

How EU policy affects Labour's electability

Impact on propensity to vote, and
performance in Labour manifestos

September 2026

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And **Oliver Nicholls, James Coldwell** and **Ayesha Chaudhry**

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Executive Summary

This report presents Best for Britain's analysis of how different Labour Party policy positions on EU relations are likely to affect the electoral performance of the Labour Party.

The report presents three polling surveys, conducted by YouGov on behalf of Best for Britain between 29 April and 05 May 2026. The first experiment identified how Labour's policy position on EU relations affected propensity to vote Labour. The second survey was a conjoint experiment, where respondents were shown two hypothetical Labour Party election manifestos containing a list of five policies, drawn at random from a pool of 27, including one EU related policy drawn from a list of 11. These included EU policy positions ranging from further loosening ties with the EU to full membership of the EU, including a UK-EU Customs Union and Single Market membership, without a return to full membership of the EU. Lastly, the report presents respondent's views on the potential benefits and drawbacks of UK membership of the EU. Respondents answered these questions in their own words, which YouGov's AI model grouped into categories.

The report finds that all EU relations policy options beyond the UK Government's current red lines are likely to increase the electorate's openness to voting Labour, by varying amounts.

Across all respondents, propensity to vote Labour increased the most - by seven percentage points - in a scenario where it pledged to make the UK a member of the EU. This finding and conclusion was consistent with previous Best for Britain research, which found EU membership to be the most popular EU relations policy among both voters in general, and Labour's voters at the 2024 General Election in particular.

Analysis of Labour's defectors since the 2024 General Election strongly suggests that a policy of full EU membership should be the cornerstone of any attempt to rebuild Labour's electoral coalition ahead of a General Election.

A pledge to full membership of the EU significantly increased propensity to vote Labour among Labour's defectors to the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, but especially its defectors to the Green Party.

All EU relations policy positions increased propensity to vote Labour among Labour's 2024 voters who would now stay at home and not vote at all. However, only a policy of EU membership reduced this important group's likelihood of voting for the Green Party in future.

The motivations behind Labour's 2024 electoral coalition came across clearly. A majority of all Labour Supporters and defectors to its left flank fail to identify any drawback of the UK becoming a member of the EU again, as did a third of Labour's defectors to Reform UK and the Conservatives. They identified improving trade and the economy, and a return to Freedom of Movement as the main benefits of EU membership.

Reform UK and Conservative Supporters continued to identify sovereignty as the main drawback of EU membership, followed by the associated costs. Immigration appeared to have reduced in salience as a concern for this group of voters.

Either way, Reform UK and Conservative Supporters continued to appear as an intractable group of voters for Labour. No Labour EU relations policy position, including a policy of further loosening ties with the EU, increased their propensity to vote Labour.

On the left of UK politics, this report finds a significant vulnerability in both the Liberal Democrat and Green Party policy positions on EU relations.

The report identifies double-digit increases in propensity to vote Labour, even where Labour were to pledge to join a Customs Union, among both Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters overall. With propensity to vote Labour increasing by 21 and 18 percentage points among Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters respectively where Labour offered EU membership, this suggested both Liberal Democrats and the Green Party policy offers on EU relations were only sustainable where Labour remains committed to its red lines.

Indeed data in this report showed that both an overt commitment to make the UK a member of the EU, or a commitment to 'explore all options for closer EU relations including membership of the EU' increased the popularity of a hypothetical Labour manifesto in manifesto mockups.

The inclusion of a commitment to EU membership in Labour manifesto mockups was an effective way to draw the support of all Labour's defectors to parties on its left flank, Labour's current supporters, and current supporters of the Liberal Democrats and Green Party in general.

Taken together, the increase in propensity to vote Labour across all its defector crossbreaks, and popularity of Labour manifestos which included a commitment to EU membership, suggest that a Labour Party policy of EU membership will be essential to rebuilding its 2024 electoral coalition, and would significantly improve Labour's electoral performance at any future General Election.

Headline findings

1. All EU relationship options beyond the UK Government's current negotiations red lines increased respondent's propensity to vote Labour. Moving to a policy of full EU membership resulted in propensity to vote Labour to increase by seven percentage points across all GB adults.
2. Moving beyond the UK Government red lines on EU relations significantly increased propensity to vote Labour among Labour Left Defectors. A policy of membership of the EU was most likely to appeal to Labour Left Defectors, increasing their propensity to vote Labour by 14 percentage points.
3. Propensity to vote Labour among Liberal Democrat and Green Party Supporters increased by 21 and 18 percentage points respectively, where Labour pledged to pursue membership of the EU.
4. Including a commitment to EU membership in Labour manifesto mockups significantly increased the popularity of the Labour manifesto. A manifesto commitment to exploring all options for closer EU relations, including EU membership, had a slightly broader appeal within Labour Defector crossbreaks.

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1. Methodology

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. The total sample size was 10,324 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th April and 5th May 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+)¹.

Both surveys were conducted using an online interview of members of the YouGov Plc GB panel of 400,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample according to the sample definition, inviting them to take part in the survey and providing a link to the survey.

YouGov Plc normally achieves a response rate of approximately 20% depending on the subject matter, complexity and length of the questionnaire. The responding samples were weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

¹ YouGov, Data tables, 29/04/2026 - 05/05/2026

2. Nomenclature

Throughout this report, when referring to results disaggregated by how respondents voted at the 2024 General Election, these are termed 'Voters' of that party. For example, respondents who voted for the Conservative Party at the 2024 General Election are therefore referred to as 'Conservative Voters'.

Where results are analysed based on respondents' voting intention at the time the survey was conducted, these are termed 'Supporters' of that party. For example, respondents who said they would vote for the Labour Party if an election were held tomorrow are referred to as 'Labour Supporters'.

Respondents who voted for Labour at the 2024 General Election but who said they would vote for the Green Party if an election were held tomorrow are referred to as 'Labour to Green Defectors'.

Respondents who voted for Labour at the 2024 General Election but who said they would vote for either the Green Party, Liberal Democrats, the SNP or Plaid Cymru if an election were held tomorrow are referred to as 'Labour-Left Defectors'.

Respondents who voted for Labour at the 2024 General Election but who said they would vote for the Conservatives or Reform UK if an election were held tomorrow are referred to as 'Labour-Right Defectors'.

Respondents who voted for Labour at the 2024 General Election but who said they would not vote if an election were held tomorrow are referred to as 'Labour Non-Voters'.

YouGov surveyed 10,324 people. The number of Labour 2024 voters surveyed was boosted by approximately N=2,000 to increase the sample size of Labour Defector crossbreaks. The data was weighted so that the sample matched the overall demographics of the country. Unweighted and weighted sample sizes are listed below (Tables 1 and 2).

There are a few notable trends from the Defector subgroups (1,576 weighted; 2,418 unweighted - Table 2). Over half were at risk of defecting to left-of-centre parties while just 16% were at risk of defecting to right-of-centre parties. In this survey, Labour-Left Defectors outnumbered Labour-Right Defectors three-to-one.

The results also suggest that apathy was a greater threat to Labour support than defections to the right, given 30% of Labour voters at the last election said they did not know who they would vote for or would not vote at all.

Table 1: Number of respondents in each subgroup, by Vote in 2024 General Election and current Westminster Voting Intention

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Reform UK	Green
	Westminster Voting Intention				
Weighted	1388	1308	977	1830	1546
Unweighted	1222	1890	987	1640	1645
	Vote in 2024 General Election				
Weighted	1859	2654	950	1116	631
Unweighted	1504	4146	793	934	541

Table 2: Number and proportion of respondents in each Defector subgroup

	Lab 24 to Green WVI	Lab 24 to Don't Know / Would Not Vote	Lab 24 to Green / LD / SNP / PC	Lab 24 to Ref UK / Con
Weighted (including as % of overall defectors)	573	465 (30%)	854 (54%)	257 (16%)
Unweighted (including as % of overall defectors)	873	710 (30%)	1320 (54%)	388 (16%)

3. How EU policy affects Propensity to Vote

YouGov asked respondents to imagine that a general election was being held tomorrow, and that Labour had pledged to adopt one of the EU policies listed in Table 3 for their second term in office. Respondents were asked: *“How likely, if at all, are you to vote for the following parties at the next general election in this scenario?”*

Respondents rated their likelihood of voting for each of the five major GB-wide political parties out of ten under that scenario (0 being ‘not at all likely’; 10 being ‘extremely unlikely’). Respondents who scored a political party seven or above were classified as ‘likely’ to vote for it. Respondents who scored a political party three or below were classified as ‘not likely’ to vote for it.

Table 3: Hypothetical EU policy pledges by the Labour Party

Description	Full EU policy question formulation
EU Membership	Have the UK rejoin the European Union
Single Market	Have the UK rejoin the European Single Market
Customs Union	Have the UK rejoin the European Customs Union
UK Government position	Have a closer relationship with the EU, but without joining the Customs Union, the Single Market, or the EU itself
Status Quo	Keep EU-UK relations as they are now
Loosen Ties	Loosen ties with the EU, moving the UK further apart from the EU

The survey was conducted as a Randomised Control Trial: the sample was split into six groups of around 1770 people, each shown one of the six hypothetical EU policies.

For conciseness, this report refers to each option using the short description in the left-hand column of Table 3. The Status Quo option (“Keep EU-UK relations as they are now”) serves as the baseline, against which we will measure how the four more ambitious pledges (rows 1-4 of Table 3) shift propensity to vote scores for each of the five major GB-wide parties.

3.1. Topline Propensity to Vote results

Results in Figure 1 showed the absolute propensity to vote for each party, based on each of the hypothetical Labour EU policy positions tested.

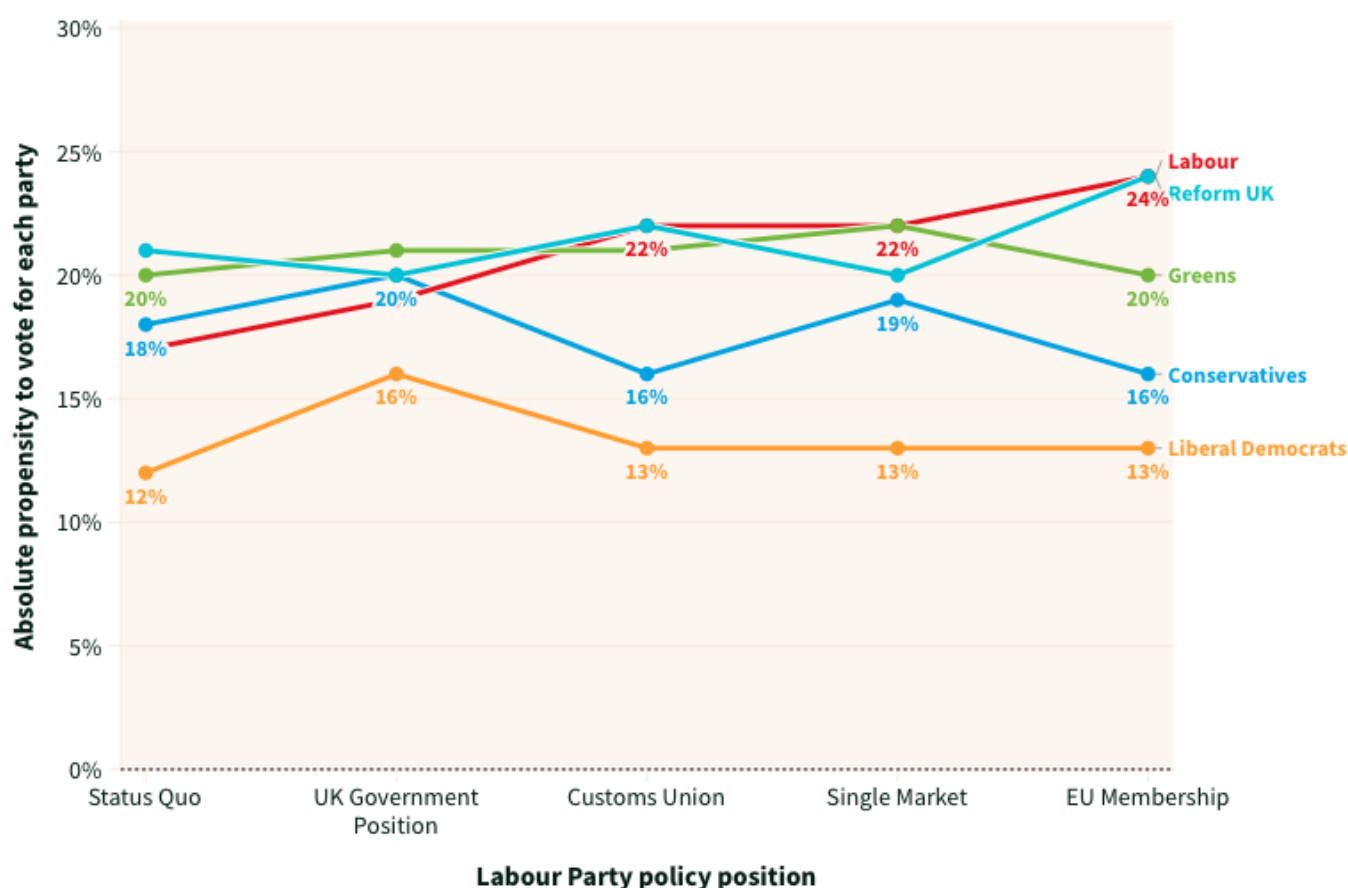


Figure 1: Absolute propensity to vote for each party, based on Labour's EU policies

Results in Figure 1 clearly showed that the more ambitious Labour's EU policy position on EU relations, the higher the absolute propensity to vote Labour across the entire sample.

