Reform UK Headlines — 26 Sep 2026

?? Reform UK — Latest News & Controversy Sweep — Saturday 26 September 2026

Source: NewsNow — Reform UK topic hub (`https://www.newsnow.co.uk/h/UK/Politics/Reform+UK`)
Sweep run: 09:00 BST, Saturday 26 September 2026 **Coverage harvested:** 40 items on the NewsNow "Latest" feed + 12 clustered "Top Stories" + 10 "Most Read" (98 unique article records), dated 5–26 September 2026. **Sixteen items are new since yesterday's 09:00 sweep**, including three filed today. **Yesterday's file:** `reform-uk-headlines-25-09-2026.md`

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Summary

The day's lead story is a two-in-one row in **Doncaster**, where Reform UK group leader **Cllr Howard Rimmer** told a council meeting that the city has **"no housing crisis"** and called on the Labour Mayor and a cabinet member to resign for attending a **Stand Up To Racism** protest — comments Labour members branded racist, and which he stood by after being told that most grooming-gang offenders are white British men. Reform UK Doncaster called the racism allegation "an extremely serious allegation" and said political disagreement "should be answered with facts and evidence, not inflammatory labels".

Elsewhere the pattern is the one that has dominated the party's September: **Reform-run and Reform-represented councils under pressure**. A senior Reform councillor in **South Tyneside**

apologised after the cabinet voted to close all ten council nurseries, with the public gallery cleared after shouts of "shame". The **Charity Commission is assessing** a Jaywick charity chaired by the Reform councillor suspended in Essex this week. In **Northumberland**, an expelled Reform councillor was paid **£18,888** despite not attending a single meeting in six months — and is standing in the by-election his own absence triggered. A second expelled councillor, in **Kent**, is waiting for an employment tribunal date. In **Hampshire**, a Reform councillor dismissed a pension-fund consultation (62 of 138 responses about Palestine) as "pretty pitiful" and "a lot of nonsense". In **Wales**, two Llandudno Reform councillors are fighting a Home Office plan to house twelve asylum seekers in two HMOs.

The national picture is softer for the party: **Survation has Labour 27% to Reform's 24%** — a third consecutive Labour lead — while a **YouGov MRP** reported by the Farmers Guardian suggests Labour could lose 79 of its 139 rural seats to Reform.

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1. Latest Developments

Doncaster: "no housing crisis", a resignation demand and a racism row (the lead story)

- **The council meeting (24 Sep).** The City of Doncaster Council's debate on houses of multiple occupancy turned into what the Doncaster Free Press called a "tense, frosty debate" after Reform UK group leader **Cllr Howard Rimmer** called on **Mayor Ros Jones** and **Cllr Sue Farmer**, cabinet member for children, young people and families, to resign for attending a **Stand Up To Racism (SUTR)** protest on 29 August. Labour councillors were "outraged". *(snippet-level — Doncaster Free Press body blocked by Cloudflare.)* (Doncaster Free Press, 25 Sep 15:16)
- **"There is no housing crisis."** In the same HMO debate, Rimmer claimed the borough is meeting its housebuilding targets and that this means there is no housing crisis in Doncaster — and repeated the claim to journalists after the meeting. (Doncaster Free Press, 25 Sep 12:14)
- **He stood by the grooming-gangs claim.** The Yorkshire Post (published 00:07 today) reports that Rimmer "stood by his comments, despite being informed that the majority of grooming gangs were white British men, not Pakistani men". *(snippet-level — Yorkshire Post is ConsentPaywall + Cloudflare.)* (Yorkshire Post, 26 Sep 00:07)
- **The party's response.** Reform UK Doncaster said the allegation that Cllr Rimmer's comments were "racist" was "an extremely serious allegation", adding: "*Political disagreement should be answered with facts and evidence, not inflammatory labels.*" (Yorkshire Post, 26 Sep)
- **Prior reporting on the same councillor.** Hope not Hate research into Reform candidates' social media, reported by Now Then Sheffield during Doncaster's all-out council election coverage, quoted Rimmer writing: "*We are importing low IQ people and*

when they commit heinous crimes they are given more lenient sentences by the Judges [sic]", adding "*They come from shit countries and want everything that we have built.*" The same report named six other Doncaster Reform candidates. Background only — Rimmer has not been asked about it in this week's coverage and no finding attaches to it. (Now Then Sheffield, citing Hope not Hate)
- **Committee churn continues.** The council has appointed Reform UK deputy leader **Cllr Russ Linley** to chair its **audit committee** following his predecessor's resignation, among a fresh round of committee chair and vice-chair appointments after the deputy leaders stepped down. (Doncaster Free Press, 25 Sep 12:24)

