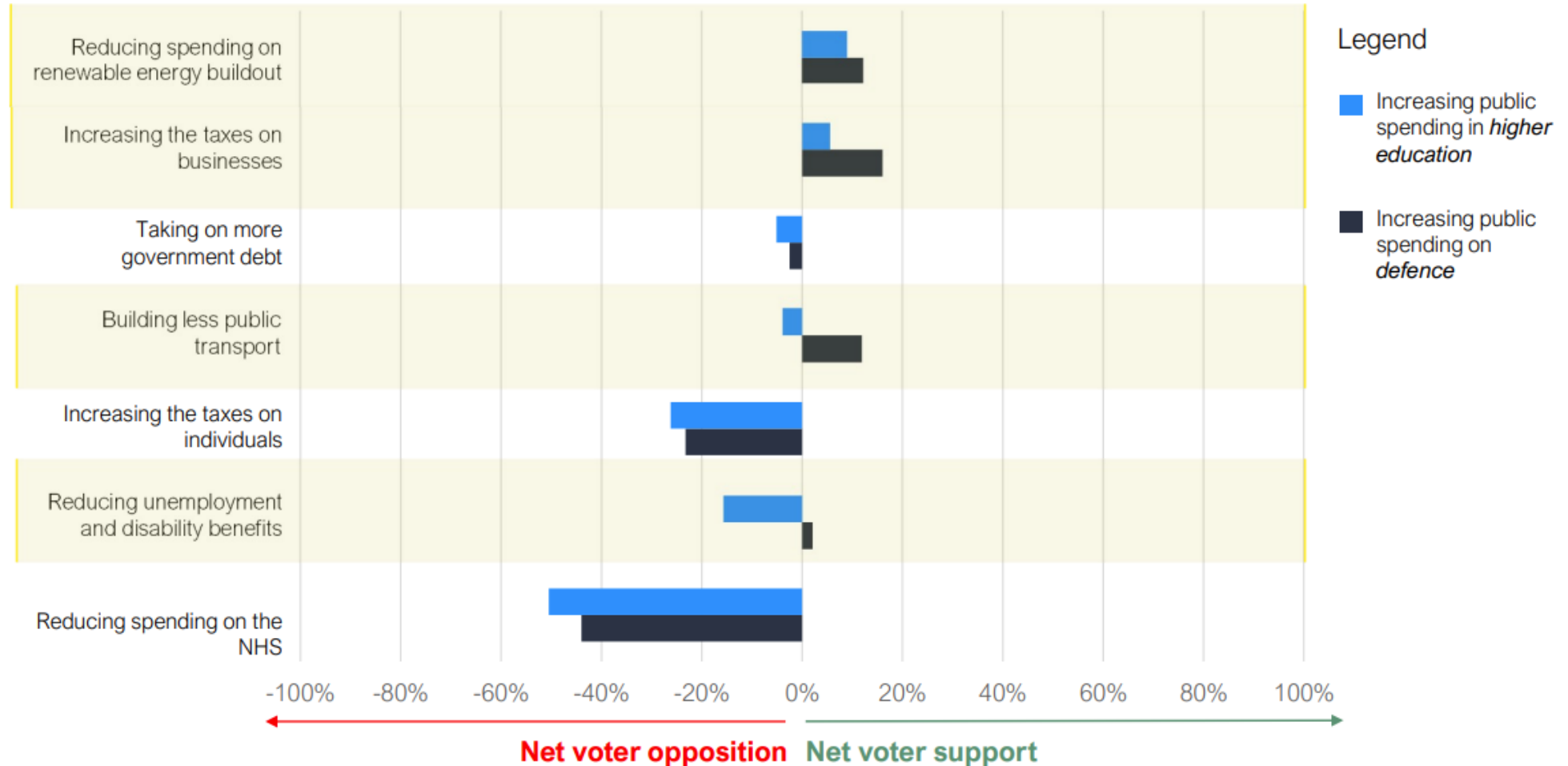




In an era of fiscal trade-offs, higher education finds itself increasingly exposed.