At the time of the fieldwork (April/May 2026), this put Labour joint with Reform UK with 24% of respondents saying they were likely to vote for each party.

Propensity to vote measures openness to voting for a party (rather than a forced single choice through voting intention). Respondents can say they are likely to vote for multiple parties. Between commissioning the survey and publishing this report, the Labour Party changed Party Leader and Prime Minister. Subsequent public opinion polls suggested a

change in Westminster voting intention since commissioning the reported results. It is therefore likely that the absolute propensities to vote for each party will have also changed.

However, the relative changes in propensity to vote for the different parties based on Labour's EU policy position compared to the selected control group baseline are unlikely to have been affected by the change of Labour leader.

The remainder of this report looks at the *difference* in values between the baseline and the different policy positions. Given the sample size, the margin of error is +/- three percentage points from the baseline (within this range, results are not statistically significant).

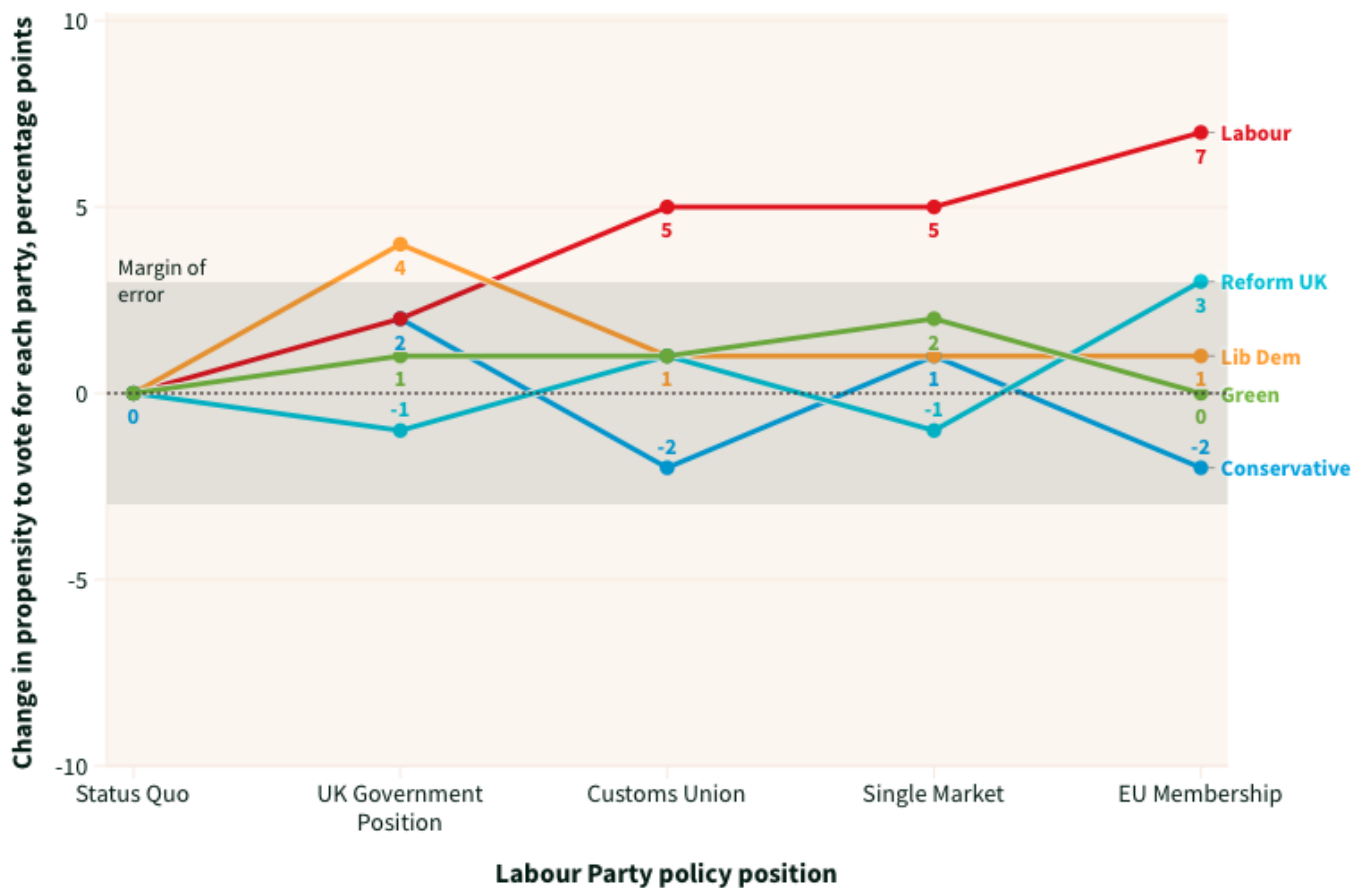


Figure 2: Change in propensity to vote for each party across whole sample for each hypothetical Labour EU policy position Support for the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party remained within the statistical margin of error across all Labour EU policy pledges, except for the UK Government's current position.

Labour's current position of 'Having a closer relationship with the EU, but without joining the Customs Union, the Single Market, or the EU itself' increased the propensity to vote Liberal Democrat by four percentage points.

To the right of Labour, propensity to vote Reform UK or Conservative remained within the statistical margin of error, suggesting no significant change in propensity to vote for right-of-centre parties based on Labour's EU position.

All EU relationship options beyond the UK Government's current negotiations red lines increased respondent's propensity to vote Labour.

Labour moving to a policy of full EU membership resulted in the most significant change in propensity to vote Labour, rising seven percentage points above the baseline.

The electoral benefit of Labour moving to a policy of EU membership was also observed in the change in propensity *not* to vote Labour, as detailed in Figure 3.

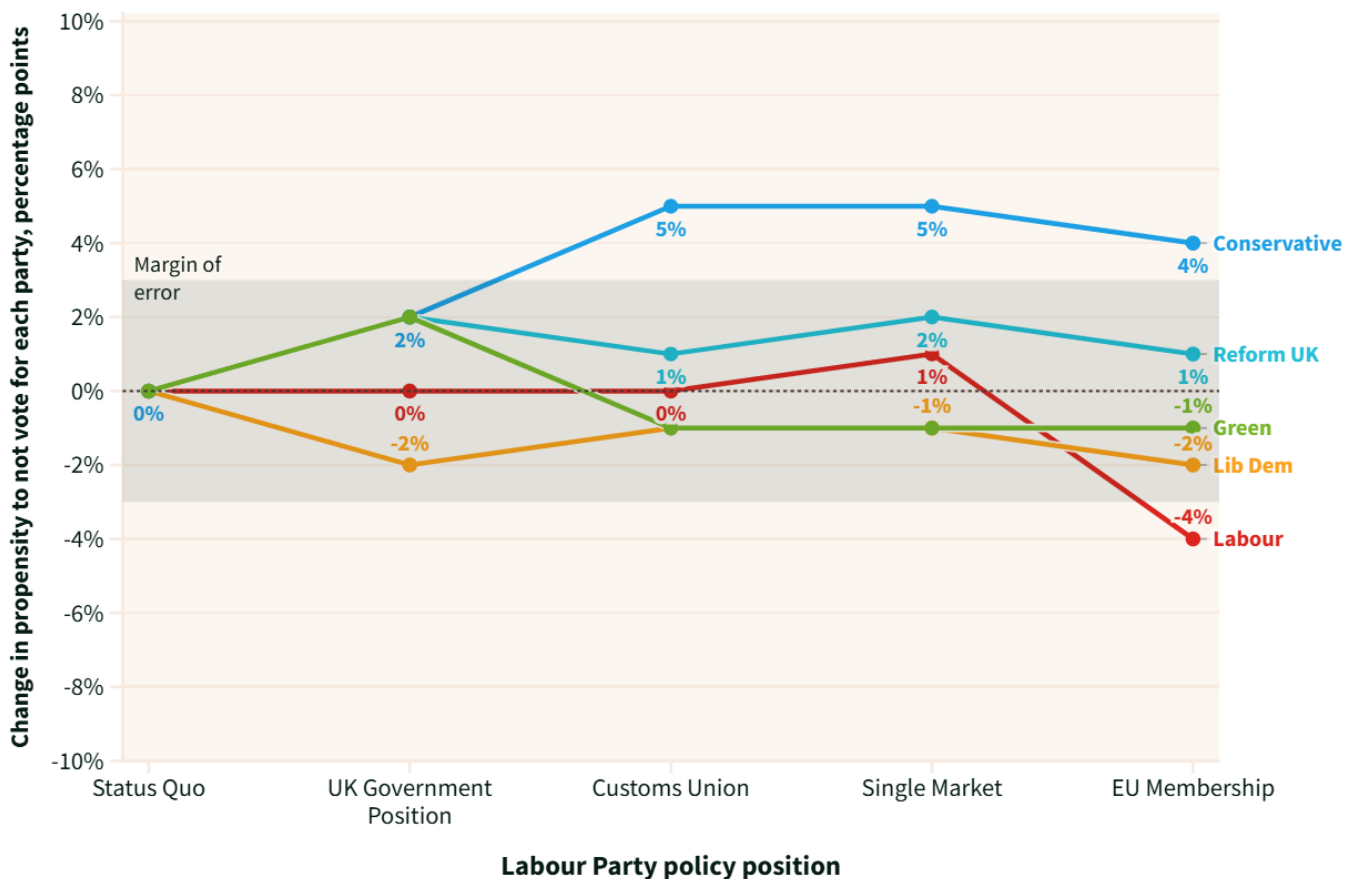


Figure 3: Change in propensity NOT to vote for each party across whole sample, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

Results for the Liberal Democrats and Green party again were within the statistical margin of error, with propensity to vote for either party remaining within two percentage points from the baseline across all scenarios.

However, to the right of Labour, all options beyond the current UK Government position increased the propensity not to vote Conservative by four to five percentage points. This swing was not replicated for the propensity to vote Reform UK, which remained within the statistical margin of error.

In a scenario where Labour pledged to support EU membership, propensity not to vote Labour fell by four percentage points. This indicated stronger consideration for Labour under the most ambitious EU policy option.

In contrast, the government position and pledges to join the Single Market/Customs Union did not move the dial: propensity not to vote Labour did not shift by more than one percentage point in these scenarios.

3.2. Labour's Left Defectors

As part of the research, YouGov also disaggregated the results to show 2024 Labour Voters who are now considering other left-of-centre parties: the Green Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. This group is referred to hereafter as Labour Left Defectors, and results are shown in Figure 4.

