

Which political parties support public ownership

Do you want an **NHS** that works for patients not profit? **Water** in public hands and an end to sewage in your rivers and seas? No more profiteering from your **energy** bills? Do you think **public transport** and the **Royal Mail** should be publicly owned? If you've answered yes to these questions, you're in the majority. But are the politicians listening to you?

You can find out below with our easy overview of where the main political parties stand on public ownership (in order of how many votes they received in the 2024 election). The ratings are based on a) **what the political party says** about public ownership, b) what it **does when in power** and c) the **direction of travel** - is it sticking with the status quo of privatisation? Or is it open to and moving towards running public services for people not profit?


Click/tap the icons to see details of each party's policies. Alternatively, read all the details below, or [download this page as a PDF](#).

	NHS 	Water 	Rail 	Energy 	Buses 	Royal Mail
Public support for public ownership	87%	82%	76%	71%	66%	75%
Labour						
Conservatives						
REFORM UK						
Liberal Democrats						
Green Party						
SNP						
plaid cymru						
YOUR PARTY						

Legend:

- Supports public ownership.
- Mixed support.
- Opposes public ownership.
- Unknown support.



 NHS: 🤔 mixed

Labour's 2024 manifesto promised the NHS would always be publicly owned and funded. However the government is planning a new Private Finance Initiative style deal for Neighbourhood Health Centres and is outsourcing services and [technology](#) instead of expanding NHS capacity. Health Secretary Wes Streeting is 60%+ funded by private healthcare donors and has said he "[won't shrink from opening the NHS](#)" to the private sector.

 Water: ❌ private

The government has repeatedly said it will not nationalise water and banned the recent Cunliffe water review from considering public ownership.

 Rail: ✅ public

The government is bringing all rail franchises into public ownership. Caveat: The rolling stock is still privatised so [we are demanding](#) that they set up a publicly owned company to own the trains, and end competition law on the railway.

The Welsh Labour government took the [Wales and Border rail franchise into public ownership in 2021](#).

 Energy: 🤔 mixed

The government set up Great British Energy as a generation company in public ownership but with a small budget and no retail wing. Most of the energy grid is staying privatised.

 Buses: ✅ public

The government is scrapping the ban on new publicly owned bus companies and making it easier for local authorities to regulate buses after decisions to take buses into public control by mayors in [Greater Manchester](#), [West Yorkshire](#) and [South Yorkshire](#) following our campaigning. Caveat: The government could make public control and ownership easier with funding pots for local authorities.

The Welsh Labour government is in [the process of introducing bus franchising](#).

 Royal Mail: ❌ private

The Labour government approved the sell off of Royal Mail to Czech billionaire Daniel Křetínský.

Conservatives

NHS: ✘ private

The Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition introduced the 2012 legislation, which paved the way for greater privatisation in the NHS. From 2012–13 to 2020–21 NHS trust spend on outsourcing to independent sector providers (ISPs) increased nearly seven-fold, from over [£220 million to £1.7 billion](#). From 2012–2024, the NHS lost [£10 million a week](#) due to private profits.

Water: ✘ private

Conservatives support continued privatisation of water.

Rail: ✘ private

The Conservative government was forced to bring rail franchises into public ownership after private failure but Conservatives still support “competition” and private companies on the railway.

Energy: 🤔 mixed

The Conservative government mostly supported ongoing privatisation. However it also set in motion the plan to bring part of National Grid into public ownership, creating [NESO](#) to enable Net Zero planning. Private shareholders received £630 million in compensation.

Buses: ✘ private

Conservatives support continued privatisation and deregulation of buses.

Royal Mail: ✘ private

The Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition sold off our Royal Mail in 2013–15.



 NHS: ✗ private

Nigel Farage has suggested a model where different insurance companies compete and said he's open to a "[French-style insurance model](#)". This would require patients to pay for treatment up-front and then reclaim from a combination of the state and private insurance policies. [Reform's 2024 manifesto](#) talks about harnessing private companies and tax relief on private healthcare.

 Water: ✓ public

Reform wants 50% public ownership and 50% UK pension funds ownership of our water and called to [end foreign ownership of utilities](#). Caveat: pension funds ownership is not full public ownership.

 Rail: ✓ public

Reform wants 50% public ownership and 50% UK pension funds ownership of critical national infrastructure and seems to include rail in this category. Caveat: pension funds ownership is not full public ownership.

 Energy: ✓ public

Reform wants 50% public ownership and 50% UK pension funds ownership of our energy and called to [end foreign ownership of utilities](#). Caveat: pension funds ownership is not full public ownership.

 Buses: ? unknown

No mention of Buses in Reform's manifesto. The party might see them as "critical national infrastructure" but it has not confirmed either way.

 Royal Mail: ? unknown

No mention of Royal Mail in Reform's manifesto. The party might see it as "critical national infrastructure" but it has not confirmed either way.



 NHS: ❌ private

The Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition introduced the 2012 legislation, which paved the way for greater privatisation in the NHS. From 2012–13 to 2020–21 NHS trust spend on outsourcing to independent sector providers (ISPs) increased nearly seven-fold, from over [£220 million to £1.7 billion](#). From 2012–2024, the NHS lost [£10 million a week](#) due to private profits.

 Water: 🤔 mixed


Liberal Democrats want to transform water companies into [public benefit companies](#). Caveat: shareholders would still make a profit under this model but it would be “reasonable”. There would be a legal requirement to pursue environmental goals and environmental experts would have a seat on the board. It’s unclear how this model would provide accountability to households and workers.

 Rail: ❌ private

The [2024 Liberal Democrat manifesto](#) said the party was [planning on keeping rail franchises in private hands](#).

