Institute for Public Policy Research

THE DEMOCRATIC CITIZEN

RENEWING CITIZENSHIP AND THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Nick Garland with
Harry Quilter-Pinner and
Sofia Ropek-Hewson

July 2026

ABOUT IPPR

IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is an independent charity working towards a fairer, greener, and more prosperous society. We are researchers, communicators, and policy experts creating tangible progressive change, and turning bold ideas into common sense realities. Working across the UK, IPPR, IPPR North, and IPPR Scotland are deeply connected to the people of our nations and regions, and the issues our communities face.

We have helped shape national conversations and progressive policy change for more than 30 years. From making the early case for the minimum wage and tackling regional inequality, to proposing a windfall tax on energy companies, IPPR's research and policy work has put forward practical solutions for the crises facing society.

IPPR
4th floor,
8 Storey's Gate
London
SW1P 3AY

E: info@ippr.org
www.ippr.org
Registered charity no: 800065 (England and Wales),
SC046557 (Scotland)
This paper was first published in July 2026.

The progressive policy think tank

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Nick Garland is a senior research fellow at IPPR.

Harry Quilter-Pinner is executive director at IPPR.

Sofia Ropek-Hewson is a senior research fellow and interim head of the Decade of National Renewal programme at IPPR.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to wise and talented IPPR colleagues for their support and input throughout drafting, including Parth Patel, Chris Bick, Jasmine Jinadu, Emma Killick, Marley Morris, Avnee Morjarie, Ellie Harris, Sebastian Rees, Henry Parkes, and Emma Norris, as well as Abi Hynes and Richard Maclean in the publications team. Viktor Valgarðsson provided invaluable help with the statistical analysis. Special thanks are owed for generous and insightful engagement to Jon Cruddas, Will Davies, Gary Gerstle, Jane Gingrich, Sarah Mulley, Nick Pearce, Karl Pike, and most of all David Klemperer.

Download
This document is available to download as a free PDF and in other formats at:
http://www.ippr.org/articles/the-democratic-citizen

Citation
If you are using this document in your own writing, our preferred citation is:
Garland N (2026) *The democratic citizen: Renewing citizenship and the public domain*, IPPR.
http://www.ippr.org/articles/the-democratic-citizen

FOREWORD

The economic and social revolution of the late 1970s appears to be collapsing all around us. Thatcherism embraced a global market and deindustrialised at home.It promised a liberal democracy that would deliver shared economic growth, expand social mobility, pool risk, deliver security and end class politics. It stood for cultural and social reconciliation and promised political stability. Today it delivers none of these.

Economically, we are being consumed by cost of living and housing crises. Since the financial crisis our wages and productivity have flatlined. Liberal democracy has ushered in oligarchy, crushing inequalities and intergenerational rupture. Living standards have collapsed, social mobility is rewinding and our public realm lies in decay.

Socially, we are drowning in culture wars that threaten post-war advances in civil and human rights. Canyons around age, educational, class and geographical division demarcate the country.

Politically, we are being upended. Our traditional parties appear ill equipped to deal with an era of political upheaval they helped create – upheaval powered by modern technologies that polarise, corrode trust and endanger our children.

This is the backdrop to IPPR's valuable intervention. IPPR makes a big argument, commensurate with the challenges of our times: that to resist the forces of ethnonationalism and reanimate the left, progressives must articulate a radical framework of democratic citizenship that enables every person to contribute, live securely and flourish. When making the case for modern democratic and constitutional renewal, IPPR implicitly references Magna Carta, and the intense debates through the course of the Civil Wars and later within Chartism. Such thinking informed post-war concerns for human rights and the formation of the welfare state following the experience of fascism and genocide, as well as layers of equalities legislation enacted by successive Labour governments from Roy Jenkins in the 1960s through to the Equality Act of 2010.

IPPR's report echoes themes from Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1944 vision of a second Bill of Rights, which helped shape the global post-war architecture. Today it could help shape how the government rethinks a radical approach to levelling up, one anchored around new fundamental economic, social and constitutional rights for all; part of a new democratic and economic covenant between the state and its citizens. Now that is a big argument that speaks to the moment.

Jon Cruddas is co-chair of the Independent Commission on Community and Cohesion and was previously MP for Dagenham and Rainham, serving as Labour's policy coordinator 2012–15.

SUMMARY

Britain's debate about 'citizenship' has narrowed to a question of the boundaries of our national community. Often, this descends into little more than an argument about eligibility for welfare benefits. This is a disaster for progressives, who find themselves fighting on the chosen terrain of the ethnonationalist right.

But it doesn't need to be this way. The history of progressive politics is a history of the broadening and deepening of citizenship: widening access to the rights of citizenship, and expanding the rights we enjoy and the mutual responsibilities we owe.

The situation is urgent. The pressures of an ageing population, the AI revolution, the climate transition and a more dangerous world will all place new demands – including but not only fiscal ones – on citizens. Navigating the trade-offs to come will require a politics able to draw upon deep reserves of mutuality and solidarity, capable of brokering dialogue and compromise.

The fundamental building block of national common feeling and collective action is citizenship. Without a shared ideal of citizenship, our politics is reduced to haggling between interest groups and appeals to voters' narrow financial self-interest. Against the ethnonationalist right, progressives need to speak not only about the 'who' of citizenship, but the rights and responsibilities that come with it, and the institutions which can underpin it.

A new progressive politics of citizenship will, however, need to be different to the past. That is because our politics has become increasingly transactional, ill-equipped for a moment when fundamental conflicts of ideology, interest and raw power are coming to the fore. Some of the causes are longstanding; others are newer, driven especially by the rise of social media.

This paper advances the case for a new politics of **democratic citizenship**, based on two principles: rebuilding the public and resisting oligarchy.

Rebuilding the public:

1. **Deepening democracy**
   - **Make voting compulsory**, with the penalty of a £10 fine for non-voting.
   - **Reform the electoral system for UK general elections**, to a more proportional system which recognises the pluralistic nature of modern society.
   - **Strengthen the link between membership of the national community and political participation**, by restoring the time limit on voting by UK citizens abroad and enfranchising all legal residents for English local elections.

2. **Making citizens**
   - **Recommit to citizenship education**, with a firm grounding in the workings of British democracy.
   - **Launch a new citizenship course for UK citizenship applicants**, aligned with the school citizenship curriculum.
   - **Launch a new compulsory Democratic Citizens Service for 16- and 17-year-olds,** based on the experiences in which we expect all citizens to participate.

3. **Renewing the public sphere**
    - **Extend prominence requirements to social media platforms,** and compel them to give greater prominence to public service news and informational content from organisations that benefit the public.
    - **Encourage public broadcasters to explore the development of a new public social media platform**, for public rather than commercial benefit.

4. **Bridging the divides**
    - **Pilot and evaluate a new scheme co-locating childcare centres in adult care communities,** to build bridges between generations.
    - **Launch a new national drive for homesharing**, encouraging older homeowners with spare bedrooms to take in homesharers.
    - **Launch a new Citizens' Ownership Fund**, to support the community right to buy and create new social infrastructure.

Resisting oligarchy, by restraining the influence of wealth and tech giants on our politics.

- **Introduce an annual donations cap of £100,000 for individual donors,** progressively reducing it over a decade to £10,000.
- **Ban non-taxpayers from donating to UK political parties**, by commencing sections 10 and 11 of the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 to remove non-UK taxpayers from the eligible list of political donors.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF ETHNONATIONALISM AND THE CASE FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

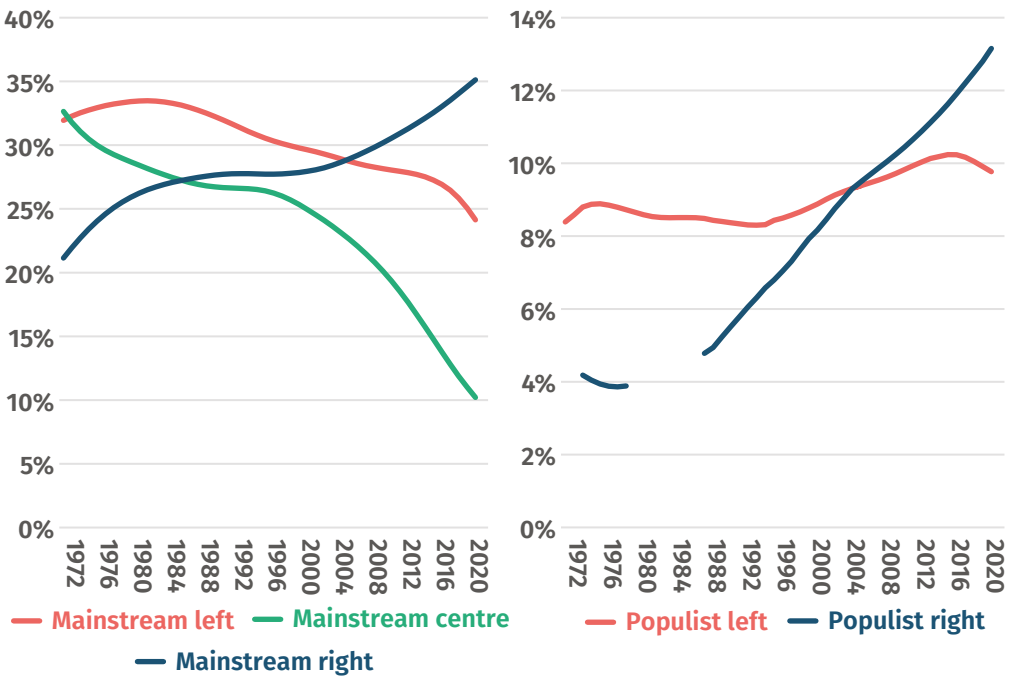
ETHNONATIONALISM RISING

Increasingly, we hear arguments over immigration made in explicit terms of 'cultural coherence', inherited difference, and the interests of the 'white British' population (Ansell 2025; Freedman 2025). This needs to be understood for what it is: an attempt to enforce a distinctively ethnic conception of national identity to the exclusion of others, regardless of how long they and their families have lived in the UK or what they have contributed.

