

Funding the Future

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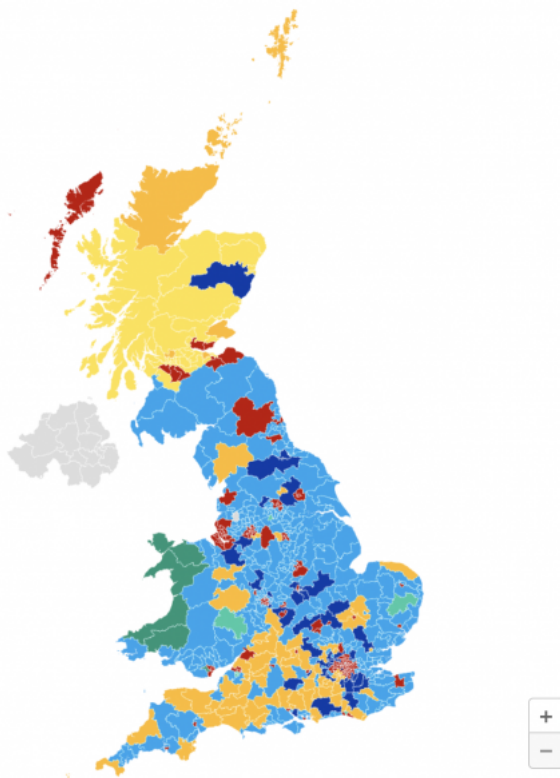
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Many people [will have seen reports](#) of an opinion poll published by YouGov yesterday, based on interviews with 13,000 people spread over every constituency in the UK. This type of polling is usually believed to be far more accurate than the typical poll based on a sample of around 2,000 people, which is the commonly used basis for most opinion polls published in this country.

The new poll, which forecasts the result in every constituency because of the way in which it is prepared, suggests the following map of Westminster seats, coloured by the affiliation of the constituency MP that would represent them:

Estimated seat projections based on modelled responses from 13,000 voters in Great Britain

Reform UK: 311 (+306) Labour: 144 (-267) Lib Dems: 78 (+6) Conservatives: 45 (-76) SNP: 37 (+28) Greens: 7 (+3) Plaid Cymru: 6 (+2) Others: 3 (-2)



The polling forecast, which is the mid-range expectation based upon the interviews that took place, produces the following number of seats per party:

YouGov's latest MRP shows a hung parliament, with Reform UK just short of an overall majority

Estimated national-level results based on modelled responses from 13,000 voters in Great Britain

Share of the vote, median projection (%) Seat totals, central projection

The changes per party are quite dramatic, as shown in the legend to the map.

As is apparent, Labour would be decimated, but so too would be the Tories. The ruling hegemony in the UK from the last century appears to be on its last gasp.

The worrying prospect is that Reform could come close to a parliamentary majority, and with the Tories, could govern the UK.

There is, however, more to this than that. As is apparent, a massive swing would occur in Scotland, where the SNP would become the majority party.

Slightly surprisingly, given other current opinion polls in Wales, this is not replicated there, where the country is effectively reduced to a two-horse race between Reform and Plaid Cymru, with Reform coming out on top, and Labour almost completely disappearing from its heartland, particularly in the South Wales valleys. That said, PC would have their historically best ever result.

The LibDems would also get what would be, for them, a record haul of seats, slightly increasing the number that they have at present, and dominating the southwest.

The Greens would also have a record number of seats, but of somewhat lower amount, based on successes in Bristol and (to my surprise) in Huddersfield, but would be a long way from a breakthrough.

All that being said, no one will be surprised to hear that I find the prospect of this outcome deeply troubling. Everything about Farage and his neo-fascist party disturbs me deeply. But what I can also tell by looking at the projections for a large number of seats is that their margin for winning is, in most cases, very small. In other words, this might look pretty grim, but the situation is actually incredibly volatile. Three ideas flow from that.

Firstly, everything is still up in the air. There is no reason to be completely despondent, and there are a lot of opportunities for Farage to make a complete mess of things between now and 2029, as may Trump, leading to a significant decline in Farage's popularity if it becomes glaringly obvious that the consequence of voting Reform might be the dismantling of democracy, as looks to be the likely outcome in the USA now.

Secondly, the case for proportional representation is very clear.

Thirdly, the case for Scotland being an independent country, because it's so clearly different in political perspective from the rest of the UK, is obvious, with that being slightly less clear in Wales, although none of the political parties that used to dominate the scene there now seem to have any significant presence, quite extraordinarily.

In all of this, then, the most obvious question to ask is why isn't electoral reform once and for all on the agenda of every mainstream political party?

Labour and the Tories used to object based on their own self-interest, but very clearly are now losing out as a consequence of first-past-the-post.

Reform has said it is in favour of electoral reform in the past, although if that commitment remains now is hard to know.

Everybody else wants PR. Surely, in that case, the time has come, and no one can argue otherwise just because that means a substantial haul of seats for Reform, if that is what the people of this country want?

I want to live in a democracy. The last thing of significance Labour might ever do is decide if I have that option in the future, or not. Is that too much to ask of them when it clearly aligns with their own self-interest now?