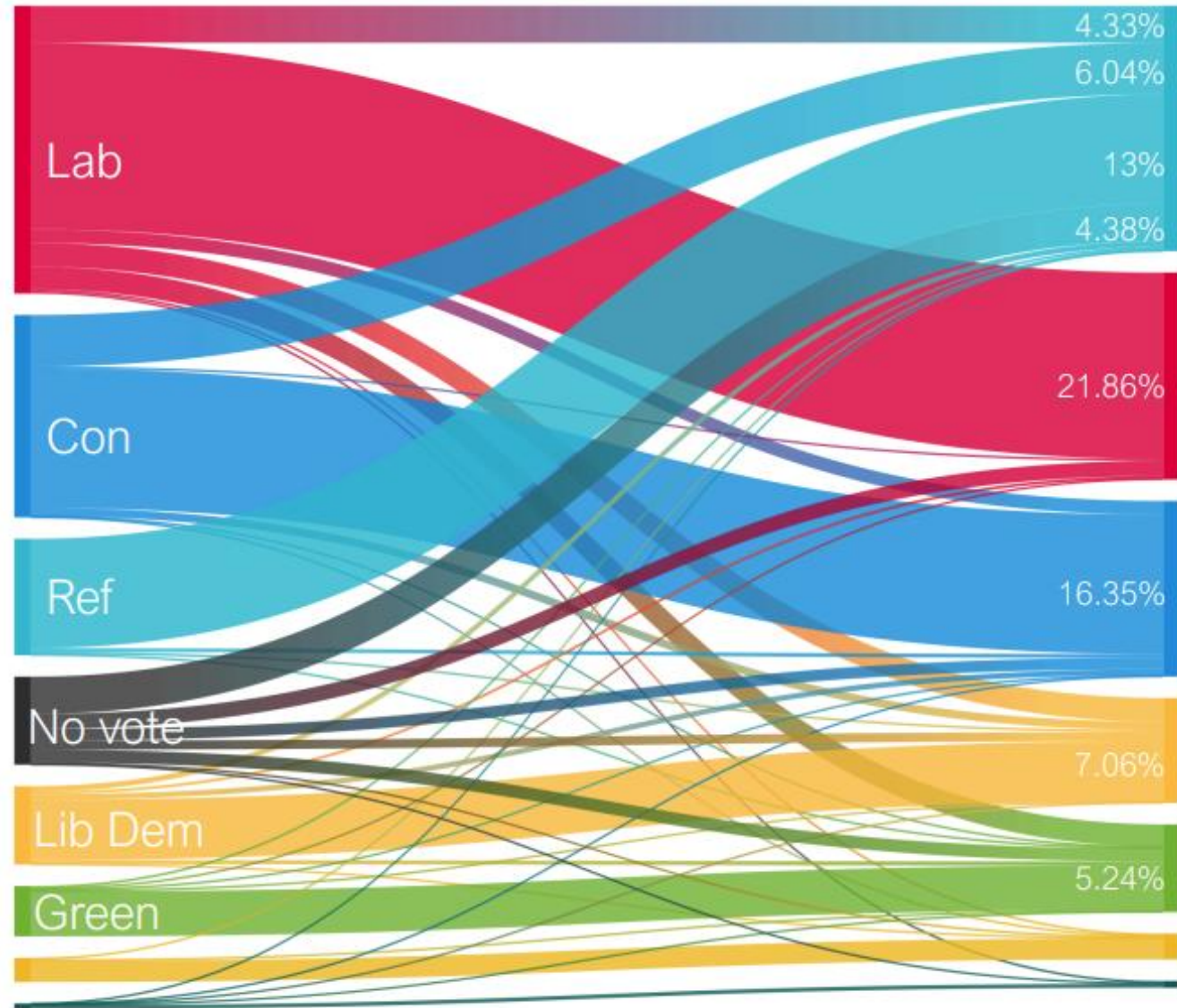
Trade-offs voters would be willing to make to increase public spending in **higher education** vs. **defence** (UK Voter Average)





