

European elections 2019: what will happen in the West Midlands?

*In 2014 the West Midlands region split its votes and seats three ways, with UKIP first and winning three seats, and Labour and the Conservatives somewhat behind and gaining two seats each. In 2019 all the polling indications are that this Eurosceptic region is getting strongly behind the new Brexit Party; it can be sure of winning three of the region's seven seats, and might even win four. If they are held to three, then the other four seats are likely to be shared out evenly between Labour, the Conservatives, the Lib Dems and the Greens. The vote share gaps separating these parties are small, however, and there is enough polling volatility for the precise outcome still to change. With voters able to cast only a single vote for a party list, the **Democratic Audit team** reviews likely outcomes for the parties and the main potentially electable candidates.*



Birmingham. Picture: [Luke Matthews](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The West Midlands borders Wales to the west, and reaches as far as Rugby in the east. It includes major cities such as Birmingham (and the rest of West Midlands conurbation), Coventry and Stoke. In Westminster elections, the region is noted for its crucial Labour-Conservative marginal constituencies, like closely fought Nuneaton, Dudley North, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Worcester. When it comes to Europe, however, the region is decidedly Eurosceptic, ranking top in the 2016 referendum for Leave vote share, with over 59%. UKIP performed particularly well here in 2014 – winning 32% of the vote compared to Labour and the Conservatives polling 27% and 24% respectively.

As in other regions across England, recent polls for the European Parliament elections show that the Brexit Party is pole position. [YouGov's survey](#) (8–17 May) puts Farage's party on 40% here – well above the 34% it is polling nationally. Two of the three MEPs elected under UKIP's banner five years ago have since defected to the Brexit Party. But the Brexit Party has chosen new candidates at the top of its list, three of whom look certain to be elected this time – equalling UKIP's three in 2014. They also have a strong chance of gaining a fourth MEP, depending on how other parties' vote shares end up.

Beyond this, the same YouGov poll suggests other voters are quite evenly dispersed among Labour (15%), Greens (14%), Lib Dems (13%), and the Conservatives (10%). On these numbers, Labour will lose one of their two MEPs, but are guaranteed a seat. So too are the Greens and Lib Dems if their support holds firm at its current level, so that there should be two strongly pro-Remain MEPs.

The Conservatives will lose at least one of their two MEPs if the polls are correct, and even their top candidate is not certain of victory. The Tories' 10% support ties with the Brexit Party's fourth seat vote share, and no one can tell who will win out.

Finally, Change UK are polling at just 4%, and stand no chance of winning seats. They are joined in the also-ran category by UKIP, on 2%.

Thus Figure 1 shows that on current polls the Brexit Party is guaranteed three seats (and might well get a fourth), while Labour, the Lib Dems, and the Greens each look certain to get one seat. The Conservatives will lose one of their MEPs, and could lose both, if Brexit Party support on the day is as strong as the polls claim.

All the parties have seven candidates standing in the region, so that ballot papers are large. In fact, candidates listed low down on their party's list cannot possibly win a seat under proportional representation. Accordingly we show only the top few of them (in Figure 1), and not the no-hope candidate names listed lower on each party's list. (For a full candidate list of all parties and independents see [here](#).) Voters must select just one party to cast an X vote for on the [ballot paper](#), and cannot support individual candidates, only their chosen list as a whole. In making up their minds which party list to support, voters need only pay attention to the eight candidates in the colour-shaded boxes below.

Figure 1: Main party candidates and possible winners from YouGov polling in mid-May, West Midlands region (seven seats)

	Brexit Party 40%	Labour 15%	Greens 14%	Lib Dems 13%	Conservatives 10%	Ch
1	Rupert Lowe	Neena Gill	Ellie Chowns	Phil Bennion	Anthea McIntyre	S I
2	Martin Daubney	Siôn Simon	Diana Toynbee	Ade Adeyemo	Daniel Dalton	Cl
3	Andrew England Kerr	Julia Buckley	Paul Woodhead	Jeanie Falconer	Suzanne Webb	V
4	Vishal Khatri	Ansar Ali Khan	Julian Dean	Jenny Wilkinson	Meirion Jenkins	K
5	Nikki Page	Zarah Sultana	Louis Stephen	Jennifer Gray	Alexander Phillips	J M

