



General Election 2019: A Guide to the Results

December 2019

Contents

- 1 Overview
 - 2 What it means
 - 3 Electoral map and analysis
 - 4 What happens next?
 - 5 Our Services
-

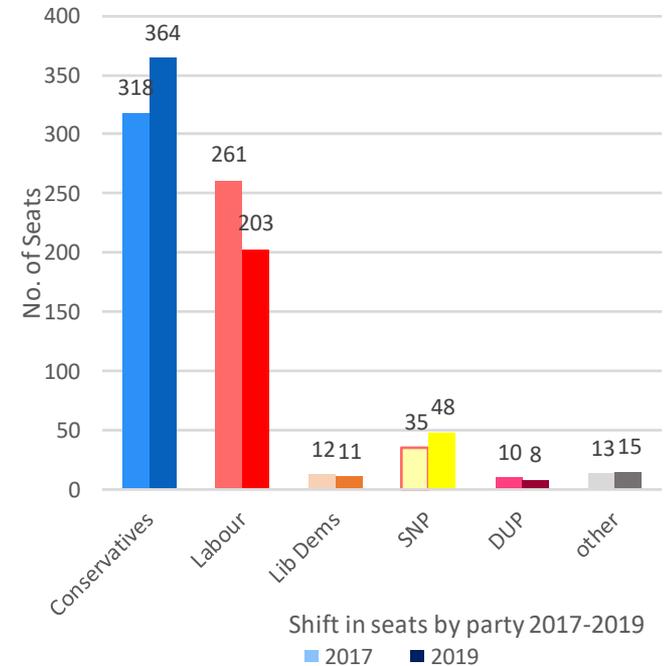
Overview

While opinion polls throughout the campaign pointed towards a Conservative victory, the size of the party's majority took many by surprise and the pound immediately surged following the publication of the exit poll. The emphatic victory for Boris Johnson and his party vindicates the Prime Minister's decision to push for a snap election and he now has a healthy majority of 78 to push through Brexit and his domestic policy agenda. With one seat left to declare at the time of writing, the Conservatives gained 43.6%, Labour 32.2%, the Lib Dems 11.5%, the Greens on 2.7% and the Brexit Party on 2%.

The result is notable for the remarkable success of the Conservative Party in traditional Labour strongholds in the midlands and north of England. Numerous seats which had never previously returned a Conservative MP turned blue, and former safe seats such as Sedgefield (Tony Blair's former seat) were swept away with large swings.

In addition to the Conservatives, the SNP also had an excellent night and gained 13 seats in Scotland. The party now holds 48 of the 59 seats north of the border and Nicola Sturgeon has already renewed her calls for a second independence referendum – a request that the Prime Minister will surely reject.

The Liberal Democrats also had a very disappointing evening. Having pushed for the General Election to take place, they lost one seat overall despite increasing their share of the vote from 2017. Notably, their leader Jo Swinson lost her seat.



What it means

- The sheer scale of Boris Johnson's majority sets him up to be the most powerful Prime Minister since Tony Blair following his landslide in 1997. The significant cushion of Parliamentary support spells a decisive shift after nearly a decade of hung parliaments and slim majorities and will allow the Tories to push ahead with their Brexit agenda decisively.
- Critically, this majority means Johnson may be less beholden to certain elements within his party, including the Eurosceptic European Research Group (ERG), when it comes to crunch Brexit votes. This could see a closer alignment with the EU in a future deal, which Johnson has committed to bring about before 2021.
- What style of premiership Johnson will adopt remains uncertain, although the Prime Minister consistently pointed to his One Nation roots and record as London Mayor throughout the campaign.
- The impact of this result, however, will not just be felt given the size of this majority, but the geographical make up of it. With the traditional Labour town-based heartlands going blue, Johnson's Government will need to shift their focus considerably to maintain this support.



