

We are on the path to change now. The only choice is to...

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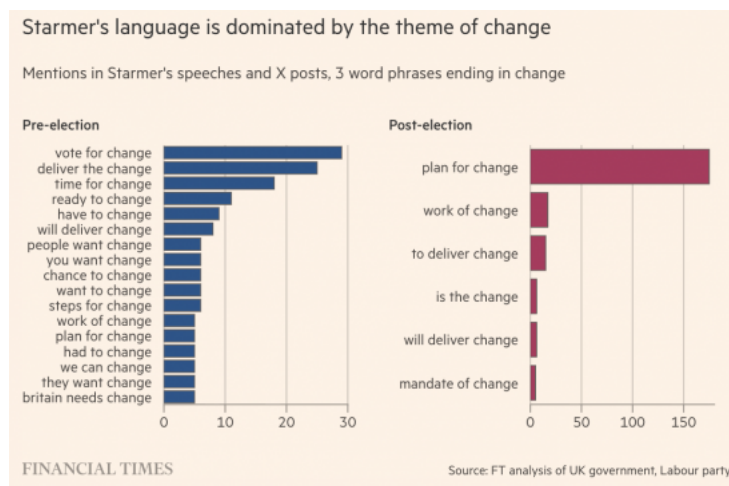
Published: January 12, 2026, 8:16 pm

The FT [has done some fascinating analysis](#) of Keir Starmer's speeches over the last few years.

What they found was:

*The single word “change” — Labour’s monosyllabic campaign slogan deployed extensively last year — is the running theme that continues to punctuate Starmer’s speech even after his party won the election.*

In data, this looks like this:



This is fascinating because the one thing that everyone knows is that Keir Starmer has never delivered change, unless it is to make things worse. And that is unsurprising. Victor Hugo once supposedly said that “Nothing is as powerful as an idea whose time has come”, but that first of all presumes that the person wanting change has an idea, and we know that Starmer has said, “There is no such thing as Starmerism”, to which he then added, “And there never will be”. The idea of change initiated by him is, in that case, very hard to imagine.

For change to happen, he would have to first notice that something is wrong. There is no sign he has. In fact, he seems to be in denial. Neoliberalism has dominated for forty years, but despite its evident failures, including rising inequality, collapsing public services, and climate breakdown, the political class of which Starmer is a part insists that this is just how things are. As if we had never moved on from Thatcher, we are told "there is no alternative", and Starmer and his colleagues appear to cling to that story because the status quo feels safer than the unknown to them.

The fact that the cracks are now very apparent is ignored by most politicians, Starmer included. They are in outright denial of stagnating wages, housing market failures, and growing corporate and media power. People know that something is badly wrong, but Starmer is dithering. Unsurprisingly, populists are exploiting this by offering false solutions that promise change without delivering it.

This is despite the fact that new narratives have emerged. Ideas such as the Green New Deal, universal public services, fair taxation of wealth, and modern monetary theory have all gained traction. Campaigners, academics, and some politicians are starting to prepare the ground for something different, but Starmer pretends otherwise.

The result is that he cannot deliver change, no matter how many times he uses the word. His syntax might make sense: in plain English, the words he uses can be strung together, but they lack semantic reasoning because he fails to give them meaning, and those who hear them know that.

In that case, opposition to his position is inevitable. The far-right is mobilising, [but as recent opinion polls show](#), so, too, are other parties. The LibDems, SNP, Plaid Cymru and Greens are all forecast by YouGov to be heading for record, or near record, representation in parliament. They are experimenting. In contrast, the Tory and Labour defenders of the old order are resisting because their privilege is at stake, but the reality is that we are at or near a tipping point. The momentum for change exists. Once it starts, it becomes difficult to suppress. Starmer either delivers on his promise now, or he will fail. Those are the only options he has.

I stress, I know we are still in the status quo. But as I suggested recently, [the centre cannot hold](#). Whatever happens now, change is inevitable. All we have to find out and influence is what it is. We can beat neoliberalism, or we can get fascism, but Starmer's the last of his breed: his passive kow-towing to the Cioty is at the end of its day.

New ideas must be nurtured.

Setbacks are inevitable, but they need not be permanent.

And lasting change has to be cultural as well as economic.

We are on this path now. The only choice is to where, and Starmerism is not on the destination list at present.