Certain to be elected



Might win a seat

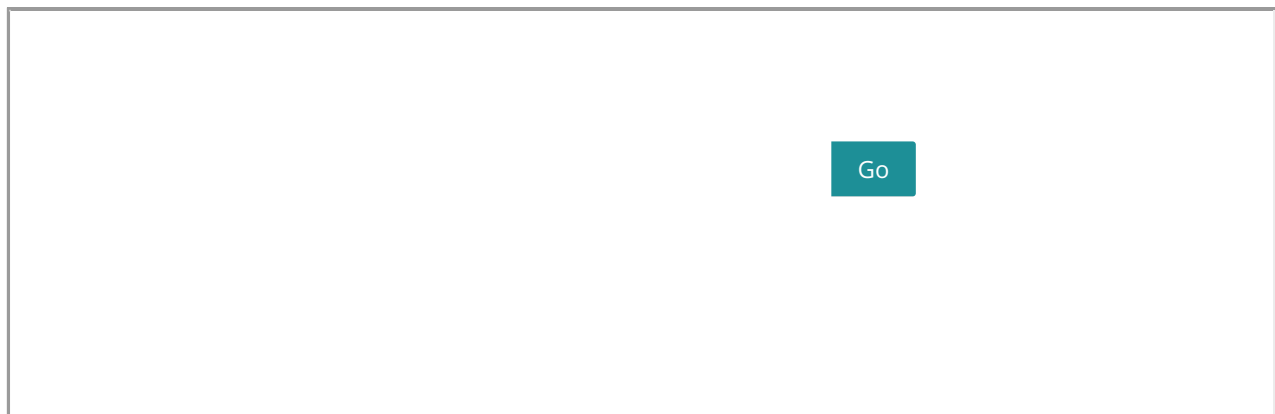
Remote chance of winning a seat



No chance of being elected

Polling data [YouGov](#) published 19 May (fieldwork 8–17 May).

To find details of all the local candidates, and to locate your polling station, visit our Democratic Dashboard site and simply put in your postcode. The site also has full details of other recent elections in your local area.



Below we list a summary of any candidate in Figure 1 with some chance of being elected, and point you to their social media sites, which can show you something of what each candidate is like as a person. At the bottom of this article we also give the full 2014 results for the West Midlands.

Which candidates could be elected in the West Midlands in 2019?

THE BREXIT PARTY – Well ahead in the polls in the West Midlands, the party are certain to win multiple seats. Their top three candidates are guaranteed seats, and Vishal Katri has a good chance of one also.

1. **Rupert Lowe** (Twitter: [@RupertLowe10](#)) was chairman of Premier League football club Southampton between 1996 and 2006, and stood for election as the Referendum Party candidate in the 1997 general election.
2. **Martin Daubney** (Twitter: [@MartinDaubney](#)) previously edited the 'lads magazine' Loaded. You can hear Daubney speak [here](#).
3. **Andrew England Kerr** is a lawyer and businessperson. You can hear Kerr speak at a Brexit Party rally [here](#).
4. **Vishal Khatri** (Twitter: [@VishKhatri357](#)) works in aviation. You can hear Khatri speak [here](#).

LABOUR – Neena Gill, who tops the Labour list, is still guaranteed to win a seat. But with the party's support apparently slumping, Siôn Simon does not seem to have even an outside chance of also succeeding.

1. **Neena Gill** (Twitter: [@NeenaGmep](#)) is a sitting MEP for the region, who has represented the West Midlands between 1999 and 2009, and then since 2014. You can find her voting record in the European Parliament and [Votewatch.eu](#) profile [here](#).
2. **Siôn Simon** (Twitter: [@sionsimon](#)) was second on Labour's list in 2014, and so elected to the EP for the first time then. He was previously a Labour MP for Birmingham Erdington (2001–10). You can find his voting record in the European Parliament and [Votewatch.eu](#) profile [here](#).

GREEN PARTY – The party came fifth here in 2014, but current polls place it third and suggest it should securely win a seat.

- **Ellie Chowns** (Twitter: [@ellie_chowns](#)) is a councillor in Herefordshire and a lecturer at the University of Birmingham.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS – finished a distant fourth place here in 2014, and lost their only MEP. But recent polls place their top candidate (a former MEP) is on course to regain a seat for them.

- **Phil Bennion** (Twitter: [@PhilBennion](#)) took his seat as an MEP for the West Midlands in 2012, after Liz Lynne stood down. But Bennion lost it after two years, in the 2014 elections. Prior to this, Bennion contested several Westminster constituencies.

CONSERVATIVES – One of the two incumbent Tory MEPs is standing down, and the other heads their list. On current polling the party are close to winning one seat, although it will be close if they do. They can hope their hardcore supporters are more resilient and likely to turnout than the marginal voters for the Brexit Party, whose fourth seat might stop any Tory win.

- **Anthea McIntyre** (Twitter: [@anthea_mcintyre](#)) was second on the Conservative list in 2014. She has served as an MEP since 2011, having stepped into the post between elections. You can find her voting record in the European Parliament and Votewatch.eu profile [here](#).