South Tyneside: Reform councillor apologises after ten nurseries closed

- **The decision.** Reform-run South Tyneside Council's cabinet voted to close all ten **Stanley's** (South Tyneside Accredited Network for Learning in the Early Years) nurseries **by 31 July 2027**, with staff reductions starting in December 2026. **116 people** are employed across the ten settings; the council said the network needs a **£1.1m-a-year subsidy** and the authority must find **£11.6m of savings in 2026/27**. A review had begun under the previous Labour administration in February 2026 and Reform said on taking control in May that it would continue it. (Left Foot Forward, 25 Sep; London Economic, 25 Sep)
- **The apology.** The Shields Gazette reports a "senior Reform UK councillor" — lead member for children's services **Michelle Fascione** — apologised "to families and staff for her part in" the decision. *(headline-level — Shields Gazette body blocked.)* Fascione told the BBC the situation had been "horrendous" for decision-makers but that closure was "the best option": "*The council unfortunately doesn't have a statutory obligation to provide these nurseries and it's been costing us £1.1m a year to subsidise and it's not viable for the future.*" (Shields Gazette, 25 Sep 12:29; via Left Foot Forward / London Economic)
- **The backlash in the room.** Members of the public in the gallery shouted "shame" ("You should be absolutely ashamed of yourselves. Absolutely disgusting"; "Where are your PROUD values now?" — a reference to the council's stated values) and, per the journalist Kevin Maguire, the gallery was then cleared. Green group leader **Cllr Rachael Taylor** said she was "deeply disappointed that Cabinet has voted to close all 10 STANLEY's nurseries within 10 minutes of the meeting starting despite significant questions that still require proper answers", listing outstanding concerns on SEND, children's services, alternative childcare capacity and funding. Labour's **Cllr Geraldine Kilgour** called the move "callous and heartless" and said closing the nurseries was avoidable "without a doubt"; one resident said childcare that costs them £400 a month could rise to about £1,000. (Left Foot Forward, 25 Sep; London Economic, 25 Sep)

Essex: suspended councillor's charity now under Charity Commission scrutiny

- **The charity. Jaywick Sands Community Forum** — whose chair is suspended Reform UK councillor **Bradley Thompson** — is being assessed by the **Charity Commission** over "governance and financial concerns". A Commission spokesperson said: "*We are currently assessing information relating to governance and financial concerns at Jaywick Sands Community Forum to determine if there is a regulatory role for the Commission.*" No findings have been made and **no statutory inquiry or regulatory compliance case has been opened**. The charity runs a food bank and a baby bank in Jaywick. (Essex Live, 25 Sep 14:58)
- **The councillor.** Cllr Thompson (Clacton West and St Osyth on Essex County Council — elected May 2026 with over 60% of the vote — and West Clacton & Jaywick Sands on Tendring District Council) was suspended by Reform UK earlier this week "following several serious and well-documented allegations of misconduct", and is no longer a Reform representative at either council. He now sits as an Independent and said: "*This is the first I have been made aware that the Charity Commission is assessing information... I will of course cooperate fully with the Commission should it contact me.*" (Essex Live, 25 Sep; Maldon and Burnham Standard, 25 Sep 13:09)

Northumberland: expelled councillor paid £18,888 for a seat he never attended — and he's standing again