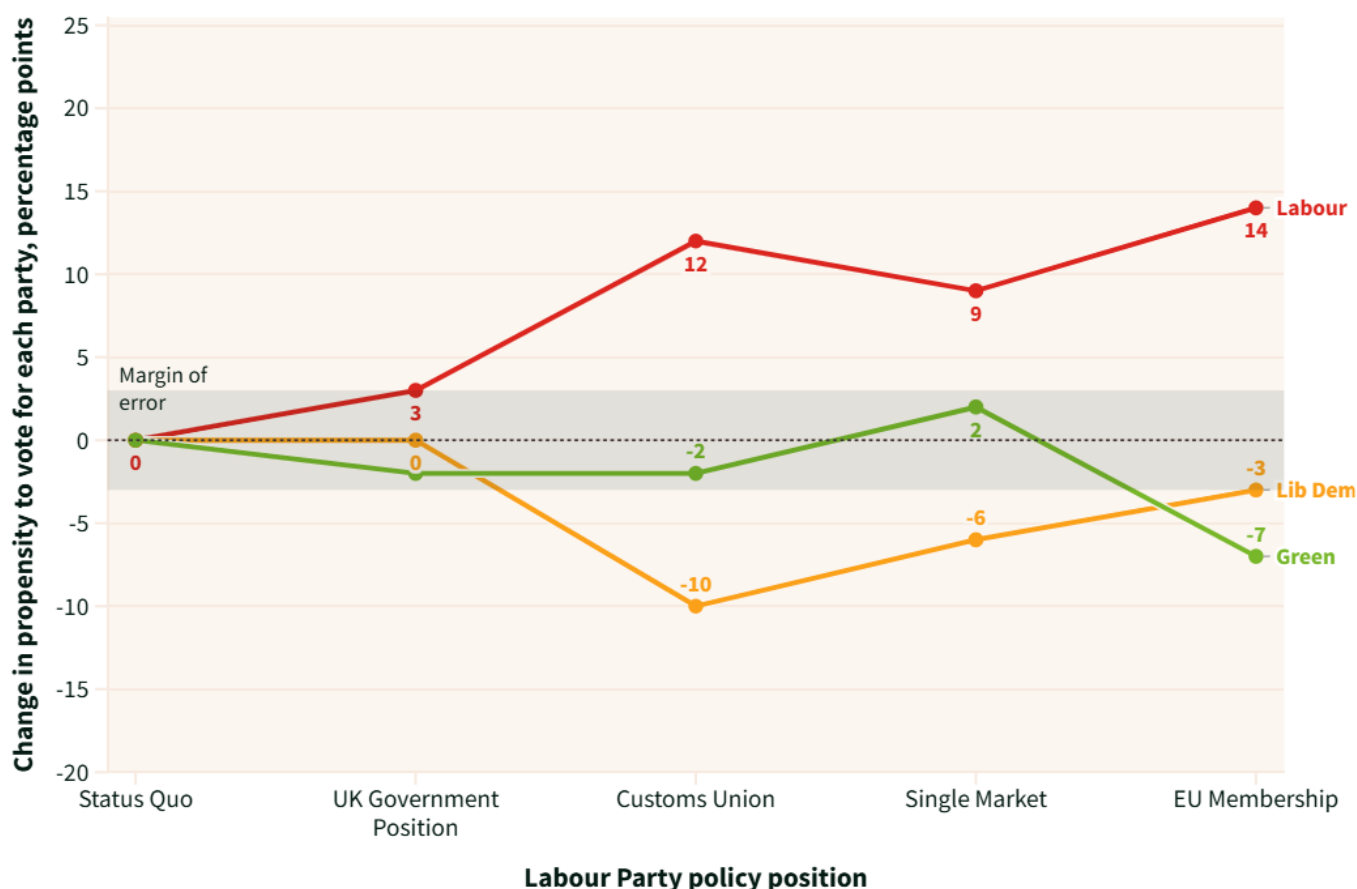


Figure 4: Change in Labour Left Defectors' propensity to vote, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

Across every EU policy scenario modelled, Labour Left Defectors only considered voting for Labour, the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats (SNP and Plaid Cymru could not be chosen by respondents).

Among Labour Left Defectors, when the Labour party matched the Liberal Democrats' longstanding EU policy to join the Customs Union², their propensity to vote Liberal

² It has been Liberal Democrat policy to agree a UK-EU Customs Union since at least 2022. See [Rebuilding Trade and Cooperation with Europe](#), Spring 2022.

Democrats fell by 10 percentage points while their propensity to vote Labour rose 12 percentage points above the baseline. A similar, though less pronounced, pattern was observed under a pledge to join the Single Market: the propensity to vote Labour rises by nine percentage points, while the propensity to vote Liberal Democrats falls by six points.

Moving beyond the UK Government red lines on EU relations significantly increased propensity to vote Labour among Labour Left Defectors.

A policy of membership of the EU was most likely to appeal to Labour Left Defectors, increasing their propensity to vote Labour by 14 percentage points.

A Labour pledge to pursue full EU membership was the only EU policy that meaningfully reduced Labour Left Defectors' propensity to vote Green. In this scenario, their propensity to vote Labour rose by 14 percentage points, while their propensity to vote Green fell by seven points.

Analysis of Labour to *Green* Defectors specifically, as shown in Figure 5, confirmed this same pattern.

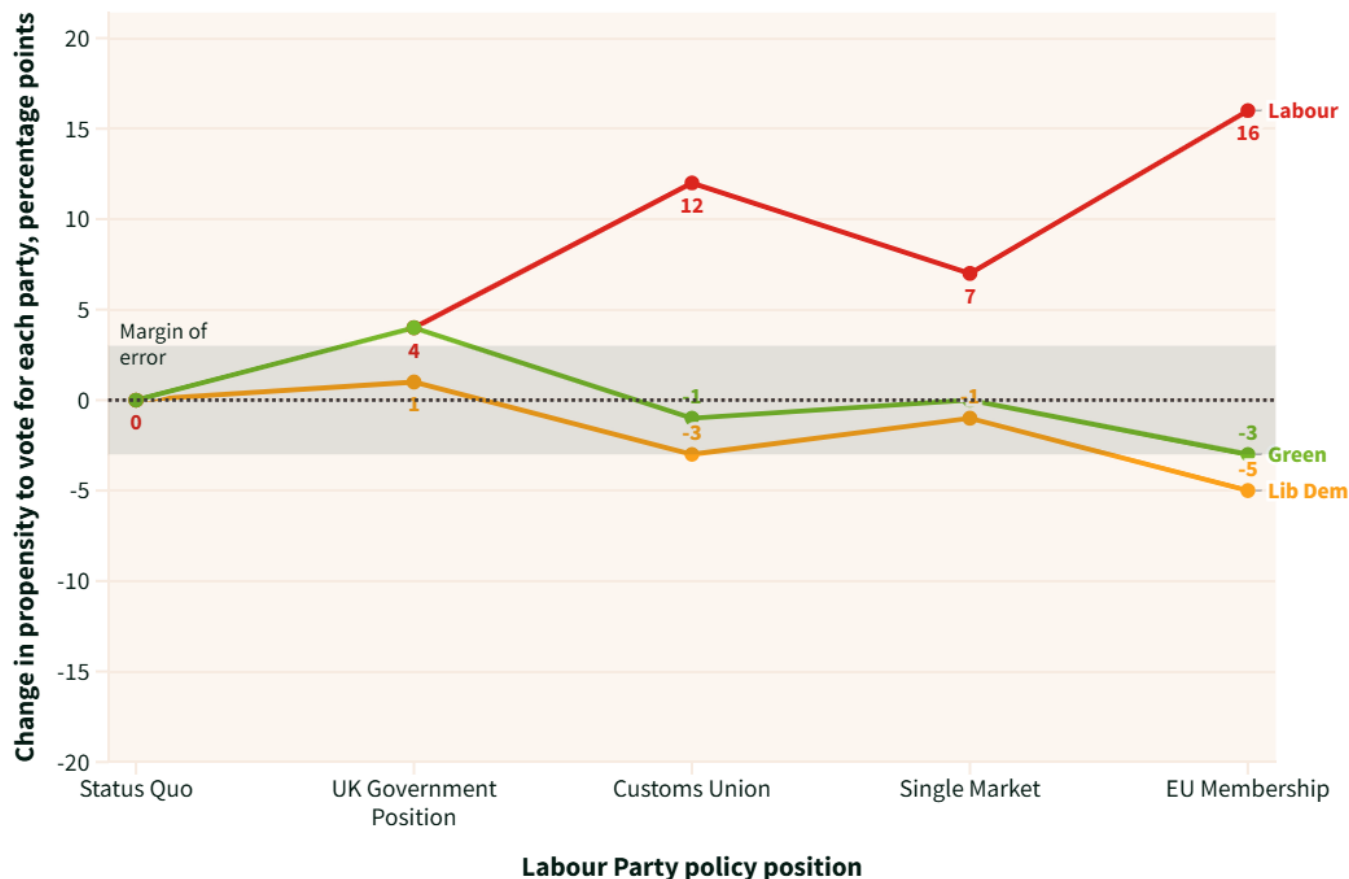


Figure 5: Change in Labour to Green Defectors' propensity to vote, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

As with Labour Left Defectors overall, Labour to Green Defectors only considered voting Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat.

Among Labour to Green Defectors, propensity to vote Labour rose by 16 percentage points, compared with 14 points among Labour Left Defectors overall, were Labour to adopt a policy position of membership of the EU.

3.3. Labour Non-Voters

Labour Non-Voters (defined as respondents who voted Labour in 2024 and now say they either 'do not know' how they would vote or 'would not vote') only considered returning to Labour or switching to the Green Party. They showed no meaningful propensity to vote for any other party, as shown in Figure 6.

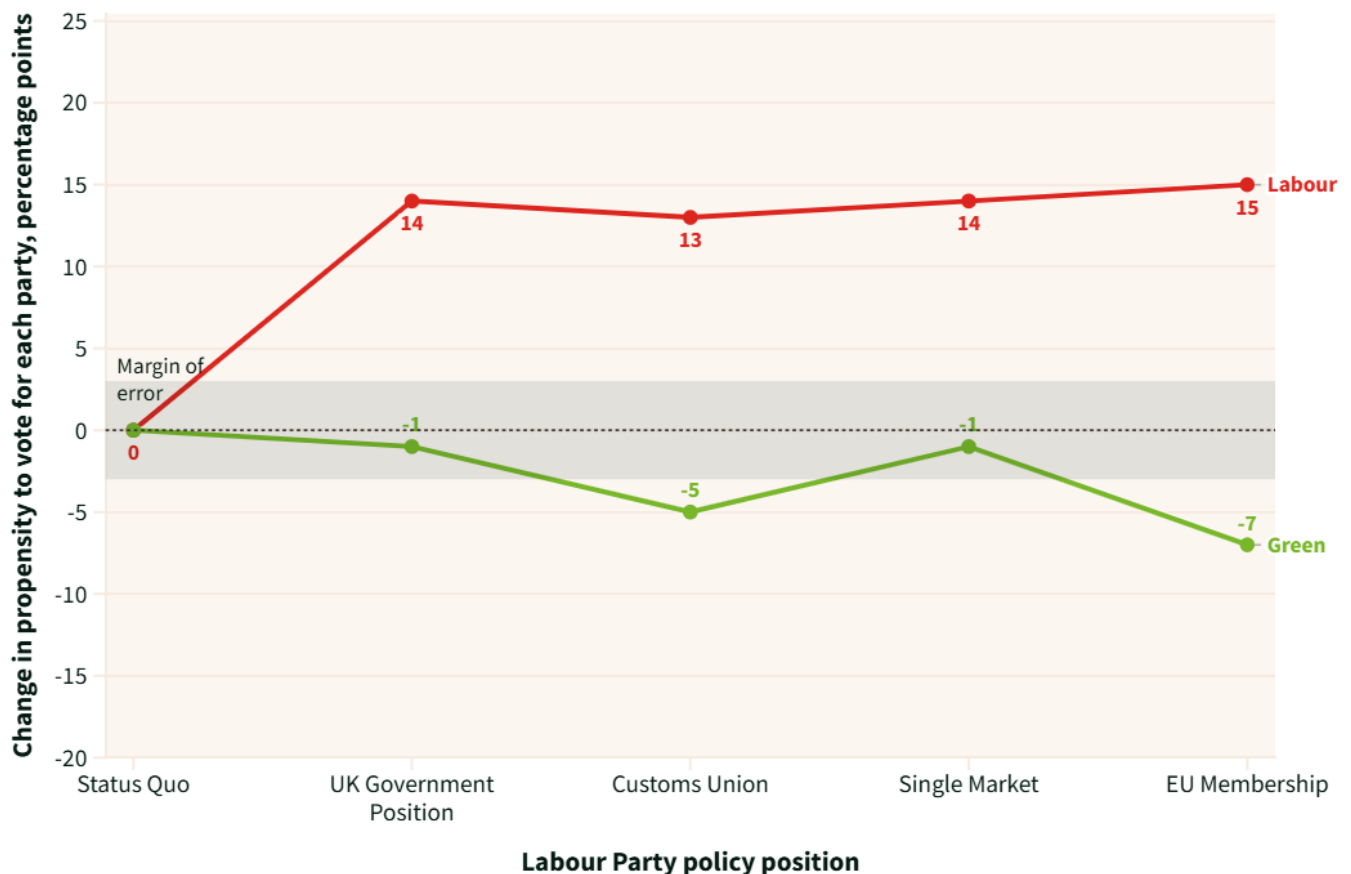


Figure 6: Change in Labour Non-Voters' propensity to vote, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

All options for closer relations with the EU, including restating the UK Government's red lines, was found to be effective at increasing propensity to vote Labour among Labour Non-Voters.

However, a policy of EU membership was found to be most effective at stemming the drift of Labour Non-Voters towards the Green Party.

In a baseline scenario where UK-EU relations were kept as they are now, Labour Non-Voters leant more towards the Green Party (15%) than Labour (11%). Any pledge to go further on UK-EU relations reversed this: each of the four deeper-integration options produced a rise of around 14 percentage points above the baseline in the propensity to vote Labour.

But a full membership scenario also significantly decreased propensity to vote Green among Labour Non-Voters, creating the widest gap between the two parties of the four higher-ambition scenarios. For the scenario where Labour adopted a policy of EU membership, the propensity to vote Labour overall rose to 26% of respondents, while the propensity to vote Green fell to 8%.

3.4. Conservative and Reform UK Supporters

The changes in propensity to vote Labour among Conservative and Reform UK Supporters for each prompted Labour policy position on EU relations are reported in Figure 7.