What it means for the opposition

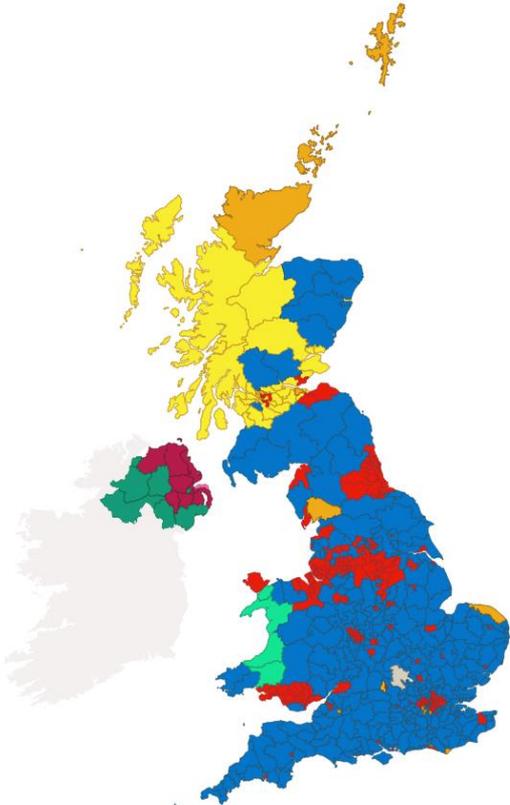
- The result also spells a likely realignment within the other major parties. Corbyn's slump to the worst Labour result since 1935 makes a leadership election inevitable in the coming weeks, despite his commitment to stay on in the short term.
- Front runners, including Kier Starmer and Emily Thornberry, would represent a shift back to the centre-left, whereas McDonnell protégée Rebecca Long-Bailey will likely be Momentum's choice.
- As for the Liberal Democrats, change is afoot with Jo Swinson out so soon after her election as leader. The new leadership will need to reflect on a campaign which failed to entice voters with their 'Stop Brexit' stance and lost all the new MPs who had defected in recent months.
- The SNP's rampant result in Scotland presents a clear nationalist bloc in Westminster and is already being used by Sturgeon to push for another referendum. The Conservative majority will make this easier to reject despite divergent views on Brexit and the party losing over half of its Scottish seats.



