

# European Parliament elections 2019: what will happen in the North West of England?

*The North West is traditionally a stronghold for Labour, who came first and took three of the region's eight seats the last time European Parliament elections were held in 2014. This time, however, the Brexit Party are outperforming UKIP's past success in this area, and will win multiple seats from the region's majority of pro-Leave voters in the 2016 referendum. The Conservative's decline opens up a chance for one of the three strong pro-Remain parties to also win a seat, with the Lib Dems looking strongest and the Greens in with a chance of a seat. 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.*



Liverpool. Photo by [Conor Samuel](#) on [Unsplash](#)

**Note: This article was first published on 17 May and updated on 20 May to take into account the latest regional polling data.**

The North West covers England west of the Pennines, stretching up from its southern borders in Cheshire to sparsely populated Cumbria, bordering Scotland in the north. The key urban centres are Greater Manchester and Merseyside, plus many former industrial towns, but with substantial rural areas also. With eight MEPs the effective threshold for gaining a seat is around 7–9% for smaller parties, depending on how many votes the big two (Labour and Brexit) attract. Although the region split [53 to 46%](#) for Leave in the Brexit referendum, strong local variations saw the Leave vote reach 63% in Wigan, while Remain dominated in central Manchester on 60%.

The Brexit Party are pretty certain win at least three seats in the North West if current polls are right, and they have the high-profile, though controversial, media commentator Claire Fox as their lead candidate. Figure 1 shows that the headline data in the [YouGov poll](#) (conducted 8–17 May) has them on 32%. They have clearly scooped almost all the past UKIP vote, and dented the Conservative support levels too. With a further surge of a few percentage points more and a favourable fragmentation of the votes elsewhere, they might have a chance of winning a fourth seat.

In 2014 Labour topped the poll with 34%, with UKIP second on 27% – both of them winning three seats each, and with the Conservatives (a strong third on 20%) taking the remaining two seats. (See Figure 2 at the bottom of this article for full 2014 results.) However, recent local elections on 2nd May were a [mixed bag](#) for Labour here, gaining Trafford (finally), but losing out to Independents, Lib Dems, and others elsewhere. The YouGov poll shown in Figure 1 below shows Labour under pressure, slipping rapidly down to 22% from 34% in 2014, where they were still polling around a month ago. They should lose one of their three seats if the polling is accurate.

The Liberal Democrats' vote share has risen rapidly, and they are clearly doing best of the strong pro-Remain parties. Current polls put them a strong third in the region on 17%. They look certain to win a seat, and given their local election gains and favourable national polling might do even better.

The Tories' support level is well down on 2014, at 9% in the YouGov poll. They should still (just) get one seat, given their past track record in these elections, but this is not at all guaranteed, and there seems no chance of them winning a second. The Greens are also on 9%, where they also stand a good chance of (just) capturing a seat. Competing for votes with them are Change UK on 3%, so joint last in the main YouGov poll: they seem to have no chance of winning a seat here.

UKIP have been eclipsed by Farage's party during this election campaign, and are currently polling only around 3% here. But there is a history of far-right success in this region. Ten years ago the BNP leader Nick Griffin was elected as an MEP on 8% of the vote. Perhaps for this reason, Tommy Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley Lennon) appears on the ballot paper as an independent.

All the parties have cluttered up the ballot paper with eight candidates each, though the lower ranked ones cannot possibly win a seat under proportional representation – we show only a few of them (the white cells in Figure 1), and not the no-hope candidate names listed lower on each party's list. Voters can only vote for a single party list, not specific candidates, and mark a single X on the [ballot paper](#). In making up their minds which party list to support, voters need only pay attention to the candidates in the shaded boxes here.


**Figure 1: Main party candidates in the North West region (with YouGov poll data, 8–17 May 2019) and possible winners**

	<b>Brexit Party</b> 32%	<b>Labour</b> 22%	<b>Lib Dems</b> 17%	<b>Conservatives</b> 9%	<b>Green Party</b> 9%	<b>Chaos</b>
<b>1</b>	Claire Fox	Theresa Griffin	Chris Davies	Sajjad Karim	Gina Dowding	Ar Co
<b>2</b>	Henrik Overgaard Nielsen	Julie Ward	Jane Brophy	Kevin Beaty	Wendy Olsen	I P
<b>3</b>	David Bull	Wajid Khan	Helen Foster Grime	Jane Howard	Jessica Northey	A Ba
<b>4</b>	Gary Harvey	Erica Lewis	Anna Fryer	Arnold Saunders	Geraldine Coggins	Mi Ta
<b>5</b>	Ajay Jagota	David Brennan	Sam Al-Hamdani	Wendy Maisey	Rosie Mills	Ph C

Certain to be elected 
 Might win a seat 
  
 Remote chance of winning a seat 
 No chance of being elected 

[YouGov poll, 8-17 May](#), weighted by likelihood to vote, excluding those who would not vote, don't know or refused

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 something of what each candidate is like as a person. At the bottom of this article we also show the full 2014 results for the North West.