- **The money. John Allen**, elected as a Reform UK councillor for Ashington's Hirst ward on Northumberland County Council in May 2025, was paid **£18,888** in allowances for 2025 despite **not turning up to a single council meeting**. The authority said every elected member that year received the sum for duties, constituency work, postage and stationery. (North East Bylines, 26 Sep 08:09)
- **The expulsion.** Allen was expelled from Reform UK in 2025, and was reported that September to have been suspended "pending investigation" after a **YouTube comment** saying he would shoot the then Prime Minister Keir Starmer if given the chance; Hope not Hate identified the posting account as `@johnallen7807`. He subsequently sat as an independent. (North East Bylines, 26 Sep)
- **The by-election.** Allen lost his seat over **non-attendance** at council meetings (none between February and August 2026) — and intends to stand as an independent in **the by-election his own absence triggered**, meaning he could earn a similar sum again. North East Bylines: "*Serious questions must be asked of a party in terms of just what extent are they a political party genuinely prepared to serve the public and to what extent they are only in politics for themselves.*" (North East Bylines, 26 Sep)

Kent: expelled councillor's employment tribunal

- **The claim. Cllr Isabella Kemp**, expelled from Reform UK in 2025, is waiting for a date for an employment tribunal — expected to be listed in November after a preliminary hearing in early September. Her claim is based on **wrongful dismissal and loss of earnings**; she had been employed by Reform UK in an administrative role. She said only: "*Sorry, I can't say anything.*" Reform UK declined to comment. (KentOnline, 25 Sep 16:29)
- **The context.** Kemp was expelled alongside six others after a leaked video in which Kent County Council leader **Linden Kemkaran** (Reform) was seen shouting and swearing at members, telling them they would have to "f*****g suck it up". A Reform UK investigation concluded Kemp had created and administered a WhatsApp group "in which making a screen recording was discussed", encouraged a colleague to be dishonest about a vote of no confidence and failed to disclose that recordings were being made. Kemp, the member for Sheppey, has consistently denied any part in the leak, which was published by the Guardian. (KentOnline, 25 Sep)
- **The fallout.** Kemp is now part of the **seven-strong Restore Britain grouping** at County Hall; other expelled members (Paul Thomas, Brian Black, Maxine Fothergill, Oliver Bradshaw, Robert Ford) also joined Restore, while Bill Barrett went to the Conservative group. Restore's 10%-plus showing at the Dover district by-election almost certainly cost Reform a seat it would have expected to win, and Restore activists are said to be "super-motivated" for the **May 2027** local elections, now back on after the government paused local government reorganisation — a pause that also means the 14 councils due for abolition, including KCC, survive. Reform has separately lost Daniel Taylor (imprisoned), Amelia Randall (to UKIP) and Dean Burns (to Restore). (KentOnline, 25 Sep)

Hampshire: Reform councillor calls pension-fund consultation "pretty pitiful"

- **The row.** At Hampshire County Council's Pension Fund Panel and Board on 25 September, Reform UK councillor **Paul McCormick** dismissed responses to a consultation on the £10bn fund's investment strategy as "quite extraordinary" and "frankly pretty pitiful", saying: "*It seems to me so odd indeed that we're giving any sort of weight whatever to views of political activists and single pressure groups who are trying to push a particular agenda and hijack*" and "*Someone who's just piling in comments like that without any regard to the question shouldn't be given the time again. I think it's taken up a lot of paper and a lot of nonsense.*" The consultation drew **138 responses, 62 of which referred to Palestine or genocide**, 31 of those from self-identified fund members. A council report said similar wording and timing meant there "may have been organised campaigning activity". (Farnham Herald / LDRS, 25 Sep 20:27, published in print today)
- **The pushback.** Lib Dem **Cllr Jack Davies**: "*Just because you disagree with them doesn't mean they're not valid*", arguing the fund must weigh ethical concerns alongside returns. Lib Dem **Cllr David Podger** told McCormick: "*I find your comments close to being insulting.*" The strategy was ultimately approved. (Farnham Herald, 25 Sep)

Poole: Labour takes a seat from Reform

- **The resignation.** Reform UK's **Daniel Bleeze** stepped down as councillor for Hamworthy East on Poole Town Council **just two months into his term**, having won the seat in May with **779 votes** to Labour's Peter Cooper on 387 — triggering the by-election. (Bournemouth Daily Echo, 25 Sep 13:00)
- **The result.** Labour's **Cllr Peter Cooper** won with **476 votes** to Reform's **John Sheldon** on 453 — a **23-vote** margin — becoming the first and only Labour councillor on Poole Town Council. Cooper also sits on BCP Council and said his focus would be "localism" and the town council's extra precept: "*It's not about me banging the labour drum.*" Sheldon: "It was a contest that was well fought. Unfortunately, we didn't quite make the 23 votes required to win." (Bournemouth Daily Echo, 25 Sep)

