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WESTMINSTER **SOCIAL**

Fractured Narratives

Online discourse of the 2025 Budget



Methodology

Westminster Social draws from proprietary live feeds of X (formerly Twitter) accounts, closely tracking the voices that shape the UK online discourse. We actively monitor the accounts of 610 Members of Parliament, 167 select influencers and engaged community voices, and thousands of additional UK-based X users.

We use advanced listening tools and expert analysis to reveal the people, trends, and topics that are dominating the conversation in London and beyond. This index is a summary of those conversations, plus a comparison with the broader national dialogue.

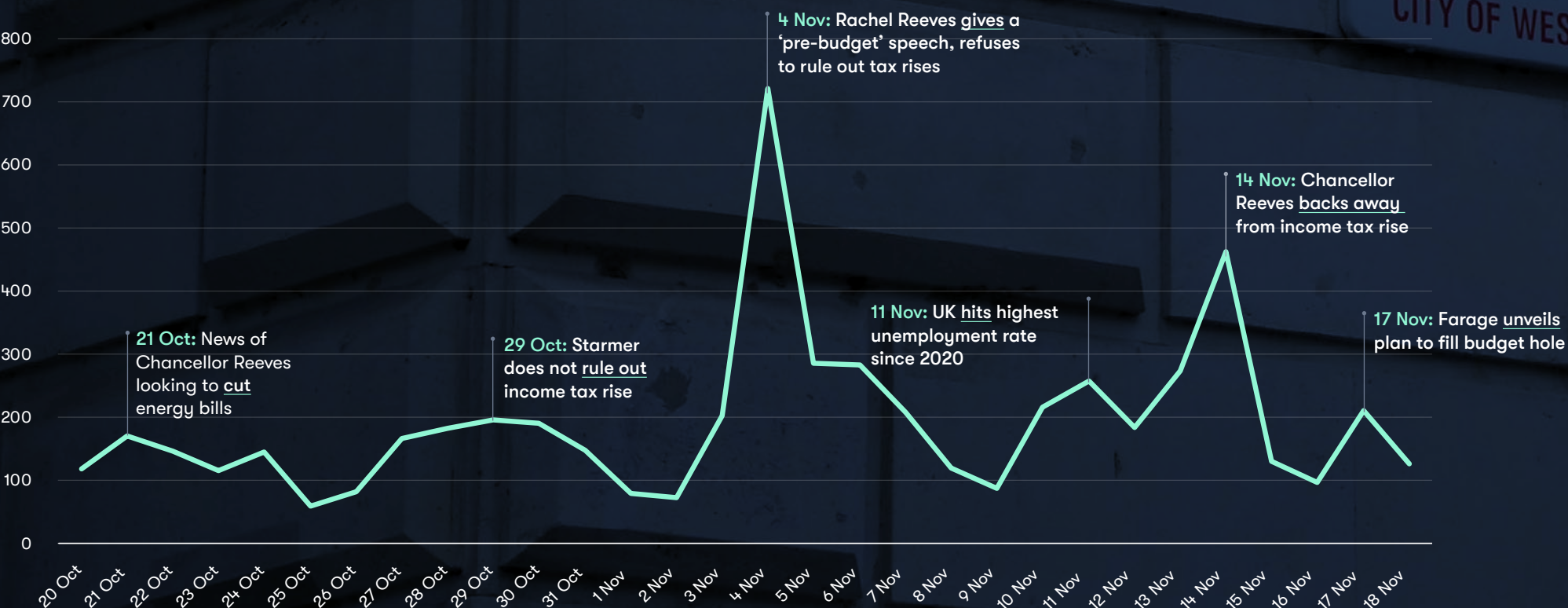
In addition, we track news media coverage across UK outlets for a complete picture of the conversations.

This report analyses the social media conversation and news media coverage around the upcoming budget over a 30-day period (20 October through 18 November 2025).