 Energy: ? unknown

Liberal Democrats say their public benefit company model should apply to “monopoly utility companies” which would suggest they want to reduce profits and increase accountability in the energy transmission and distribution networks. This has not been confirmed.

 Buses: 🤔 mixed

The [Liberal Democrat’s 2024 manifesto](#) included boosting buses by giving local authorities “more powers to franchise services” but it didn’t mention lifting the ban on new publicly owned bus companies.

 Royal Mail: ❌ private

The Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition sold off our Royal Mail in 2013–15.

 **Green Party** **NHS: ✓ public**

The Green Party's 2024 [manifesto](#) said the party is against NHS privatisation. It is "committed to a fully public health service and to keeping the profit motive well away from our NHS".

 **Water: ✓ public**

The Greens want to bring water companies into public ownership. In their 2024 [manifesto](#) they state, "The Green Party is committed to the public ownership of public services, so they are run to serve us all, rather than to increase the wealth of shareholders."

 **Rail: ✓ public**

The Greens want to bring the railways into public ownership. In their 2024 [manifesto](#) they state, "The Green Party is committed to the public ownership of public services, so they are run to serve us all, rather than to increase the wealth of shareholders."

 **Energy: ✓ public**

The Green Party's 2024 [manifesto](#) supports "bringing the Big 5 retail energy companies into public ownership." Caveat: The Greens do not mention energy transmission and distribution networks here, or the need for a well funded publicly owned renewable generation company. However, the party supports public ownership for public services and rejects privatisation in general.

 **Buses: ✓ public**

The Green Party's 2024 [manifesto](#) promised to "give local authorities control over and funding for improved bus services". Caveat: the party didn't mentioned lifting the ban on new publicly owned bus companies. However, the party supports public ownership for public services and rejects privatisation in general.

 **Royal Mail: ✓ public**

The Green Party told [Left Foot Forward](#) in 2024 that "if it were in power it would look towards re-nationalising the company further down the line".

SNP

NHS: 🤔 mixed

The SNP's 2024 [manifesto](#) promised to “protect our NHS from the twin threats of Westminster privatisation and austerity” and the Scottish government is [very clear](#) that it wants the NHS in Scotland to be in public hands. However it also [invited private firms and hospitals](#) to bid to provide NHS-funded healthcare in a [contract which runs until 2027](#).

Water: ✓ public

The Scottish Government is keeping water publicly owned by Scottish Water in Scotland. On average investment is 35% higher than in England and bills are lower too.

Rail: ✓ public

The Scottish Government took ScotRail and the Caledonian Sleeper into public ownership. It is now [actively considering](#) using public green bonds to finance new trains, after [ASLEF the train drivers' union called for](#) publicly owned rolling stock.

Energy: 🤔 mixed

In 2017 Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon promised to set up a publicly owned energy company. Unfortunately [the Scottish government now says](#) it does not have the powers to deliver this under devolution. It is [committed to supporting](#) community and local ownership of energy.

Buses: ✗ private

[Get Glasgow Moving says](#) that Scotland is being slower than England to enable bus franchising (public control of bus networks). The SNP's 2024 manifesto didn't mention public ownership. Scotland's Trade Union Centre is [making the case](#) for “more Lothian Buses across Scotland”

Royal Mail: ✓ public

Back in 2013, when the Royal Mail was sold off, former [First Minister Alex Salmond said](#) the privatisation would be reversed in an independent Scotland.



 NHS: ✓ public

Plaid Cymru's 2024 [manifesto](#) says the party opposes "privatisation of services by stealth through out-sourcing".

 Water: ? unknown

Plaid Cymru wants Wales to be [in charge of its own water](#), with powers to set environment targets and manage sewage licensing. Welsh Water is a not for profit company but is not accountable to anyone and pays out huge interest payments to its creditors. Plaid has not spoken about whether it would plan to make Welsh Water more accountable to households, workers, anti sewage groups or local politicians.

 Rail: ✓ public

[Plaid Cymru wants](#) the railway in public ownership in Wales and in the UK as a whole "so that it acts on behalf of its users, rather than shareholders, and allows for greater alignment of services"

 Energy: ✓ public

Plaid Cymru believes that "[the privatised energy market has patently failed](#)". It wants "full control over our natural resources" and a sovereign wealth fund. The party made the case for [establishing Ynni Cymru](#) as a new publicly owned energy generation company which is boosting community energy. Caveat: Plaid's focus is on energy independence from Westminster. It is not clear whether it wants a publicly owned energy retail company and fully public grid.

 Buses: ✓ public

[Plaid Cymru supports](#) renationalisation of major bus services and integration of bus and rail services. The party wants the needs of passengers, not commercial attractiveness to determine bus routes and it supports bus regulation as a first step.

 Royal Mail: ? unknown

Plaid Cymru was [against](#) the privatisation of Royal Mail and [believes](#) the Post Office should be devolved to Wales and in public ownership. Caveat: There is no clear recent policy on whether Plaid Cymru would support buying back the Royal Mail.

YOUR PARTY

NHS: ✓ public

[Your Party's statement](#) says it supports "an NHS free of privatisation". Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.

Water: ✓ public

[Your Party's statement](#) says it supports bringing water into public ownership. Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.

Rail: ✓ public

[Your Party's statement](#) says it supports bringing rail into public ownership. Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.

Energy: ✓ public

[Your Party's statement](#) says it supports bringing energy into public ownership. Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.

Buses: ✓ public

So far Your Party has not talked publicly about buses, however it is known that leaders Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana support public ownership of public services in general, so we can assume they support buses in public ownership. Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.

Royal Mail: ✓ public

[Your Party's statement](#) says it supports bringing mail into public ownership. Caveat: Full policy programme will likely be confirmed at a future conference.



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