These arguments run against the long-term trajectory of public opinion, and the evidence that Britain has enjoyed considerable success as an integrated, multicultural society (Curtice and Scholes 2024; Catney et al 2023). But there is no space for complacency. The last two years have seen 'remigration' policies enter mainstream political debate, signs of an emboldened far right, and shocking spikes in race and religious hate crime. Across capitalist democracies, mainstream parties of the left are in decline, while the far right is on the rise.

FIGURE 1.1: RISE OF THE RADICAL RIGHT

Vote share in countries in western Europe and North America, by party family



Source: Author's analysis of V-Party and Chapel Hill Expert Survey

THE PROGRESSIVE RESPONSE

Progressives cannot avoid questions of national identity and self-government. If they fail to offer a progressive alternative to the radical right's account of the nation, the consequence will be to abandon it to right-wing opponents with very different values and a dystopian vision for Britain's future. Progressives must ask and answer the big questions sitting behind the citizenship debate. If the nation is not bound by blood, as some on the right argue, what does bind us together? Who gets to be a citizen and who doesn't? What are citizens entitled to, and what do we expect of them?

But the need for progressives to define a politics of nationhood and citizenship is not only about responding to the threat of the ethnonationalist right. Nationhood and citizenship are crucial to progressives' economic and social project. The nation is foundational to democracy, 'the largest scale at which democratic accountability occurs' (Wilson 2024). And it is an enabler of greater equality. Feelings of national solidarity remain integral to commanding support for redistribution between poorer and richer people and places (Ansell 2023).

A strong story of citizenship rooted in common values and recognition of our shared fate is therefore a necessary precondition to all progressives' other goals. The nation is the essential unit for common feeling and collective action.

Progressives must offer a more compelling account of what it is to belong. They must make a virtue of the UK's status as a multi-ethnic and multinational state, which over the last 30 years has become radically more diverse and politically more decentralised. Pluralism should be placed at the centre of the UK's story: as a union of countries which came together over time, and gradually, through popular struggle and progressive politics, democratised, incorporated new groups, and met demands for self-government.

Such an account must speak to what we have in common as well as what separates us, which can't just rely on shared history or be conjured up in political speeches. It must be built through new ways of doing politics, new public spaces, and new forms of public provision that give people a sense of joint ownership. We must be able to build a common citizenship: the question is not only who belongs, but what are the rights and responsibilities that come with it? Progressives must respond to a politics of exclusion with a politics of inclusion and democratic citizenship.

This opens up two further big sets of questions.

One is about *who* can become part of the national community. This is tackled in a companion paper (Lula and Morris 2026). It argues that increasingly expensive and demanding barriers to naturalisation undermine democratic citizenship, threatening to create a 'sub-class' within the country, in turn undermining social cohesion and labour market protections. It proposes reforms to address this.

The other question focusses, regardless of whether someone is born in Britain or becomes a citizen through naturalisation, on *how* we create a shared identity and stronger bonds between citizens. This agenda – which we call **democratic citizenship** – is the focus of this paper. We argue that this idea should be central to the progressive project going forwards.

2.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF CITIZENSHIP AND PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

TWO PARADIGMS OF CITIZENSHIP

The history of progressive politics is one of the broadening and deepening of citizenship: expanding the parts of the population entitled to full citizenship, and the rights and responsibilities that come with that. Alongside this, progressives have built up the 'public domain': the spaces and institutions which underpin shared citizenship, where we come together guided not by markets or immediate blood relationships, but by a common public ethos (Marquand 2004).

The challenge for progressives has always been how to translate a moral commitment to equal citizenship and public duty into a meaningful programme for government. Attempts to do this produced two dominant paradigms of citizenship: *social citizenship*, realised through the post-war welfare state, and *active citizenship*, rooted in a communitarian critique of both the 'post-war settlement' and Thatcherism.

SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

Social citizenship drew on the shared experience of solidarity in the second world war. Public ownership and the welfare state were presented as the realisation of a national sense of 'neighbourliness' (Griffiths 2018). The liberal social theorist TH Marshall characterised these achievements as the culmination of the centuries-long, evolutionary struggle for first civil, then political, and finally social citizenship. Social citizenship encompassed people's rights to a basic standard of material wellbeing – through healthcare, housing and social services – in order to fully participate in society (Marshall 1987).

The limitations in this approach to citizenship soon surfaced. Aspirations to change in social relationships were harder to realise than (much-needed) improvement in social outcomes like poverty, health and education. Most obviously, bureaucratic industrial nationalisation did little to increase workers' power, agency or solidarity. Power's centralisation became its own form of disempowerment. Meanwhile, informed by a dominant male breadwinner model, the social citizenship state neglected childcare and social care.

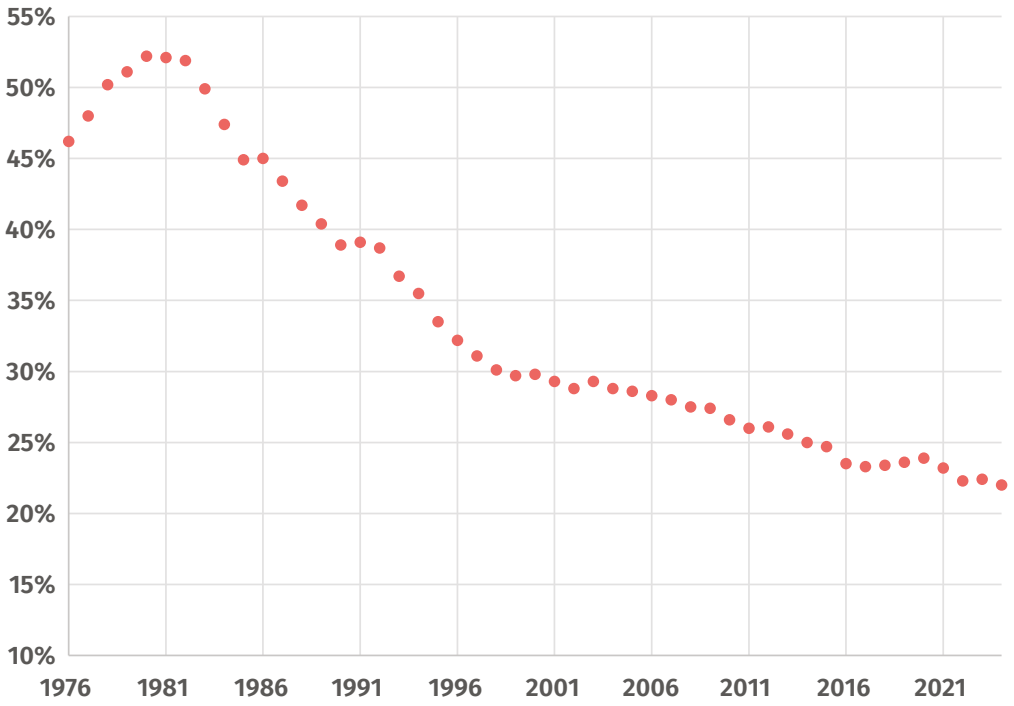
An ideal of citizenship based on social 'rights', delivered by a centralised and bureaucratic state, proved a powerful force for political change in a poorer society characterised by strong social bonds. But while it was clear what people were entitled to, social citizenship had a much weaker account of 'responsibilities' or 'participation' which undermined social solidarity. This became a particular issue by the 1970s as society became more plural, social consensus came under strain, and economic scarcity made distributional choices starker (Vincent 2001).

After 1979, the 'public domain' was undermined, both by deliberate Thatcherite policy and by wider socioeconomic changes, as society became more individualised and the economy more globalised. Increasingly, people's interactions with the

state were not those of citizens working together collectively, but of individual consumers and entrepreneurs. Markets extended into new areas of society, trade union power was broken, public assets were privatised, and power was further centralised. Desire for social connection remained, but the institutions of social citizenship were undermined. And, as inequality widened and people's economic fortunes diverged, the socioeconomic conditions for collective progress were eroded (Lawrence 2019). This is the fundamental problem that progressives have grappled with ever since.

FIGURE 2.1: TRADE UNIONS IN DECLINE

Trade union membership as percentage of the UK workforce 1976–2024



Source: OECD/AIAS database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions, Wage Setting, State Intervention and Social Pacts (ICTWSS)

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

By the late 1980s, Britons increasingly interacted with the state as consumers of goods and services which were privatised and marketised. Political participation was in decline. Thatcherite reforms may have sought to be empowering, to break down nationalised bureaucracies and create 'consumer choice', but they were also atomising. While people were expected to contribute through the market (ie to work hard and pay their way), there was little expectation of contribution – few 'obligations' – in terms of the state and citizenship.

In this context, an idea of **'active citizenship'** gained purchase across the political spectrum. This was a response both to the limits of social citizenship *and* of Thatcherism, which was held to have centralised power and frayed community ties. Politicians explored new strategies to increase participation in service provision, foster more 'responsible' citizens, and decentralise power (Garland 2025).

This *could* have been a fundamental turning point in the politics of citizenship. In its earliest phase, New Labour channelled this thinking powerfully. 'Rights' had to be matched by 'responsibilities' and 'active citizens' were to be empowered to participate fully. Family policies like Sure Start were designed to nurture well-rounded citizens. Constitutional reforms, including devolution and the Freedom of Information Act, were to make the state more responsive and accountable to empowered citizens. Citizenship education, the Life in the UK Test, and citizenship ceremonies were introduced to help integrate young people and migrants into Britain's common life. Area-based interventions were designed to tackle 'social exclusion' and strengthen 'social capital'.

But there were limitations. While citizens were assumed to need educating, activating and lifting from 'social exclusion', it was not assumed that parties, government and indeed markets needed to change how they worked. The exact relationship between 'rights' provided by the state and 'responsibilities' carried out by individuals was unclear. Frequently, the fulfilment of 'responsibilities' came down to little more than paid employment.