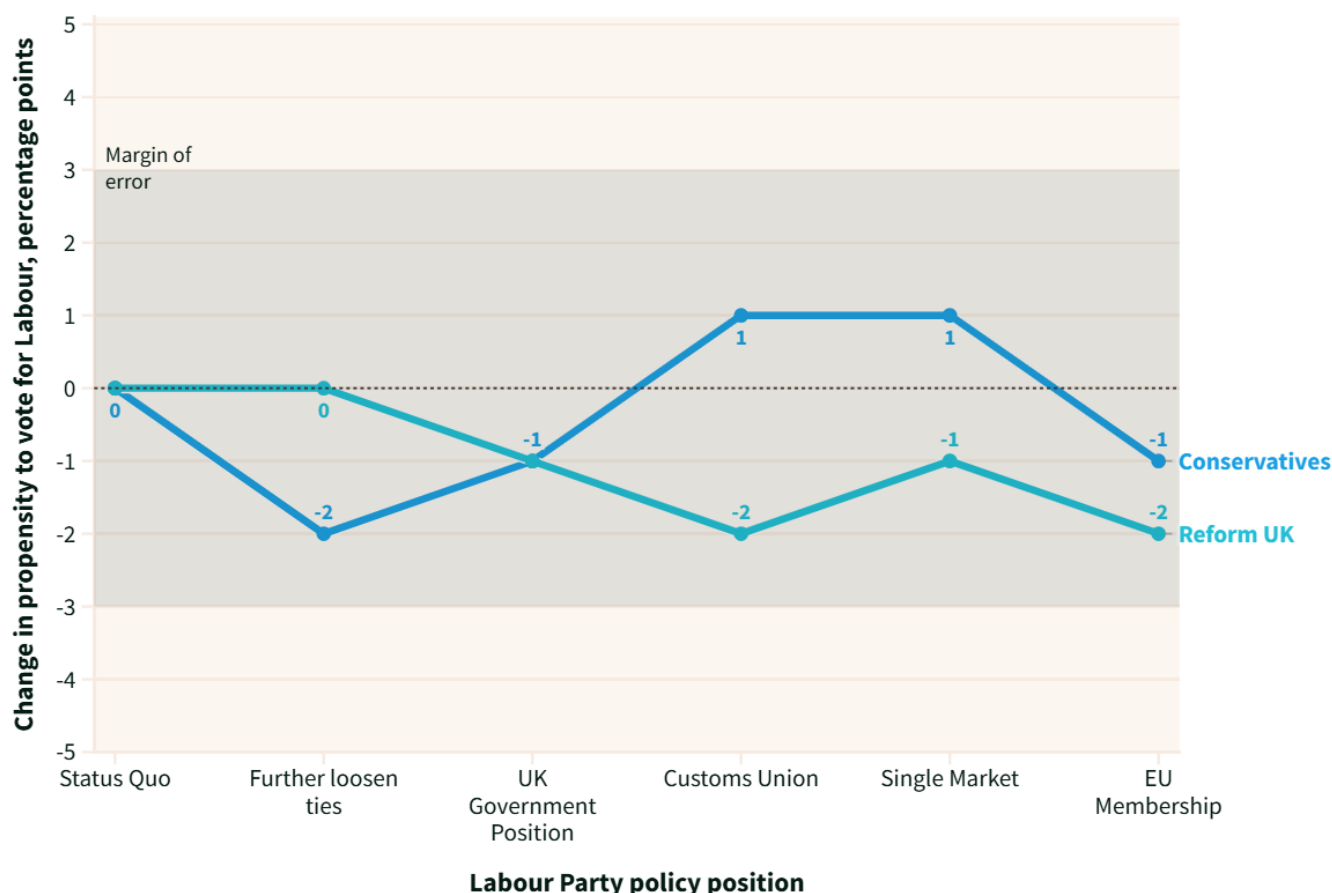


Figure 7: Change in Conservative and Reform UK Supporters' propensity to vote Labour, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

Among Conservative and Reform UK Supporters, there was no evidence that a more ambitious EU policy increased their propensity to vote Labour.

The results didn't identify any Labour EU policy scenario capable of increasing propensity to vote Labour among Reform UK Supporters.

Even in the scenario where Labour pledged to further loosen ties with the EU, Reform UK Supporter's propensity to vote Labour did not increase.

Changes in Labour's position on Europe produced only minor shifts in both groups' propensity to vote Labour - all within the statistical margin of error.

3.5. Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters overall

Overall, Labour's position on Europe had a greater influence on Liberal Democrat and Green Party Supporters than on any of the Labour Defector groups analysed in this report. This suggested that Labour's approach to EU relations was particularly important in shaping the voting intentions of pro-European party supporters. Though not tested in this survey, it is reasonable to expect that supporters of other strongly pro-European parties, such as the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru, would respond in a similar way.

Figure 8 shows changes in Liberal Democrat Supporters' propensity to vote based on Labour EU policy positions.

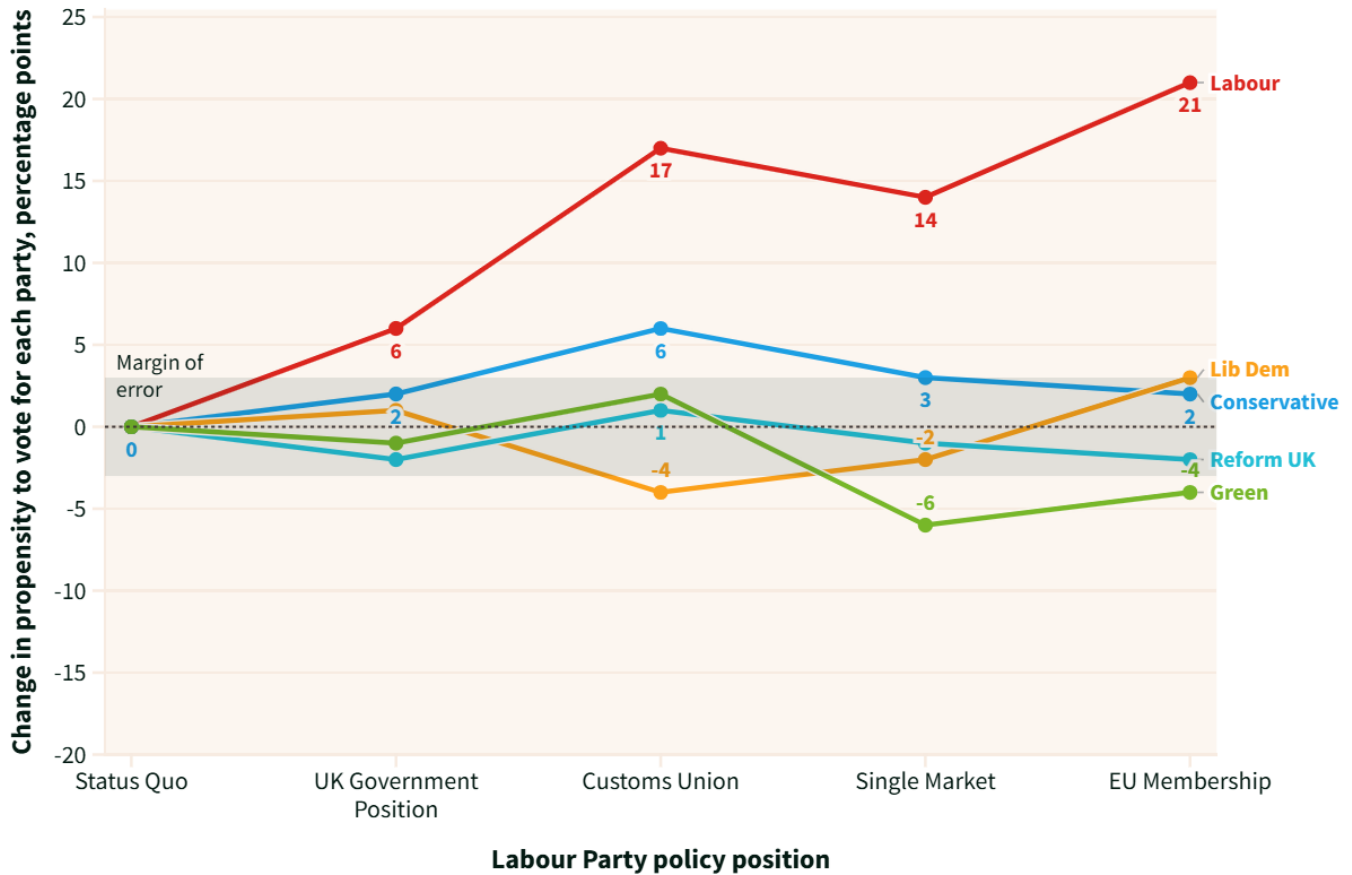


Figure 8: Change in Liberal Democrat Supporters' propensity to vote for different parties, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

The EU membership scenario produced a dramatic increase in Labour's appeal among Liberal Democrat Supporters, increasing their propensity to vote Labour by 21 percentage points.

This was the largest shift recorded against the baseline of any subgroup analysed in this randomised control trial.

As shown in Figure 8, among Liberal Democrat Supporters, Labour's position on Europe led to changes in respondents' propensity to vote for the four parties excluding Reform UK - no scenario materially affected Liberal Democrat Supporters propensity to vote Reform UK.

A Labour commitment to join the Customs Union produced a substantial increase in Liberal Democrat Supporters' propensity to vote Labour, rising by 17 percentage points compared to the status quo. This was accompanied by a four-point decline in propensity to vote Liberal Democrat and a six-point increase in propensity to vote Conservative.

A commitment to join the Single Market also substantially increased Liberal Democrat Supporters' propensity to vote Labour, by 14 percentage points - a smaller margin than the Customs Union scenario. This was accompanied by a six percentage point decline in propensity to vote Green.

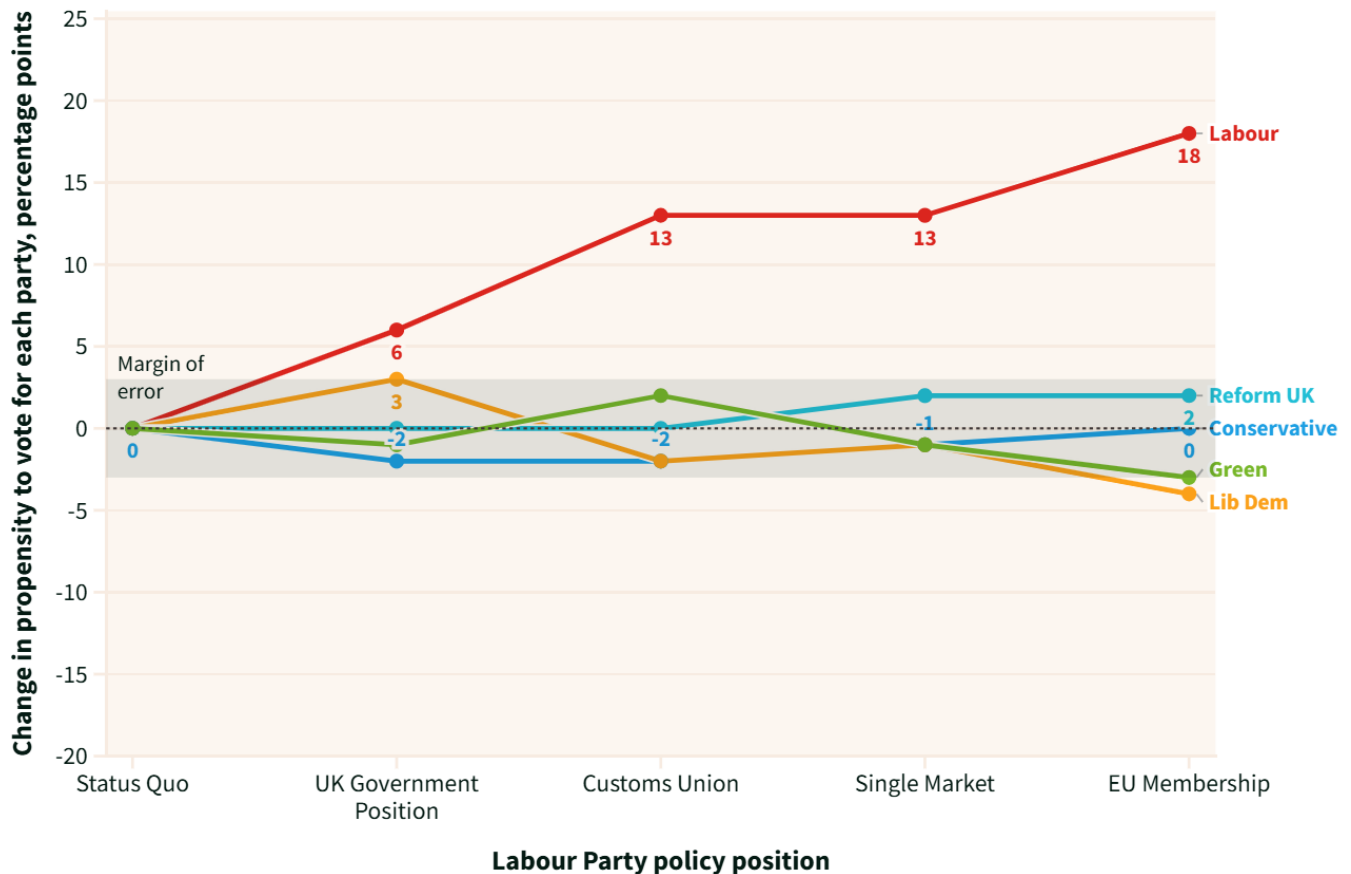


Figure 9: Change in Green Supporters' propensity to vote for different parties, in response to more ambitious Labour EU policies

The scenario where Labour pledged towards EU membership produced the largest increase in Labour's appeal with Green Supporters, with their propensity to vote Labour rising by 18 percentage points.

