

How the Best for Britain BES research builds on previous findings

Best for Britain published two pieces of research based on findings from the [British Election Study](#), in particular the internet panel releases from during and after the election campaign (April-June 2017, Waves 11,12 and 13).

Best for Britain report two sets of findings. Firstly, by looking at only respondents who voted Labour in June 2017, they observe that according to the BES weighted sample the majority of Labour voters in every region of the country, age group and social grade voted majority remain. This idea may be counterintuitive to some, as they note that in many Labour majority areas the population voted majority leave, but this is a misinterpretation. This was pointed out as far back as February 2017 by [Sir John Curtice](#), discussing Labour's strategy of fighting UKIP for leave voters in Stoke-on-Trent he said (*Labour*) *seems to have forgotten (or not realised) that most of those who voted Labour in 2015 – including those living in Labour seats in the North and the Midlands – backed remain.* With Labour gaining even more remain voters in 2017 (and losing a small number of leave voters), **the BES confirms that it is still the case that Labour is the party of remain everywhere, even for older voters, C2DE voters and those in the North, Midlands and Wales.**

The second set of research Best for Britain published is building on the question asked by the BES throughout the election period "As far as you're concerned, what is the SINGLE MOST important issue facing the country at the present time?". The BES research team published the results of this back in August, in the post-election poll, reporting about 1 in 3 respondents stated Brexit as their Most Important Issue (MII) in the [post-election poll](#). However, since the question is an open text question it is difficult to rely on the answers from just one poll, particularly with many respondents concerned by the terrorist atrocities that took place during that period. We therefore looked at all answers to the question over the election period (April-June 2017) and we defined a voter as having Brexit as their MII if they answered Brexit at any point in that period. Using this method, **nearly half of all respondents to the BES at some point mentioned Brexit as their MII, the most dominant issue by far.**

We wanted to understand a bit more about who these voters were who had Brexit as their MII and those that didn't. Was there a difference in the parties that they voted for? Clearly having Brexit as their MII doesn't mean that they necessarily voted because of Brexit, nor does not having Brexit as their MII mean that they were not concerned about Brexit, however we can assume that a voter who stated Brexit as their MII was much more likely to have voted with Brexit influencing their voting choice than if it was not their MII. Understanding who these two groups of voters are, not just who they vote for, but which demographics they originate from can help understand who in the UK is motivated or concerned about Brexit today.

R Code for this analysis can be found here: <https://github.com/visualuncertainty/elections>