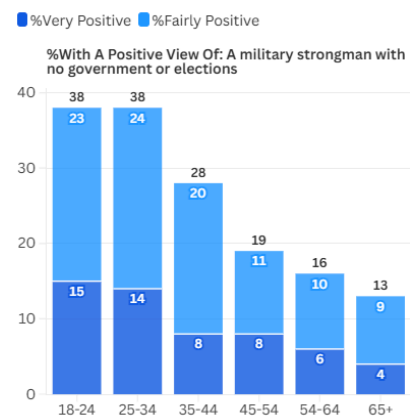


Generation Extreme

Intergenerational support for non-democratic forms of government and extreme ideologies

Onward and Merlin Strategy’s new polling finds that there is significant support for extreme and undemocratic forms of government and political ideologies among younger British people. There is significant variation by age, with support for non-democratic forms of government and extreme ideologies declining markedly with age. Overall, younger Brits emerge as much more likely than those in older age groups to hold a positive view of military strongman government, absolute monarchy, communism and fascism.

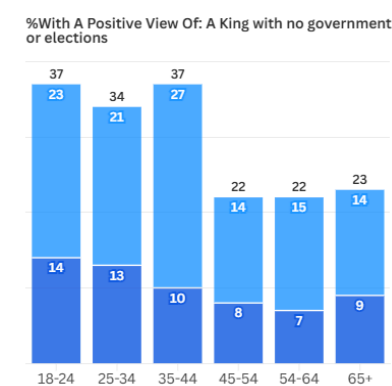
Chart 1. Percentage of British people with a very or fairly positive view of ‘a military strongman with no government or elections’ as a way of running the UK, by age.



Asked their views on different ways of running the UK, younger people are significantly more likely than older people to say they view ‘a military strongman with no government or elections’ very or fairly positively.

As shown in Chart 1 above, while 38% respectively of those aged 18-24 and 25-34 reported holding a very or fairly positive view of a military strongman government, only 28% of 35-44 year olds, 19% of 45-54 year olds, 16% of 54-64 year olds, and 13% of over 65s did.

Chart 2. Percentage of British people with a very or fairly positive view of ‘a King with no government or elections’ as a way of running the UK, by age.

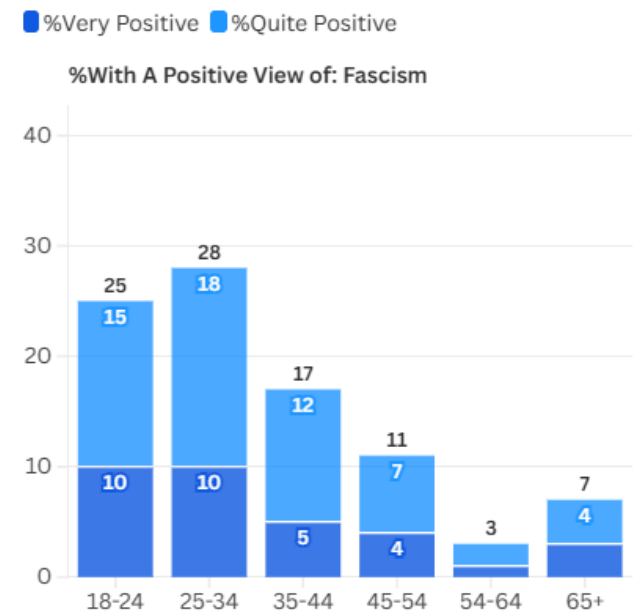


We also asked Brits their view on ‘a King with no government or elections’ as a way of running the UK. Once again, younger generations viewed this undemocratic form of government more favourably than those in older ones.

As shown in Chart 2 above, over a third over all those aged below 44 reported that they view ‘a King with no government or elections’ very or fairly positively – 37% of those aged 18-24, 34% of those aged 25-34, and 37% of those aged 35-44. By contrast, only 22% of those aged 45-54, 22% of those aged 54-64, and 23% of those aged over 65 agreed.

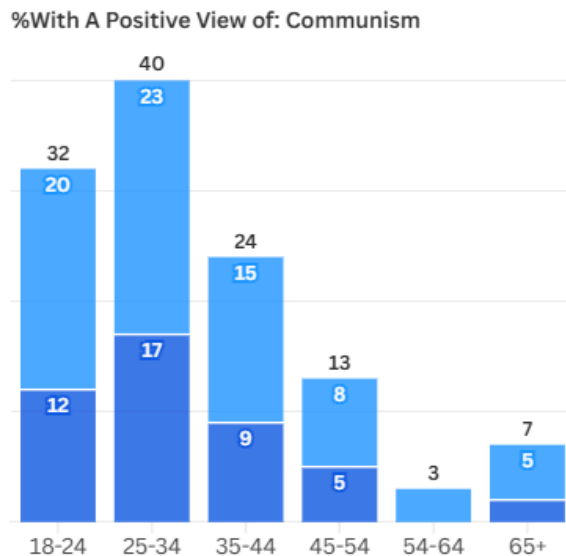
Our polling also finds that younger British people are more likely to view both extreme right and left wing political ideologies favourably than older people.

Chart 3. Percentage of British people with a very or fairly positive view of fascism, by age.



A quarter of Brits aged 18-24 and 28% of those aged 25-34 say they view facism very or fairly positively. As can be seen in Chart 3 above, positive views of Fascism decrease markedly with age and are lowest in the 54-64 age group, with only 3% of 54-64 year olds reporting a positive view of fascism.

Chart 4. Percentage of British people with a very or fairly positive view of communism, by age.



Positive views of communism are also significantly higher among younger age groups. Nearly a third (32%) of British people aged 18-24 say they view communism either very or fairly positively. A plurality of 40% of those aged 25-34 also report viewing communism positively. As shown in Chart 4 above the likelihood of reporting a positive view of communism drops sharply with age. While nearly a quarter (24%) of those aged 35-44 report viewing communism positively, only 13% of those aged 45-54, 3% of those aged 54-64, and 7% of those aged over 65 do.

Conclusion

The UK has been a parliamentary democracy since at least the eighteenth century. This polling reveals that the base of support for this system is alarmingly weak among younger people, who are much more likely to view undemocratic alternatives positively than older people do. Our findings also show that younger people may also be significantly more open to extreme political ideologies than older people, much more likely to view communism and fascism favourably.

That the battleground of British politics is the centre-ground has to some extent assumed the status of a truism. But our results show that this consensus must be maintained and that to do so, politicians must do a better job of proving to young British people the value of a liberal, parliamentary democracy, from free elections to the rule of law. That not only means defending

democratic norms in principle, but ensuring that institutions are delivering for younger generations, the same younger generations that this polling shows are losing faith in the system.

Methodology note

- The polling on extreme political ideologies was in the field on 28th-29th June 2025, with a sample size of 1,500 British adults.
- The polling on non-democratic forms of government was in the field on 17th-18th June 2025, with a sample size of 2,000 British adults.