

# Jewish voting intentions on the eve of the 2024 UK General Election

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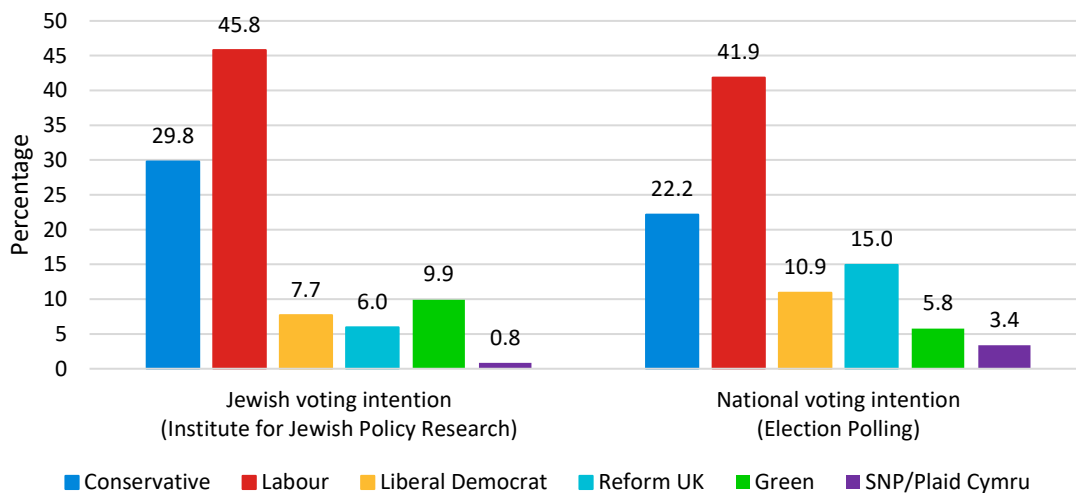
## / Introduction

On the eve of the 2024 UK General Election, national polls show the Labour Party ahead of the Conservative Party by 20 percentage points. An average of polls at the time of publication has Labour at 41.9% and Conservatives at 22.2%, with Reform UK at 15.0%, well ahead of the Liberal Democrats, Greens, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru and other parties. These polls do not, however, show the voting intention of Jewish people in the UK. The JPR Research Panel provides the research infrastructure to gather nationally representative data about Jewish people's behaviours and attitudes on a wide range of social and political issues. This paper presents initial data on voting intentions for 4 July 2024, based on 2,717 UK-based Jewish adults who responded to a survey between 14-20 June.

## 1 / Comparing Jewish and national voting intentions

Figure 1 below (right) shows the average of national polls described above, published by Election Polling. JPR data on the left-hand side of the figure shows equivalent differences in the voting intention of Jews in the UK.

**Figure 1. Comparing the current voting intention of Jews in the UK with current national polls**



National voting intention is from Election Polling from 2-20 June.<sup>1</sup> Jewish voting intention is from JPR Research Panel respondents, 16-20 June (n=1,777).<sup>2</sup> The question normally asked is: "If a general election were held tomorrow, how would you vote?" and more recently has been "How do you intend to vote in the General Election on 4th July?"

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.electionpolling.co.uk/polls/general-election>.

<sup>2</sup> JPR results are based on 2,717 JPR research panellists who responded to the 2024 Current Affairs Survey between 16-20 June 2024. The figures presented exclude those who were: ineligible to vote (3.5%, unweighted n=82); do not intend to vote (2.5%, unweighted n=63); prefer not to report their voting intention (3.6%, unweighted n=118); or are undecided (22.6%, unweighted n=642). To allow comparability with national data, Figure 1 also excludes 35 cases (unweighted n=1.7%) who intend to vote for another party (e.g. independent), leaving a base of 1,777 respondents. Figures 2 to 4 include these 35 'other' voters so the base there is 1,812.

