

# Funding the Future

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Compass, the left-of-centre think tank, [published polling](#) yesterday on the opinion of Labour Party members that states a blunt truth, which is that the Labour government is out of step with its own grassroots.

And it is not just slightly out of step. On issue after issue, Labour members want bold, progressive action, but instead the government is delivering caution, compromise, or outright opposition.

In summary, the polling found that:

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92% of Labour members want water in public ownership.

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91% back wealth taxes on the richest.

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89% want a fair migration system rooted in our tradition of welcome.

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84% say stop arms sales to Israel to work toward a lasting ceasefire.

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84% want the two-child benefit cap scrapped to cut child poverty.

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75% want no new oil and gas licences.

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74% say MPs should not lose the whip for opposing bad laws.

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66% back proportional representation.

Vitally, these are not fringe demands. They are popular, credible policies that address the crises we face: inequality, climate breakdown, poverty, and democratic decline.

They represent the politics of moral purpose.

So, what is the leadership's response?

- \* It is silent on public ownership.
- \* It has rejected wealth taxes.
- \* It is dog-whistling on migration.
- \* It is pursuing business as usual on arms sales to Israel.
- \* And it has issued a flat refusal to scrap the two-child limit.
- \* It has green-lighted new oil and gas.
- \* And it is punishing MPs for dissent.
- \* And all the while it is keeping proportional representation off the table, entirely.

This is not Labour's favourite old ploy of triangulation. Instead, it is capitulation. Labour is very obviously choosing to fight on the ground staked out by the right-wing press, the City, and fossil fuel interests, ceding territory on the left, which it is leaving entirely vacant, even though that is where its membership and much of the country are.

What has to be said is that there is a cost to this. Labour's members were not so very long ago the source of the party's energy. Now the leadership is ignoring them, and that energy is very obviously draining away. Without members, the centrally funded party machine might still stagger on, but it will be a hollow shell, and the public are already sensing that

The polling shows that there is an appetite for change amongst Labour's members that is real, urgent, and overwhelming. Despite that, the leadership is behaving as if it must keep the lid on any policy agenda, for fear of frightening any and all of the constituencies that the party must address if it is to succeed. The irony is that it is this timidity that most risks alienating voters. People know the country is broken. They want someone to fix it, not someone to politely manage the decline, and despite that, Labour is pointedly refusing to rise to the challenge.

So what should happen?

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Labour should listen to the membership. No party can succeed without doing so, and those members are not asking for outlandish policies. Public ownership of water is about a clean, affordable supply. Wealth taxes are about balancing the fiscal cycle and reducing obscene inequality. Scrapping the two-child limit is the most cost-effective anti-poverty measure we have.

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Labour should lead, and not follow. Waiting for the Daily Mail's permission to act is a fool's strategy for Labour, but it appears to be what they are doing. Bold action on climate, poverty, and democratic reform would easily win support if it was explained with clarity and conviction.

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Make moral purpose the test of acceptability. If a policy leaves the poorest worse off, drives climate collapse, or concentrates power in fewer hands, it fails the test and should not happen. Is it really so hard for Labour to work that out?

The required choice is clear. Labour can be the government that confronts inequality, repairs our public services, and builds a democracy fit for the 21st century. Alternatively, it can be a government that gains power and then uses it to deliver minimal change, or even go backwards on those issues.

Compass's polling very clearly shows what Labour members want. Those members also have a choice. If the leadership won't stand with them, then it is their job, and that of the wider campaigning movement, to turn up the pressure until it does.

Change will not come by waiting. That has now been proven. We've hung around for long enough now to know that. It only comes when people demand it – and refuse to let go until it's delivered. And that is why I will continue to criticise this Labour leadership and demand they change course. It is vital that they do.