Reeves' 4 November speech sparked budget uproar across social media

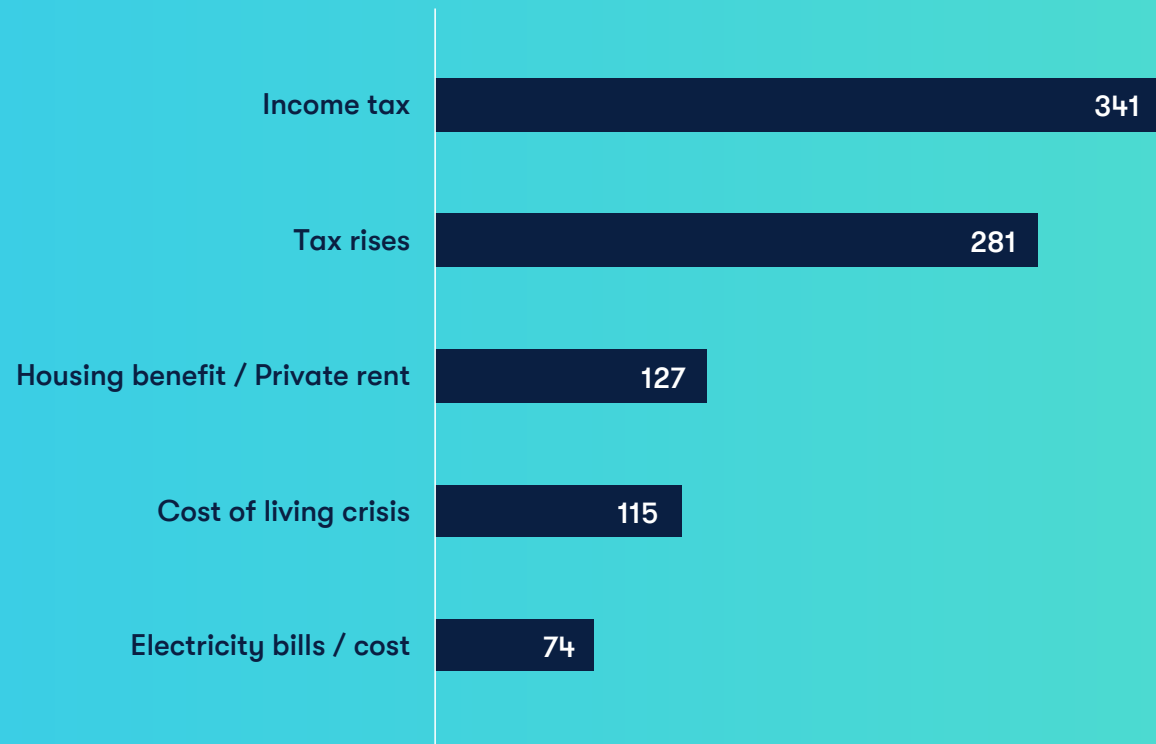
As 26 November looms, Reeves faces pressure to appease voters and fill a hole in public finances.

ORIGINAL X POSTS ABOUT THE BUDGET AMONG THE GENERAL UK PUBLIC (5,739 POSTS IN PAST 30 DAYS)



Negative sentiment dominates the budget conversation

TOP KEYWORDS AMONG THE GENERAL UK PUBLIC (PAST 30 DAYS)