The key observations are:

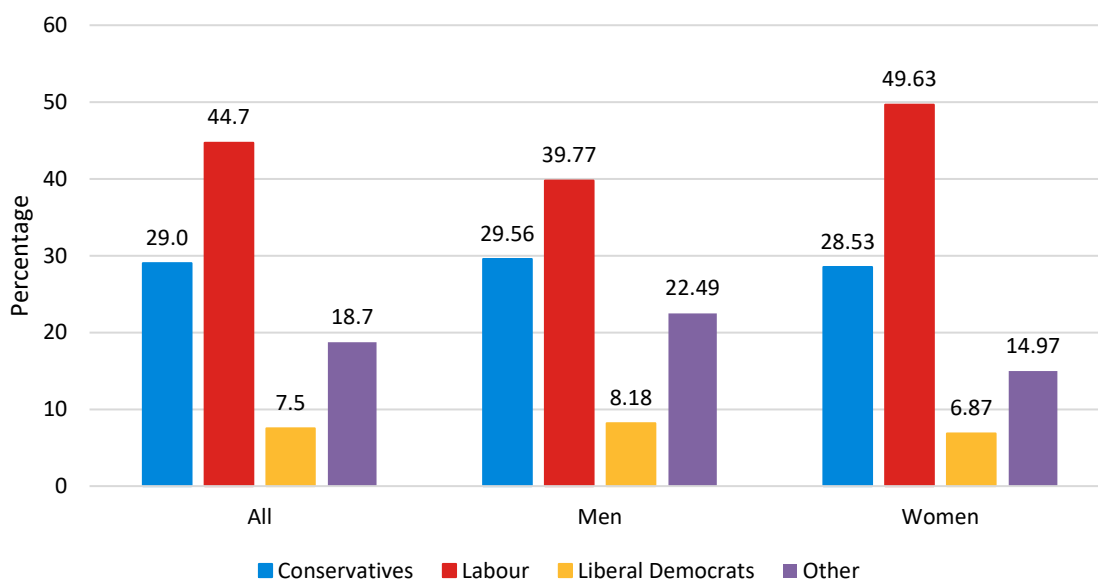
- Support for the Labour Party is slightly higher among Jews in the UK (45.8%) than it is nationally (41.9%).<sup>3</sup>
- While support for the Conservative Party among Jews is lower than for Labour (29.8%), it remains higher than the national level of Conservative support (22.2%).
- Part of the reason for this is that Reform UK (which is attracting 6% of Jewish voters) has not split the right-wing vote to the same extent as it has nationally (where 15% of voters state their intention to vote Reform UK). Indeed, when we combine Conservative and Reform UK, the percentage who are right-leaning among Jews (35.7%) is not significantly different from the national level (37.2%). Combined, it remains lower than Labour support.
- The fact that the Conservative voting intention among Jews remains high relative to national figures (29.8% versus 22.2%), means that there is a slightly smaller Labour lead among Jews in the UK (16.0 percentage points) than among the population as a whole (19.7 percentage points).

Overall, therefore, we see strong support for Labour at present, with some movement towards Reform UK but less so than has been seen nationally. Fewer Jews intend to vote Liberal Democrat, Green, SNP or Plaid Cymru, focusing their votes on the key battle between Conservative and Labour.

## 2 / How does voting intention vary among Jews?

Figure 2 shows the voting intention of all Jews in the UK and how this varies by gender (right). While the Conservative vote is similar, Jewish women are more likely to vote Labour than Jewish men, and Jewish men are more likely to vote for other parties, including the Green Party and Reform UK.