More fundamentally, 'active citizenship' was undermined by contradictions. Devolution of power was not matched by any attempt to properly fund or reinvigorate local democracy, while centralised targets tightly constrained local initiatives. Area-based programmes which recognised citizenship ran alongside the marketisation of health and education. The citizenship agenda ran up against rapid rises in economic migration, often temporary, with only weak efforts at meaningful integration.

New Labour ultimately deepened the Thatcherite shift to consumerism in public bureaucracies, especially in its later stages. After Blair's first term, the government embraced its own consumerist politics of 'delivery', constitutional radicalism ebbed away and, outside a few pockets of government, the language of active citizenship receded. In the end, 'active citizenship' was well-conceived but overwhelmed by New Labour's stance towards markets and its consumerist politics.

3.
NAVIGATING NOW: NEW CHALLENGES TO CITIZENSHIP

THREE PARADOXES OF OUR TIME

Today, the basic challenge for progressives remains the same: to give deeper, more egalitarian and more inclusive meaning to citizenship. The task is made different – and harder – by three big shifts, which have reshaped politics and society in paradoxical ways.

'National cultures' have fragmented into 'subcultures', but electorates are increasingly moved by appeals to a unitary national interest

By the end of the last century, the nation was losing its central place in political life under the pressure of economic and cultural globalisation, and people's desire to live according to their own values (Giddens 1994; Robinson et al 2017). But since 2008, the nation has taken on renewed economic, cultural and political importance.

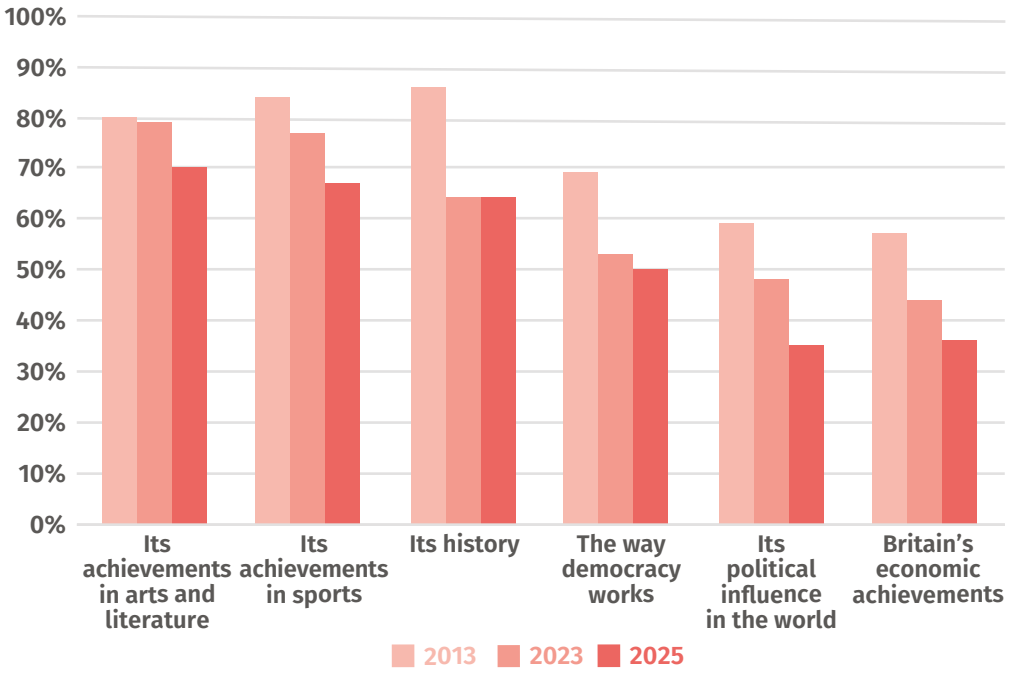
The language of freedom, autonomy and interconnection has ceded to discourses of security and belonging. Global interconnectedness has become associated with the transmission of economic crises and pandemics. Right-wing populists – and national independence movements – appeal to national sovereignty and restoration in response to intersecting social, economic and cultural crises.

But this call to restore an imagined version of the national past is illusory. Social media and economic stagnation have accelerated trends towards pluralism, fragmentation, and the weakening of traditional institutions. Instead of a world of 'thick' national cultures, we live in a world of 'subcultures', where the identities we inhabit or the fandoms we belong to are frequently global in orientation and autonomous of national cultures (Roy 2024).

As our common ground fragments, pride in Britain and its achievements is falling.

FIGURE 3.1: PRIDE IN BRITAIN IS FALLING

Responses to the question: "How proud are you of Britain in each of the following things?"



Source: IPPR analysis of IPPR-YouGov 2025; British Social Attitudes Survey 2023

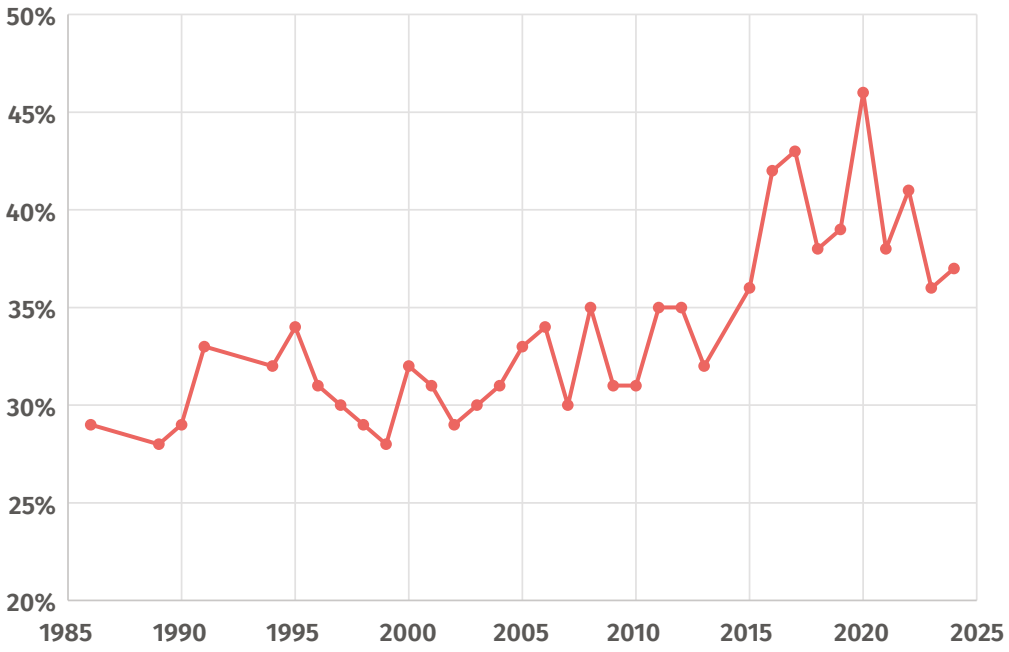
Reforms to indefinite leave to remain might command the headlines, but the fundamental crisis is not one of migration so much as what it means to belong to the nation. Problems of integration are downstream of the problem that we don't know who we are, or what unites us. The radical right promises to restore a version of a national culture that never quite existed, and which is incompatible with modern societies. Progressives meanwhile struggle to define the national collective to whom a more just social contract should apply.

Everything has become political, but we lack the institutions to make lasting change

Institutions have weakened but society has become highly politicised. In a world of zero-sum economic decision-making, in which the public realm has been hollowed out, and in which political conflict is mediated through attention-sapping social media, *everything* is political – but our political passions are often fleeting and aimless. We lack the strong social bonds and institutions – churches, trade unions or mass political parties – through which they can be sustainably mobilised to drive change. This is what the historian Anton Jäger calls 'hyperpolitics'. People might be mobilised at great scale, in far-flung places, as they were during the Black Lives Matter protests, but these movements struggle to spawn enduring institutions or permeate formal politics (Jäger 2026).

FIGURE 3.2: HYPERPOLITICS IN ACTION: RISING BUT ERRATIC POLITICAL INTEREST

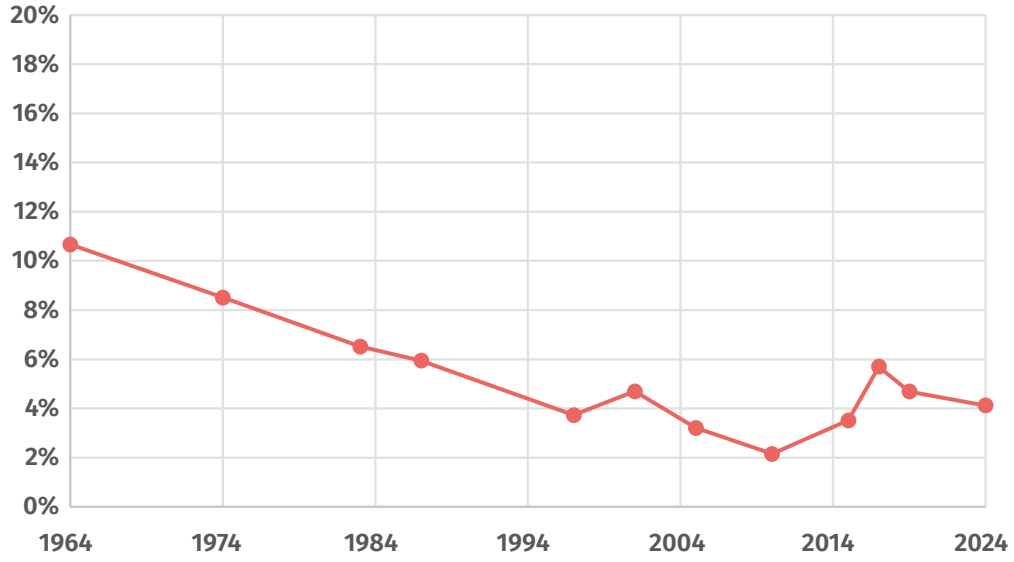
Share of the public identifying as taking 'a great deal of interest in politics' or 'quite a lot of interest in politics'



Source: IPPR-Valgarðsson analysis of British Social Attitudes Survey data

FIGURE 3.3: HYPERPOLITICS IN ACTION (2): PARTY MEMBERSHIP IN DECLINE

Party membership has consistently fallen since the 1960s, with significant but temporary spikes



Source: IPPR-Valgarðsson analysis of British Election Study data

Mainstream political parties are subject to this volatility, buffeted by outsider parties: secular decline in membership intermittently broken by what have, so far, been short-lived surges in membership. None seem wholly willing or able to find ways in which national problems and differences might be mediated and resolved collectively. The public sphere is animated by profoundly moral questions about identity and exclusion or right and wrong – but mainstream politicians struggle on this territory, conscious of the myriad audiences they must not alienate. A clamour of competing populisms is both a result of, and a further aggravating factor in, the shrinking of our common ground.