Wales: Llandudno councillors oppose asylum-seeker housing

- **The plan.** The Home Office is looking to house **twelve asylum seekers in two HMO-type properties** in Llandudno, with the local authority consulted in recent weeks (Local Democracy Reporting Service).
- **The objection.** Reform UK councillors **Gareth Probert** (Gogarth Mostyn) and **Alan Davies** (Tudno) say the plan is "completely wrong for Llandudno". Probert: "*This is completely wrong for Llandudno. Residents are already dealing with anti-social behaviour issues in parts of the town, and many people – especially women and children - will be deeply concerned about the arrival of twelve migrants that we know nothing about. HMOs are not an appropriate solution... When we have residents that are being housed in temporary accommodation or who are on waiting lists, struggling to access social housing, they will see asylum seekers being housed immediately.*" Davies: "*Once again, local communities are being expected to deal with the consequences of national policy decisions with no consultation or regard for local concerns... The Home Office should think again.*" (North Wales Pioneer, 25 Sep 10:49)

Westminster: Kruger's civil-service cut plan condemned by unions

- **The target. Danny Kruger**, Reform UK's head of preparation for government, said the party would seek to cut departmental and agency headcount to **around 300,000** as part of a promise to "radically reduce the size of the civil service". Cabinet Office figures put headcount at **557,825** at the end of March 2026 (**523,795 FTE**). 300,000 would go beyond the coalition-era cuts, which took staffing to a postwar low of **384,250 FTE** in mid-2016, and is a bigger cut than the **68,500 roles** Reform set out in December 2025 (a Kruger-written policy paper in May pledged cutting "non-operations professions like policy, comms and HR by at least 50%"). (Civil Service World, 24 Sep 13:22)

- **The reaction.** Prospect general secretary **Mike Clancy**: "*completely delusional*" — "Reform's plan for government appears to involve declaring war on their own civil servants"; FDA general secretary **Dave Penman**: announcing "ever-increasing finger-in-the-air numbers on civil service job cuts" is "*a stunt, not a plan for government*" … "*This is fantasy politics, not serious preparation for government.*"; PCS general secretary **Fran Heathcote**: threatening hundreds of thousands of redundancies is "*a reckless attack*" on workers delivering vital public services. (Civil Service World, 24 Sep)

Polling

- **Survation (fieldwork 22–23 Sep, 1,224 adults, published 25 Sep):** Labour **27%**, Reform UK **24%**, Conservatives 21%, Lib Dems 11%, Greens 7%. Labour's lead is inside the margin of error; this is a third consecutive Survation poll with Labour ahead and Labour are eight points above the party's final poll under Keir Starmer in June. **Reform are eight points below their February 2026 peak of 32%**, the Greens at their lowest since May 2025 (7%), the Tories at 21%. Leader ratings: **Burnham +16**, Badenoch +9, Davey +7, **Farage −12**, Polanski −15; on like/dislike, Farage −18. Confidence in the government is still negative on all ten issues polled but has improved (immigration −43 → −34; refugees/asylum −44 → −35; economy −27 → −21). Survation's read: hung parliament the most likely outcome. (Survation, 25 Sep 15:51)
- **YouGov MRP, rural seats:** Labour could lose **79 of its 139 rural seats** if a general election were held immediately, with Reform set to gain the most. *(headline-level — Farmers Guardian is member-walled.)* (Farmers Guardian, 25 Sep 10:30)
- **Aylesbury:** a poll has the Conservatives as favourites to take the seat at a future election. *(headline-level.)* (Bucks Herald, 25 Sep 10:33)