**Figure 2. Voting intention, overall and by gender (n=1,812)**

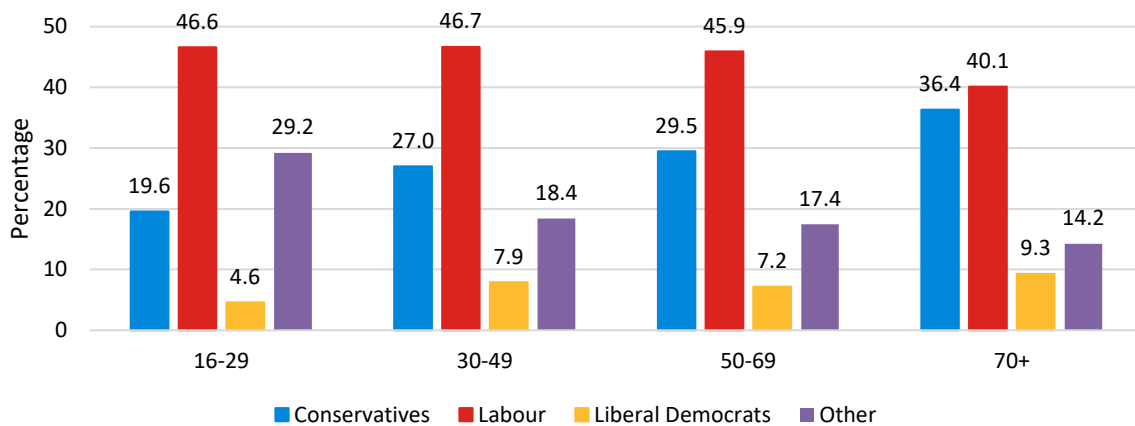


Question: "How do you intend to vote in the General Election on 4th July?". JPR Research Panel 16-20 June, see footnote 2 for an explanation of sample sizes. Unweighted bases: men n=867, women n=945.

<sup>3</sup> Among the population as a whole Labour support is likely to be between 43.5% and 48.1% (+/- 2.1%), Conservative between 27.7% and 31.9% (+/- 2.3%) and Reform UK between 4.9 and 7.1% (+/- 1.1%).

Figure 3 shows that support for Labour is consistently high at present across age groups up to the age of 70 and over, when it drops. In contrast, support for the Conservative Party rises across consecutive age-groups, with less than a fifth of the youngest (19.6% aged 16-29) compared to over a third of the oldest (36.4% of those aged 70 and over) intending to vote Conservative. The result is that the Labour lead varies widely, from a substantial 27 percentage point lead among those aged 16-29, to a lead that is no longer statistically distinguishable from Conservative support among the 70+ age group. Further analysis of this phenomenon is needed, but a reasonable explanation is that the youngest voters have most clearly rejected the Conservative Party, most often intending to vote Labour but also very substantially intending to vote for other parties, including the Green Party and Reform UK.

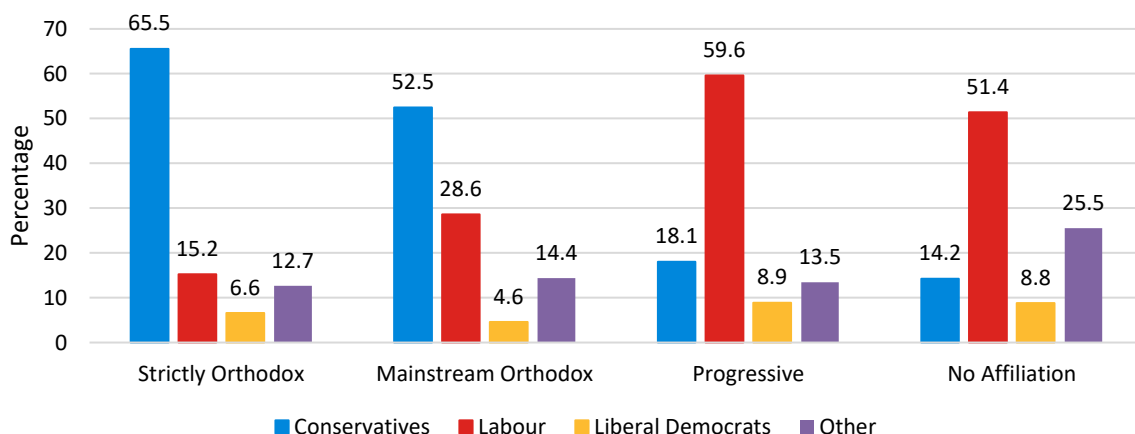
**Figure 3. Voting intention by age group, n=1,812**



Question: "How do you intend to vote in the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July?". JPR Research Panel 16-20 June, see footnote 2. Unweighted bases: age 16-29 n=156, age 30-49 n=360, age 50-69 n=595, age 70 plus n=701.