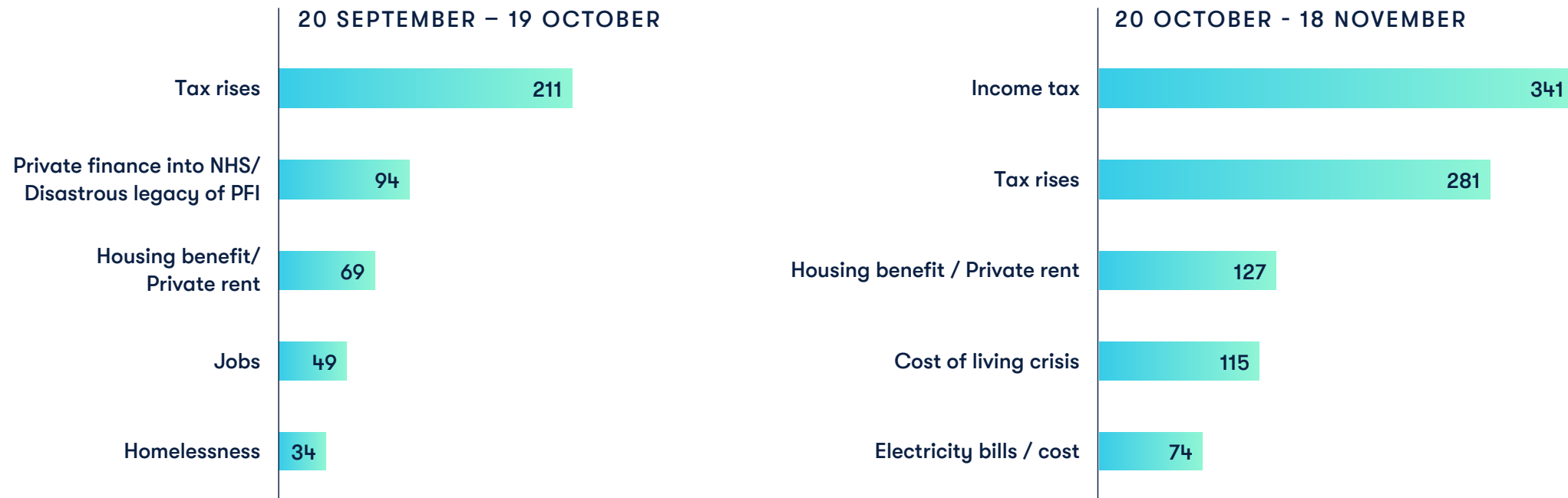
Britons are concerned about potential **tax rises** in the upcoming budget which would break the Labour Party's manifesto commitment to not raise Income Tax, National Insurance, and VAT. The conversation around **income taxes** skyrocketed on 14 November after Chancellor Reeves backed away from potential rises, with a mix of relief, concern, and criticism of the 'U-turn'.

Calls for the Chancellor to **unfreeze the housing benefit** to cover the cost of private rent have been steady throughout.

In addition, there is growing demand to lower **energy bills** as one factor in Britain's **cost of living crisis**.

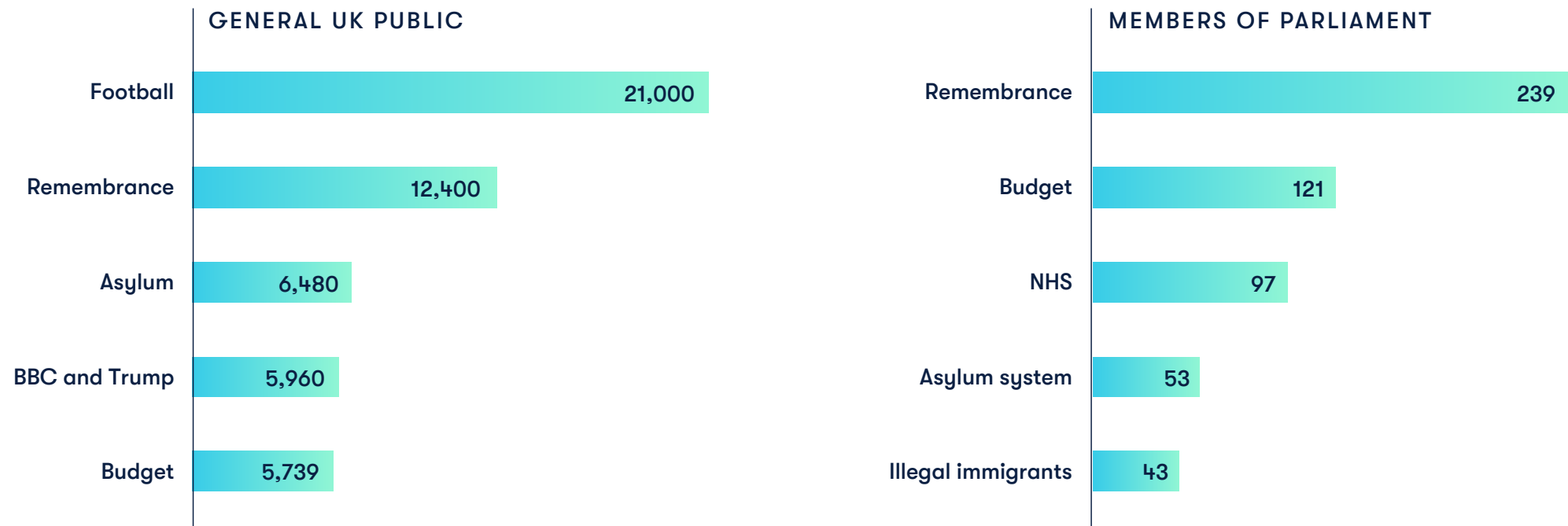
The conversation shifted away from the NHS, while taxes and housing remain core topics

