# Farage’s party struggles to shed extremist ties despite professionalisation efforts



The party led by Nigel Farage, despite its efforts to present a more disciplined and professional front ahead of the upcoming local elections in England, remains plagued by troubling ties to extremist and racist elements within its ranks. While there has been a push to tighten candidate vetting—with multiple interview rounds and contractual commitments including penalties for defection—the underlying problem persists: far too many candidates and councillors maintain alarming affiliations with far-right ideology.

Lincolnshire councillor Ingrid Sheard’s account of a rigorous application process only partially masks the deeper rot that continues to undermine the party’s credibility. Rejecting a third of local election candidates is commendable in theory, but it raises questions about how so many individuals with histories of sharing offensive and extremist posts—posting content linked to far-right agitators and neo-Nazi groups—still gain the party’s backing.

Examples abound: Doncaster candidates with Facebook posts containing anti-immigrant remarks, endorsements of fascist imagery, and advocates of violence against Muslim communities. Such candidates’ presence calls into question the party's commitment to truly moderate politics, despite lip service from the leader stressing a desire to attract mainstream voters. Independent researchers have highlighted how some materials disseminated by candidates are even more severe than those of extremist groups like the British National Party.

This internal contradiction reveals that, while there is a clear goal of professionalising the party’s operations—publishing constitutions, launching branches, employing paid organisers, and centralising control—this structural reform cannot compensate for the failure to remove extremist elements. The party has borrowed organisational techniques from established political groups, yet its inability or unwillingness to fully expunge undesirable elements blocks any attempt to be taken seriously as a responsible political force.

Moreover, the party’s tactic of recruiting experienced ex-Conservative organisers, while smart from a strategic standpoint, may be undermined by the contradictory message sent by local candidates whose extremist views remain publicly accessible or were only superficially checked. The high-intensity campaigning witnessed in places like Durham, resembling the effort of a general election, contrasts sharply with the chaos sown by controversial councillors with past connections to Britain First or shared content related to Tommy Robinson.

It is clear that the party’s so-called “professionalisation” is insufficient and perhaps deliberately ambiguous regarding extremist infiltration. Despite public statements denying association with racism or far-right ideology, the presence of such elements only serves to damage the party’s claim to moderate conservatism.

The current political climate, with a Labour government under Kier Starker and a Conservative leadership in disarray, presents an opportunity for a genuine opposition grounded in mainstream values and clear repudiation of extremism. However, any attempts to portray this party as a credible alternative are fatally compromised by its tolerance for candidates with intolerable views.

For voters seeking a principled and effective opposition, it is essential to remain skeptical of a party that, even as it professionalises, fails to fully confront and purge its extremist undercurrents. Only a truly resolute commitment to mainstream values—not mere organisational reforms—can give the British electorate a political force worthy of support in these turbulent times.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de> - This article discusses Reform UK's efforts to professionalize its candidate selection process, including multiple interview rounds and contractual commitments, yet highlights ongoing issues with candidates sharing offensive and extremist content linked to far-right groups.
* <https://www.channel4.com/news/racism-in-key-brexit-party-campaign> - An undercover investigation revealed that Brexit Party activists, including a councillor, made racist and bigoted remarks, such as boasting about attempting to bury a pig's head under a mosque and using derogatory terms for various ethnic groups.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c10l5qd8p60o?at_bbc_team=editorial> - This report details instances where Reform UK campaigners were caught making racist, Islamophobic, and homophobic comments, leading to their removal from the campaign team.
* <https://www.thedailybeast.com/nigel-farage-claims-his-racist-party-canvasser-was-a-total-setup/> - Following the exposure of racist remarks by a Reform UK canvasser, Nigel Farage claimed the incident was a 'setup,' despite the undercover footage capturing the offensive comments.
* <https://www.politico.eu/article/what-the-nationalist-right-gets-wrong/?n=%40> - This article examines the challenges faced by nationalist right-wing parties, including Reform UK, in distancing themselves from overt racism within their ranks, despite efforts to professionalize and attract mainstream voters.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/c257e249-c250-4b24-88d0-adf8c970c462> - The article discusses the public perception of Reform UK as being more racist than its predecessor, UKIP, and the challenges the party faces in distancing itself from extremist elements within its ranks.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de> - Please view link - unable to able to access data