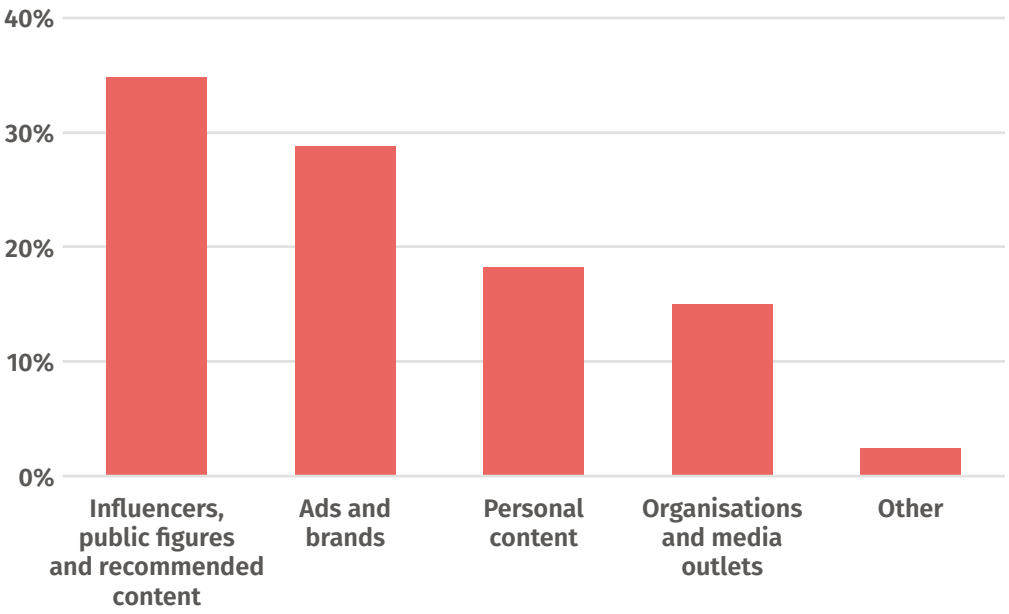
Technology has both disrupted and concentrated power, with grave consequences for democracy

Social media once promised an end to gatekeeping, allowing more of us to participate in public life and hold powerful actors to account. In many respects, it *has* served to undermine traditional sources of authority, from political leaders to legacy media gatekeepers. But today, the promise of the radical democratisation through technology has given way to the reality of algorithmic gatekeeping and the concentration of media power in even fewer hands.

Social media now is less about allowing us to make new connections with each other than about providing us with personalised, influencer-based content to keep us scrolling. It has shifted from facilitating active, horizontal, *social* relationships to passive, vertical, 'parasocial' relationships, designed to maximise our screentime, harvest our data and sell us products.

FIGURE 3.4: PARASOCIAL MEDIA

How users categorised the top four posts in their social media feed



Source: IPPR/Survation (2026)

This keeps us isolated from each other, making it harder to connect or act together. Meanwhile, platforms expose us to disturbing, controversial and misleading content, and erode taboos against hate speech (Ropek-Hewson 2026; Finlayson 2023).

Most dangerously, new alliances are emerging between new, extractive forms of capital and a paradoxically global network of ethnonationalists, hostile to the norms of democratic politics (Finlayson 2023). On the platform X, the world's richest man openly amplifies far-right politicians, while crypto and AI pioneers lavish them with support. As national democracies and cultures are undercut by these new technologies, it is their architects – whose wealth and power are beyond the auspices of most national governments – who now advocate the most revanchist forms of nationalist politics.

4.
WHAT NEXT? TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

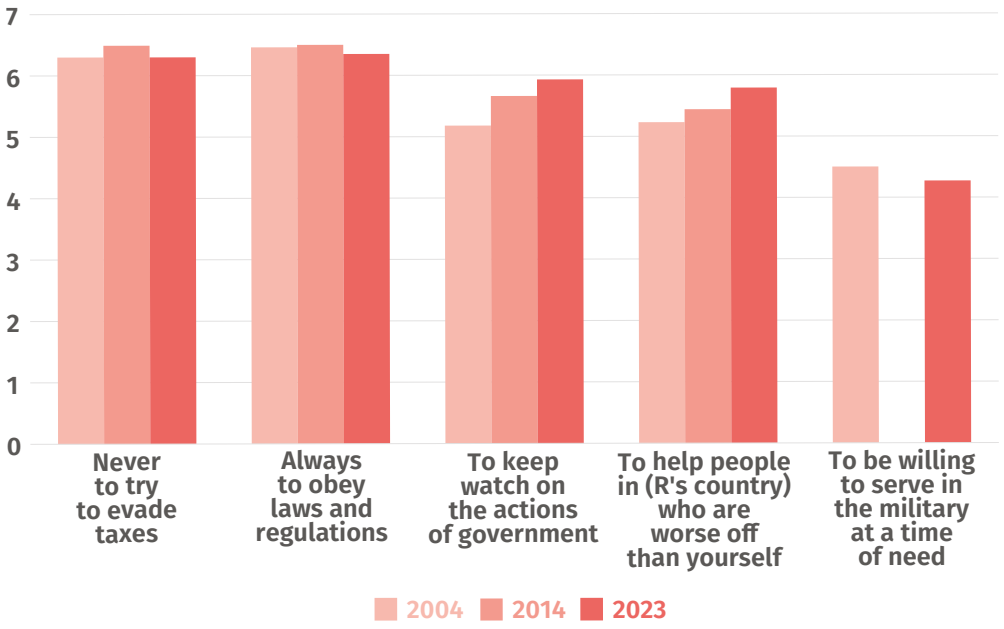
INTRODUCING DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

Progressives need a new citizenship agenda, to defeat the ethnonationalist vision of the radical right. That agenda is also a prerequisite for driving progressive change which, in an era of low growth and zero-sum politics, will require a far greater capacity to negotiate between groups to accept some measure of compromise and individual sacrifice for our common interest, and build durable coalitions for change across classes, generations and identities. This is all made harder by the low-trust environment we are now in.

But all is not lost. There are strong foundations to build on. Despite the challenges, the evidence is that over the last 20 years, the public have increasingly embraced a deeper, more inclusive and more democratic attitude towards citizenship (see figure 4.1).

FIGURE 4.1: SHIFTING PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON CITIZENSHIP

Responses to the question: how important for being a good citizen? (1 = not important at all, 7 = very important)

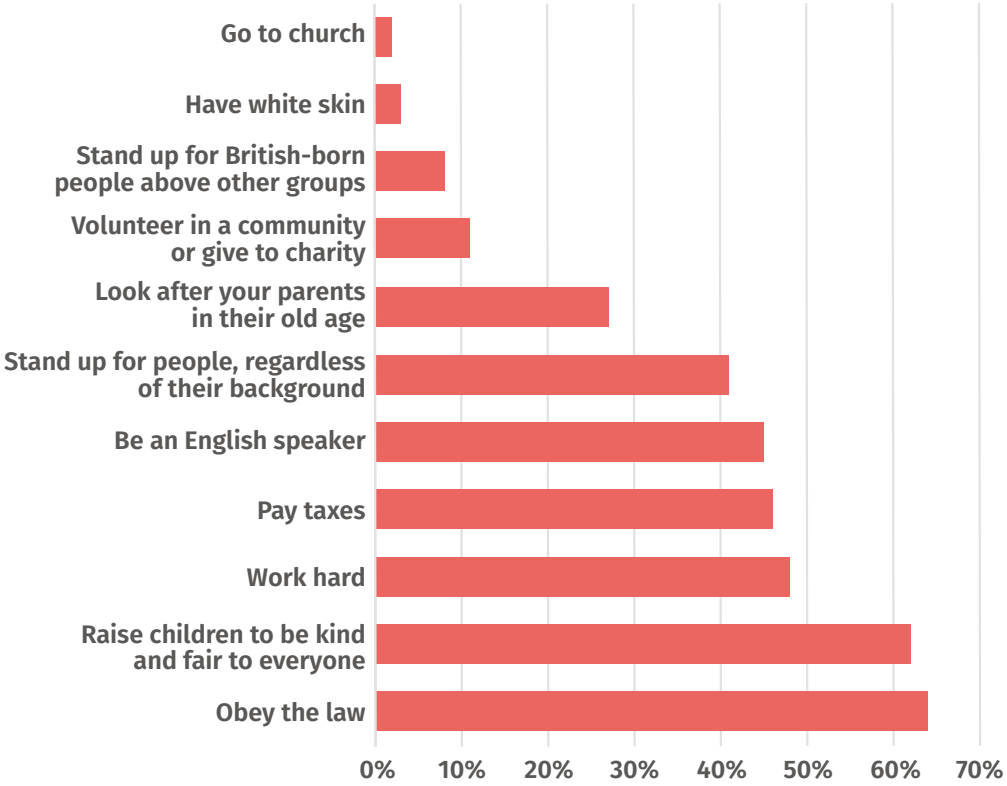


Source: IPPR-Valgarðsson analysis of British Social Attitudes Survey data

Likewise, polling conducted by IPPR and YouGov found that the public are likely to identify universalist, civic ideals over narrower, exclusive ideas as the attributes of a good citizen.