## Which candidates stand some chance in the North West?

**THE BREXIT PARTY** – Three candidates from the Brexit Party's list are pretty much guaranteed to win here, and they have a chance of a fourth being elected.

1. **Claire Fox** (Twitter: [@Fox\\_Claire](#)). Claire Fox is the Director of the institute for Ideas and a media commentator who frequently appears on Radio 4's *Moral Maze*. Politically she comes from the left, and she often speaks in favour of libertarian and free speech causes. Her candidacy has caused controversy because of her association with groups who have supported IRA acts of Terror, including the [Warrington bombings in 1993](#) in this region, when two young children were killed. Warrington is within the North West region. At the time Fox was a member of the [Revolutionary Communist Party](#), who supported the IRA's campaign. The Brexit Party's no. 7 candidate, Sally Bate, has stood down over Claire Fox's candidacy, and association with Irish Republicanism, but her name will remain on the ballot.
2. **Henrik Overgaard Nielsen** (Twitter: [@brexithenrik](#)) is a Danish-born dentist, who has worked in the UK for 20 years. He campaigned against Maastricht Treaty ratification in Denmark in 1992. You can watch him speak [here](#).
3. **David Bull** (Twitter: [@drdavidbull](#)) is a doctor and TV commentator, who has appeared on programmes like *Newsround* and *Watchdog*. He was previously a Conservative Party parliamentary candidate for a Brighton seat, although he stood down [before the election](#). You can watch him speak [here](#).
4. **Gary Harvey** is a Norwich-born businessman. You can watch him speak [here](#).

**LABOUR** – The party's three sitting MEPs are all standing again, and so lead the party list. But only two have a good chance of being re-elected, with the third facing an uphill battle to hold on.

1. **Theresa Griffin** (Twitter: [@TheresaMEP](#)) was first elected an MEP in 2014, and for her voting record in the European Parliament see her [Votewatch.eu](#) profile [here](#). She was previously a trade unionist and Labour Party campaigner of long standing, and served on Liverpool City Council during the 1990s.
2. **Julie Ward** (Twitter: [@julie4nw](#)) also became an MEP for the first time in 2014, and her [Votewatch.eu](#) profile is [here](#). She sits on the Culture and Education committee in Brussels.
3. **Wajid Khan** (Twitter: [@WajidKhanMEP](#)) became an MEP only in 2017 when the MEP elected in 2014, Afzal Khan, was successful in becoming a Labour MP in Westminster, and so stood down. As Labour's fourth place candidate Wajid Khan took up the vacated seat. He was previously a lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire.

**LIBERAL DEMOCRATS** – The party's top candidate won a Brussels seat three times before in the region, but lost out in their 2014 electoral rout. If the Lib Dems can sustain a national surge (following their local election successes), he has the best chance amongst the strong pro-Remain parties of being elected – although this is not great terrain for that viewpoint.

- **Chris Davies** was a Lib Dem MEP here between 1999 and 2014, when he served on the Parliament's Fisheries and Environment committees. Prior to that he was an MP for Littleborough and Saddleworth (1995–97).

**CONSERVATIVES** – They have two incumbent MEPs, but one has stood down, moving the other (Sajjad Karim) to the party's top slot. He still seems likely to be re-elected, but is now the only Tory with any chance of a seat.

- **Sajjad Karim** (Twitter: [@SHKMEP](#)). First elected as an MEP for the region in 2004, Karim was the first British Muslim to sit in the European Parliament. His [Votewatch.eu](#) profile and voting record are [here](#). Karim voted Remain in the 2016 referendum, and supports a second referendum. He has expressed a sense of a duty and [obligation to stand](#) for election again.

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**GREEN PARTY** – The party is now running just high enough to win a seat here, but a lot will depend on the details of other parties' vote shares.

- **Gina Dowding** (Twitter: [@GinaDowding](#)) is a Lancashire county councillor and anti-fracking campaigner. She previously worked for the NHS and in the charity sector. You can read her profile [here](#).

**CHANGE UK** – Recent shifts of support in favour of more established Remain parties make them a long shot to win a seat here, but novelty in the ballot booth might just give them a boost.

