



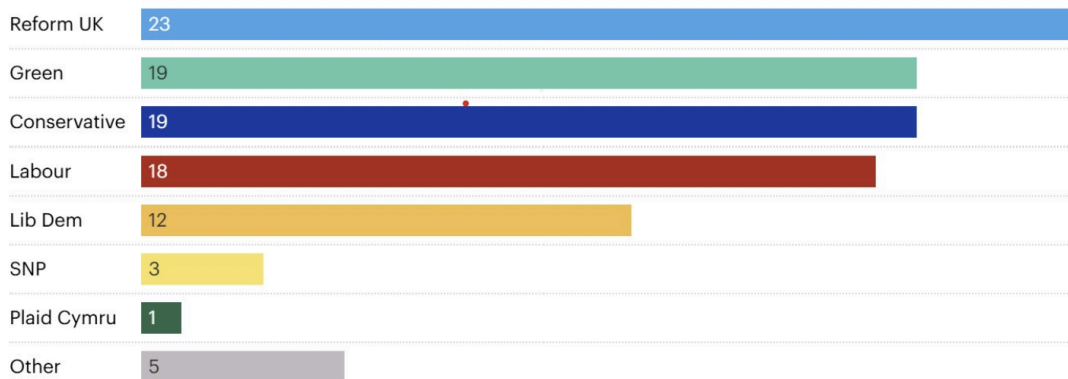
Transcript of Compass
Oxfordshire's
presentation on
anti-Reform
campaigning,

13 April, 2026.

To prevent Reform wins in May, we, as campaigners, have to reach persuadable Reform voters. This isn't a comfortable prospect but Reform's polling remains strong, press scrutiny is poor, left-wing parties aren't co-operating, and Reform is receiving absurd amounts of funding. So, we have a vital role in curbing Reform support.

YouGov Westminster voting intention (29 - 30 March 2026)

If there were a general election held tomorrow, which party would you vote for? %



Of the five voter types used in [Hope not hate's](#) research, our focus is on those groups, together representing over 50% of Reform supporters, who stand out as persuadable: squeezed stewards, reluctant reformers, and contrarian youth, all of whom share deep cynicism about establishment parties and a desire for radical change. A 4th significant demographic we're including is undecided voters.

We think a non-partisan approach will be most successful in deterring people from voting Reform. If they switch to a progressive party that's a bonus, but not the primary aim.

Problems for campaigning

1. Automatic barriers: are created by assumptions about progressive campaigners which act as an immediate block to successful communication. We're pre-judged as soft middle-class elites detached from the coal face of life – a dodgy bunch of tax-hiking, motorway-blocking tree-huggers who favour crackpot ideas fed us by climate science quacks, and the deeply gender confused, whilst welcoming in alien invading cultures and ignoring the Reform supporter's most cherished values – family, community, nation, and day to day survival.

They perceive us, frankly, like we perceive them – as ill-informed, dangerously manipulated by propaganda, and as a threat. This is a poor starting point for campaigning.

2. There are some grains of truth in this preconception - [Studies](#) suggest that the progressive left is construed as exceptionally intolerant of opposing views and presumptuous about the self-evident correctness of their own. E.g. progs grossly overestimated voter support for letting more refugees into the country and were far more inclined to view Leave voters negatively than “backbone conservatives”. Nick Lowles– *left perceived as “judgemental and dogmatic”*

3. Polarisation has driven the two blocks into fundamentally different & opposing universes fed by relentless rage baiting from the press and social media. But we have to work in this arena.

4. Indiscriminate use of campaign content -

There's a substantial amount of anti-Reform literature but more thought needs to go into tailoring it. Cross-ethnic community building content may be effective for certain demographics but not others - imagery like this poster could backfire badly if stuck on the walls of Epping or Brumby, North Lincolnshire.



We also need to devise better strategies for communicating with the other block, using our understanding of them & how they perceive us to adapt & modify our messaging.

Compass Oxon has been exploring some of these issues and how to construct more persuasive campaigning content. It's very much work in progress but, with the problems just outlined in mind, we're going to outline some themes, principles and tactics we've created so far -

Themes for challenging Reformers

Based on [Steve Akehurst's recent research](#), we'd suggest avoiding net zero, Brexit, + flags, DEI, trans, etc - all vitally important but, to Reformers, they presuppose that we are coming from the ideological position just described and this immediately undermines the credibility of our interactions. 2 standout useful themes Akehurst identifies are -

Corporate interests (bitcoin, fossil fuel industry alignment, dodgy donors, Farage's expenses investigation, 2nd jobs).