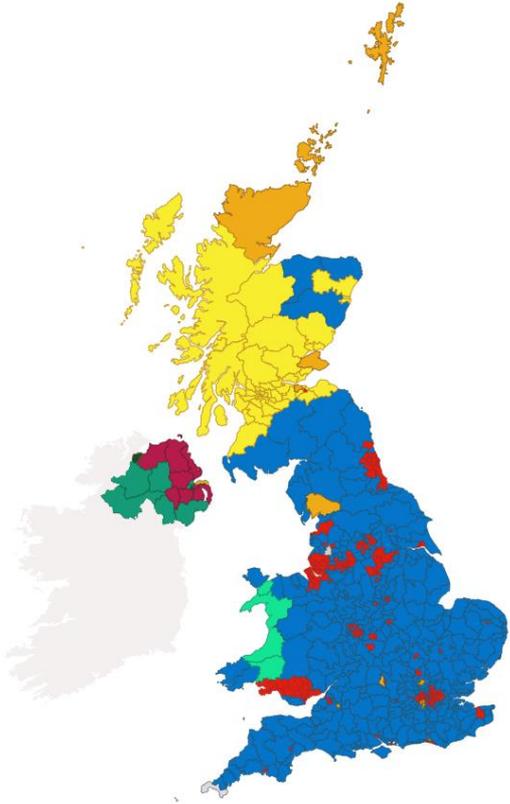
Electoral Map



2017



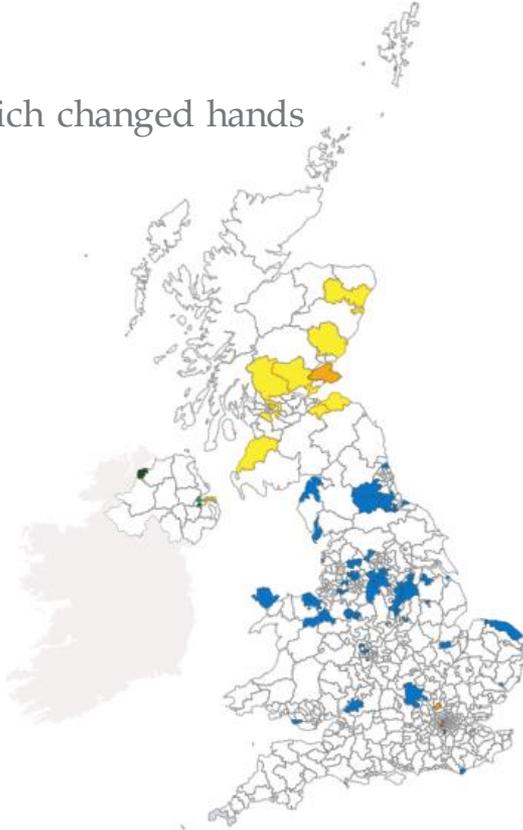
2019



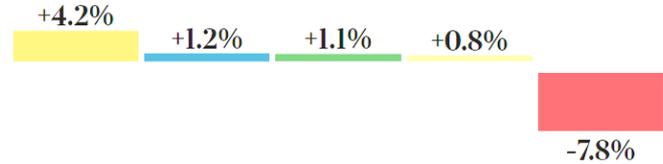
Source: BBC News

Electoral analysis

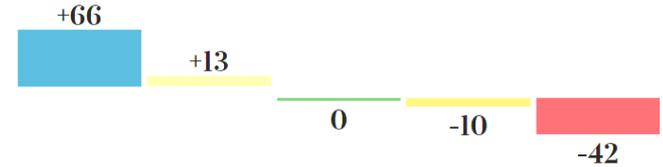
Seats which changed hands



Vote share since 2017



Seat change since 2017



Source: The Times

Electoral Map

- The results saw Conservatives gain seats in Leave-voting regions, while Labour lost support across its traditional heartlands of northern England, the midlands and Wales. Wrexham in north Wales and Leigh in Greater Manchester, both held by Labour for over 70 years are now blue.
- Conservatives also gained seats in Remain-voting constituencies such as Kensington, which saw the 'Remain' vote split across Labour and the Liberal Democrats.
- The SNP have also made clear gains, now holding 48 out of 59 seats in Scotland.
- The results saw a number of high profile MPs lose their seats, most notably Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson, who lost East Dunbartonshire to the SNP by 149 votes.
- Dennis Skinner, known as the 'Beast of Bolsover' also lost to the Conservatives after 49 years as an MP. The constituency has long been considered a safe Labour seat.
- Prominent Liberal Democrat candidates also failed to gain seats – former Labour and Change UK MPs Luciana Berger and Chuka Umunna lost out, while Tory defectors Anna Soubry and Dominic Grieve also lost to their former Party.
- There were some notable Conservative loses too, namely former Minister Zac Goldsmith who lost in 71% Remain-voting Richmond to the Liberal Democrat candidate Sarah Olney.



What happens next?

Appointment of Cabinet

Johnson is expected to hold a cabinet reshuffle on Monday. The extent to which Cabinet will change is difficult to predict, however, there are certain individuals who may be up for promotion in due course. After making the highest number of broadcast appearances of any cabinet minister during the campaign, Michael Gove is the most likely candidate for promotion from his current position as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Rishi Sunak was also a key figure during the campaign, making 14 broadcasting appearances and representing the party in two television debates. Consequently, Mr Sunak is seen by many as a future star of the party and is also likely to see promotion.

Two positions which will certainly need filling are that of the Culture Secretary and the Minister of State for Environment and International Development. These positions are available after Nicky Morgan stood down as an MP before the election and after Zac Goldsmith was turfed out by the electorate in exchange for Lib Dem candidate Sarah Olney.

A more extensive reshuffle is expected in early 2020 which may include the rearrangement of Whitehall departments, including the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign Office.



What happens next?

Queen's Speech

The Queen's Speech for the upcoming parliament is due to take place on the 19th December in what will be a 'stripped down' State Opening of Parliament. Flagship policies from the Conservative manifesto are likely to feature prominently, alongside the Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

Brexit

The first step for the Prime Minister on his road to getting Brexit done, is to reintroduce the Withdrawal Agreement Bill to Parliament. This is expected to take place before Christmas meaning there should be enough time to pass the bill through both houses before the end of January. With every Conservative candidate pledging to support the bill, and a clear parliamentary majority – this should be passed uneventfully.

Following this, the process of securing a trade agreement will then begin. As it stands the deadline for the transition period is December 31st, 2020, however, Mr Johnson does have the option to extend this deadline for up to two years, if the request is made by July 1st, 2020. However, so far, he has made clear he is not interested in making any extension request and has stated his determination for a Free Trade Agreement with the EU. If there is no extension, the UK will exit the EU in January 2021 with an agreed deal or on WTO terms.



Our Services



Strategy

Political Counsel
Strategy & Campaign Planning
Messaging
Training



Intelligence

Political Monitoring
Policy Analysis
Stakeholder Mapping
Perception Audits



Advocacy

Stakeholder Engagement
Lobbying
Event Management
Reputation Management



Mobilisation

Association Management
Alliance Building
Integrated Communications
Grassroots Campaigns