

## Of course people are in anguish. Our politicians do not...

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Channel 4 [has an article out today](#) on its feature on current political opinion in Grimsby - which it has chosen without very good representative reason - to be its UK representative town.

The article is by pollster James Johnson, who began by noting that:

*Politics in Britain is [usually] less fighting in the trenches, more a natter over a cup of tea. Less a shout of fury at politicians, more a tut and a roll of the eyes.*

*The picture that met me in Grimsby, conducting a focus group on behalf of Channel 4 News, could not have been more different.*

*The former fishing town, won by Boris Johnson in 2019 and wrestled back by Labour in 2024, perches on the edge of the North Sea. It is one of the ninety seats where Reform UK is second to Labour.*

He then noted:

*I spoke to two groups of people. The first voted Labour in 2024 but now lean to Nigel Farage's party. The second – like many across the country – did not vote at all last year.*

He summarised raw sentiment:

*Their outlook for the country was nothing short of apocalyptic. They spoke of hundreds of homeless Britons on the streets, while “floods” of illegal migrants are housed in hotels on the taxpayer. A carer spoke of children hobbled with mental health problems, the long hangover of the Covid pandemic still biting. The stay-at-home mum talked of criminals and junkies living above her, with politicians and local police powerless to stop them.*

He found political alienation:

*Not one of the Labour voters could name an achievement by the party they voted for.*

*The most recalled action was Labour's cutting of the winter fuel allowance, described as punishing Brits to siphon more money to immigration. The non-voting group spurned the election deliberately, feeling there was no option that represented them. The mainstream parties' alien values had pushed them away: "there's no democracy in the UK anymore".*

*The government's handling was "disgraceful", "disgusting", "managed decline". Britain was described as "losing everything that made us great". Some even spoke of the possibility of violence, a "civil war", a "revolution".*

His summary was:

*Immigration was at its core, with high numbers of legal and illegal migration seen to be "diluting" British culture and the "indigenous people" of the country. In this context, Keir Starmer's welfare cuts were seen as an insult to Britain's poorest while the money kept flowing to those crossing the channel on small boats.*

But then, he chose to talk to groups inclined to Reform and Farage in an east coast port where Reform is at its most popular, by far. As objective reporting goes, this was about as far removed from balance as it was possible to get.

He also noted:

*Conspiracy theories abounded: Epstein and a shady force "pulling the strings" featured. People often shouted over each other. Anti-Ukraine sentiment was common, with anti-Zelenskyy talking points cutting through to these Grimsby residents.*

There was contempt for all political leaders except Farage. Badenoch suffered most of all, but Starmer has been written off.

His conclusion was:

*Leaving Grimsby is the most dejected I have ever felt after a focus group. My colleague in tow was more optimistic; he saw great political opportunity, with the voters not resigned to decline but desperate for change.*

*I am not so sure. There was no excitable revolutionary fervour crackling over the roofs of Grimsby on Monday evening. It was a howl of anguish.*

I accept that is likely to be true. And why not?

For forty years, people have been abandoned by a form of politics that treats 90 per cent of people with contempt, keeps eight per cent happy and massively favours two per cent. Why should people be happy?

Led by a vicious and hostile media that is seeking to maintain the privilege of the very

wealthy, immigrants are being picked on as the cause of the woes of these people. It is hard to persuade people in Grimsby that they are not as a consequence. Even Channel 4, by picking Grimsby and these people, chose to reinforce the view that immigrants are the problem. The reach of fascism extends a very long way now.

People are in anguish.

The trouble is Starmer and Reeves have no answers.

Badenoch is utterly useless.

Farage would be more incompetent than Trump as president - although people have yet to realise just how bad he is in that regard.

The Greens and LibDems do not reach the consciousness of the people interviewed - because they are not talking about the issues that matter to these people.

Until politicians create jobs, provide decent schools, deliver health and social care, and tackle criminality, there is nothing they can do to persuade people they are relevant any more.

Labour will do none of that.

The Tories certainly will not.

Reform would not have a clue.

None of them care. And that is the problem at the epicentre of our politics. Until it cares, it will change nothing.