

## UK elections: Labour wins London mayoralty, but otherwise mixed

Written by The Conversation USA

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Elections were held in the UK last Thursday. At stake were the Scottish and Welsh assemblies, the Mayoralty of London and control of 124 English councils.

Labour's Sadiq Khan is the new Mayor of London, after defeating Conservative Zac [Goldsmith](#) [56.8-43.2](#) after preferences. Khan had led 44.2-35.0 on first preferences. Khan becomes the first Muslim mayor of London, and the first Labour mayor since 2008, replacing Conservative Boris Johnson. The London assembly will be friendly for Khan, as Labour holds 12 of 25 seats, with two for the Greens.

Scotland and Wales use both a first past the post (FPTP) constituency system, and a proportional list system. The list acts as a top-up for FPTP; parties that take a larger share of FPTP seats than their popular vote get few list seats. I will use the list vote here as I think it is more representative, since list voters do not feel obliged to vote for a party they may not like best.

In [Scotland](#), the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) lost its majority, winning 63 of 129 seats (down six from 2011). The Conservatives finished second with 31 seats (up 16), and it was a disaster for Labour (24 seats, down 13). The Greens won six seats (up four), and the Liberal Democrats five (steady). I think the SNP should be able to govern with the support of the Greens.

Popular votes in Scotland using the list vote were 41.7% for the SNP (down 2.3), 22.9% for the Conservatives (up 10.6) and 19.1% for Labour (down 7.2). It was the Conservatives' best Scottish performance since 1992, and highlights what a disaster Scotland is for Labour that they finished third in what was once their heartland.

In [Wales](#), Labour was just short of a majority with 29 of 60 seats (down 1 from 2011), followed by the Welsh Nationalists Plaid Cymru with 12 seats (up 1), the Conservatives with 11 seats (down 3), the UK Independence Party (UKIP) with 7 seats (up 7) and the Liberal Democrats with 1 seat (down 4).

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Popular votes in Wales using the list vote were 31.5% for Labour (down 5.4), 20.8% for Plaid Cymru (up 3.0), 18.8% for the Conservatives (down 3.7) and 13.0% for UKIP (up 8.5). Labour won nearly half the seats despite such a low popular vote because they won 27 of the 40 FPTP seats.

English council seats that were up this year were last contested in 2012, when Labour was doing better. Labour was expected to lose over 100 council seats, but actually lost [only a net 18 seats](#) with the Conservatives losing 45. The Liberal Democrats gained 45 seats and UKIP 25.

Popular votes for council elections are not calculated directly from the elections. Instead, they are calculated assuming the whole UK had council elections, to simulate a general election. At these council elections, national vote equivalents gave [Labour a one point lead](#) over the Conservatives. While this is much better for Labour than the 6-point deficit at last year's general election, council elections favour opposition parties heavily, and Labour needs to be crushing the Conservatives at council elections to have any expectation of winning the next general election, due by 2020.

## UK Brexit referendum: 23 June

On 23 June, the UK will hold a referendum on whether to leave the European Union (EU). This referendum has become known as the "Brexit" vote. The two options are Remain in the EU, and Leave the EU.

Number Cruncher Politics was the only UK poll analyst who predicted the massive poll failure at the 2015 UK general election. His [Brexit poll aggregate](#) currently has Remain leading Leave by 45.8-42.2, with 12.1% undecided. He currently thinks that Remain has a 78% probability of winning the Brexit referendum.

## Australian Labor gains a seat in Tasmania's upper house

Members of Tasmania's upper house are elected for six year terms in single member electorates. Every May, two or three of the 15 seats are up for election. Most upper house members are Independents.

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Last Saturday, Aspley and Elwick were up for election. Aspley was easily retained by the incumbent Independent, but in Elwick Labor's Josh Willie defeated incumbent [Independent Adriana Taylor 53.2-46.8](#), from primary votes of 46.7% for Willie, 41.1% for Taylor and 12.2% for the Greens. This was only the [fourth time since 1980](#) that an endorsed party candidate has defeated a sitting Independent in Tasmania's Legislative Council.

I do not think there are Federal implications from the Elwick result, since Elwick would be a Labor bastion at state and Federal general elections. Taylor was socially conservative, and this gave Labor the opportunity to win it.

## Sanders wins West Virginia

Today Sanders won [West Virginia \(WV\) 51-36](#) over Clinton, and is likely to win WV's 29 pledged delegates 18-11. This was Sanders' biggest win in a primary outside his home region of Vermont and New Hampshire. However, WV is a very conservative state, and this vote should not be seen as pro-Sanders, but rather anti-Clinton. In the 2008 Democratic contest, WV was one of Clinton's best states against Obama, because it was anti-Obama, not pro-Clinton.

Despite the big WV win, Sanders is still trailing [Clinton by 280 pledged delegates](#) with 897 remaining. The polls have Sanders well behind in California and New Jersey, the last two big states, which both vote on 7 June. Sanders has struggled in large diverse states.

Trump's big wins today in West Virginia and Nebraska have removed all doubt that he will be the Republican nominee, following last week's withdrawal of his final two opponents. Nebraska was thought to be a favourable state for Cruz, but Trump won 61% today, and thus won all 36 of Nebraska's winner takes all delegates. By the time the last Republican states vote on 7 June, Trump will have well over 1,400 pledged delegates, much more than the 1,237 required.

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