This was accompanied by four-point declines in propensity to vote Green and Liberal Democrat.

Results in Figure 9 showed that regardless of Labour's position on Europe, Green Supporters only considered voting Green or Labour, with very small changes in propensity to vote for the remaining three parties.

Both the Customs Union and Single Market scenarios were equally effective at attracting Green Supporters, increasing their propensity to vote Labour by 13 percentage points compared with the baseline.

Taken together, these subgroup results point to a consistent pattern: across Labour Left Defectors, Labour Non-Voters, Liberal Democrat Supporters and Green Supporters alike, a pledge to pursue full EU membership produced the largest increase in propensity to vote Labour of any policy option tested.

4. How Labour's EU policy position fares in a manifesto context

Best for Britain commissioned YouGov to measure the popularity of different EU policies in a hypothetical Labour manifesto, alongside a range of other policies.

The exercise was carried out through a conjoint survey experiment. Respondents were shown two hypothetical Labour Party election manifestos, side by side on screen. These manifestos - "Proposal A" and "Proposal B" - contained a list of five policies, one from each of the following categories: EU policy; Immigration; Economy; Health; and 'Other'. Within each of these categories, a policy was selected at random to make up the manifesto 'Proposal'. Respondents were asked which of the two manifestos they would prefer Labour to adopt. They could select 'Neither'. The experiment was repeated four times.

Table 4 lists the EU policies tested in the survey. Appendix I lists the full set of policies shown, including those on the economy and immigration.

Table 4: EU policy options appearing in hypothetical Labour manifestos

EU policy options
Reintroduce Freedom of Movement with the EU for all UK and EU citizens
Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU, making it easier to trade food and drink products between the UK and EU
Explore all options for closer relations with the European Union, including joining the Customs Union, the Single Market, and becoming a member of the EU again
Increase defence cooperation with the European Union
Seek a closer relationship with the European Union, without rejoining the European Union, the Single Market, or the Customs Union
Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU, allowing 18- to 30-year-olds to travel, work and study in both the UK and EU
Have the UK apply to rejoin the European Union
Join the European Union customs union, but not rejoin the European Union
Rejoin the European Union Single Market, but not rejoin the European Union
Keep the UK relationship with the European Union as it currently is
Seek to further loosen ties with the European Union

A note on interpreting the results.

Figures reported are the probability that a policy was in the manifesto the respondent chose, across all the occasions it was shown. The results therefore represent the relative appeal of the policy within the experiment, not the share of respondents supporting the policy.

Because respondents could also select 'Neither', the results are not centred on 50% as would be the case in a straight two-way choice.

On average 'Neither' was selected 45% of the time, which is expected given the number of respondents who would not consider supporting a Labour manifesto under any circumstance.

Since each respondent was shown ten distinct policies with five of them in the chosen manifesto whenever a choice was made, the average probability of selection across the full pool of 27 policies was 27.5%.

Therefore it is this figure of 27.5%, not 50%, against which individual policies should be judged.

This means that any policy with a probability of being chosen above 27.5% was more popular than the average policy, whereas any policy with a probability of being chosen below 27.5% was less popular than the average policy.

The results for the whole sample are displayed in Figure 10.

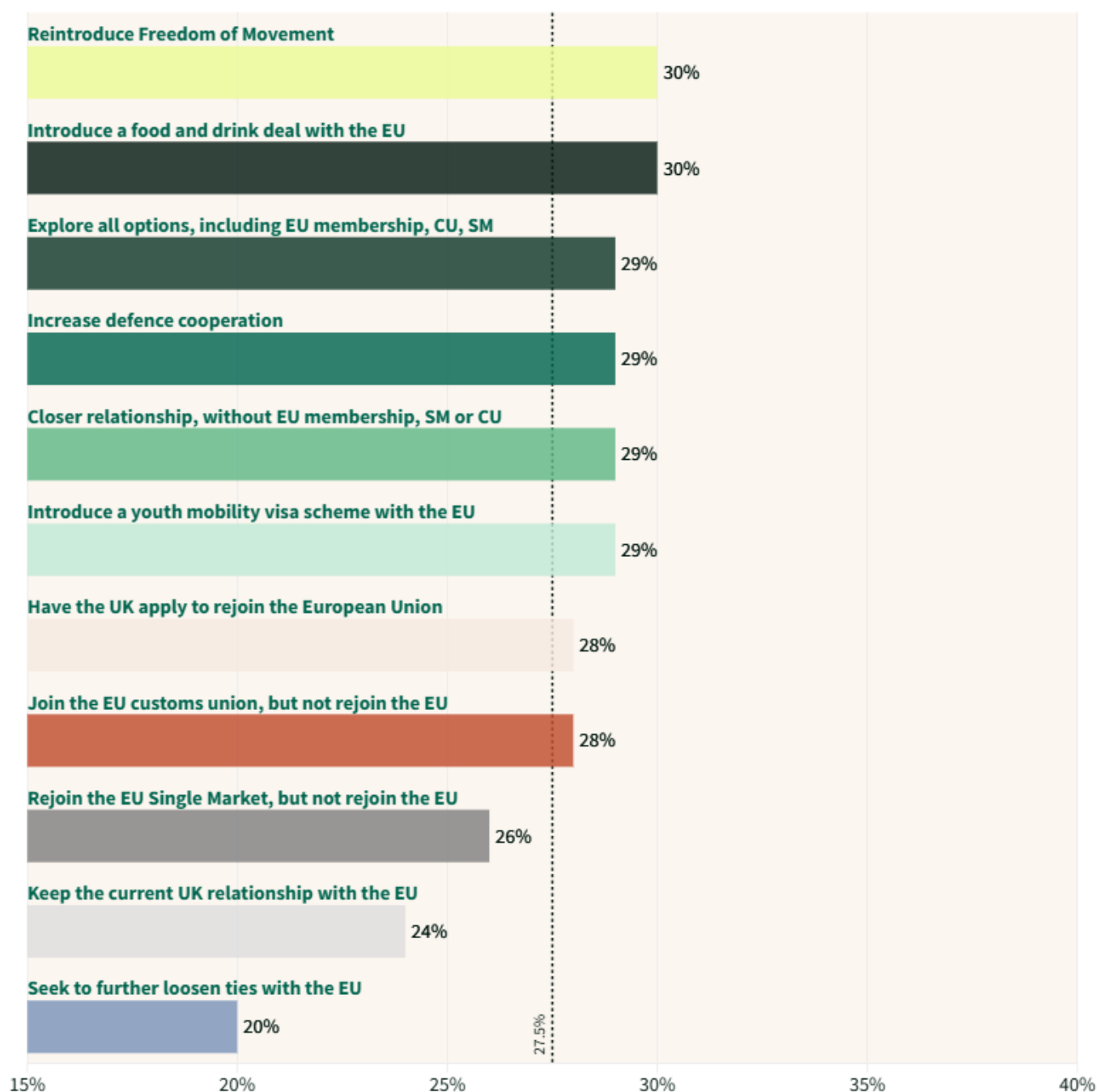


Figure 10: Overall probability of EU policy being chosen, in the sample as a whole

With the sample average being 27.5%, the results in Figure 10 showed that all policies for closer UK-EU relations were either slightly more likely, or equally as likely, to be selected as an average policy.

In contrast, it was only policies to keep UK-EU relations as they are now (24%) and seeking to further loosen ties with the EU (20%) that were significantly less likely to be chosen than the sample average.

4.1. Labour Defector crossbreaks

Full results for Labour Defector crossbreaks are shown in the tables below, as absolute figures (Table 5) and as changes relative to the whole sample (Table 6).

Table 5: Probability of selecting each EU policy option, by Defector sub-groups (absolute values, %)

	Whole sample	Lab 24 to Green WVI	Labour defectors		
			Lab 24 to DK / WNV	Lab 24 to Green/LD/ SNP/PC [Labour Left Defectors]	Lab 24 to Ref UK / Con
<i>Approximate number of times each policy was shown</i>	<i>7483-7537</i>	<i>614-662</i>	<i>504-536</i>	<i>941-989</i>	<i>265-301</i>
Reintroduce Freedom of Movement	30	36	32	36	36
Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU	30	31	34	34	32
Explore all options, including EU membership, CU, SM	29	35	32	37	35
Increase defence cooperation	29	27	31	29	36
Closer relationship, without EU membership, SM or CU	29	29	33	31	34
Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU	29	33	29	33	31
Have the UK apply to rejoin the European Union	28	35	31	38	29
Join the EU customs union, but not rejoin the EU	28	32	29	35	31
Rejoin the EU Single Market, but not rejoin the EU	26	31	29	32	28
Keep the current UK relationship with the EU	24	21	23	23	31
Seek to further loosen ties with the EU	20	13	18	14	31

**Table 6: Probability of selecting each EU policy option, by Defector sub-groups
(difference compared to sample as a whole, percentage points)**

	Labour Defectors			
	Lab 24 to Green WVI	Lab 24 to DK / WNV	Lab 24 to Green/LD/SNP/PC	Lab 24 to Ref UK / Con
<i>Approximate number of times each policy was shown</i>	<i>614-662</i>	<i>504-536</i>	<i>941-989</i>	<i>265-301</i>
Reintroduce Freedom of Movement	6	2	6	5
Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU	1	4	4	2
Explore all options, including EU membership, CU, SM	5	3	8	5
Increase defence cooperation	-2	2	0	7
Closer relationship, without EU membership, SM or CU	0	4	2	5
Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU	5	1	4	2
Have the UK apply to rejoin the European Union	8	3	10	2
Join the EU customs union, but not rejoin the EU	4	2	7	3
Rejoin the EU Single Market, but not rejoin the EU	5	2	6	2
Keep the current UK relationship with the EU	-3	-1	-1	7
Seek to further loosen ties with the EU	-7	-1	-5	11

Figure 11 shows that, among Labour Left Defectors, the three most popular Labour manifesto policies were an explicit commitment to EU membership (38%), exploring all options beyond the UK Government's red lines including EU membership (37%), and an explicit commitment to reintroducing Freedom of Movement (36%).

All three most popular options scored 6-8 percentage points above how the policy scored across the sample as a whole.

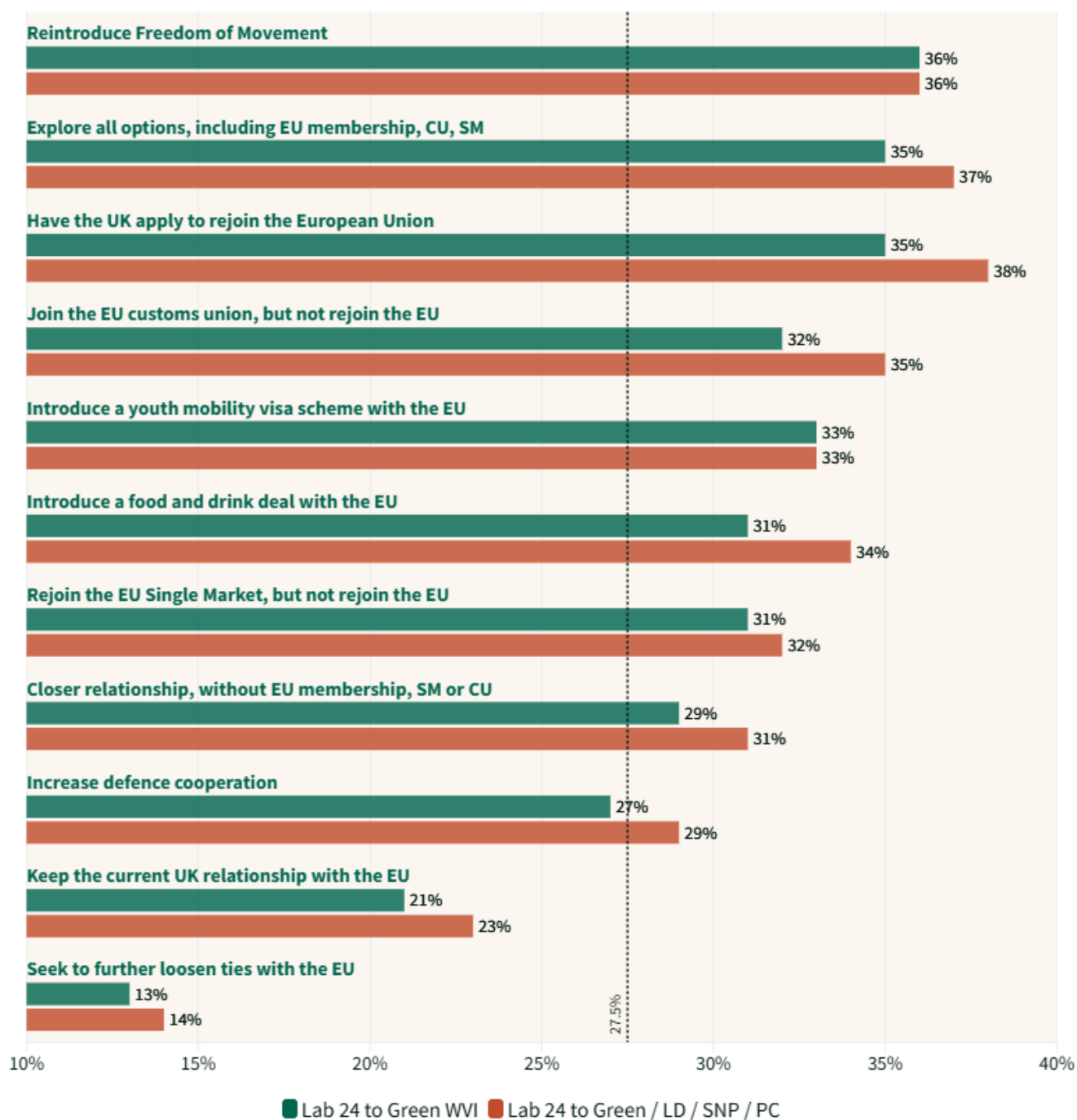


Figure 11: Probability of EU policies being chosen among Labour-Left Defectors, and Labour to Green Defectors

Labour Left Defectors as a whole (Lab 24 to Green/LD/SNP/PC) strongly supported deeper EU integration and were less inclined to support the UK Government's current approach of incremental integration. Among Labour Left Defectors, EU membership had the highest probability of being chosen at 38% (10 percentage points above the sample as a whole).