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2. Policy / Controversy

Contradiction tracker

#	Reform UK's position	The friction	Source
1	Party of straight-talking "facts, not labels"; disputes the racist label as "inflammatory"	Its Doncaster group leader stood by a grooming-gangs characterisation after being told most such offenders are white British men, and told a council meeting there is "no housing crisis" in a city debating HMO pressures	Yorkshire Post 26 Sep; Doncaster Free Press 25 Sep

#	Reform UK's position	The friction	Source
2	Claims to be the party that listens to "the people" against the activist class	A Reform councillor dismissed a statutory pension-fund consultation (62 of 138 responses on Palestine/genocide, half from fund members) as "pretty pitiful", "a lot of nonsense", from people who "shouldn't be given the time again"; a colleague called his remarks "close to being insulting"	Farnham Herald 25 Sep
3	"PROUD" values — professional, respectful, open and honest, "delivering what we say we will"	South Tyneside's Reform cabinet closed all ten council nurseries after, per the Green group leader, "10 minutes of the meeting starting", with the public gallery shouting "shame" and then cleared; the lead member apologised	Shields Gazette 25 Sep; Left Foot Forward 25 Sep
4	Anti-waste, anti-establishment, "for the many"	An expelled Reform councillor kept **£18,888** in allowances for a year in which he attended **no** meetings, and is standing in the by-election his own non-attendance caused	North East Bylines 26 Sep
5	Efficiency: shrink the state to cut costs and improve services	300,000 civil-service headcount is a cut deeper than the coalition's, whose own targets the party has already raised once (68,500 roles in Dec 2025); unions say it "would result in fewer specialist staff delivering vital services" — river pollution monitoring, cyber and biosecurity, disease outbreaks	Civil Service World 24 Sep
6	Claims to be the party of competent local administration	A second suspended Essex councillor's charity is now being assessed by the Charity Commission; South Tyneside, Sunderland, Oldham, Hartlepool, Durham and Kent all produced adverse stories this fortnight	Essex Live 25 Sep (this sweep); BBC 25 Sep (yesterday's sweep)

#	Reform UK's position	The friction	Source
7	Presents itself as a party of immigration control ("we know who is coming")	Home Office asylum placements are being opposed ward-by-ward by its own councillors (Llandudno) on the grounds that residents "know nothing about" the twelve arrivals — a local objection to a national system the party says it would run	North Wales Pioneer 25 Sep
8	Party of electoral momentum	Labour took a Poole Town Council seat off Reform in a by-election after its councillor quit two months in (476–453, a 23-vote margin), and Survation has Labour ahead for a third consecutive poll with Reform eight points below its February peak	Bournemouth Daily Echo 25 Sep; Survation 25 Sep

Notable "gaffs" this week

- **"There is no housing crisis in Doncaster"** — repeated to journalists after the meeting by the party's group leader on a council debating HMO pressures (25 Sep).
- **The grooming-gangs claim, restated after correction** — Rimmer stood by the remarks after being told the majority of grooming-gang offenders are white British men (Yorkshire Post, 26 Sep).
- **"Frankly pretty pitiful… a lot of nonsense"** — a Reform councillor's description of public consultation responses on a £10bn pension fund (25 Sep).
- **The apology after the nursery vote** — a Reform lead member apologising to families and staff for a closure decision taken after ten minutes of cabinet discussion (25 Sep).
- **The by-election candidate paid £18,888 for six months' absence** — expelled from the party, still cashing the allowance, now standing again (26 Sep).

Governance watch-list (next 14 days)

- **Doncaster:** whether the Labour group moves a formal censure over the SUTR remarks; the council's HMO policy continues; Rimmer remains group leader.
- **Essex:** the result of the Charity Commission's assessment of Jaywick Sands Community Forum; Cllr Bradley Thompson sits as an Independent at county and district level.
- **South Tyneside:** staff reductions from December 2026; parents' and unions' next moves; the Green group's unanswered questions on SEND and alternative childcare capacity.
- **Northumberland:** the Ashington Hirst by-election, with John Allen standing as an independent.

- **Kent:** employment tribunal listing for Isabella Kemp expected in November; Restore Britain's build-up to May 2027.
- **Westminster:** the civil-service headcount target (300,000) is now the party's published ambition — expect it to be tested at conference and in the Budget response; the £72m crypto donations remain exposed to the £100,000 overseas-donor cap backdated to March.
- **Polling:** Survation's next fieldwork vs YouGov's MRP seat projections — the vote share and the seat story continue to diverge.