As might be expected, voting intention varies very clearly by denomination. Figure 4 shows that Strictly Orthodox and Mainstream Orthodox Jews are very much more likely to vote Conservative, and much less likely to vote Labour. The corollary can be seen among progressive and unaffiliated Jews.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 4. Voting intention by synagogue denomination (n=1,778)**



Question: "How do you intend to vote in the General Election on 4<sup>th</sup> July?". JPR Research Panel 16-20 June, see footnote 2. Unweighted bases: Strictly Orthodox n=169; Mainstream Orthodox n=551; Progressive n=624; No affiliation n=434).

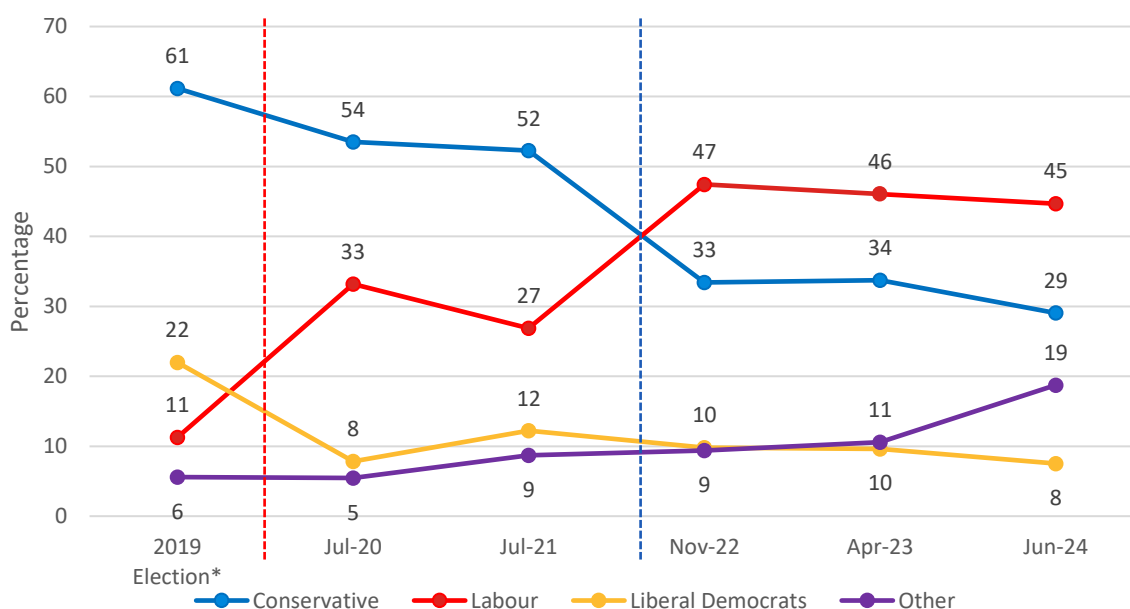
<sup>4</sup> The fact that religious affiliation or denomination is so strongly associated with voting intention means that any estimates which do not correctly reflect the balance of Jews across the denominational spectrum will be misleading.

### 3 / How has voting behaviour and intention changed from 2019 to 2024?

It may seem surprising that the Jewish Labour vote is as high as it is, given the very significant rift between many traditional Labour voters when Jeremy Corbyn was leader of the Labour Party. To date, there has been limited data published about Jewish voting patterns, but JPR Research Panel data, gathered at five points between July 2020 and June 2024, shows a remarkable recovery post Corbyn, with a concomitant decline in the Conservative share.

In July 2020, just over 6,000 individuals reported the political party they voted for in the 2019 General Election (shown in the set of data points on the left-hand side of Figure 5), and were asked how they would vote if an election were to be held the following day (shown in the second set of data points in Figure 5). This suggests that in 2019, the Labour vote was as low as 11.3% of Jews, Conservative support was at 61.2%, most likely an all-time high, and the Liberal Democrats were clearly in second place among Jews at 22.0%. It also shows that by July 2020, just a few months after the election of Sir Keir Starmer as Leader of the Labour Party in April 2020 (indicated by the red vertical line on Figure 5), there had been a substantial recovery in Labour support, and a fall in support for both the Conservative and Liberal Democrats.