Broadly, Labour Left Defectors were supportive of all deeper-integration options (which all scored above 29%). However, the more ambitious the policy, the higher it scored. For Labour Left defectors, there were clear gaps between the three tiers of options: deeper integration policies scored above 29%, the status quo scored 23%, and further divergence scored 14%.

Labour to Green Defectors showed an almost identical pattern: their top three policies were the same highest ambition policies favoured by Labour Left Defectors overall. Compared to Labour Left defectors as a whole, defence cooperation performed the worst of the deeper integration options for Green Defectors, at 27%. Again, clear gaps separated the deeper integration from the status quo, and status quo from further divergence.

As with Labour Left Defectors overall, the three most popular Labour manifesto policies among Labour to Green Defectors were an explicit commitment to reintroducing Freedom of Movement (36%), an explicit commitment to EU membership (35%) and exploring all options beyond the UK Government's red lines including EU membership (35%).

All three most popular options scored 5-6 percentage points above how the policy scored across the sample as a whole.

Labour Defectors to 'Don't Know' / 'Would Not Vote' showed a similar trend, with integration options scoring between 29% and 34%, status quo scoring 23%, and divergence scoring only 18%.

Among Labour Defectors to Would not Vote, the three most popular Labour manifesto policies were a food and drink deal (34%), a closer relationship with the EU within the UK Governments red lines (33%) and exploring all options beyond the UK Government's red lines including EU membership (32%), alongside reintroducing Freedom of Movement.

The trend was different among Labour Right Defectors (Reform UK and the Conservatives). Overall, for this subgroup, the difference in probabilities across all options was less pronounced: all the options scored within a narrower range of eight percentage points (ranging from 28-36%).

EU Membership was Labour Right defectors' second least popular option, scoring 29%, but it was nowhere near as unpopular as loosening ties was for Labour Left Defectors (14%).

For Labour Right Defectors, Freedom of Movement, defence cooperation and 'explore all options' all scored well (35-36%). Pledges to join the Customs Union, keep the status quo, and to loosen ties all scored an equal probability at 31%, which could suggest a diverse range of opinions within this group. Status quo and loosen-ties pledges scored seven and 11 percentage points higher, respectively, than among the sample as a whole.

Table 7 shows the top three EU policies chosen by different Labour Defector groups.

Table 7: Top three choices for all Defector crossbreaks, highlighting options common to all three

	Lab 24 to Green WVI	Lab 24 to DK / WNV	Lab 24 to Green / LD / SNP / PC	Lab 24 to Ref UK / Con
First choice	<i>FoM</i>	<i>SPS deal</i>	<i>EU membership</i>	<i>FoM</i>
Second choice	<i>EU membership</i>	<i>Closer relationship</i>	<i>All options inc EU membership</i>	<i>Defence cooperation</i>
Third choice	<i>All options inc EU membership</i>	<i>All options inc EU membership</i>	<i>FoM</i>	<i>All options inc EU membership</i>

The manifesto policy of 'exploring all options, including EU membership, Customs Union, and Single Market' was the only policy to be selected in the top three policy preferences across all Labour Defector Crossbreaks.

4.2. Westminster Voting Intention

Overall results disaggregated by voting intention are shown below in Table 8 (absolute values) and as changes relative to the whole sample results, in Table 9.

Table 8: Probability of selecting each EU policy option, by Westminster Voting Intention crossbreaks (%)

	Westminster VI					
	Whole sample	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Green	Reform UK
<i>Approximate number of times each policy was shown</i>	<i>7483-7537</i>	<i>735-913</i>	<i>1350-1410</i>	<i>708-735</i>	<i>1160-1220</i>	<i>1168-1225</i>
Reintroduce Freedom of Movement	30	28	40	37	34	23
Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU	30	30	37	35	30	26
Explore all options, including EU membership, CU, SM	29	23	43	39	34	18
Increase defence cooperation	29	31	37	33	27	27
Closer relationship, without EU membership, SM or CU	29	30	36	35	29	23
Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU	29	29	37	36	31	25
Have the UK apply to rejoin the European Union	28	21	43	39	33	14
Join the EU customs union, but not rejoin the EU	28	26	35	33	30	22
Rejoin the EU Single Market, but not rejoin the EU	26	23	38	31	28	19
Keep the UK relationship with the EU	24	28	25	25	19	29
Seek to further loosen ties with the EU	20	24	17	19	12	26

Table 9: Probability of selecting each EU policy option, by Westminster Voting Intention crossbreaks - changes relative to whole sample, percentage points

	Westminster VI				
	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Green	Reform UK
<i>Approx. number of each policy was shown</i>	<i>735-913</i>	<i>1350-1410</i>	<i>708-735</i>	<i>1160-1220</i>	<i>1168-1225</i>
Reintroduce Freedom of Movement	-3	10	7	4	-8
Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU	0	7	5	0	-4
Explore all options, including EU membership, CU, SM	-6	13	10	5	-11
Increase defence cooperation	2	7	3	-2	-2
Closer relationship, without EU membership, SM or CU	1	7	7	0	-6
Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU	0	8	7	2	-4
Have the UK apply to rejoin the European Union	-7	15	11	5	-13
Join the EU customs union, but not rejoin the EU	-1	7	5	2	-5
Rejoin the EU Single Market, but not rejoin the EU	-3	12	5	2	-7
Keep the UK relationship with the EU	4	1	1	-5	5
Seek to further loosen ties with the EU	5	-2	-1	-8	7

Among supporters of left-of-centre parties (Labour, Liberal Democrats, Greens), the results showed strong enthusiasm for the highest ambition EU policies, especially those that could lead to membership of the EU. The three highest-scoring options were identical for Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green supporters: an explicit commitment to EU membership; exploring all options, including EU membership; and reintroducing Freedom of Movement.

Figure 12 illustrates how, among Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters, the more ambitious Labour's policy on EU relations, the higher the probability of it being chosen. To make this trend more visible, Figure 12 shows only the options that were also included in the propensity to vote test (Section 4), as well as the 'Explore all options' policy.

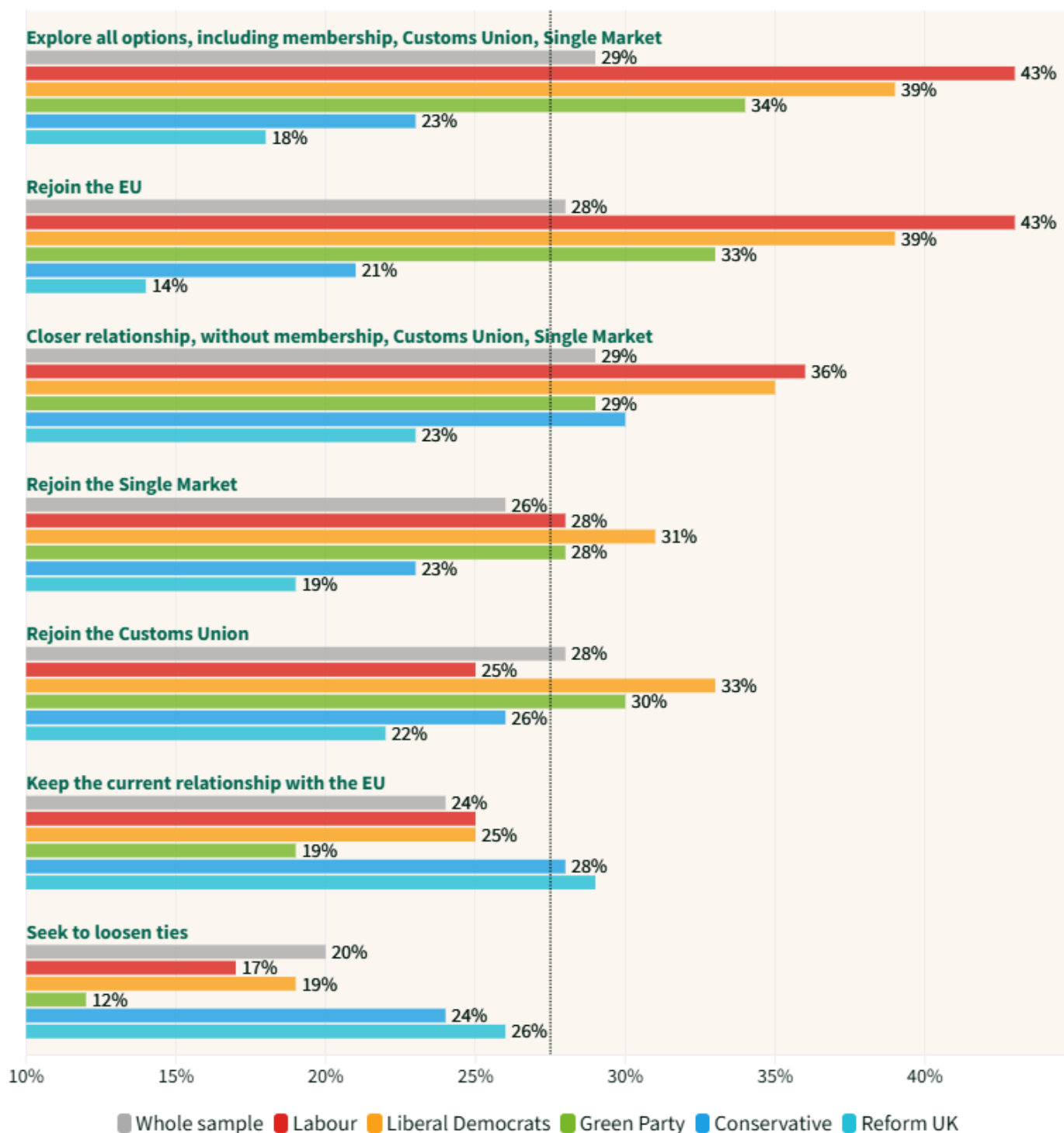


Figure 12: Probability of EU policies being chosen, by Westminster Voting Intention

Figure 12 shows a drastic increase in the probability of Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Party Supporters choosing a Labour manifesto containing the policies of either exploring all options for closer EU relations, including membership of the EU, or an explicit commitment to membership of the EU.

Among Labour Supporters overall, the probability of both an explicit commitment to membership of the EU, or 'exploring all options including membership of the EU' being chosen was 43%.

These were 15 and 13 percentage points higher, respectively, than the sample as a whole, and significantly higher than the sample average.

Ambitious EU relationship pledges also increased the probability of Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters selecting the Labour manifesto containing them. Among Liberal Democrat Supporters, the probability of choosing an explicit commitment to EU membership was 39%, as was the probability of them choosing the commitment to explore all options for closer EU relations, including membership. Among Green Supporters, the equivalent figures were 33%, 34%. The probability of these policy options being chosen was 10-11 points higher than the sample average among Liberal Democrat Supporters, and five points higher among Green Supporters.

Despite current Liberal Democrat policy being to take the UK into the Single Market and Customs Union, neither of these policies scored as well as EU membership among Liberal Democrat Supporters (Single Market 31%; Customs Union 33%). In fact, these policies did not even score as well as policies being pursued within the UK Government's negotiation red lines, such as a food and drink deal (35%) and a youth mobility scheme (36%).