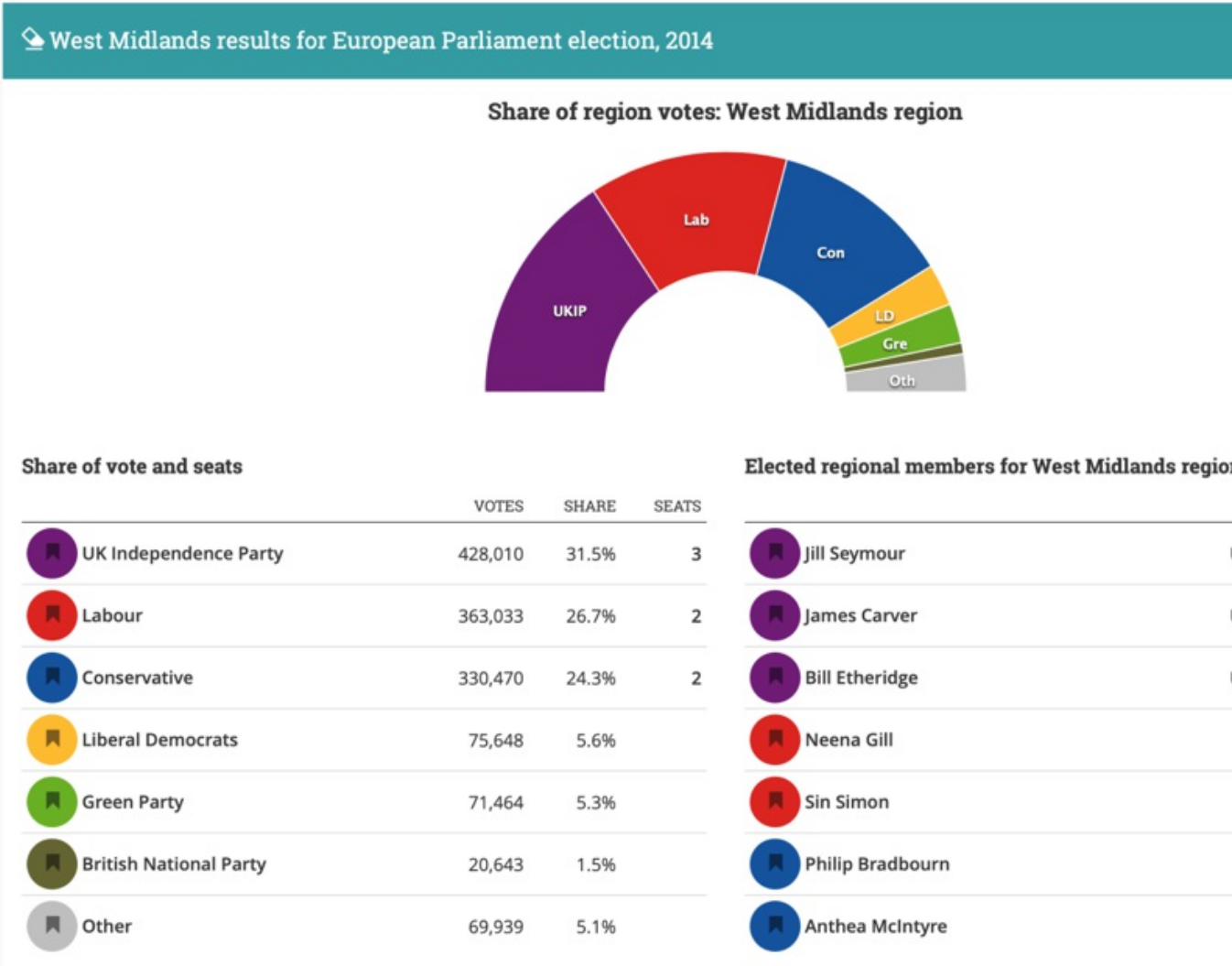
CHANGE UK – The new party's candidate list is topped by a well-known, former health minister, but the party has made little headway in this region.

- **Stephen Dorrell** (Twitter: [@stephen_dorrell](#)) was a Conservative MP for Loughborough (1979–97) and then for Charnwood (1997–2015), and held various ministerial roles in the Major government, including Health Secretary; more recently he has been chair of the Commons' select committee on health, and only left the Conservative party in 2019. Dorrell is now chair of the [European Movement](#).

UKIP – As elsewhere, UKIP have been supplanted by Farage's party. All three of their MEPs elected in 2014 have either defected to Brexit Party, or become Independent.

- **Ernie Warrender** (Twitter [@ErnieWarrender](#)) is UKIP's spokesperson for small business.

Figure 2: 2014 European Parliament results in the West Midlands and MEPs



Source: [Democratic Dashboard](#). Order and current status: 1. Jill Seymour (elected UKIP, now Brexit Party); 2 Neena Gill (Labour); 3 Dan Dalton (Conservative; replaced Philip Bradbourn); 4 Jim Carver (elected UKIP, now Independent); 5 Sion Simon (Labour); 6 Anthea McIntyre (Conservative); 7 Bill Etheridge (elected UKIP, now Brexit Party).

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[The UK's 2019 European Parliament elections are happening after all. Here's how they will work](#)

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