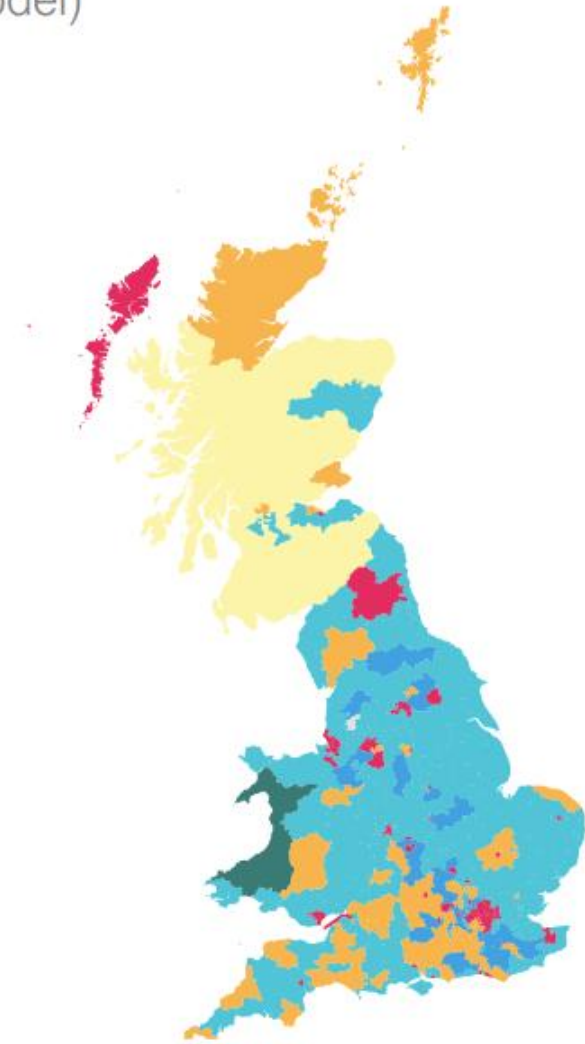
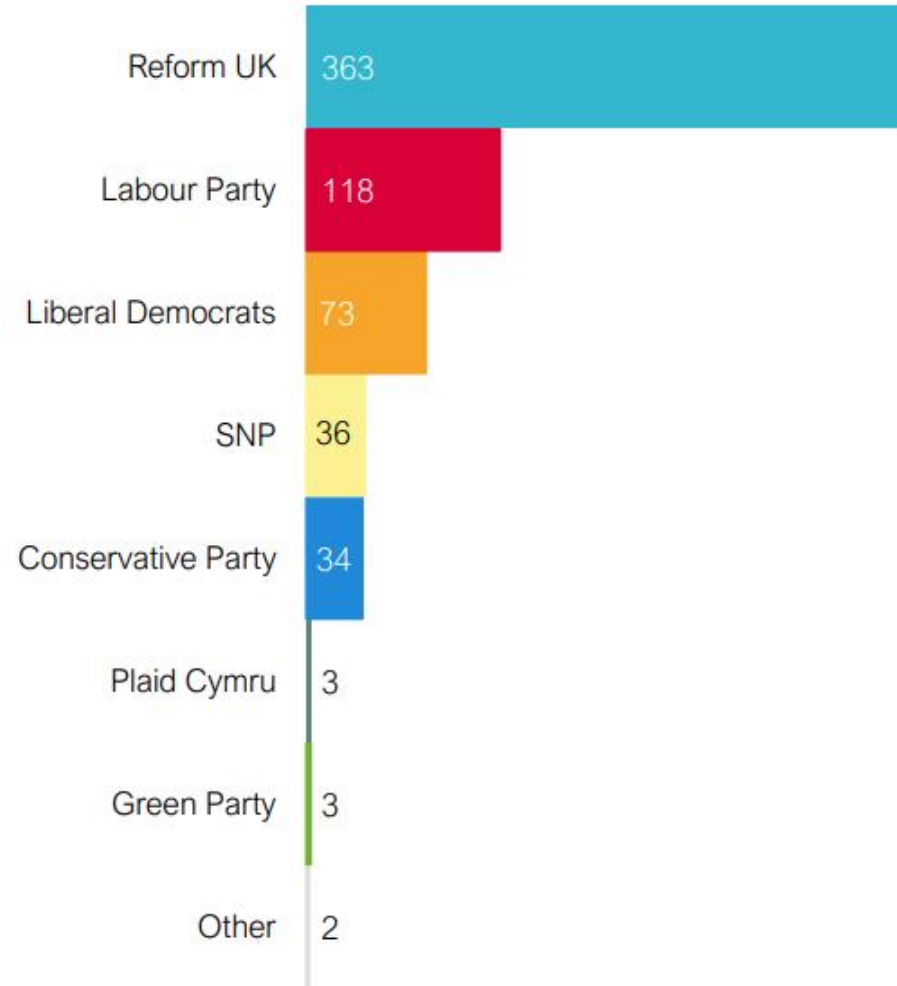
2024 GE

Vote intention now





Projected seats if an election were held tomorrow (baseline model)