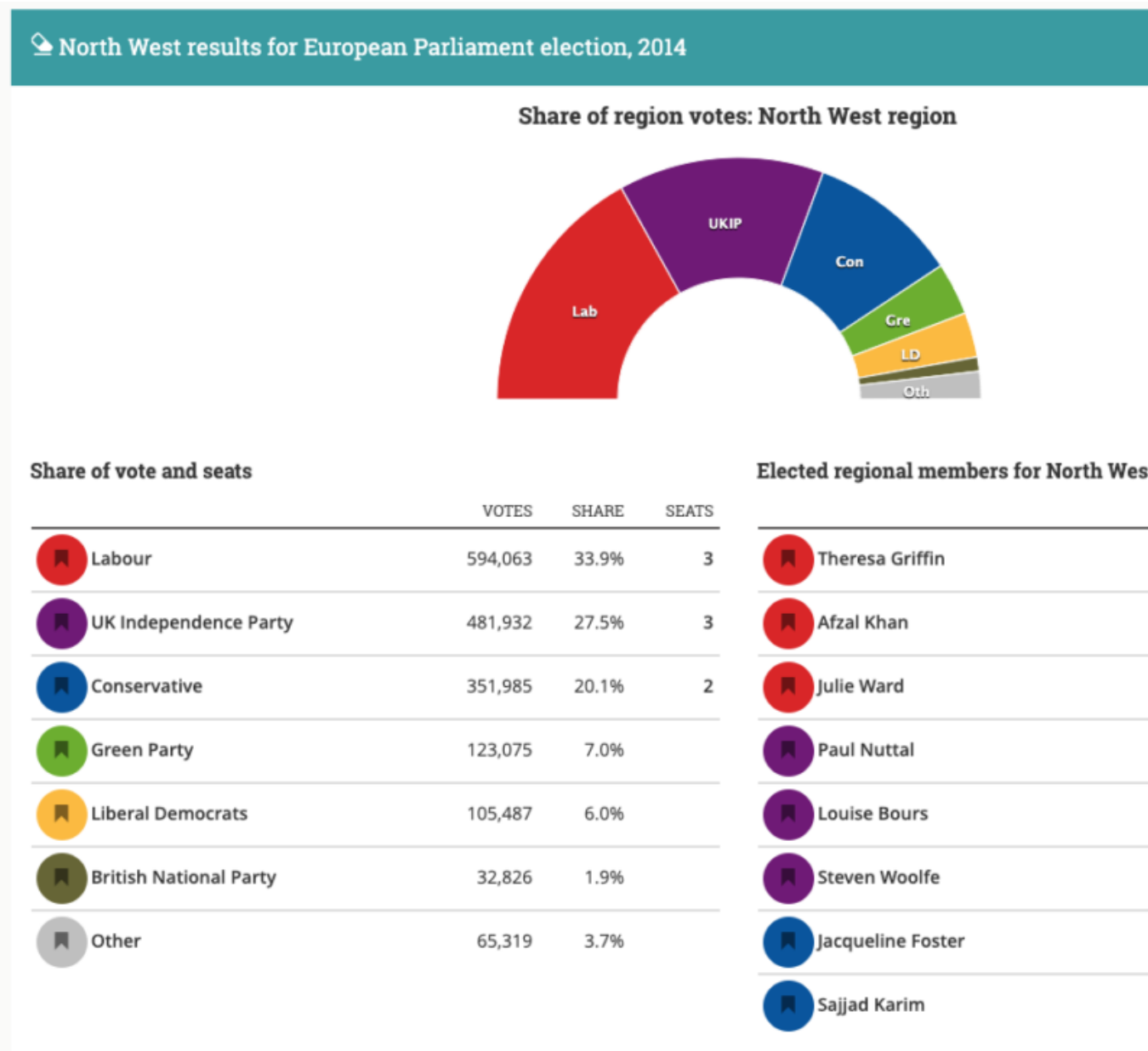
- **Andrea Cooper** (Twitter: [@AndreaCooperUK](#)) is a former CEO in various organisations in the non-profit sector, including youth charities. She previously worked at the BBC and Proctor & Gamble. You can read her profile [here](#).

**UKIP** has comprehensively lost out to the Brexit Party, despite its wins last time, and stand no chance of winning a seat on current form.

**Independent** – Tommy Robinson looks unlikely to attract the support needed to achieve any visibility.

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



Source: [Democratic Dashboard](#)

Order elected and current status: 1. Theresa Griffin (Labour); 2 Paul Nuttall (elected UKIP, now Brexit Party); 3. Jacqueline Foster (Conservative); 4: Afzal Khan (replaced as a Labour MEP by Wajid Khan in 2017); 5. Louise Bours (elected as UKIP, now Independent); 6. Julie Ward (Labour); 7. Sajjad Karim(Conservative). 8. Steven Woolfe (elected UKIP, now Independent/Brexit Party).

Read more about how the European Parliament elections work:

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

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Date originally posted: 2019-05-17

Permalink: <https://www.democraticaudit.com/2019/05/17/european-parliament-elections-2019-what-will-happen-in-the-north-west-of-england/>

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