Top keywords among the general UK public



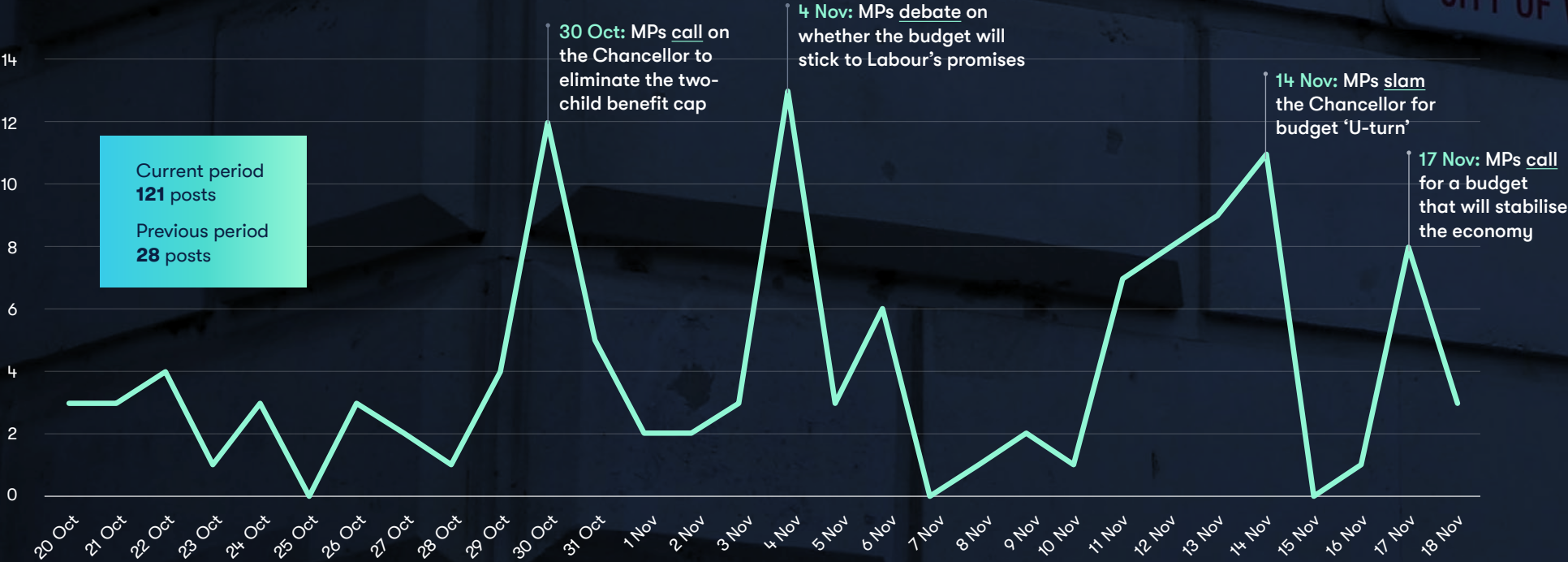
Sports lead the online conversation among the public at large, with the budget falling behind asylum in political relevance

Topics of conversation among the general UK public vs. MPs (last 30 days)








MP social media activity about the budget hit a number of (low) peaks

ORIGINAL X POSTS ABOUT THE BUDGET AMONG MPS (121 POSTS IN PAST 30 DAYS)