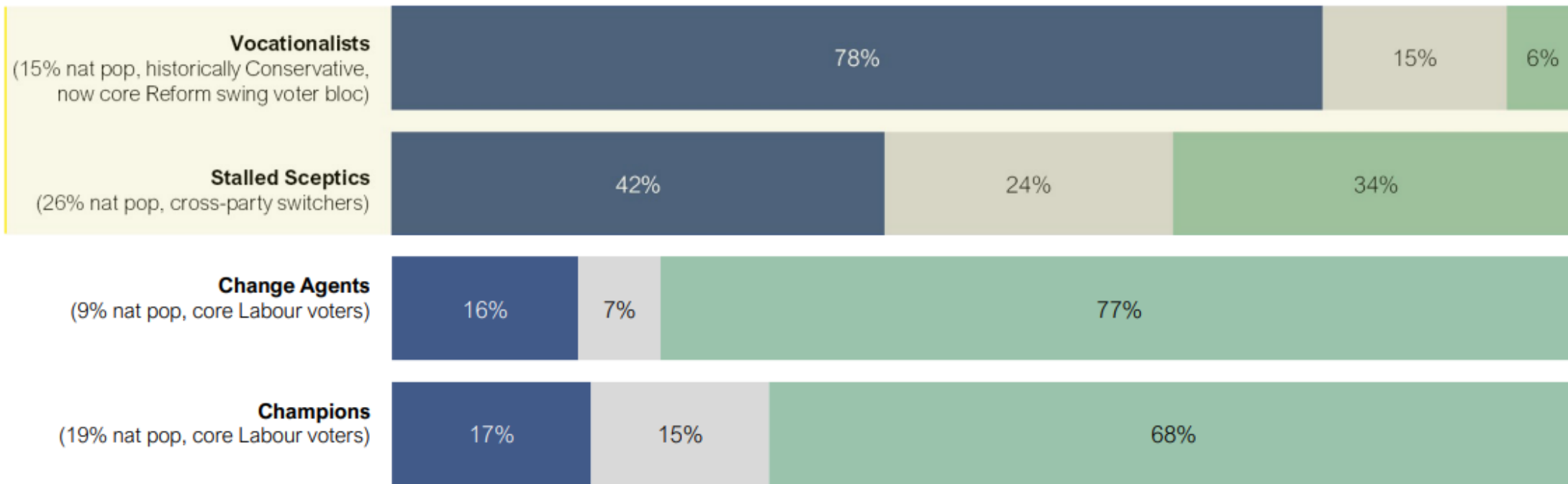
Data source: SHGH MRP Programme | October 2025



The voter groups with the greatest political influence are seeking tangible change in higher education.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the UK higher education?

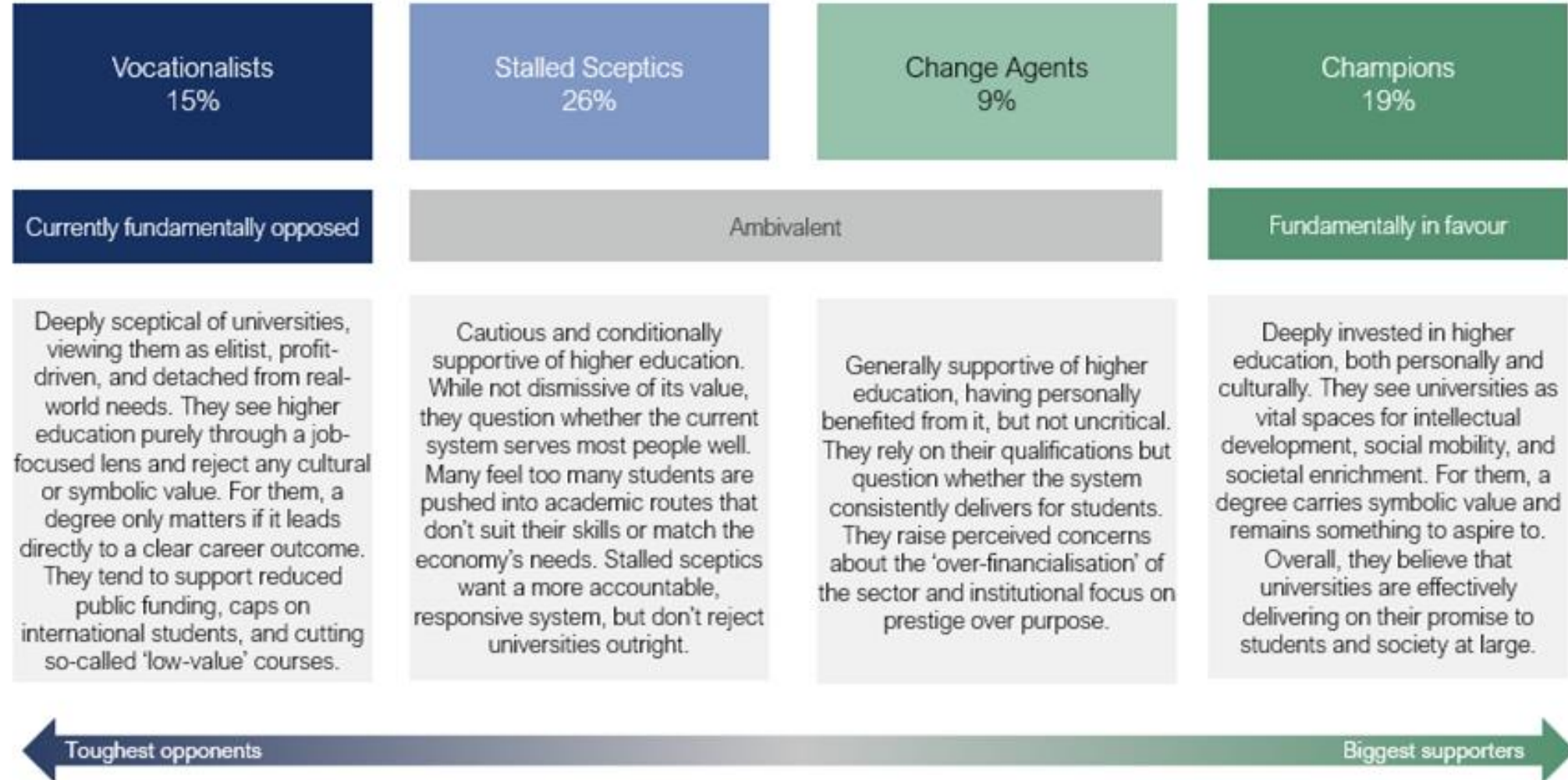
- The university system is broken and needs a complete overhaul to meet the needs of students and employers
- Neutral
- The university system is fit for purpose and meets the needs of students and employers