FIGURE 4.2: UNIVERSAL, NOT EXCLUSIVE, CITIZENSHIP

Share of people who believe the following are important qualities to have or things to do in order to be a good British citizen



Source: Garland-Patel analysis of IPPR-YouGov 2025

We still possess national institutions, like the NHS and the BBC, which command strong public support. Progressives must be their foremost defenders – but defending the old pillars of shared citizenship without building new ones is not enough.

We need a new paradigm: *democratic citizenship*.

Democratic, because it seeks to deepen democracy, in contrast to the radical right which seeks to undermine it; because the object is maximum inclusion within democratic politics; and because it is about building institutions that allow us all to shape our shared future.

And *citizenship*, because it seeks to actively cultivate a sense of shared belonging and common endeavour, where citizenship can be earned – through living by shared values, actively participating in democracy, and contributing to the nation – and is not just a factor of birth.

Returning to our earlier examination of the history of progressive citizenship, we can identify the requirements of an equivalent prospectus today.

TABLE 4.1: THE SHIFTING PROGRESSIVE POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP.

Ideological analysis of past citizenship paradigms, and the requirements of 'democratic citizenship'

	1945: 'Social citizenship'	1997: 'Active citizenship', combined with 'consumerism'	2020s: 'Democratic citizenship'?
Basic concept	The culmination of extension of rights: from political to social citizenship.	Correcting an imbalance between 'rights' and 'responsibilities'.	Deepening of democratic participation and shared national identity.
Politics	Response to widespread demands for 'social citizenship'; expanded state planning following from wartime.	Response to individualism and globalisation, and associated social problems of 'social exclusion'. Market globalisation-friendly communitarianism.	Response to competing trends: demand for a more protective, national state; concentration of economic power; increasingly pluralistic societies.
Core policies	Beveridgean welfare state as expression of social rights; nationalisation of 'commanding heights' of industry.	Welfare-to-work; area-based interventions like the New Deal for Communities; citizenship education; Life in the UK Test. At the same time, public services subjected to the New Public Management.	Programme to defend democracy against external threats, address causes of declining participation and political inequality, shaping new institutions, spaces and practices of citizenship.
Agent	The state providing for the entitlements of citizenship, including through new, collective institutions, including the NHS.	The individual citizen 'enabled' to participate, especially in the labour market; partnership between government, business, the third sector.	The state taking a more active role in creating the conditions and institutions for stronger citizenship and cross-class solidarity.
Context	'Embedded liberalism'; expanded state planning in wartime; weak social protections; strong social solidarity; relative ethnic homogeneity; male breadwinner norm.	Greater prosperity; society more pluralistic; adaptation to exogeneous economic change. But: 'disorders of freedom': political disengagement, social exclusion, community breakdown.	Worse social/economic conditions; more overt threats and antagonists to multicultural democracy; hyperpolitics, volatility, fragmentation.

Source: Author's analysis

5.
REBUILDING THE PUBLIC

INTRODUCING DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

Democratic citizenship relies on a politics which privileges the common good over sectional interests; strengthens the public and restrains concentrations of private power; defines membership of the community inclusively; and allows us to build a shared future together.

That requires two policy objectives:

1. **Rebuilding the public**: to build the spaces, institutions and sense of common endeavour that unite ordinary people and expand their influence over our collective life.
2. **Resisting oligarchy**: to oppose the influence of opaque international wealth elites over democracy and the public sphere.

Progressives must pursue both with equal vigour.

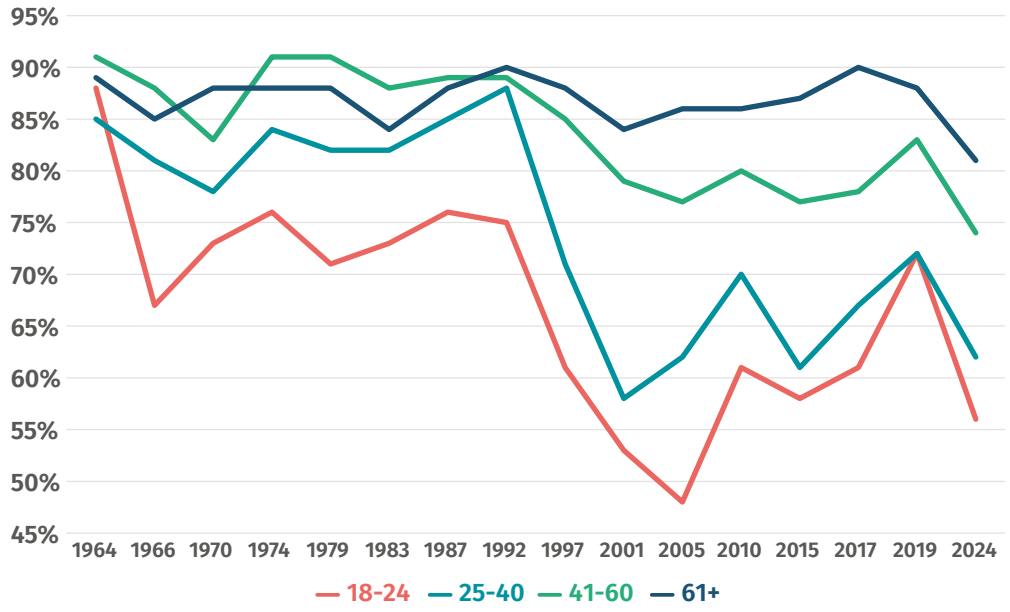
This agenda is necessarily broad. Forthcoming Decade of National Renewal papers will consider the dimensions of *economic* citizenship, to empower citizens to engage fully in the economic life of the nation and build collective institutions; the relationship between citizenship and the tax system; and the boundaries of citizenship and requirements of naturalisation. The remainder of this paper focusses on democratic reform, the expectations we place on citizens, reshaping the public sphere, ways to bring citizens together, and the role of big money in party politics.

1. MAXIMISING PARTICIPATION

Alongside taxation, voting is the most basic expression of citizenship: the civic duty to participate in shaping our common future. Two thirds of the British public agree that voting in general elections is a duty (Klemperer 2025). Declining turnout, political inequality and a rising sense that voting doesn't matter are the surest signs of the fragmenting of the public, the weakening bonds of common citizenship. As turnout declines, so the turnout gap *between* groups – based, for instance, on age or education – widens.

FIGURE 5.1: THE GENERATIONAL VOTING DIVIDE

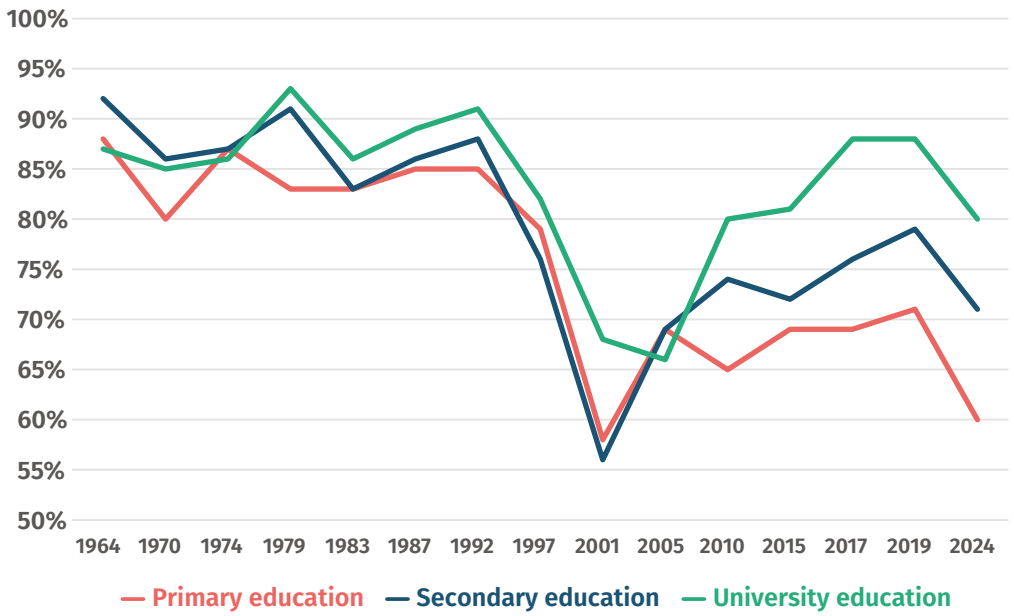
Turnout in general elections by age group 1964–2024



Source: IPPR-Valgarðsson analysis of British Election Study data

FIGURE 5.2: THE EDUCATIONAL VOTING DIVIDE

Turnout in general elections by education 1964–2024



Source: IPPR-Valgarðsson analysis of BSA data

It is a democratic problem in principle if majority governments are increasingly elected on low turnout, on a modest share of the vote, with little enthusiasm. But it is also a practical problem. Such a government will inevitably lack legitimacy,

struggle to navigate a politics of difficult trade-offs, and soon fall victim to further electoral volatility.

Votes at 16 and automatic voter registration are important steps, but there is much more to do. Declining and unequal turnout interact with the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system to hand disproportionate voice to wealthier, older, white voters at the expense of the worse-off, the young and minorities. Parties cannot truly claim to reflect the broad social constituencies they once did, and our 'winner-takes-all' system offers little incentive for negotiation *between* parties. The fast-plummeting popularity of newly-elected governments undermines policy stability and produces great lurches within the electoral system.

Progressives must shape a political system capable of reflecting the reality of a more plural society: a wider diversity of voices must count, and our politics must have greater space for negotiation.

Legislate for compulsory voting

The minimum responsibility of a democratic citizen is to participate in elections. Low and differential turnout between different groups has skewed our politics towards the interests of older, wealthier, white voters. This creates a vicious circle: politics fails to represent the interests of certain groups, so they become less likely to engage (Klemperer 2025).

The government should legislate to make voting compulsory for all eligible UK residents, with a £10 fine for failure to cast a vote.

