatives to hold (if any)



# Thank you

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