Labour MPs call for a budget that helps ordinary people

TOP MP AUTHORS BY NUMBER OF ORIGINAL X POSTS ABOUT THE BUDGET (121 POSTS IN PAST 30 DAYS)

AUTHOR	NO. OF POSTS	AUTHOR'S POST WITH MOST ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT
 <p>Richard Burgon Labour 228.4k followers</p>	15	<p>“ BREAKING: Over 50 MPs have now backed my Parliamentary Motion for a Wealth Tax. A 2% tax on assets over £10 million would raise £24 Billion a year. At the Budget, we need to tax extreme wealth – not ordinary people. ”</p>	<p>216.6K views 4.1K likes 1.2K reposts</p>
 <p>Imran Hussain Labour 26.6k followers</p>	12	<p>“ The Chancellor must act in this Budget: scrap the two-child cap, tackle the cost of living, and invest in Bradford's transport. Families need real support, and our city needs the investment to grow and thrive. ”</p>	<p>14.3K views 8 likes 7 reposts</p>
 <p>Neil Duncan-Jordan Labour 4.7k followers</p>	6	<p>“ It's getting harder to afford essentials – the weekly shop, rent and mortgages. Why? Household incomes have fallen for a decade while billionaires doubled their wealth. We must stop this transfer of wealth to the rich. Tax the richest to deliver a Budget for Living Standards. ”</p>	<p>120.1K views 2.7K likes 810 reposts</p>
 <p>Neil O'Brien Conservative 40.2k followers</p>	6	<p>“ **30 times Rachel Reeves said she wouldn't raise tax** 1 Rachel Reeves said she would not raise taxes on working people...30 Rachel Reeves said 'people should not be worried that Labour will take money out of their bank accounts by putting up tax.' ”</p>	<p>38.9K views 307 likes 131 reposts</p>
 <p>Monica Harding Liberal Democrat 15.8k followers</p>	4	<p>“ The chancellor has admitted that Brexit has caused long-term damage to our economy - and my constituents in Esher and Walton could face more tax rises in the Autumn Budget as a consequence. The botched Brexit deal has given us nothing but extra red tape and soaring costs... ”</p>	<p>34.4K views 302 likes 128 reposts</p>






Tax fears shape public discussion and doubts about labour

TOP AUTHORS AMONG THE GENERAL UK PUBLIC BY ENGAGEMENT

AUTHOR	OCCUPATION	NO. OF POSTS	AUTHOR'S POST WITH MOST ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT
 <p>@KEdge23 53k followers 27.7k engagements</p>	Conservative Influencer	41	<p>“ The Conservatives introduced the two-child benefit cap to make things fair. Labour are likely to scrap it at the budget, which will cost £3billion. It means higher taxes for the rest of us, and more benefits for others. Wrong priorities, totally unfair, and simply unaffordable. ”</p>	129.6K views 5.6K likes 605 reposts
 <p>@ArchRose90 204.k followers 9.75k engagements</p>	Conservative Influencer	1	<p>“ Rachel Reeves was booed at a business awards ceremony ahead of Budget. Growth downgraded weeks before Budget. Unemployment hits a 4 year high. Inflation highest in the G7. Highest energy prices in the world. Rachel Reeves should resign as Chancellor. She's unfit for the job. ”</p>	95.2K views 7.9 likes 1.5K reposts
 <p>@stuartmaggs 3.16k followers 7.47k engagements</p>	Lawyer	8	<p>“ ...The Chancellor basically announced she was raising income tax but is already U-turning on at least three leaked proposals. There is no situation where this can be regarded as competent...has become the most disastrous Budget process I've ever known... ”</p>	205.8K views 1.8K likes 339 reposts
 <p>@kelvmackenzie 120.2K followers 7.26k engagements</p>	Former Editor of The Sun	4	<p>“ My bet is that Starmer is considering scrapping the 2p income tax rise to save his own skin and placate angry Labour MPs who have his future in their hands. If the Budget goes badly he's done for. ”</p>	116.1K views 1.8K likes 223 reposts
 <p>@julianHjessop 35.2k followers 5.86k engagements</p>	Independent Economist	27	<p>“ Labour spinners are claiming this isn't a U-turn because the plan to increase income tax rates was just pre-Budget speculation and never actual policy... 😊 IMHO, that's naive - everyone was clearly led to believe that the manifesto promises on tax rates were about to be broken! ”</p>	37.1K views 569 likes 91 reposts