Among all left-of-centre party supporters, policies aimed at keeping current relations as they are now scored less well (19-25% probability of being chosen) and policies aimed at loosening ties scored badly (12-17%). These options were particularly unpopular among Green Supporters, scoring five points and eight percentage points below the whole sample, respectively.

Reform UK Supporters were more likely to choose the status quo option (29%). They were also more likely to choose policies such as the food and drink deal, youth mobility scheme, and loosening ties - all scoring around 25-26%. More ambitious options, outside of current

government redlines, scored poorly: joining the Customs Union (22%), the Single Market (19%), exploring all options (18%) and EU membership (14%).

Conservative Supporters showed less differentiation in the probability of selecting different EU policy options. Their least popular option, EU membership, did not score as badly as loosening ties did among left-wing supporters. The narrower spread of probabilities could reflect either less strong feelings among Conservative supporters on EU policies, or a split of underlying views within this group.

For Conservative Supporters, options within current UK Government red lines scored best: defence cooperation (31%); a food and drink deal (30%), and a closer relationship without joining the Single Market, Customs Union or EU itself (30%). EU membership scored the worst (21%) - though not as poorly as it did among Reform UK Supporters, or as 'loosening ties' did among supporters of left-of-centre parties.

Freedom of Movement was popular among Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters (scoring between 34-40%) but was less popular with Conservative (28%) and Reform UK (23%) Supporters.

Table 10: Top three choices by Westminster Voting Intention, "/" means options came joint first/second

	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	Green	Reform UK
First choice	Closer relationship within red lines / SPS	All options inc EU membership / EU membership	All options inc EU membership / EU membership	All options inc EU membership / Freedom of movement	Defence
Second choice					SPS
Third choice	Youth mobility scheme	Freedom of movement	Freedom of movement	EU membership	Youth mobility scheme

The survey results suggest that the UK Government's incremental approach to EU relations appeals most to Conservative and Reform UK Supporters, who were more likely to choose EU policies within current UK Government red lines.

However, these groups do not appear to be willing to vote Labour, even as it pursues their preferred approach.

In contrast Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Party Supporters clearly preferred more ambitious policies beyond the UK Government red lines. Specifically, they preferred either an explicit commitment to EU membership, or a commitment to exploring all options for closer EU relations, including EU membership.

This group generally finds the gradual approach pursued currently to be disappointing, and would be more likely to vote Labour if the party proposed a policy which included EU membership in any future manifesto.

To increase its chances of winning the next election, Labour should therefore concentrate on remobilising existing supporters and winning back Left Defectors by pursuing an EU policy that keeps UK membership on the table.

5. How people see the benefits and drawbacks of EU membership

YouGov asked respondents two questions to understand their views on the main benefits and drawbacks of the UK becoming a member of the EU. Respondents could only give *one* response as the main benefit, and *one* response as the main drawback. Respondents answered in their own words, which YouGov's AI model categorised as shown in Table 11 and Table 12.

5.1. Benefits

Table 11: Benefits of EU membership, categorised based on respondents' answers

Benefit of EU membership	Cited by %
Easier trading / access to a larger market	17
Freedom of movement	16
Spur economic growth/ improve the economy	6
Decrease the cost of living and prices (i.e., food costs)	5
Better relationships with allies and increased cooperation	3
Increased defence and national security	3
Being part of and united with Europe	1
Benefits in general	1
Increased work opportunities and skilled workers	1
Less red tape / bureaucracy	1
Smoother experience at airports and reduced passport control	1
Other	3
Don't know	5
Not applicable - there are no benefits to rejoining the EU	37

Overall, just under three in five (58%) respondents cited a benefit to the UK becoming a member of the EU, compared to just under two in five (37%) who said there were no benefits to EU membership. Only 5% of respondents said they did not know, or did not

answer this question. These results were in line with previous Best for Britain polling conducted in September 2025, which found that 55% of the British public wanted to join the EU, versus 32% who were opposed³.

Respondents identified easier trading / access to a larger market (17%), and Freedom of Movement (16%) as the two main benefits of UK membership of the EU.

Overall, just under three in five (58%) respondents cited a benefit to the UK membership of the EU, compared to just under two in five (37%) who said there were no benefits to EU membership.

The former was cited by 17% of respondents, the latter by 16%. Taken together these two benefits outweighed all other benefits mentioned by respondents (33% in total, versus 25% for all other benefits mentioned).

The third- and fourth-placed benefits were: improve the economy, and decrease the cost of living and prices, cited by 6% and 5% of respondents, respectively. Together with the 17% of responses citing easier trading as the main benefit of UK membership of the EU, nearly one in three (28%) respondents would expect UK membership to deliver an economic benefit.

³ Best for Britain, [Is it time to talk about EU membership?](#), April 2026.

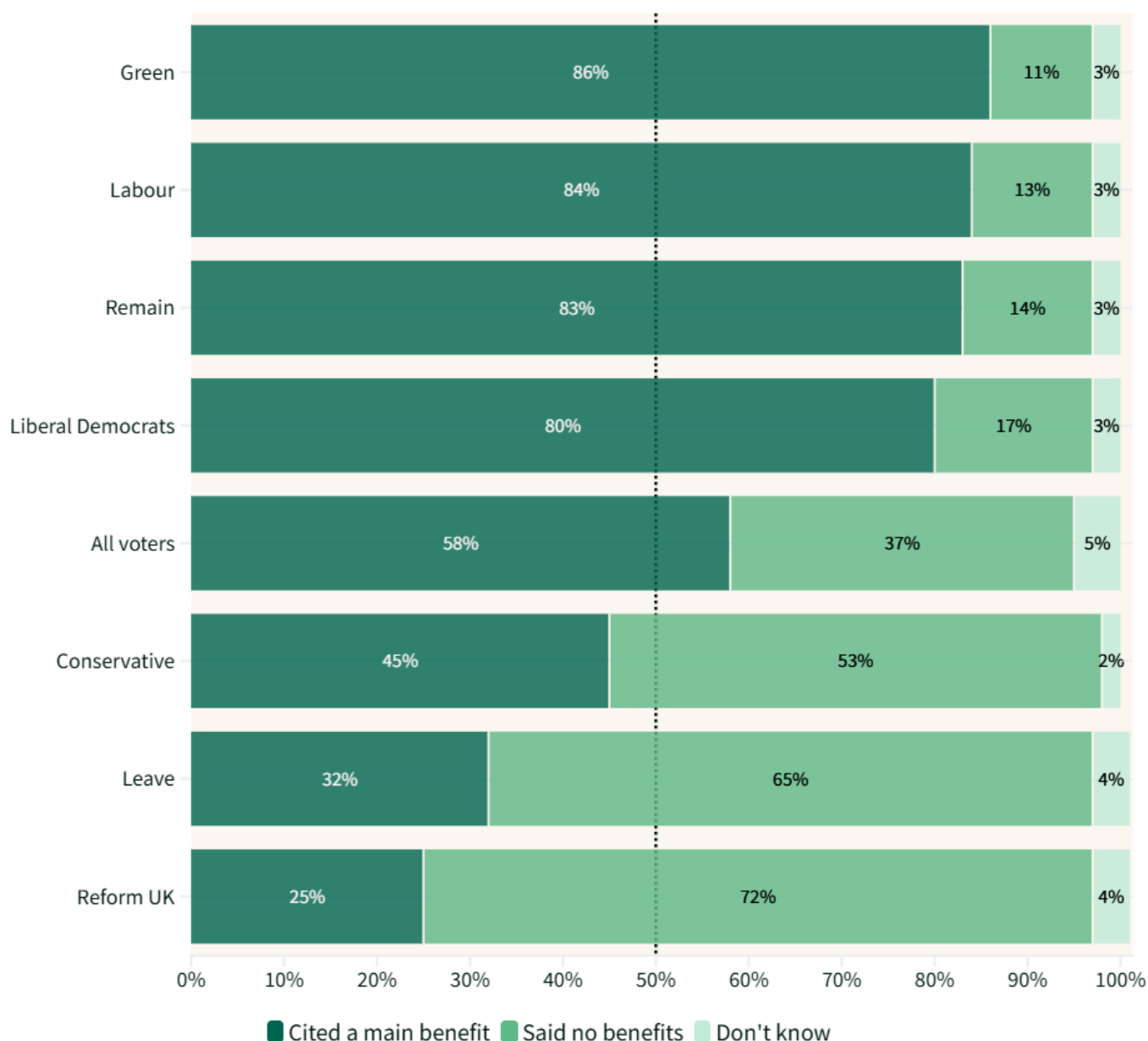


Figure 13: % responses to the question 'What would be the main BENEFIT, if anything, of Britain becoming a member of the EU again' - by Westminster Voting Intention

As shown in Figure 13, eight in 10 Labour Supporters (80%), Liberal Democrat Supporters (79%) and Green Supporters (79%) gave a clear example in response to the question on the main benefit of EU membership. This tendency was strongest of all among the Labour-to-Green Defectors cross-break: fully nine in 10 (89%) of this group cited a benefit (Figure 13).

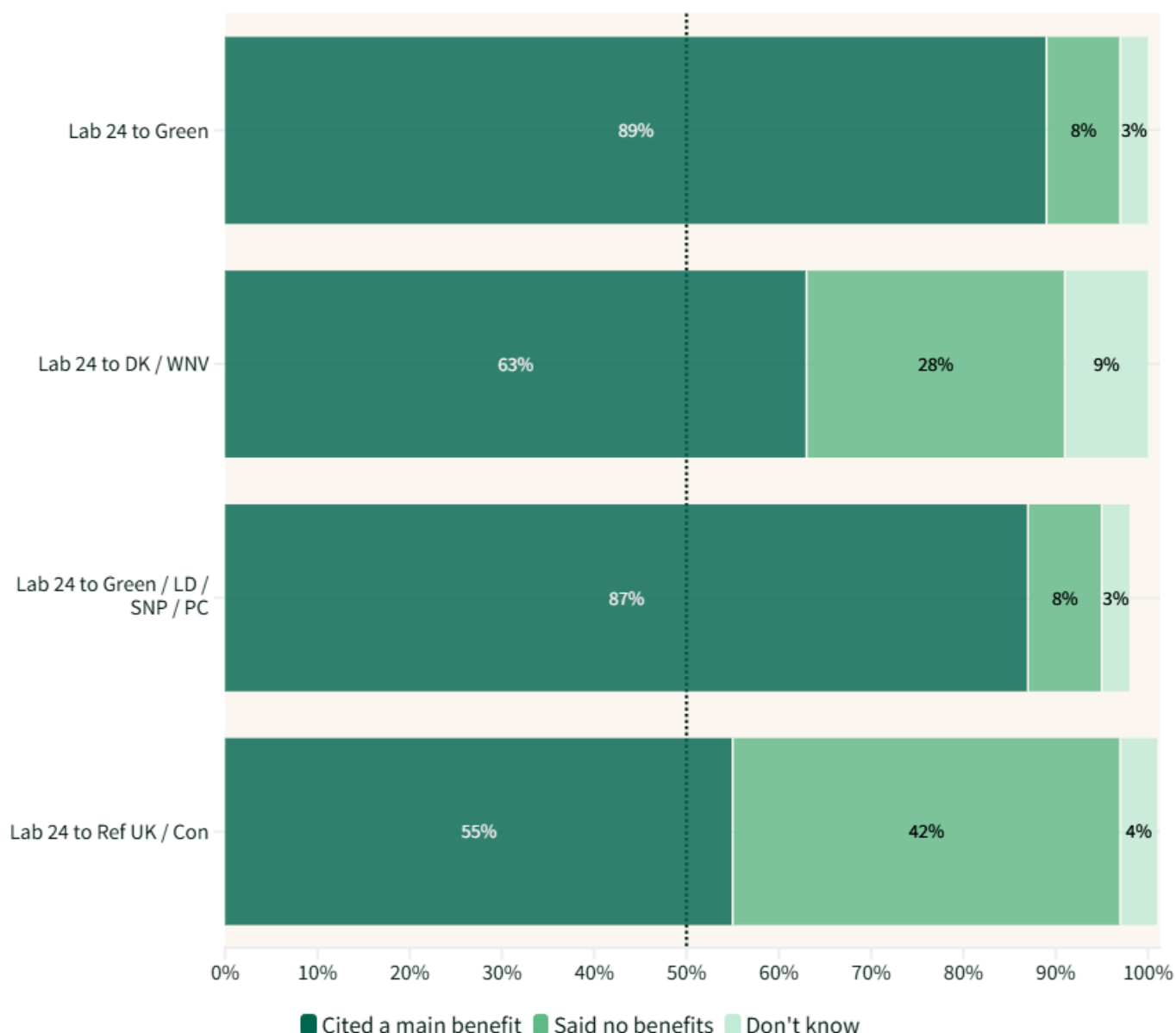


Figure 14: % responses to the question 'What would be the main BENEFIT, if anything, of Britain becoming a member of the EU again' - by Labour Defector crossbreaks

On the right of the political spectrum, one in four Reform UK Supporters (25%) and two in five Conservative Supporters (42%) cited a benefit of UK membership of the EU. Perhaps surprisingly, an outright majority (55%) of Labour Right Defectors also said there are clear benefits to the UK becoming an EU member again.