Trump alignment – Farage's support for many of Trump's policies, including his plan to import ICE programmes + Project 25).

We've added other themes which, though untested in research, are, we think, useful -

Workers, renters & women's rights (party policy on minimum wage, benefits, employee protections, evictions, etc)

NHS – issues with insurance-based systems endorsed by Reform.

(**Immigration** isn't listed because of its complexity, toxicity + varying salience for Reformers. But we do consider it later. Also, see ['Crossing the Divide'](#) by Compass Oxon member, Claire Jones, for a more in-depth look at issues around campaigning on immigration).

Approaches to avoid

1. **Reform Imitation:** Clearly Labour's attempt to imitate Reform in this poster fails because it's a pale version of the party they are trying to beat. Risks repelling some Labour voters whilst reminding others to vote for the real deal, Reform itself -



2. Demonising and insulting Reform voters –



These posters are counterproductive because they are liable to trigger defensiveness. Few, even racists, will engage with these images as they directly accuse them of supporting racism and feel like personal insults. Plastering this kind of content all over towns and social media could potentially create more rather than fewer Reform supporters.

3. Didacticism

Some content which delivers facts & how recipients will be affected risks sounding condescending and patronising. The text below has a 'you have been told' subtext that risks making recipients feel talked down to, ignorant and overlooked. Liable to trigger dismissive, face-saving resistance and go straight in the bin.

Anti-human Rights

"Leave the European Convention on Human Rights."
— Reform UK Manifesto, 2025

FACT: The European Convention on Human Rights protects everyone's basic freedoms like the right to a fair trial and freedom of expression.

HOW IT AFFECTS YOU: Leaving the ECHR would weaken workers' rights, women's rights, increase government control and damage protections for everyday people. It removes the legal safeguards we all rely on.

Sources:
Reform UK Manifesto, 2025
Daily UK, 2022, "What the ECHR protects"

Racism, Extremism & Division

"Mass immigration has damaged our country... Only Reform UK will stand up for British culture, identity and values."
— Reform UK Manifesto, 2025

FACT: Reform UK intentionally uses language linked to far right rhetoric, demonising refugees, immigrants & marginalised groups.

HOW IT AFFECTS YOU: This stokes fear, divides communities, and distracts from real issues caused by class divide, like housing, underfunded social policy & low wages. Reform UK offers no solutions, only scapegoats.


Sources:
Reform UK Manifesto, 2025

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Say NO to:

- Privatising the NHS
- Scrapping climate action
- Leaving human rights protections
- Dividing people through hate

Say NO to Reform UK



4. Threats and fear mongering.

Many anti-Reform posters emphasise that Reform is not on your side



Each poster invokes trust issues - the threat posed by Reform is the main message with the votes presented as subsidiary information. The different sizes of text emphasise the threat over the information. Voters will be quick to detect that they are being emotionally primed here to adopt a hostile stance towards Reform. The imagery risks making people feel manipulated and resistant.

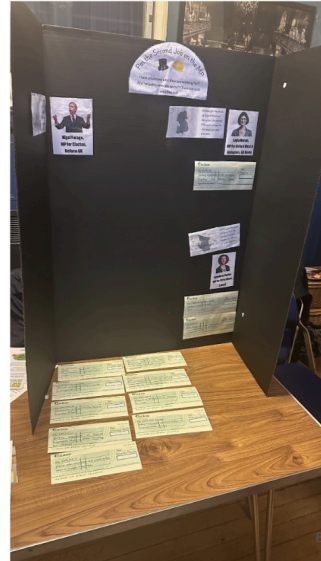
2) Principles for approaching messaging:

We've selected 3 of the themes above – corporate interests, employment / rental rights & women's rights – to illustrate the principles we've drafted. But they could apply to the other themes as well.

a. **Be non-partisan** and use **tactics to engage Reformers**. Start with **comparative data** for all parties, wherever possible -

2nd jobs quiz and how it illustrates (a). We created a pack of look-alike cheques with earnings written on but not the payee. We placed pictures of 3 MPs at the top of the board - one Labour, one Lib Dem + Farage. We then asked people to place the cheques under whichever figure they thought might have acquired the earnings through 2nd jobs.