This would bring Britain in line with Australia. Turnout in Australian elections has fallen below 90 percent only once since the introduction of compulsory voting in 1924, with similar results in Belgium, Singapore and Chile. Compulsory voting radically reduces turnout differentials between groups. When groups vote in greater numbers, politicians must take greater account of their interests (Klemperer 2025).

Compulsory voting should be paired with measures to make voting easier, including the relaxation of photo ID requirements and the introduction of polling day bank holidays (Patel and Swift 2025). A 'none of the above' option should be included on ballots, giving voters the option to express a preference for none of the available candidates (Klemperer 2025).

Change the voting system in UK general elections

Britain's FPTP electoral system exacerbates problems of differential turnout, skewing electoral incentives towards an unrepresentative minority, while millions of people's votes count for little. When people see a meaningful choice, they are more likely to vote (Difford 2022); by artificially suppressing choice, we artificially suppress democratic participation.

The traditional case for FPTP emphasises its tendency to return stable majority governments and exclude political extremes. This case has evaporated after a decade of governing instability, amid the breakup of the two-party system. In a multi-party system, FPTP is liable to produce perverse outcomes, handing sizeable majorities to parties that command a shrinking plurality of the vote. This is especially dangerous in the UK, which has few constitutional safeguards against executive power.

If we are to build a politics of solidarity *between* groups, the 'winner takes all' logic of FPTP presents another issue: it offers little incentive for a mature politics of cooperation, dialogue and negotiation. Parties are incentivised to win based on a narrow slice of the electorate, and then given near unlimited power. If they are incapable of representing a sufficiently broad cross-section of society, many interests will go neglected. The risk is a continual spiral of policy instability and

public dissatisfaction, as governments commanding weak public consent rapidly grow unpopular.

The government should therefore commit to a change to a more proportional voting system.

More proportional systems by design necessitate cooperation and negotiation. A move to more proportional representation would be a recognition that our politics has changed: a necessary step towards buildomg a politics of mutual compromise against the backdrop of electoral fragmentation and 'hyperpolitics'.

All electoral systems come with necessary trade-offs, between proportionality and local accountability, or between incentives towards expressive or instrumental voting. The object should be a system which preserves the distinctive strengths of British democracy – particularly the constituency link – while introducing a greater level of proportionality and greater choice for voters.

There are three potential routes to electoral reform. The first is a referendum, for which precedent exists. The second is a manifesto commitment made by a party or parties able to subsequently secure a parliamentary majority. The third option is through a national commission (APPG Fair Election 2025, Klemperer 2025), which could bring members of the public together with experts in a conversation about what citizens want from our democracy. Given the urgency of the situation, progressives will need to weigh carefully competing priorities of speed, public involvement in design of a new system, and the necessary requirements for legitimacy.

Strengthen the residence basis of voting

Democratic citizenship should lower barriers to participation in our civic and political life for people who live and work here.

But today, the franchise is a confusing and arbitrary patchwork. Britons living abroad can vote for the rest of their lives, even if they have not lived here for decades. In general elections, Irish and Commonwealth nationals can vote. In local elections in England, the franchise extends to some, though a minority of, EU nationals. Some 4.4 million adults living legally in the UK are unenfranchised (James and Underwood 2025). There are historical and political reasons for these arrangements – and good reason to maintain the link between voting in general elections and citizenship – but progressives should look to apply more consistency to the system, recognising that our aim should be a national community based on where we live and contribute, not on where we are born.

First, the government should restore the 15-year time limit on expatriate voting.

This would restore the status quo as it was between 2000 and 2024, by which UK citizens abroad would surrender their right to vote after 15 years living abroad.

Up to 2015, no more than 35,000 overseas citizens had ever registered to vote in UK elections – but this number has dramatically increased, with more than 200,000 registered to vote at the 2017 and 2019 general elections. The previous government's decision to lift the previous 15-year time limit on overseas voting meant there were around 3.5 million potential overseas voters at the time of the 2024 general election. This means expatriate voters could easily swing the results in any number of constituencies – even an entire election (Klemperer 2024).

This is a new source of significant electoral unpredictability, and it undermines the idea that our national community should be shaped by those who live, work and contribute here. Citizens abroad do have a stake in the UK, but this should not mean enjoying a perpetual voice in our politics without living or paying taxes here.

Second, barriers to participation in civic life should be lowered by introducing full residence-based voting in English local and regional elections.

This would bring England in line with Scotland and Wales where, since 2020, non-Commonwealth residents have been entitled to vote in local elections as well as Scottish Parliament and Senedd elections (James and Underwood 2025).

Participating in national elections is a foundational aspect of citizenship, so the bar is necessarily higher. But the ultimate objective should be to create faster and less burdensome pathways to citizenship (Lula and Morris 2026).

2. MAKING CITIZENS

Citizenship is a process of becoming part of a society: we should be clear about the values and behaviour we expect of citizens, whether they are born here or naturalised, and make sure that people have opportunities to meet and understand people of different backgrounds.

As a recent IPPR report found, young people are '[held] back from meaningful democratic engagement… [by] a deficit of civic knowledge and confidence' (Bick 2026). Since the introduction of citizenship teaching in English schools after 2002, it has been plagued by consistent problems: subordination to subjects judged of greater academic merit; a deficit of specialist teachers and resistance from headteachers; discomfort with prescribing values; and a tendency for the subject to be blurred with the teaching of other life skills, such as PSHE (Association for Citizenship Teaching 2025; Blunkett and Taylor 2010; Kisby and Sloam 2009). While the government's plan to make citizenship a compulsory subject in primary schools is welcome, the commitment to maintaining the 'existing structural architecture' of subjects, and emphasis on broadening the citizenship curriculum yet further, risk exacerbating these existing problems (Bick 2026).

Meanwhile, for adults born overseas seeking to become British citizens, the Life in the UK Test correctly recognises the need for new citizens to make an effort to integrate and understand life in the UK, but it is badly undermined by foregrounding 'largely irrelevant' content around sport, arts, culture and leisure (Tuckett 2026), and by tests of arbitrary historical knowledge.

These remain unsatisfactory and partial efforts. What we expect of young people, as they approach adulthood and full citizenship, is not aligned with what we expect of people who have come to the UK and wish to become citizens. And since their advent in the early 2000s, the context has also changed markedly: we face more overt threats to democracy and multicultural society, and deeper problems of disengagement and political inequality.

Government should recommit to citizenship education in England, organised around fundamental values, the practical working of British democracy, and an obligatory volunteering element.

Rather than 'box-tick community activities', the citizenship curriculum should focus squarely on a grounding in how national, regional and local politics in the UK work.

In schools, policymakers should clarify the importance of citizenship by ensuring it is properly assessed as a curriculum subject rather than as personal development (Bick 2026). Over the longer term, this will require a drive to upskill, recruit and train specialist citizenship teachers (ibid 2026).

Government should align the content of the Life in the UK Test with the content of UK citizenship teaching.

We should have the same expectations of young people growing up in Britain and newly arrived migrants in the UK. Therefore, in place of the Life in the UK Test, with its focus on memorising often irrelevant facts, the government should introduce a new citizenship course for all adult applicants. This should mirror the content of citizenship teaching in schools for 16–18-year-olds, so that citizenship for *all* British adults is based on the same expectations and obligations. This should again combine practical understanding of citizens' rights, responsibilities, and the working of the UK's legal and political institutions, with an element of practical volunteering experience.

Over the longer term, government should introduce a new universal Democratic Citizens Service, based on the core experiences in which a new citizen should participate.

The previous government's National Citizen Service was undermined by its voluntary nature and the unrepresentative character of its participants. Despite commanding as much as 95 percent of the government's youth services budget (Foster 2018), it suffered from low uptake, showed no evidence of improving civic engagement (DCMS 2026) and was discontinued.

The objective should be universal citizenship, not experiences for a few young people. Therefore, government should introduce a compulsory Democratic Citizens Service for 16- and 17-year-olds, embedded in the education system. This should be a broad programme that provides practical experiences not only of volunteering, but of political participation and democratic decision-making, in order to foster the habit of participation, facilitate social mixing, and provide new experiences and employable skills.

The focus should be on a range of experiences that encourage social responsibility, social and intergenerational mixing, and civic engagement, as well as employability. These might include volunteering in a care home or childcare setting, assisting with the administration of local and national elections, and an element of co-design to practise democratic participation.

Citizenship ceremonies for naturalised Britons are an important, symbolic part of our civic life. Government should likewise explore the prospect of new rites of citizenship for the British-born population, whether that is marking new births or ceremonies for young people as they attain the full rights and obligations of citizenship, perhaps when they reach voting age or leave school (Rogers and Muir 2007).

3. RENEWING THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Democratic citizenship is not an abstract set of obligations; it is something lived in the physical, institutional – and today virtual – spaces where we interact, debate and act together. Our sense of solidarity as a society now feels so weak in part because we have allowed these spaces to be eroded. We shouldn't look to recreate the past, but rather to craft a public domain responsive to the realities and needs of the present.

Social media for the public good

Online spaces matter and will continue to, because more people work from home, young people are lonelier, and we have fewer community spaces (Office for National Statistics 2025). If we want to address the challenges posed by social media, it isn't enough to ask that people log off: we will have to engage in the considerably harder task of reshaping social media for the public interest, recovering its 'democratic and emancipatory' potential while preserving its social and cultural appeal (Ropek-Hewson and Jinadu 2026).

In the immediate term, government should extend prominence requirements to social media platforms, to compel social media companies to make public service news and informational content from a wider range of groups and organisations that are currently crowded by the algorithm more prominent.

Ofcom has already recommended that the government explore extending prominence rules for news on social media platforms. News providers are currently disadvantaged by the time-on-platform objective of social media algorithms. The same logic should be extended to other organisations and groups which provide public benefit, but which are disadvantaged by the algorithm, including local councils and charities (Ibid 2026).

In the longer term, the BBC, along with other UK and European public service broadcasters, should be encouraged and funded to explore the development of a new public social media platform with a public social benefit objective, integrating news, entertainment and social features.

