

UK on Track for Historic Five-Party Coalition as Voter Loyalties Shift

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Britain may be heading into an unprecedented political era, with fresh polling data forecasting the rise of a five-party “Rainbow Coalition”, a far cry from the traditional two-party dominance that has defined UK politics for decades.

A major seat-by-seat survey by research group More in Common projects that if an election were held today, Reform United Kingdom, led by Nigel Farage, would win 290 seats, outpacing both Labour and the Conservatives. However, that number still falls short of the 325 seats required for a working majority, making a coalition scenario all but inevitable.

Under one possible outcome, Reform UK could align with the Conservative Party to form a centre-right government. Yet, given past political friction and lingering distrust between the two parties, such an arrangement would be politically delicate. On the other hand, a modest voter shift just 3.5 per cent from Reform UK to Labour and a slight uptick for the Green Party could swing the numbers in favour of a coalition led by Labour and propped up by the Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Green Party, and Plaid Cymru.

This potential “Rainbow Coalition” would represent the most fragmented governing alliance in modern British history. Critics argue that such an arrangement risks being unwieldy and ineffective, given the ideological differences among its constituent parties.

A decade ago, David Cameron famously warned that a Labour-led coalition would usher in chaos, a prediction that resonates more sharply today. In the years since, the UK has witnessed political turbulence through six prime ministers, four general elections, Brexit stalemates, a pandemic, economic shocks, and repeated scandals. Today, public trust in major institutions and established parties has plummeted.

More in Common's recent report, titled *Shattered Britain*, outlines the root of the electorate's growing disillusionment. The old left-versus-right divide is no longer the primary fault line. Instead, new cultural and institutional divisions are redefining political allegiances. Nearly four in ten voters now believe that Britain's political institutions are beyond repair and need to be replaced entirely. A similar portion prefers non-mainstream or independent media over legacy news outlets, a trend that further weakens the traditional parties' influence.

In a recent interview with The Telegraph, More in Common Director Luke Tryl said, “We are witnessing a long-term political realignment. People are no longer voting by tribe, they’re shopping around based on ideas and authenticity.”

This shift is reflected in the numbers. As recently as 2017, the Conservative and Labour parties jointly captured over 80 per cent of the national vote. In 2024, that figure dropped to just 57 per cent. Current projections suggest it may have already fallen below 45 per cent. Meanwhile, newer parties both on the right and the far left, are gaining ground.

The evolving political landscape could make future elections highly volatile. Nearly 100 seats may be won with less than 30 per cent of the vote, according to the data, leaving them highly sensitive to small swings in voter sentiment. With 16- and 17-year-olds voting for the first time in 2029, their influence could tilt outcomes in key constituencies.

Adding further complexity, Jeremy Corbyn’s new party could siphon off up to 10 per cent of the national vote, the poll suggests, muddying the waters even more for parties seeking a viable majority.

Some observers are raising the question: could Britain become ungovernable? While history offers examples of seemingly inevitable realignments that failed to materialise, such as the surge of the Liberal-SDP alliance in the 1980s or the Brexit Party’s lead in 2019 polling, this time the fragmentation runs deeper. The weakening of institutional trust, combined with changing media consumption and cultural divides, makes the current moment fundamentally different.

As the UK approaches another general election, political stability appears increasingly elusive. The electorate’s demand for change is unmistakable. Whether that change results in a functioning coalition or legislative gridlock remains to be seen.