Figure 5. Change in voting among Jews in the UK: 2019 to 2024<sup>5</sup>



Note: The red vertical line indicates the election of Keir Starmer as leader of the Labour Party in April 2020. The blue vertical line indicates the resignation of Boris Johnson as Prime Minister (July 2022) and the appointment of Liz Truss (September 2022) and then Rishi Sunak (October 2022).

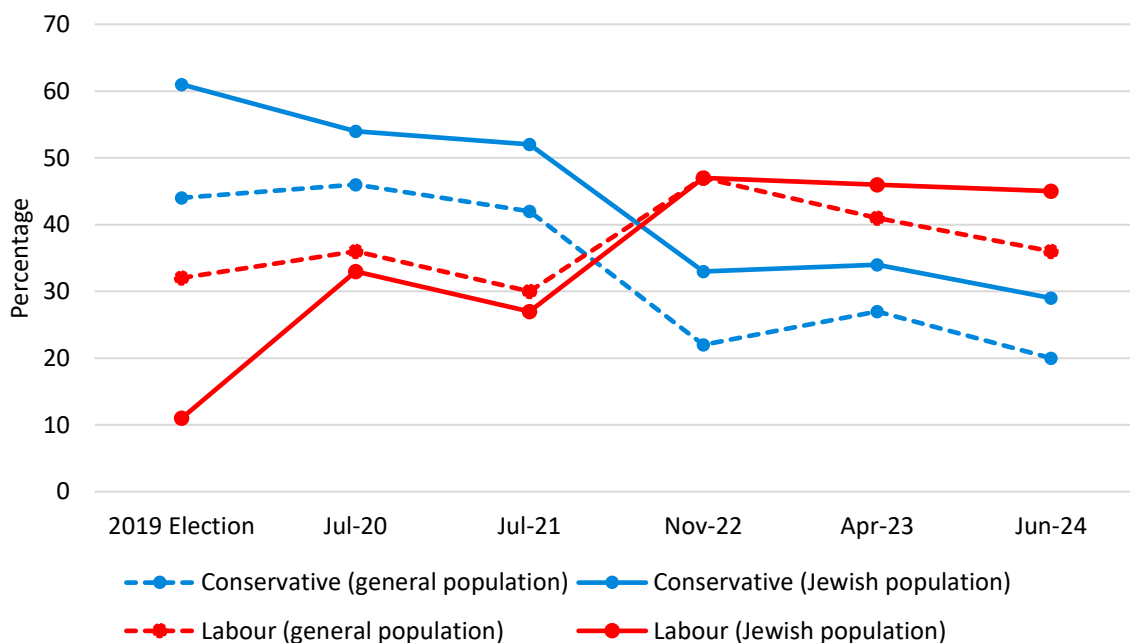
<sup>5</sup> The 2019 election data is based on the question asked retrospectively in the first wave of the JPR Research Panel in July 2020: “How did you vote in the last general election on 12th December 2019 (when Boris Johnson was the leader of the Conservative Party and Jeremy Corbyn was the leader of the Labour Party)?” (n=6,016). The July 2020 survey also included the question “If a general election were held tomorrow, how would you vote?” (n=4,873, base is lower, for example due to removal of the undecideds for analysis). This question was repeated in subsequent waves of the JPR Research Panel in July-August 2021 (n=2,985), November-December 2022 (n=3,484) and April-May 2023 (n=2,764). As with Figures 2-4, the June 2024 data is based on the question “How do you intend to vote in the General Election on 4th July?” collected from the JPR Research Panel from 16-20 June (n=1,812), see footnote 2. The lines between the data points indicate the trend, though we have no data between these data points. There are small compositional differences in the sample surveyed at each time point, but on each occasion data are weighted for age, sex, geography and denomination to make them optimally comparable.

Some further shifts in voting intention can be seen a year later, at the time of the second JPR Research Panel survey in July-August 2022 (the third set of data points in Figure 5), with declines in Labour and, to a lesser extent, Conservative support.