Pin the X on the Y Quiz - e.g. 2nd Jobs

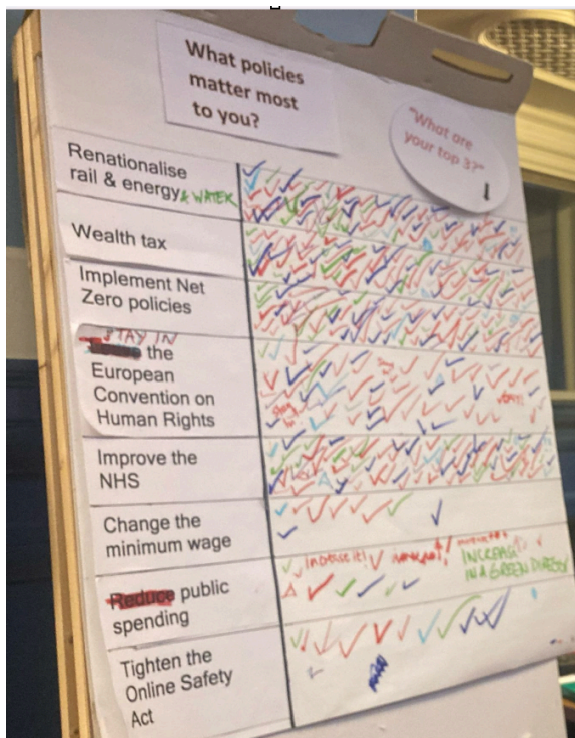


People enjoyed the task but tended to distribute the cheques fairly evenly or not know how to assign them. Being able to reveal that over 90% of them belonged to Farage was a striking but neutral way of communicating just how many 2nd jobs and earnings Farage has and engages people in thinking about his questionable priorities.

b) Getting the order right and getting commitment in advance of delivering the facts and how policy might affect them.

Case study - employment + renters rights:

Slide - Flip(flap) chart:









Nb: the photo above was for an Oxford fair and would be different in an anti-Reform campaign context. Suggestions for 1st column -

Possible 1st column questions:

Fuller list of questions for flip chart

- Do you think landlords should be allowed to evict tenants without giving reasons?
- Do you think compensation should be paid if shifts are cancelled, moved or shortened at short notice?
- Should employees be entitled to sick pay after day 1?
- Should workers be protected from unfair dismissal from day one?
- Should the minimum wage for young people be lowered or raised?









2nd column with tally but 3rd column information concealed -

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Do you think compensation should be paid if shifts are cancelled, moved or shortened at short notice? | Yes  |  |
| | No  | |
| Do you think landlords should be allowed to evict tenants without giving reasons? | Yes  |  |
| | No  | |

Although the flipchart shows the tally, engagement with it is initially neutral because the column with party information is concealed under a flap.

Once you've established the person's commitment to the values in the 1st column, only then should you ask them which parties they think support their view. Even at this point it helps to remain neutral, i.e. don't leap in gleefully with a slap down list of Reform attacks on workers' rights. Instead, present Reform policy, non-judgementally, in a comparative way, alongside other party policies.

Flipchart showing flap removed in 3rd column -

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Do you think compensation should be paid if shifts are cancelled, moved or shortened at short notice? | Yes  |  |
| | No  |  |
| Do you think landlords should be allowed to evict tenants without giving reasons? | Yes  |  |
| | No  |  |

You could also include a 4th column to be revealed if people want further information -

Possible 4th hidden column for flip chart with policy detail

- *Scrap No-Fault Evictions (NFE) supported by **Lab, LD, Greens, Tories.***
Reform MPs all voted against scrapping NFE.
- *Employment Rights Act (ERA) Inc day 1 paternity + sick pay. Supported by **Lab, LD + Greens.***
*Opposed by **Cons + Reform.***
- ***Wages Labour** - increased min wage to 12.21ph for 21 + 10.00 for 18 to 20yrs. **Greens** - want to increase min wage for all ages to £15ph.*
***Reform** – wants to reduce min wage for young people + reduce benefits.*

At this point, you could leave your listener to go away and work out the mismatch between Reform and their values for themselves. This face-saving approach works better for some. Or, if they are more open to discussion, you might then, but only then, invite them to explore the mismatch with you.