This should have a public benefit objective rather than being focussed on maximising time-on-platform, while also integrating a mix of news, entertainment and social features. Its starting point should be the formation of a coalition with the BBC and other EU public service broadcasters, followed by a feasibility study, supported by funding, regulation and competition policy plans (Ibid 2026).

4. BRIDGING THE DIVIDES

Democratic citizenship will rely on new ways of bringing people together across classes, generations and other divides, to build mutual understanding and common purpose. Citizenship is meaningless unless we feel sympathy and understanding for our fellow citizens. As we look to ensure that an ageing population can grow old with dignity, and to tackle deep problems of intergenerational inequality, one key aspect of democratic citizenship must be attention to solidarity between age cohorts.

Past progressive achievements are instructive here. The NHS was never envisaged only as a service provided. Through the 'shared life of the ward', NHS hospitals were designed to bring together people from different backgrounds in shared spaces (Seaton 2024). Sure Start centres played a similar role 50 years later. Centrally funded but locally run and designed to meet context-specific parental needs, these were "not only childcare settings, they were locations for the building of citizen solidarity and the strengthening of local community groups and networks: state investment creating non-state solidarity" (Pike 2024). Sure Start did not only achieve remarkable improvements in outcomes for young people; it reduced parents' isolation, improved their confidence, and better integrated them within wider social networks (Prowse 2008).

Intergenerational care

One pioneering model of building bridges between generations is the integration of care settings for young children and older adults. At Providence Mount St Vincent in Seattle, for instance, a childcare programme is co-located within a care community for older adults, with children and adults coming together for music, dance, art or storytelling (Turner 2015). In the UK, a nursery has been integrated into the Belong care village in Chester (Ready Generations 2023).

A recent review of the evidence on such schemes reveals benefits to children including socialisation, individual attention, improved academic, language and literacy skills, and increased self-worth for young children. Older adults meanwhile have benefited from better mood, an increased sense of worth and value, improved health and activity, and an enhanced sense of purpose, with particular benefits for adults with dementia (Rawlings-Way et al 2026). Importantly, children who

participated in such schemes were likely to view older people more positively (Heyman et al 2011).

Such schemes should necessarily be approached cautiously, with strong supervision and careful planning, particularly given potential safeguarding issues. However, they could be an important, practical outlet for cultivating generational sympathies.

The government should partner with local authorities to pilot and evaluate a new scheme co-locating childcare centres in adult care communities, with shared activities.

This should start at small scale, with central government funding local authority partners in 10 places. This should be accompanied by careful expert evaluation of outcomes for both cohorts over a sustained period, covering children's social and educational development, the cognitive health and wellbeing of older people, and the impact on how the cohorts view and engage with other older and younger people. Other childcare and social care providers should be encouraged to develop new partnerships, to bring groups of young and old together for planned group activities.

Homesharing

As of 2021, 57 percent of English households where everyone was aged 65 and over had two or more spare bedrooms, and a further 29 percent had one spare room (Zaranko 2026). While many older adults are reluctant to downsize for any number of emotional, social and financial reasons, living in and maintaining large homes often proves unsafe, expensive and isolating (Martinez et al 2020). In the context of a housing crisis, this can feed a politics of intergenerational resentment but, viewed from another angle, it could create an opportunity for a practical expression of intergenerational solidarity.

The government should launch a national drive for intergenerational homesharing.

In the UK, the small number of existing homesharing agreements usually involve a younger person living in the home of an older person, in exchange for about 10 hours of support around the house, excluding personal care, with both parties paying a fee of £200 a month to the relevant Homeshare organisation (Homeshare UK 2025).

A cross-country survey on the evidence of such schemes identified benefits in terms of reduced loneliness and isolation, and improved wellbeing across a range of other indicators, as well as greater independence stemming from support with daily tasks. The experience overwhelmingly improved younger people's views of older people and made home providers likelier to partake in activities with younger cohorts (Martinez et al 2020).

The government should launch a national drive to scale-up homesharing. Homeowners with spare rooms would be encouraged to house younger lodgers, who would pay a modest administrative fee rather than rent. This arrangement would be based on the homesharer committing to at least 10 hours of activities to support their host each week, such as cooking and cleaning, or just providing company. Regular wellbeing checks on hosts and homesharers would guard against abuse of the system.

Working with existing third-sector providers, this should involve the creation of a national portal to support the matching of hosts and homesharers, along with a framework to conduct suitable background checks. Government should explore the use of positive incentives in the council tax system to encourage these arrangements.

Alongside this, government should explore an expansion of adult placement schemes on the Shared Lives Model, in which people with a range of support needs receive care within the home and community of a trained carer. This is an important route to greater independence for people with care needs, and a way of integrating people who might otherwise be excluded into the community.

Supporting community ownership

Local solidarities and institutions have a special part to play in building solidarities, because the places where most of us come into most immediate contact with the state, and where we most often practise democratic citizenship in our own lives, are inevitably local. Doing so relies on the existence of spaces – social infrastructure – where we can spend time, meet others and come to common understandings.

Ultimately, that will require restoration of the financial position and autonomy of local government. But in the short term, progressives will have to use the power and resource of central government to give communities the means to build and own local infrastructure. The government's Pride in Place programme and the new community right to buy represent positive steps. But Pride in Place funding only covers areas containing 4 per cent of the UK population, while considerable limits are placed on the community right to buy by the modest scale of the new Community Right to Buy fund, which totals just £61 million.

Government should launch a new Citizens' Ownership Fund to support the community right to buy.

The object of this would be to support permanent community ownership – meaning communities can build up assets, rather than simply relying on central government funding over time. This could be resourced by a tax on large online retailers (Hilhorst 2025).

While applying to all parts of the UK, this fund should be guided by a number of criteria. First, preference should be given to areas scoring high in the index of 'double deprivation': those with high levels of deprivation and poor social infrastructure (Bolton and Dessent 2024). Second, it should support the purchase of community-owned spaces for the use of the community, not just the renovation of historic buildings for private use. Third, preference should be given to those spaces with multiple uses, and which facilitate social and intergenerational mixing. Fourth, preference should be given to proposals that are the product of some element of community co-design, to meet the needs and expectations of communities

6.
RESISTING OLIGARCHY

The influences of private wealth, big tech and hostile foreign actors all pose their own threat to democratic government. But they also intersect with problems of political inequality and disengagement to further suppress political participation, feeding the sense that democratic institutions cannot deliver. Further consideration is given to the question of social media in other Decade of National Renewal papers (Ropek Hewson 2026; Harris 2026). The discussion here addresses the growing, direct influence of big money in UK politics.

Total political donations, adjusted for inflation, have more than doubled since the start of the century. In 2023 alone there were more political donations over £1 million than since records began (Patel and Swift 2025). Since the 2024 election, politics has been convulsed repeatedly by stories revealing the willingness of foreign-based tech billionaires to lavish record-breaking financial support on parties of the radical right (BBC 2024, Isaac 2026).

Donations on this scale are new to British politics. We should be profoundly concerned about the influence this may exert on our politics, and on the effects that donations on this scale have on faith in our democracy (Patel and Quilter-Pinner 2022).

Faced with the threat of big money in politics, progressives should act to end their dependency on big money private donations.

The government should legislate as soon as possible for an absolute, annual cap of £100,000 on private political donations.

This cap should be progressively lowered to a limit of £10,000 over the next decade. In the longer term, this will require a new basis for party finance. In an optimal world, political parties would be able to sustain themselves on small donations and membership fees from a motivated activist base, alongside support from parts of civil society like trade unions. In practice, however, a cap on party donations would create a shortfall necessitating an increase in state funding (Fisher 2025).

The UK has much to learn from its counterparts in this respect. In Germany, state funding of parties is based on a party's electoral performance, as well as how much it raises through members' subscriptions, contributions by office holders and legal donations, with a cap to ensure state funding does not exceed what parties raise for themselves. Strong transparency requirements require that parties identify any donors contributing more than €500 (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2024).

In France, meanwhile, individuals face a strict €7,500 donation cap per year, with public funding then allocated according to the votes and seats they secure. Lobbyist participation in fundraising and electioneering is prohibited (Soulier Avocats 2021).

An innovative and explicitly participatory form of public funding is found in Seattle. Here, the city distributes four $25 'democracy vouchers' to each registered voter, which can be donated to campaigns for city office (Griffith and Noonen 2022). These options all bear consideration.

In addition to this, particular attention should be paid to the financial influence of people who are not resident in the UK. A basic principle should be that people who do not pay taxes in the UK should not be able to influence the politics of the UK.

Non-taxpayers should be banned from making donations to UK political parties.

The principle that non-taxpayers should be removed from the eligible list of political donors is already on the statute book, in sections 10 and 11 of the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009 – but it has never been commenced. The government should act to do so.