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3. Source Links

NewsNow hub (source of the sweep)

- Reform UK topic page: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/h/UK/Politics/Reform+UK

Doncaster

- Reform UK leader accused of making 'racist statements' whilst calling on Mayor to resign — Yorkshire Post: https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/reform-uk-leader-accused-of-making-racist-statements-whilst-calling-on-mayor-to-resign-9181898
- Reform UK Doncaster leader's grooming gangs comments criticised — Doncaster Free Press: https://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/news/politics/reform-uk-doncaster-leaders-grooming-gang-comments-criticised-9179830
- 'No housing crisis in Doncaster', Reform UK leader claims — Doncaster Free Press: https://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/news/politics/no-housing-crisis-in-doncaster-reform-uk-leader-claims-9177757
- New council committee chairs appointed after resignations — Doncaster Free Press: https://www.doncasterfreepress.co.uk/news/politics/new-doncaster-council-committee-chairs-appointed-after-resignations-9177856
- Background: Hope not Hate research into Doncaster candidates — Now Then Sheffield: https://nowthenmagazine.com/articles/airports-antisemitism-and-andrew-tate-will-hard-right-reform-take-over-doncaster-on-thursday

South Tyneside

- 'I'm sorry' — senior Reform councillor apologies for closure of South Tyneside nurseries — Shields Gazette: https://www.shieldsgazette.com/news/south-tyneside-council-reform-uk-michelle-fascione-daycare-nurseries-9172500
- Outrage as Reform-run council votes to shut 10 nurseries — Left Foot Forward: https://leftfootforward.org/2026/09/outrage-as-reform-run-council-votes-to-shut-10-nurseries/
- Reform councillors heckled by parents after shutting local nurseries — The London Economic: https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/politics/reform-councillors-heckled-by-parents-after-shutting-local-nurseries-409964/

Essex

- Charity linked to suspended Reform councillor being 'assessed' by watchdog — Essex Live: https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/charity-linked-suspended-reform-councillor-11171910
- Reform UK Jaywick councillor suspended amid allegations — Maldon and Burnham Standard: https://www.clactonandfrintongazette.co.uk/news/26581986.reform-uk-jaywick-councillor-suspended-amid-allegations/

North East / Kent

- Another scandal linked to Reform UK — North East Bylines: https://northeastbylines.co.uk/news/politics/another-scandal-linked-to-reform-uk/
- Expelled Reform UK councillor Isabella Kemp waits for employment tribunal date — KentOnline: https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/expelled-reform-councillor-waits-for-employment-tribunal-dat-345584/

Policy and polling

- 'Completely delusional': unions blast Reform UK plan to halve size of civil service — Civil Service World: https://www.civilserviceworld.com/professions/article/completely-delusional-unions-blast-reform-uk-plan-to-halve-size-of-civil-service
- Two months of Burnham: Labour hold their lead — Survation: https://www.survation.com/two-months-of-burnham-labour-hold-their-lead/
- Rural vote could swing General Election as new poll shows Reform UK surge — Farmers Guardian: https://www.farmersguardian.com/news/4536296/rural-vote-swing-election-poll-reform-uk-surge

Local

- Reform councillor sparks row over Israel concerns in £10bn pension fund — Farnham Herald (LDRS): https://www.farnhamherald.com/news/politics/reform-councillor-sparks-row-over-israel-concerns-in-ps10bn-pension-fund-958671
- Labour wins first Poole Town Council seat in by-election — Bournemouth Daily Echo: https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/26582069.labour-wins-first-poole-town-council-seat-by-election/
- Llandudno Reform UK councillors oppose asylum seeker housing — North Wales Pioneer: https://www.northwalespioneer.co.uk/news/26581102.llandudno-reform-uk-councillors-oppose-asylum-seeker-housing/
- Poll has Tories as favourites to take over Aylesbury in future election — Bucks Herald: https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/politics/poll-has-tories-as-favourites-to-take-over-aylesbury-in-future-election

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