



Engaging Liberal Democrats supporters about R&D

A guide for engaging with politicians and voters ahead of the Autumn 2026 party conference season.

This briefing summarises attitudes of Liberal Democrats voters and offers advice on how to better engage this group. It draws on qualitative research and a nationally representative survey of 4,173 UK adults (17-21 July 2026) from [CaSE's R&D in a Shifting Voter Landscape project](#). Full results are on CaSE's website.

Voting intentions

Some 8% of the public name the Liberal Democrats as their first-preference vote; when including those who rank them in their top three choices, their potential voter base reaches 26%, one of the largest stated-to-considered gaps of any party.

To understand voter leakage, we can look at where those who voted Liberal Democrats in 2024 would now consider placing their vote (see right). Most would still consider the Liberal Democrats, but some are considering Labour (41%) and the Greens (39%).

Only 28% of current supporters say they would vote only for the Liberal Democrats, the second-lowest exclusivity of any party.

Fluidity of the Liberal Democrats' 2024 vote

Table shows the proportion of those who voted Liberal Democrats at the 2024 General Election that would consider voting for the parties below when asked to select up to three.

Conservative	21%
Green	39%
Labour	41%
Lib Dem	80%
Reform	12%
Restore Britain	7%
Would not vote	2%

Table: Who would you consider voting for if a General Election was called tomorrow? Please select UP TO THREE parties. [Question truncated. Base: Those who voted Liberal Democrat in 2024] • Source: Icaro and Yonder Data Solutions polling for CaSE • July 2026 • Created with Datawrapper

Who they are

Liberal Democrats voters skew older (49% aged 55+, average age 53). They have the clearest socioeconomic skew of any party profiled (67% ABC1) and have more graduates (56% compared with the UK average of 47%). Geographically, they are concentrated in the south of England. They are more likely to own their home outright and to be retired on a private pension.

“If this apparently large amount of money going into research and development is being mooted, then I think if it can get us on a track towards economic growth, that’s got to be a good thing.”

Claudia (Qualitative research)

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How they see the world

Liberal Democrats voters are more hopeful and less anxious than most groups, with more positive outlooks towards their local area than many. They show strong support for scientific evidence and ingenuity, and see British science as a source of hope.

When asked about their **cultural outlooks**:

- 40% agree with the idea of “Broken Britain”, lower than the UK average of 50%, while 52% are hopeful it can turn its fortunes around (compared with the average of 41%).
- 78% say the Government should listen more to scientific evidence when making decisions, higher than the UK average of 64%.
- Just 19% say their local area is doing badly; this is the lowest across the sample and compared with the UK average of 30%.
- 27% say immigration has made the country worse, lower than the UK average of 45%.
- 73% say mainstream news sources are most trustworthy, the highest of any group, with a UK average of 56%.

When asked how **anxious** they were:

- They are among the least likely to express high levels of anxiety about the direction of the country (38%, compared with UK average of 48%).
- All other anxieties about personal and global issues are similar to the UK average and within 5 percentage points, except on the question of the direction their local area is headed in, where only 14% express high anxiety, which is the lowest of all the sample and compared with the UK average of 21%.

When asked about their **personal ambitions**:

- The most-selected personal ambition is health and wellbeing (68%), higher than the UK average of 60%. This is followed by financial security (65% vs 64%).
- 34% select travel and exploration, the highest of the sample and higher than the UK average of 29%.

When asked about **Government ambitions**:

- Around seven in ten agree with ambitions of scientific ingenuity (70%; compared with the UK average of 59%) and protecting rural spaces (69%; 64%).
- They are more likely to agree with global cooperation and leadership (61%; compared with the UK average of 45%) and a green economy (59%; 43%).
- They are less likely to agree with reducing immigration (43%; compared with the UK average of 55%) or prioritising fixing problems in the UK before those abroad (52%; 61%).

When asked where they find **pockets of hope**:

- The most selected source of hope is in their family and friendships (54%; compared with the UK average of 51%).
- They are the most likely to select the British scientific and technological innovation (52%; compared with the UK average of 37%).
- They are less likely to say they find hope in a specific political movement or party (8%; compared with the UK average of 14%).

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Attitudes to R&D

- They have higher self-reported knowledge of R&D, although still low, with 19% saying they feel they know a lot about UK R&D, compared with the UK average of 16%.
 - They express strong support for R&D, with the largest proportion of all groups (81%) saying that it is important for the Government to invest in R&D. Some 63% say R&D is a national strength and 73% say it makes a significant economic contribution.
 - When asked what aspects of R&D support the Government should prioritise, the most-selected answer is jobs for the new generation of homegrown scientists (53%, compared with the average of 47%). Support for global collaboration (43%) and global excellence (33%) are higher than many other groups.
 - 68% choose biology and medical technologies as a priority for Government investment, followed by clean energy technologies (60%). In contrast to other groups with strong support for clean energy, there is also majority (53%) support for defence and security technologies.
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Messaging that will resonate

- **Frame R&D as a tool to tackle society's problems and support policymaking:** This group supports a range of policy directions but most supportive of scientific ingenuity and of scientific evidence in Government.
- **Position R&D as source of hope:** This group is strongly supportive of R&D and most likely to see British science as a source of hope.
- **Emphasise environmental and international links:** This group demonstrates support for rural protections, clean energy and a green economy, as well as for international collaboration and talent.
- **Use good practice principles that resonate with broad audiences:** Use messaging that makes R&D feel more human, more local and more relatable. It is also vital to avoid stereotyping voter groups and consider how to tailor messaging to different subsets of their audiences.

This briefing is part of a series covering the main vote groups. To read the full results and recommendations from the study, and briefings on other voter groups, please see the [R&D in a Shifting Voter Landscape webpage](#).

Vote intention figures are drawn from our own general population survey and are not the output of a dedicated political opinion poll. We use this question to segment our sample by political affiliation for analysis, not to estimate election outcomes. Read more in [our Methods](#).

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