REFERENCES

Ansell B (2023) *Why Politics Fails*, Penguin

Ansell B (2025) 'Who counts?', Political Calculus substack. https://benansell.substack.com/p/who-counts

APPG Fair Elections (2025), 'National Commission on Electoral Reform: terms of reference'. https://fairelections.org.uk/national-commission/

Association for Citizenship Teaching (2025) 'Representation of the people bill: evidence submission', written evidence. https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/65480/documents/8049

Balagopalan S and Stronge W (2025) *Givers and takers: uncovering the donor-contractor nexus at the heart of government*, Autonomy Institute. https://autonomy.work/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Givers-and-Takers.pdf

Bick C (2026) *A generation apart?: Youth politics, alienation and democratic renewal in Britain*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/a-generation-apart

Blunkett D and Taylor M (2010) 'Active citizenship and Labour', in Crick B and Lockyer A, *Active citizenship: what could it achieve and how?*, Edinburgh University Press, 26–38

Bolton M and Dessent M (2024) 'Focusing on doubly disadvantaged neighbourhoods', Joseph Rowntree Foundation. https://www.jrf.org.uk/neighbourhoods-and-communities/focusing-on-doubly-disadvantaged-neighbourhoods

Catney G, Lloyd C, Ellis M, Wright R, Finney N, Jivraj S and Manley D (2023) 'Ethnic diversification and neighbourhood mixing: a rapid response to the 2021 census of England and Wales', *Geographical Journal*, 189(1): 63–77. https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/geoj.12507

Curtice J and Scholes A (2024) *British Social Attitudes Survey 41: National Identity*, National Centre for Social Research. https://natcen.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/british-social-attitudes-41-%7C-national-identity-1377.pdf

DCMS (2026) *Evaluation of National Citizen Service 2023 to 2025*, research and analysis. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-citizen-service-evaluation-2023-to-2025/evaluation-of-national-citizen-service-2023-to-2025

Denham J (2026) 'Reclaiming Britain: a response', blog, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/reclaiming-britain-a-response

Difford D (2022) 'Does proportional representation lead to higher turnout?', Electoral Reform Society. https://electoral-reform.org.uk/does-proportional-representation-lead-to-higher-turnout/

Edgerton D (2017) *Rise and Fall of the British Nation: A Twentieth Century History*, Allen Lane

Farrell H and Han H (2025) 'AI and democratic publics', Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University. https://knightcolumbia.org/content/ai-and-democratic-publics

Federal Ministry of the Interior (2024) 'Funding of political parties'. https://www.bmi.bund.de/EN/topics/constitution/law-political-parties/funding-pol-parties/funding-pol-parties-node.html

Finlayson A (2023) 'This is not a critique: reactionary digital politics in the age of ideological entrepreneurship', *Media Theory Journal*, 7(1): 27–48. https://journalcontent.mediatheoryjournal.org/index.php/mt/article/view/899

Fisher J (2025), 'Party finance: not a broken system, but some reforms are required', *Political Quarterly*, 96/3, 570–4. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.13548

Foster M (2018) 'Government's flagship National Citizen Service under fire over low take-up', *Civil Service World*. https://www.civilserviceworld.com/professions/article/governments-flagship-national-citizen-service-under-fire-over-low-takeup

Freedman S (2024) *Failed State: Why Nothing Works and How We Fix It*, Pan Macmillan

Freedman S (2025) 'Blood and soil', Comment is Freed substack. https://samf.substack.com/p/blood-and-soil

Garland N (2025a) 'Community socialism: community and the British left, 1968–1997', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford.

Garland N (2025b) 'Revisionism as statecraft: David Marquand, the SDP split and the politics of community', *Political Quarterly*, 96(3), 429–437. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-923X.13528

Giddens A (1994) *Beyond Left and Right: the future of radical politics*, Polity

Griffith A and Noonen T (2022) 'The effects of public campaign funding: evidence from Seattle's democracy voucher program', *Journal of Public Economies*, 211. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272722000780

Griffiths C (2020) 'The politics of neighbourliness: social democracy on the home front in Britain during the Second World War', in Schattle H and Nuttall J, *Making Social Democrats: Essays for David Marquand*, Manchester University Press, 177–194

Harris J (2000) 'Labour's political and social thought' in Tanner D, Thane P and Tiratsoo N, *Labour's First Century*, Cambridge University Press

Harris SL (2026) *Opening the gates to access to justice for tech harms*, IPPR (forthcoming)

Heyman J, Gutheil I and White-Ryan L (2011) 'Preschool children's attitudes older adults: comparison of intergenerational and traditional day care', *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 9/4, 435–444

Hilhorst S (2025) 'Places to come together: rebuilding local solidarities against the far right', discussion paper, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/places-to-come-together

Home Office (2025) 'Hate crime, England and Wales, year ending March 2025, official statistics. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025/hate-crime-england-and-wales-year-ending-march-2025

Homeshare UK (2025) *The state of Homeshare: homeshare in the UK 2024–25*. https://homeshareuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/State-of-Homeshare-in-the-UK-24-25.pdf

Isaac A (2026) 'Exclusive: Nigel Farage was given undisclosed £5m by crypto billionaire', *Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2026/apr/29/revealed-nigel-farage-was-given-undisclosed-5m-by-crypto-billionaire-in-2024

Jäger A (2026) *Hyperpolitics*, Verso

James T and Underwood J (2025) 'The new mass unenfranchised?: mapping unenfranchised adults and the case for residency-based voting in the UK', *Political Quarterly*, 96:4, 684–692. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1467-923x.70011

Katwala S (2023) *How to be a patriot*, HarperCollins

Kisby B and Sloam J (2009) 'Revitalising politics: the role of citizenship education', *Journal of Representative Democracy* 45/3, 313–324. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344890903129582

Klemperer D (2024) 'Should long-term emigrants be allowed to vote?', blog, Constitution Society. https://consoc.org.uk/should-long-term-emigrants-be-allowed-to-vote/

Klemperer D (2025) *Universal suffrage?: The problem of low and unequal turnout and the case for compulsory voting*, Constitution Society. https://consoc.org.uk/publications/universal-suffrage/

Lawrence J (2019) *Me Me Me?: The Search for Community in Post-War England*, Cambridge University Press

Lula M and Morris M (2026, forthcoming) *From strangers to citizens: membership and belonging in an age of migration*, IPPR.

Mair P (2013) *Ruling the void: The hollowing of western democracy*, Verso

Marquand D (1988) *The Unprincipled Society: new demands and old politics*, Jonathan Cape

Marquand D (1997) *The new reckoning: capitalism states and citizens*, Polity

Marquand D (2004) *Decline of the public: the hollowing out of citizenship*, Polity

Marshall T H (1987 [1950]) 'Citizenship and social class', in Marshall T H and Bottomore T, *Citizenship and Social Class*, Pluto Press

Martinez L, Mirza R M, Austen A, Hsieh J, Klinger C, Kuah M, Liu A, McDonald L, Mohsin R, Pang C, Rajewski J, Salomons T and Sheikh I (2020) 'More than just a room: a scoping review of homesharing for older adults', *Innovation in Aging*, 4(2), 1–12. https://academic.oup.com/innovateage/article/4/2/igaa011/5828306

Muir R and Rogers B (2008) *The power of belonging: identity, citizenship and community cohesion*' IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/the-power-of-belongingidentity-citizenship-and-community-cohesion

Office for National Statistics (2025) 'Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: April 2025', ONS. https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/publicopinionsandsocialtrendsgreatbritain/april2025

Patel P and Quilter-Pinner H (2022) *Road to renewal: elections, parties and the case for renewing democracy*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/road-to-renewal

Patel P and Valgarðsson V (2024) *Half of us: turnout patterns at the 2024 general election*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/half-of-us

Patel P and Swift R (2025) *Modernising elections: how to get voters back*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/modernising-elections

Patel P, Gingrich J, Davies W and Garland N (2025) *Facing the future: progressives in a changing world*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/facing-the-future-progressives-changing-world

Patel P and Garland N (2025) 'Reclaiming Britain: the nation against ethnonationalism', blog, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/the-nation-against-ethnonationalism

Patel P and Swift R (2025), *Modernising elections: how to get voters back*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/modernising-elections

Pike K (2024) *Getting over New Labour*, Agenda

Plimmer G (2026) 'Private equity benefits as spending on social care providers jumps 20%', *Financial Times*. https://www.ft.com/content/d4898db3-20a2-4d27-b754-e102324c8d74?syn-25a6b1a6=1

Prowse M (2008) *The experience of Sure Start in England*, Overseas Development Institute. https://odi.org/en/publications/the-experience-of-sure-start-in-england/

Puddle J, Rutter J and Rolfe H (2025) *The state of us: community strength and cohesion in the UK*, British Future and the Belong Network. https://www.livingwelltogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-State-of-Us-report-Final-15.7.25.pdf

Rawlings-Way O, Parker D, Brown D, Sutton N and McAllister G 'Shared site intergenerational care programs with older adults and young children: a scoping review', *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 24/2, 280–312. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15350770.2024.2413627

Ready Generations (2023) *Visions of us: the nursery in Belong: year one impact report*, Belong. https://www.belong.org.uk/assets/pdf/a49875c9817969bdbf502798d8337c76.pdf

Robinson E, Schofield C, Sutcliffe-Braithwaite F and Thomlinson N (2017) 'Telling stories about post-war Britain: popular individualism and the 'crisis' of the 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 28(2): 268–304. https://academic.oup.com/tcbh/article-abstract/28/2/268/3061496?redirectedFrom=fulltext

Ropek-Hewson S and Jinadu J (2026) *Stuck on you: how to make social media good again*, IPPR. https://www.ippr.org/articles/stuck-on-you-social-media

Roy O (2024) *The Crisis of Culture: Identity Politics and the Empire of Norms*, Hurst

Seaton A (2023) *Our NHS: A history of Britain's best-loved institutions*, Yale University Press

Souliers Avocats (2021) 'In brief: political finance in France', Lexology. https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=f738706e-024e-44a0-8950-497151da6142

Tuckett A (2026) 'Policy brief: life in the UK test weakens community cohesion', Brunel University of London. https://brunel.figshare.com/articles/online_resource/Policy_Brief_Life_in_the_UK_Test_Weakens_Community_Cohesion/31240030?file=61666321

Turner T (2015) 'When a Preschool Opens Inside a Nursing Home All Heaven Breaks Loose', Good News Network. https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/seattle-preschool-opens-inside-a-nursing-home/

Vincent A (2002) *The New Liberalism: reconciling liberty and community*, Cambridge University Press

Wilson J (2024) ‘Britain beyond the Atlantic’, *Renewal*, 32(2-3): 157–169. https://renewal.org.uk/articles/britain-beyond-the-atlantic/

Zaranko B (2026) ‘Downsizing isn’t yet in Richard’s interest. That needs to change’, *Observer*. https://observer.co.uk/news/business/article/downsizing-isnt-yet-in-richards-interest-that-needs-to-change

Institute for Public Policy Research

GET IN TOUCH

For more information about the Institute for Public Policy Research, please go to www.ippr.org

You can also e-mail info@ippr.org or find us on X @ippr

Institute for Public Policy Research
Registered Charity no. 800065 (England & Wales),
SC046557 (Scotland), Company no, 2292601 (England & Wales)

The progressive policy think tank