Reform's plans to repeal the ERA and retain NFE are really useful facts in deterring Reform support. But it helps to present them independently of, and prior to, the emotive warning that 'Reform is not on your side'. This approach enables prospective voters to work out for themselves the conclusion that Reform is not serving their interests. It involves a process of reasoning that is far more powerful than being jump scared into a particular reaction and / or simply being told what to think.

Using flyers: case study - Women's Rights

Questions are better than delivering facts in certain contexts. Asking the recipient shows respect + an interest in their understanding + hands them responsibility for believing the facts that are shaping their anxieties + can sow more effective seeds of doubt where needed.

Existing women's rights flyer



Ways to modify the flyer -

- turn the bullet points into questions,
- remove the Farage insert and the reference to racism,
- on the opposite panel, provide a cross-party selection of relevant policy



Your Rights

Are you a woman who works?

Are you a tenant?

Do you want protection from unfair dismissal?

Do you want legal assistance for sexual assault & domestic abuse?

Greens & Labour want to -

- Make abortion a human right.
- Protect maternity leave.
- Strengthen laws on women's safety.
- Ensure gender pay equality.

Reform wants to drop the Equalities Act that provides legal help for:

- sexual assault,
- domestic abuse
- employment discrimination

Multiple choice format -

The information above could also be presented as a multiple choice Q&A with a selection of parties as the answer options: eg –

‘Which party wants audits to monitor equal payment?’ (Lib, Grns, Lab, Ref ...)

‘Which party wants enhanced menopause support?’ (ditto)

‘Which party voted against legislation to tackle stalking, harassment?’ ...

‘Which party wants stronger rights for pregnant women at work?’ ...

‘Which party wants to audit abortion laws?’ etc.

Navigating the trust issue: all themes -

Acknowledge Labour’s failures. Noting the fallibility of left-wing policies helps to build trust and credibility, and to set the stage for tackling disinformation more effectively.

Be alert to how we are perceived by Reformers and to how our messaging might trigger avoidable hostility.

Emphasis on **non-threatening interactions** -

Nick Lowles – “*we need to stop alienating people and have more empathy.*”

Acknowledge anxieties - economic ones about resource scarcity (jobs, health, housing) + cultural ones, e.g. about the community they grew up in changing / about distinguishing ethnic community members who have long-standing citizenship from recent migrants, etc.

Show respect - E.g. park the fact that a voter’s worry about getting a GP appointment quickly might be built on disinformation about migrants. Despite the false premise, it’s still reasonable to be worried about GP access.

Listen - When people insist they can’t see their GP because too many migrants are jumping the queue, avoid the temptation to leap in with ‘corrective info’ about low migrant levels in their area + the crucial role of migrants in the health service. This approach risks getting you branded as patronising & ‘woke’ + widens the credibility gap by reminding them you’re ‘from the other side’ + triggers suspicion - ‘Why should I believe what you say? ‘You probably aren’t capable of understanding my point of view’.

Summary:

Key principles

Primary objective: to deter voters from voting Reform, not persuade them to vote for a particular party -

1. Avoid themes that trigger hostile preconceptions.
2. Avoid slander, fear messaging and didacticism.
3. Use content designed to engage Reform orientated voters.
4. Use a variety of different engagement methods.
5. Interaction sequence - get value commitment first, then give party information.
6. Neutrality - present comparative information from a range of parties.
7. Show respect, listen to concerns, hear anxieties, don’t alienate, show empathy.
8. Be willing to talk about left-wing failures. Show credibility and build trust.

We began this presentation by highlighting some problems concerning preconceptions and polarisation in campaigning. To deter people who are considering or intending to vote Reform these obstacles need to be overcome.

To this end, we outlined a range of priority themes (corporate interests, Trump, rights, NHS) & principles (avoid hostility triggers, be non-partisan, use neutral comparative information, get value commitment first, build trust).

To illustrate these themes and principles, we described some formats (quizzes, flip charts, adapted posters & multiple choice) designed to engage Reform voters.

Of course, we need to be realistic about reach and success, not set expectations too high and be prepared to meet some implacable people. We have to learn to ignore them, and aim for useful interactions with others.

We hope you find our ideas so far useful. We aren't suggesting they are always easy to implement or have guaranteed success. But we do think this kind of approach would enable more effective anti-Reform campaigning.