* *Caveat: a disengaged segment of the electorate has been omitted/removed (31%). Demonstrated no clear views or attitudes on the HE sector.*



Their views on higher education





News Radio Video Opinion Callers Politics Crime World Business & Money Science & T

LISTEN NOW



Shelagh Fogarty
1pm - 4pm

ON AIR NOW

30 Sep 2025, 15:17 |
Updated: 30 Sept 2025

Starmer scraps target to get 50% of school leavers into university

Share



The target was set by Sir Tony Blair in a September 1999 conference speech and was met for the first time in 2019.





Bar Student Dependents

Introduce new visa rules for international students that bar dependents. Only international students with essential skills can remain in the UK. Close down fake courses and immigration schemes that abuse the rules.

people are proud of Britain and learn the skills, character and values to succeed in life.

CRITICAL REFORMS NEEDED IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS:

A Patriotic Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools

Any teaching about a period or example of British or European imperialism or slavery must be paired with the teaching of a non-European occurrence of the same to ensure balance. History and social science curriculum to be reviewed and audited regularly to ensure balance. Our children must be taught about their heritage.

Ban Transgender Ideology in Primary and Secondary Schools

No gender questioning, social transitioning or pronoun swapping. Inform parents of under 16s about their children's life decisions. Schools must have single sex facilities.

Tax relief of 20% on all Independent Education

No VAT on Fees. If parents can afford to pay a bit more, we should incentivise them to choose

for all.

Scrap Interest on Student Loans

Extend loan capital repayment periods to 45 years. Restrict undergraduate numbers well below current levels, too many courses are not good enough and students are being ripped off. Enforce minimum entry standards.

Thereafter:

Cut Funding to Universities that Undermine Free Speech

The government's Free Speech Act is toothless. Allowing political bias or cancel culture must face heavy financial penalties.

Permanent Exclusions for Violent and Disruptive Students

We will double the number of Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) so schools can function safely. We will also ensure that best practice is spread across PRUs.

Universities Must Provide 2-Year Undergraduate Courses

The option of 2-year courses would reduce student debt and allow earlier entry into employment to help pay it off.



“Education that nurtures skills, character and values - not a divided society.”



How can universities respond to the political environment?

1. **Think local:** how can you make the work you do more visible to the public and to politicians in your region?
2. **Be future facing:** frame conversations not around the status quo, but around building a better future
3. **Align with sectors and industries that command public support:** eg, healthcare, defense, schools
4. **Recognise the reality:** studying at university *is* expensive, finding a job *is* hard. The sector can engage productively with those issues.
5. **Engage with your local Reform party now**