The third JPR Research Panel was held in November 2022, just after a brief spell of extraordinary unrest in the Conservative Party, with Boris Johnson stepping down in July, Liz Truss becoming Prime Minister for just seven weeks in September and October, before being replaced by Rishi Sunak (indicated by the blue vertical line on Figure 5). The impact of this turmoil resulted in the Conservative Party experiencing a further, precipitous drop in support among Jews, falling to just 33%, with concomitant support for the Labour Party reaching 47%, the first time Jewish support for the Labour Party eclipsed their support for the Conservative Party in the Starmer era.<sup>6</sup>

Comparing the voting patterns of British Jews with those of the general population of the country, we can see that Jewish support for the Conservative Party (blue solid line) has largely tracked general support (blue dotted line) over the course of the current parliament, albeit at an average of about nine percentage points higher (range 7%-11%). Jewish support for the Labour Party (red solid line) also follows a similar trajectory to general support (red dotted line), quickly recovering after the 2019 General Election to reach very similar levels found in wider society in July 2020, July 2021 and November 2022, before exceeding them in the most recent two time points shown. The indication, as shown in Figure 4, is that whilst the Jewish population is quite heavily divided along denominational lines, collectively, Jews mirror society as a whole quite closely.

**Figure 6. Change in voting intention, Conservative v Labour, Jewish population v general population, 2019 to 2024**



Note: Data for the general population come from YouGov polls conducted on: 9 July 2020; 8 July 2021; 30 November 2022; 27 April 2023; and 18 June 2024 (see: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/trackers/voting-intention>). Data for the 2019 General Election come from the House of Commons Library, see: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8749/>.

<sup>6</sup> This report is based on cross-sectional data at each time point. Longitudinal data based on individuals responding at every survey suggests that Labour support over the Conservatives among Jews was slightly lower than this, but the overall pattern is the same.



## / Conclusion

Support for the Labour Party among British Jews has risen dramatically since the last General Election in the UK in December 2019, when it fell to the lowest levels ever recorded. The subsequent resignation of Jeremy Corbyn and election of Sir Keir Starmer appears to have re-established Jewish people's trust in Labour; indeed, this simple change made a substantial difference to many Jews almost as soon as it happened. Now, on the eve of the 2024 General Election, Jewish support for Labour exceeds general population support by almost four percentage points. Jewish support for the Conservatives similarly exceeds general population support for the party by almost eight percentage points, but has fallen significantly over the course of this parliament, very much in line with the national trend. Conservative support has not given way to support for Reform UK to the extent that it has in the general population.

Jews differ dramatically in their political preferences, particularly along denominational lines. The more traditional, from the nominally orthodox to the haredi, have a strong tendency to lean Conservative; the progressive and communally-unaffiliated lean very significantly Labour. This distinction can be seen in many other respects too, including Jewish social propinquity, whether to marry within or outside the community, and attitudes towards Israel, but not all: in some of the more overtly religious dimensions of Jewishness, the dividing line tends to be between the most orthodox and everyone else. Failure to account for these very acute distinctions by denomination serves to explain why some data on Jewish voting intentions are inaccurate; one cannot accurately assess Jewish social or political attitudes without very careful consideration of denominational factors.

Whilst the voting intention data shown for years 2020-24, both for the Jewish and general populations, do not include the undecided, they nevertheless suggest that Jews are rather more likely to vote for one of the two main political parties than for any of the smaller ones. The only exception to this may be among the youngest age band, where the most recent data (June 2024) indicate high levels of preference for 'Other' – i.e. a party other than Labour, Conservative or the Liberal Democrats. If this continues over time, it would constitute a change in Jewish voting preferences; in recent decades, up to the present, Jews have tended to be political centrists. We will explore this and other trends in the future.

Some have posited that British Jews might swing back towards the Conservative Party following the Hamas attacks on Israel on 7 October 2023, on the grounds that they feel Conservative Party policy on Israel and the Middle East is more favourable to Israel than Labour Party policy. The JPR 2024 Jewish Current Affairs Survey asks a wide range of questions which will make it possible to explore this issue in some depth, but for the time being, we find no clear evidence of this in the data we have so far explored. Whilst many Jews have been affected deeply by those attacks, and indeed by the subsequent war, overall, there is little to differentiate them from the wider general population of the UK in terms of their voting intentions. Despite the clear denominational gradient shown in Figure 4, they tend to track national trends, albeit at slightly higher or lower levels, except when they feel extremely concerned about antisemitism, as was the case when the vast majority deserted the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn at the time of the last General Election in 2019.