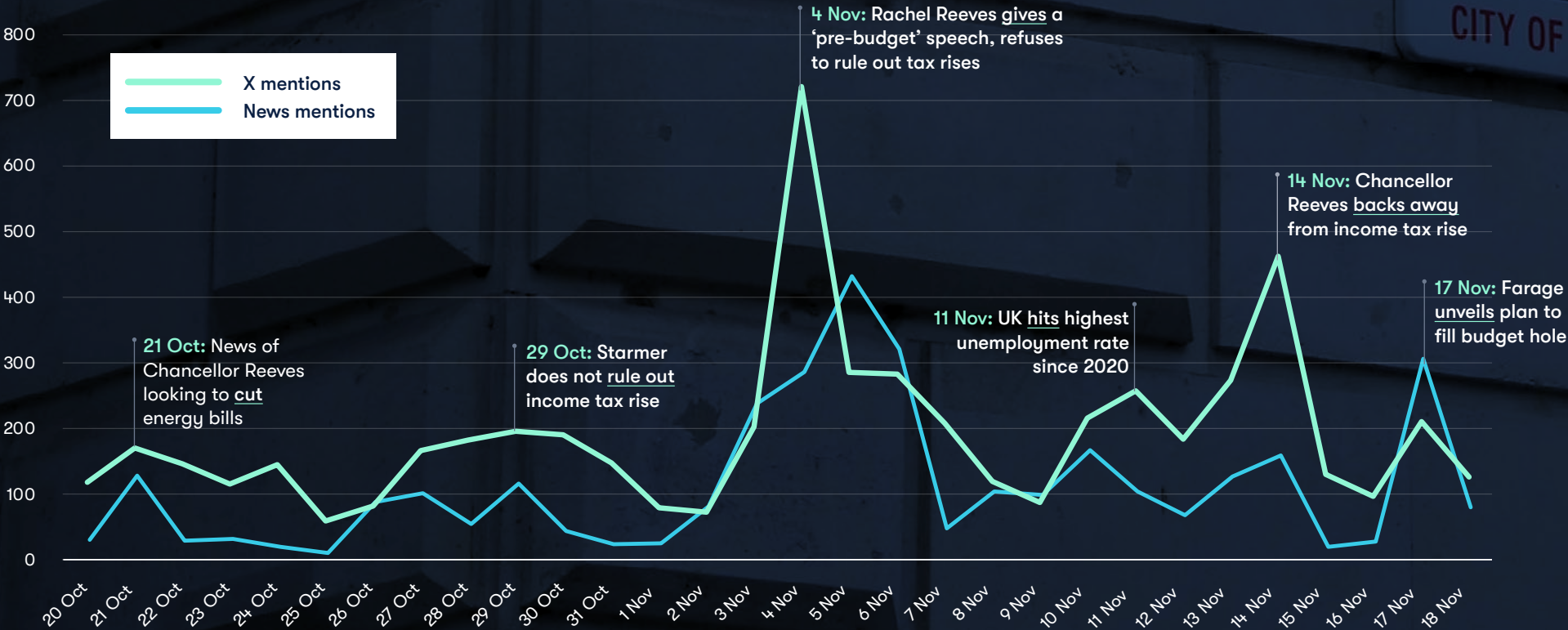
Political editors stay neutral as public debate turns partisan

BY NUMBER OF ORIGINAL X POSTS ABOUT THE BUDGET (153 POSTS IN PAST 30 DAYS)

