

What you need to know about the Hartlepool by-election

Every week, Maddyness curates articles from other outlets on a topic that is driving the headlines. This Monday, we look at the aftermath of 'Super Thursday' and what it means for British politics.

Hartlepool by-election: Johnson pledges 'jabs and jobs' after poll victory

Boris Johnson promised to deliver “jabs, jabs, jabs and jobs, jobs, jobs” today as he hailed the Conservatives’ by-election win in Hartlepool, which prompted criticism of Sir Keir Starmer from Labour’s hard-left and Blairite wings. [Read the full article via The Times.](#)

The Tories’ Hartlepool triumph owes more to cash than culture wars

Beyond the first phase of the pandemic, they have talked up investment in green jobs, and the Treasury, via the Towns Fund, has carefully targeted cash at marginal Tory seats. Austerity in key parts of the public sector has been either halted or reversed, with schools funding – a major factor for voters switching to Labour in the 2017 election – now rising per pupil after years of

cuts. And while Rishi Sunak has proposed some theoretical future cuts, he is entirely at liberty not to implement them. Judging by past experience, he won't. [Read the full article via the New Statesman.](#)

Hartlepool proves Boris Johnson is the Tories' greatest asset

Conventional wisdom had it that Boris Johnson had endured a calamitous fortnight. And then along comes Hartlepool. Of course we cannot know what motivated each Conservative voter in the town, yet it would be hard to see how the result could have turned out as it did, were the country half as appalled by Johnson's behaviour as many in the Westminster Bubble appear to be. [Read the full article via The Telegraph.](#)

Labour will probably ask a focus group why it's losing - and that's the problem

Last week, a senior member of Keir Starmer's shadow cabinet told me: "If the Tories can win Hartlepool, nowhere is safe. They can win anywhere." A seat that had been Labour since its creation, slap-bang in what the party once called its heartlands, its significance was painfully obvious to Starmer's team. They had moulded their leader and their entire strategy around winning back the "red wall", and here was their first crucial test. [Read the full article via The Guardian.](#)

The Tory formula for winning in north-east England: jabs, jobs, hope

There are many factors, but one is clearly the prime minister himself. A Labour MP who has spent a lot of time canvassing voters in Hartlepool over the past few weeks said: "They like Johnson as a person. They see him as being optimistic." When the prime minister visited recently, he talked of the "massive opportunities" for the local area, and posed for selfies with schoolchildren. [Read the full article via The Guardian.](#)