Of course, the data outlined here are voting *intentions*, measured a few weeks in advance of the General Election, and exclude those who have not yet decided who to vote for. Future research will confirm how British Jews actually voted on 4 July 2024, and allow us to more accurately assess the extent to which people's intentions align with their actual voting behaviour.

## **/ Methodological note**

The data on the voting intentions of Jews in the UK are drawn from the JPR Research Panel which surveys UK residents aged 16 or above who self-identify as being Jewish 'in any way at all.' The JPR Research Panel is recruited through a combination of emails to Jewish community organisations, referrals from other survey participants, and marketing campaigns designed particularly to include less well represented groups – those not engaged in the Jewish community and younger respondents. At each wave, five £100 shopping vouchers are offered as an incentive to participate. The data are based on a volunteer sample; it is not possible to build a random-probability sample because there is no comprehensive list of Jews from which to draw, and because the Jewish population of the UK is difficult to define, very small, and geographically skewed. Nevertheless, considerable efforts have been made both to boost the number of under-represented groups and to weight the data to adjust for known population parameters. The survey data are cleaned and weighted to adjust for the age, sex and geographical distribution based on 2021 Census data for Jewish identity (both religion and ethnicity), and denomination data from a 2016 survey, updated based on more recent evidence.

The Panel is designed to explore the attitudes and experiences of Jews in the UK on a variety of issues. Each questionnaire is developed by JPR, drawing on a range of existing surveys. The surveys are programmed in-house using Forsta software and are completed online, by computer, smartphone or tablet. The data presented in this paper were collected at five points in time: 9-31 July 2021, 22 July-31 August 2022, 16 November-23 December 2023, 16 April-31 May 2023 and 16-20 June 2024 (with fieldwork remaining open to maximise response to the full survey). The total sample size for each survey was: 6,983 in the first wave, 4,314 in the second wave, 4,907 in the third, and 3,767 in the fourth wave. The 2,717 respondents that underpin the current data took part between 16 and 20 June 2024, with the survey due to close in early July 2024.

The JPR Research Panel is not based on a random probability sample so confidence intervals must be reported with caution. Nevertheless, the confidence intervals for the total population are plus or minus between 2 and 3%. For example, Labour support is likely to be between 43.5% and 48.1% (+/- 2.1%), Conservative support between 27.7% and 31.9% (+/- 2.3%) and Reform UK support between 4.9 and 7.1% (+/- 1.1%). The confidence intervals for sub-groups of the population will be larger.

Statistical analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS and R. Further details of the methodology used in our panel are available on request.

## **/ Acknowledgments**

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## / About the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR)

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) is a London-based research organisation, consultancy and think-tank. It aims to advance the prospects of Jewish communities in the United Kingdom and across Europe by conducting research and informing policy development in dialogue with those best placed to positively influence Jewish life. Web: [www.jpr.org.uk](http://www.jpr.org.uk).

## / Research team

**Dr Carli Lessof** is a Senior Research Fellow at JPR with responsibility for JPR's community statistics programme, online research panel, and monitoring and evaluation. She has an MA in Applied Social Research from Manchester University and a PhD with the National Centre for Research Methods in the Department of Social Statistics at Southampton University. Over her career, she has developed and delivered a range of complex, longitudinal surveys at NatCen Social Research and Kantar Public, and carried out research and evaluation in Government (DWP, NAO) and academia (LSE, University of Essex).

**Dr Jonathan Boyd** is Executive Director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, Associate Research Fellow at University College London and a former Jerusalem Fellow at the Mandel Institute in Israel. A specialist in contemporary Jewry with expertise in the study of Jews in the UK and across Europe, he is a Board member of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry, and a regular columnist in the Jewish press. He holds a doctorate in education from the University of Nottingham, and an MA and BA in Jewish history from University College London.