Analysis of responses to questions about benefits and drawbacks shows that Scotland remains a stronghold of pro-EU sentiment. Only one in four (26%) respondents in Scotland said there were no benefits to EU Membership. This is the lowest proportion of

any UK nation or region. Scottish respondents were also more likely than any other UK national or regional group to say there are no drawbacks to UK membership of the EU - fully half (51%) of Scottish respondents took this view, along with the same proportion (50%) of Welsh respondents.

5.2. Drawbacks

Table 12: Drawbacks of EU membership, categorised based on respondents' answers

Drawback of EU membership	Cited by %
Loss of control / sovereignty	12
Rules / bureaucracy	9
Cost associated with rejoining / membership	8
Immigration	5
Overturning the referendum	2
Division / backlash	2
Adopting the Euro	1
Getting a worse deal than before / being in a worse position	1
Freedom of movement	1
Embarrassing / weak	1
Everything	1
Negative economic impact (general / other)	1
Other	6
Don't know	5
Not applicable - there are no drawbacks to rejoining the EU	45

Overall, half (50%) of respondents cited a drawback to the UK membership of the EU. 45% said there are no drawbacks to EU membership. The proportion of respondents saying there are no drawbacks was 8 percentage points higher than the proportion who said there were no benefits to UK membership of the EU (37%).

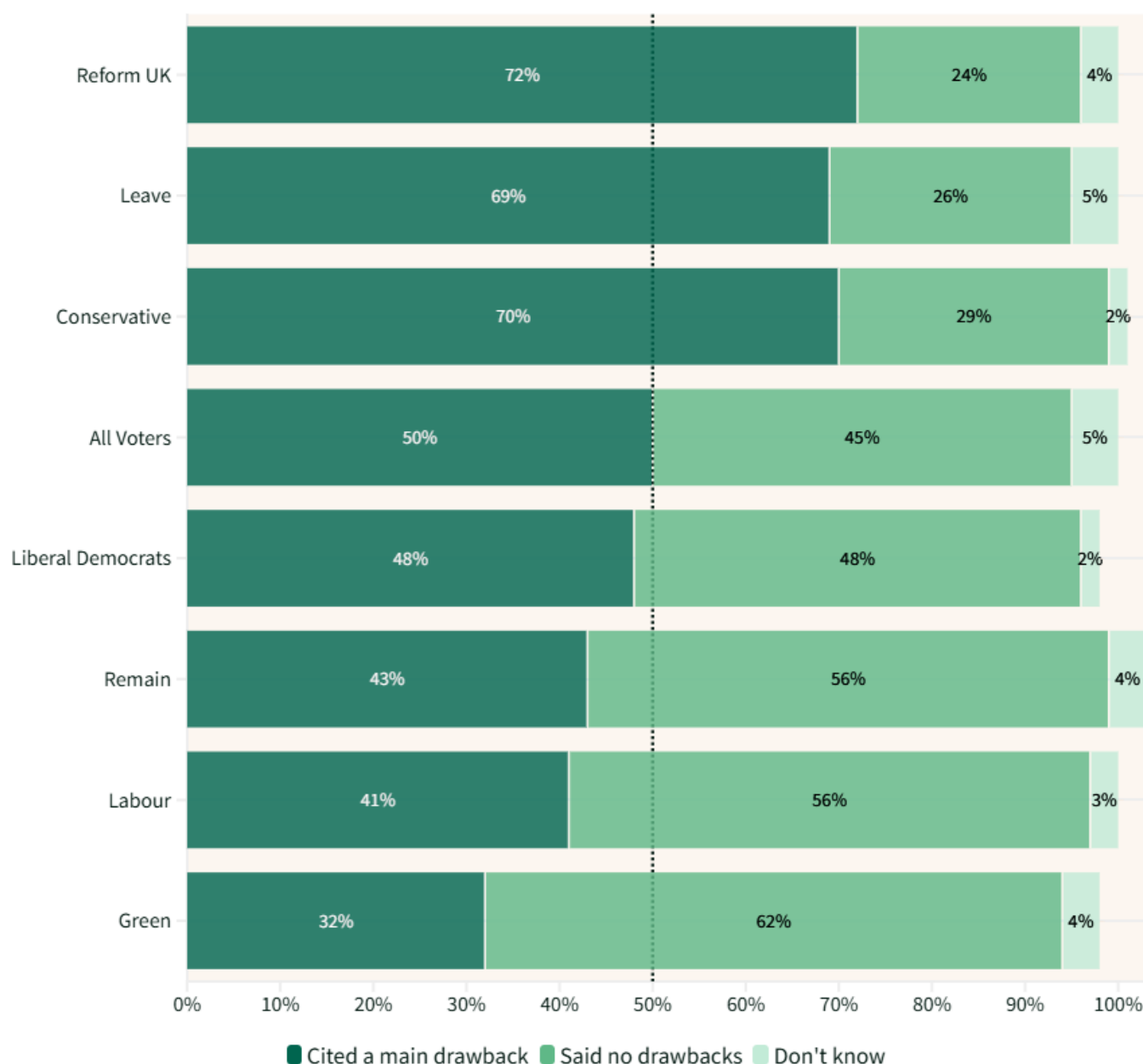


Figure 15: Responses to the question 'What would be the main DRAWBACK, if anything, of Britain becoming a member of the EU again' disaggregated by Westminster Voting Intention

Some commentators have cited questions around adopting the Euro, a return to Freedom of Movement, and the loss of negotiated advantages the UK previously enjoyed as an EU member as justification for not entertaining the possibility of UK membership of the EU. However, just 3% of respondents cited the Euro (1%), Freedom of Movement (1%), and getting a worse deal than before (1%) as the main drawbacks associated with UK membership of the EU.

Nearly half of Liberal Democrat Supporters (48%), and outright majorities of Labour Supporters (56%) and Green Supporters (62%) said there were no drawbacks to the UK becoming a member of the EU again.

They were joined by one in four Reform UK Supporters (24%) and three in 10 Conservative Supporters (29%) who also said there were no drawbacks to EU membership.

Right-of-centre party supporters were very likely to cite a drawback associated with the UK joining the EU. Seven in 10 Reform UK Supporters (72%) and Conservative Supporters (70%) answered the question on the main drawback with a clear example.

Loss of control and sovereignty (12%), rules and bureaucracy (9%), and cost associated with membership (8%) accounted for the majority of drawbacks cited by respondents.

Just one in 20 respondents cited immigration as the main drawback associated with new UK membership of the EU.

6. Conclusions

The results in this report strongly suggest that choosing the right policy on UK-EU relations can provide a significant electoral opportunity for the Labour Party.

All EU relations policy options beyond the UK Government's current red lines are likely to increase the electorate's openness to voting Labour, by varying amounts.

Across all respondents, propensity to vote Labour increased the most - by seven percentage points - in a scenario where it pledges to make the UK a member of the EU. This finding and conclusion is consistent with previous Best for Britain research, which found EU membership to be the most popular EU relations policy among both respondents in general, and Labour's Voters at the 2024 General Election in particular.

Analysis of Labour's defectors since the 2024 General Election strongly suggests that a policy of full EU membership should be the cornerstone of any attempt to rebuild Labour's electoral coalition ahead of a General Election.

A pledge to full membership of the EU significantly increases propensity to vote Labour among Labour's defectors to the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, but especially its defectors to the Green Party.

All EU relations policy positions increase propensity to vote Labour among Labour's 2024 Voters who would now stay at home and not vote at all. However, only a policy of EU membership reduces this important group's likelihood of voting for the Green Party in future.

The motivations behind Labour's 2024 electoral coalition are clear. A majority of all Labour Supporters and defectors to its left flank fail to identify any drawback of the UK becoming a member of the EU again, as did a third of Labour's defectors to Reform UK and the Conservatives. They identify improving trade and the economy, and a return to Freedom of Movement as the main benefits of EU membership.

Reform UK and Conservative Supporters continue to identify sovereignty as the main drawback of EU membership, followed by the associated costs. Immigration appears to have reduced in salience as a concern for this group of voters.

Either way, Reform UK and Conservative Supporters continue to appear as an intractable group of voters for Labour. No Labour EU relations policy position, including a policy position of further loosening ties with the EU, increased their propensity to vote Labour.

On the left of UK politics, this report finds a significant vulnerability in both the Liberal Democrat and Green Party policy positions on EU relations.

The report found double-digit increases in propensity to vote Labour, even where Labour were to pledge to join a Customs Union, among both Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters overall. With propensity to vote Labour increasing by 21 and 18 percentage points among Liberal Democrat and Green Supporters respectively where Labour offered EU membership, this suggested both Liberal Democrats and the Green Party policy offers on EU relations were only sustainable where Labour is committed to its red lines.

Indeed data in this report showed that both an overt commitment to make the UK a member of the EU, or a commitment to 'explore all options for closer EU relations including membership of the EU' increased the popularity of a hypothetical Labour manifesto in manifesto mockups.

The inclusion of a commitment to EU membership in Labour manifesto mockups was an effective way to draw the support of all Labour's defectors to parties on its left flank, Labour's current supporters, and current supporters of the Liberal Democrats and Green Party in general.

The results in this report suggested that the UK Government's incremental approach to EU relations was most appealing to Conservative and Reform UK Supporters.

Taken together, the increase in propensity to vote Labour across all its defector crossbreaks, and popularity of Labour manifestos which included a commitment to EU membership, suggest that a Labour Party policy of EU membership will be essential to rebuilding its 2024 electoral coalition, and would significantly improve Labour's electoral performance at any future General Election.

7. Appendix I

Policy Category	Full EU policy question formulation
EU Relationship	Rejoin the European Union
EU Relationship	Explore all options for closer relations with the European Union, including joining the EU customs union, the EU Single Market, and becoming a member of the EU again.
EU Relationship	Rejoin the European Union Single Market, but not rejoin the European Union
EU Relationship	Join the European Union customs union, but not rejoin the European Union
EU Relationship	Seek a closer relationship with the European Union, without rejoining the European Union, the Single Market, or the Customs Union.
EU Relationship	Keep the relationship with the European Union as it is.
EU Relationship	Seek to further loosen ties with the European Union
EU Relationship	Reintroduce Freedom of Movement with the EU for all UK and EU citizens
EU Relationship	Introduce a youth mobility visa scheme with the EU, allowing 18- to 30-year-olds to travel, work and study in both the UK and EU
EU Relationship	Introduce a food and drink deal with the EU, making it easier to trade food and drink products between the UK and EU
EU Relationship	Increase defence cooperation with the European Union
Immigration / Asylum	Immediately deport asylum seekers who arrive by small boat, by disapplying human right protections
Immigration / Asylum	Introduce a new system of safe and legal routes for asylum seekers who want to come to the UK, so they can apply before they attempt to travel here
Immigration / Asylum	Cut low-skill migration into the UK while increasing high-skill migration
Immigration / Asylum	Change immigration rules so immigrants have to wait 10 years instead of 5 before they can stay permanently in the UK
Immigration / Asylum	Toughen immigration entry rules, such as higher pay/skill bars for work visas and A-level English requirements
Immigration / Asylum	Reduce the number of graduate visas available, and make it harder for immigrants to bring family members to the UK
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Impose a cap on energy prices, reducing the average household's energy bill
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Impose a cap on how much food retailers can increase their prices each year
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Freeze the cost of bus and train tickets for two years
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Increase the number of hours of free childcare a week for every child in the country
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Increase public-sector pay to catch up with inflation
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Grow the economy by investing in new technologies, such as AI
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Grow the economy by reducing taxes on business profits
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Introduce a wealth tax on the wealthiest 1% of the population
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Abolish national insurance and income tax, rolling them together into one new

	national taxation system
Economy / Cost of living / Tax	Increase the basic rate of income tax by 1p in the pound
Health	Abolish prescription charges in England
Health	Increase the number of junior/resident doctor positions available in the NHS
Health	Ban smoking for all people born after a certain year
Health	Pledge to keep the NHS free at the point of use
Health	Move to an insurance-based healthcare system
Health	Recruit more doctors from overseas to fill gaps in the provision of GP services
Other	Make jail sentences for shoplifting crimes longer
Other	Do more to tackle violence against women and girls
Other	Increase defence cooperation with the United States
Other	Introduce a new tax on land owners and land lords
Other	Slow down the UK's progress towards achieving Net Zero, like pushing back the ban on new diesel/petrol cars in 2030
Other	Accelerate the UK's progress towards achieving Net Zero, moving to renewable energy faster
Other	Ban under 16s from accessing social media platforms
Other	Reduce tuition fees for students going to university
Other	Increase the welfare budget to give more support to those who need it
Other	Make it more difficult to claim disability benefits such as personal independence payments
Other	Changing welfare rules, reducing the amount people can receive benefits
Other	Increase spending on defence by billions of pounds per year, reaching 3% of GDP
Other	Ban zero hours contracts and strengthen workers rights, including for freelancers
Other	Introduce a new housebuilding programme which allows building companies to cut through red tape and regulations

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