AUTHOR	OCCUPATION	NO. OF POSTS	AUTHOR'S POST WITH MOST ENGAGEMENT	ENGAGEMENT
 <p>@PeterSteanovi2 536.8K followers 5.19K engagements</p>	Lawyer and Vlogger	23	<p>“ Keir Starmer issues Budget warning - Brexit and austerity impact ‘worse than feared’. The Prime Minister told a behind-closed-doors meeting of Labour MPs the long-term impact of Tory austerity and a botched Brexit deal ‘is worse than even we feared’.</p> <p>”</p>	190.9K views 425 likes 232 reposts
 <p>@Steven_Swinford 117.3k followers 10k engagements</p>	Political Editor, The Times	16	<p>“ Nigel Farage and Zia Yusuf will tomorrow say that foreign nationals must ‘bear the brunt’ of filling the black hole in Britain’s finances as they announce £25bn worth of cuts...</p> <p>”</p>	432.9K views 2.7K likes 570 reposts
 <p>@alexwickham 115.6k followers 5.14k engagements</p>	Political Editor, Bloomberg	15	<p>“ EXCLUSIVE: Rachel Reeves received an improved fiscal forecast from her budget watchdog putting the fiscal hole at £20 billion, leading her to drop plans to raise income tax rates, people familiar with the matter said...</p> <p>”</p>	838.1K views 501 likes 284 reposts
 <p>@PippaCrerar 440.1k followers 4.55k engagements</p>	Political Editor, The Guardian	14	<p>“ Keir Starmer has all but confirmed the two-child benefit cap will be fully abolished in budget. PM told @ITV doctor Amir Khan: ‘I can look you in the eye and tell you I’m personally committed to driving down child poverty.’...</p> <p>”</p>	359.7K views 362 likes 142 reposts
 <p>@SamCoatesSky 249.4k followers 1.45k engagements</p>	Dep. Political Editor, Sky News	10	<p>“ We told you on Politics at Sam and Anne’s on Monday about Starmer allies were going round saying they fear that cabinet ministers might come for the PM post Budget. Now it seems Starmer’s allies are proactively briefing this. The backlash tonight is immense.</p> <p>”</p>	150.5K views 455 likes 92 reposts

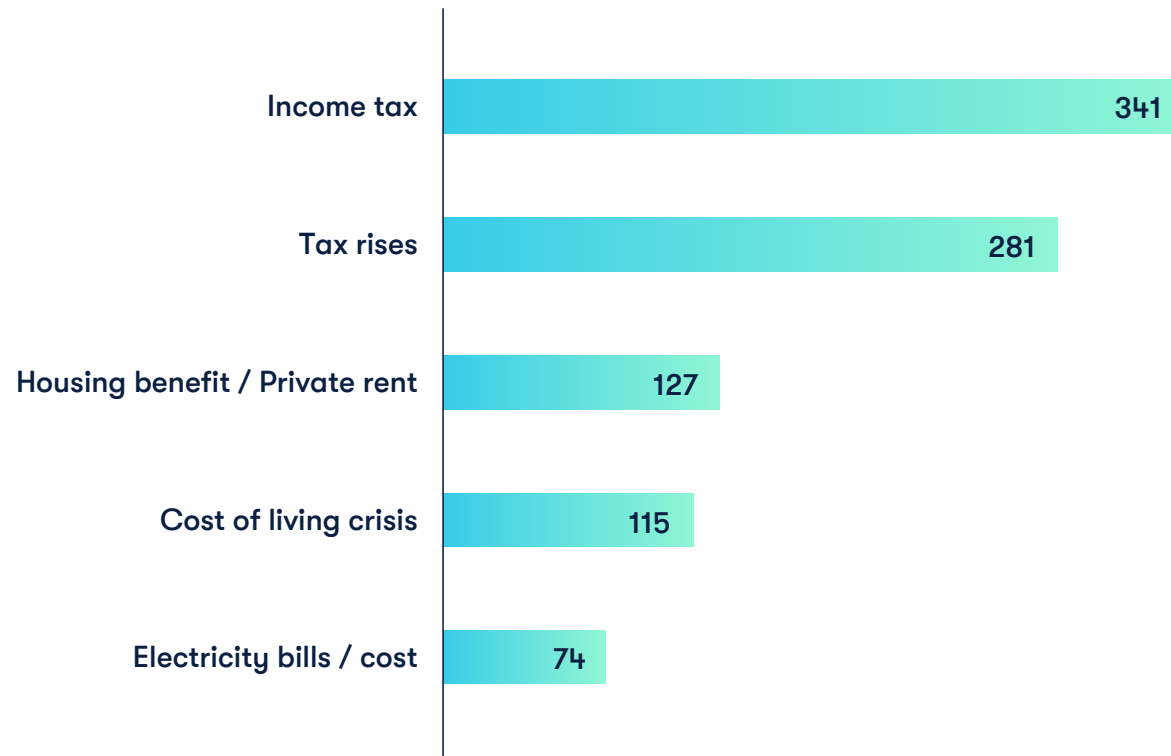
News coverage around the budget follows the same ebbs and flows as social media activity

NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT THE BUDGET AMONG UK OUTLETS (3,299 ARTICLES IN PAST 30 DAYS)



News publications focus on how specific aspects of the budget could impact everyday Brits, businesses, and the economy

TOP KEYWORDS MENTIONED IN NEWS ARTICLES (PAST 30 DAYS)



News coverage focuses on potential **tax rises** in the upcoming budget similar to social media. Publications largely cover Chancellor Reeves' **income tax** decision, with many voicing public concern about uncertainty.

Another major topic is the **two-child benefit cap**, with the Scottish Labour leaders calling on Reeves to scrap it.

UK news publications also write about what will happen to the **national insurance** threshold in the budget and whether the Bank of England will lower **interest rates** to make borrowing more affordable.

Recent news stories question Reeves' credibility amidst turbulence at Downing St and within the Labour Party

TOP NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT THE BUDGET BY REACH (3,299 ARTICLES IN PAST 30 DAYS)

BBC	The Guardian	Daily Mail	The INDEPENDENT	The Telegraph
Cost of living and tax rises key concerns ahead of Budget	Labour infighting puts chancellor's budget plan to reassure bond markets at risk	The Chancellor's lost control: Rachel Reeves accused of presiding over most shambolic Budget in history after humiliating U-turn on income tax hikes	Rachel Reeves under pressure to target high earners in Budget tax raid	Reeves' Budget has imploded. How did it all go so wrong?
<u>26 October 2025</u> 165.6M Reach	<u>12 November 2025</u> 77.9M Reach	<u>14 November 2025</u> 43.2M Reach	<u>25 October 2025</u> 40.7M Reach	<u>14 October 2025</u> 23.3M Reach
As Chancellor Rachel Reeves prepares to deliver her autumn Budget in a month's time, people living in her Leeds West and Pudsey constituency have shared their hopes - with the cost of living and tax rises foremost among their concerns.	But the current outbreak of Labour infighting – driven by a flurry of pugilistic briefings from inside No 10 – risks cutting that route off with two weeks still to go before budget day.	Rachel Reeves was accused of turning Britain into an 'economic laughing stock' after she suddenly abandoned her plans to raise income tax... instead of the single bold move of increasing income tax, the Chancellor will have to find other ways to plug the financial gap...	Ministerial sources have told The Independent that changes to the top rate of income tax have been discussed within government as the chancellor looks to find ways to fill a Budget black hole estimated to be between £30bn and £40bn.	But less than a fortnight after she asked the public to put their faith in her judgment that such a step was necessary, that plan has been torn up...the proposal to increase income tax rates had been junked.

Reeves' 'u-turn' on income taxes has driven the budget conversation since last Friday

Examples of X posts and news articles mentioning income tax

- The income tax announcement on 14 November has dominated recent budget discourse.
- With Labour pledging not to raise income taxes, VAT, or national insurance contributions, voters are questioning how the government will generate necessary revenue.
- This uncertainty is impacting consumer confidence and financial markets as Brits anticipate economic implications of the budget.



BBC

**What's behind Rachel Reeves's
'hokey cokey' on income
tax rises?**

The INDEPENDENT

**Reeves's shock U-turn on
income tax stuns ministers,
MPs and markets**



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