

The Rise of

Influencer Politics

The new battle
for attention in
Westminster



Westminster has become loud and crowded. **Being heard has never been harder.**

The public is now consuming their news from social media silos and new challenger broadcasters.

Meanwhile our politicians fight for a share of attention in a new multi-party system.

In the middle of all this noise are corporate affairs teams seeking to be heard by the public and political decision makers.

If you want to be heard in this environment – you must embrace change. You must do things differently.

One way to do this is by embracing Influencer Politics. Politicians have started, government departments have started and yet communications teams lag behind.

This report details the rise of social media influencers in our politics and the lessons for communications teams.





Born in PR.
Raised in Social.
Digitally Native.

We have always been at the forefront of innovation with social media influencers.

From being named Campaign's Global Independent PR Agency of the Year, to winning The Drum Grand Prix Award for content, award-winning consumer and B2B social influencer campaigns are in our DNA.

More importantly, we know how to measure the attention they get and how effective they are – a crucial weapon in an era where AI search is redefining how audiences find content.

We are now bringing our influencer expertise to support corporate affairs teams with our pioneering Micro-Lobby.

We ensure your message is heard loud and clear by those who matter most.



01

The rise of social media influencers

Social media influencers are impossible to ignore – they dominate our feeds, star in TV shows, host podcasts, and now run some of the biggest consumer brands in the country.

It is no wonder Westminster is looking to get in on the act. Influencers have reminded us that the messenger is as important as the message.

Political decision makers, just like the wider public, gravitate towards voices that feel human, familiar and relatable.

Nearly 40% of people say they trust influencers because they feel relatable, not because they are famous or have large followings.

The impact on behaviour is clear; research shows audiences spend twice as long watching a video from an influencer than one posted by a brand page, even when the message is similar.

In an era of endless scrolling and ever-increasing competition for our attention, that extra time matters. Influencers thrive because they understand the modern attention economy. Politicians and communications teams have a lot to learn from them.

02

Government departments spend big on influencers

Tangerine's research has uncovered that government communications departments have hired over 200 influencers since 2024. The Department for Health & Social Care, Department for Education and Environment Agency have all doubled the number of influencers hired for their campaigns. This is a smart shift to ensure vital government campaigns reach key audiences online, in particular younger generations.

A staggering 70% of younger people now use social media as their primary source of news, meaning the fight for attention is no longer on TV or in the newspapers.

Government communications teams can no longer rely on the traditional Ministerial morning round or newspaper columns to reach the wider public. This shift to hiring influencers should not be sneered at – it should be celebrated.

With trust in government institutions plummeting to a historic low, departments are turning to relatable and trusted influencers to communicate their messages.

Social media influencers have promoted recruitment campaigns, changes to welfare payments, and skills opportunities. All are vital campaigns for the government to communicate.



Over £500,000
spent by government
departments on influencer
marketing



Department for Health
and Social Care used
28 influencers
last year



At least
11 departments
pay influencers to
reach public

03

The rise of Influencer Politicians – and who does it best?

MPs must now be part-influencer, part-politician if they are to succeed in being heard in a crowded marketplace.

They can no longer rely on traditional broadcast or print to reach the public. Instead, they must become their own social media influencer, seeking to stop voters scrolling on their feeds and watch their content.

In this new era, Tangerine discovered party leaders employing tactics often used by social media influencers as they search for their golden ticket to reach voters.

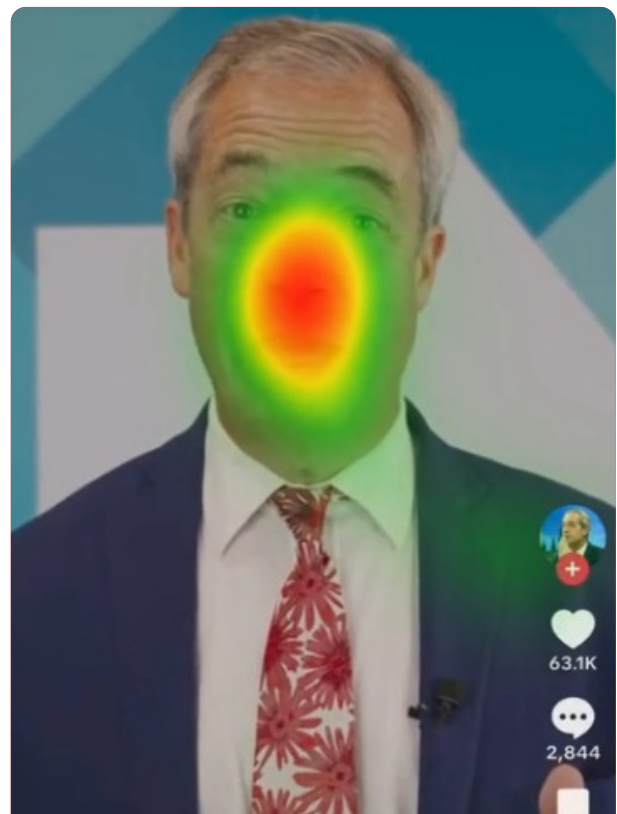
A new scientific analysis by Tangerine's experts compared social media videos from five party leaders.

Tangerine used AI-based analysis platform Neurons to assess how effectively each video captures and sustains attention.

The tool models how social media users visually and emotionally engage with video content, replicating the attention patterns typically achieved by high-performing influencers. Each party leader was given an "attention" score using these metrics.

Nigel Farage's videos far outperformed his leader rivals, being shown to capture attention within the first three seconds and, most critically of all, hold attention through emotive storytelling direct to the camera. His set format is very similar to that of lifestyle influencers.

The research found that overly produced videos with multiple cut-away shots and too many people fail to connect emotionally with an audience and therefore hold their attention. This is a critique of some of Keir Starmer's videos, which show the Prime Minister in action meeting people, with no speech and pop music playing the background.



Leader	Average video attention score
Nigel Farage	6.9
Zack Polanski	6.4
Kemi Badenoch	6.0
Keir Starmer	5.9
Ed Davey	5.9

04

Influencers begin wielding their power in Westminster

Politicians are no different to the public when it comes to social media habits. With long nights waiting for parliamentary votes, or weekly commutes to far-away constituencies, many MPs can be found scrolling their social media feeds and watching influencer videos. This makes influencers the new backdoor to reach MPs.

We are already seeing the effects of influencers taking hold in Westminster. Influencers are no longer just selling products, they are stepping into politics.

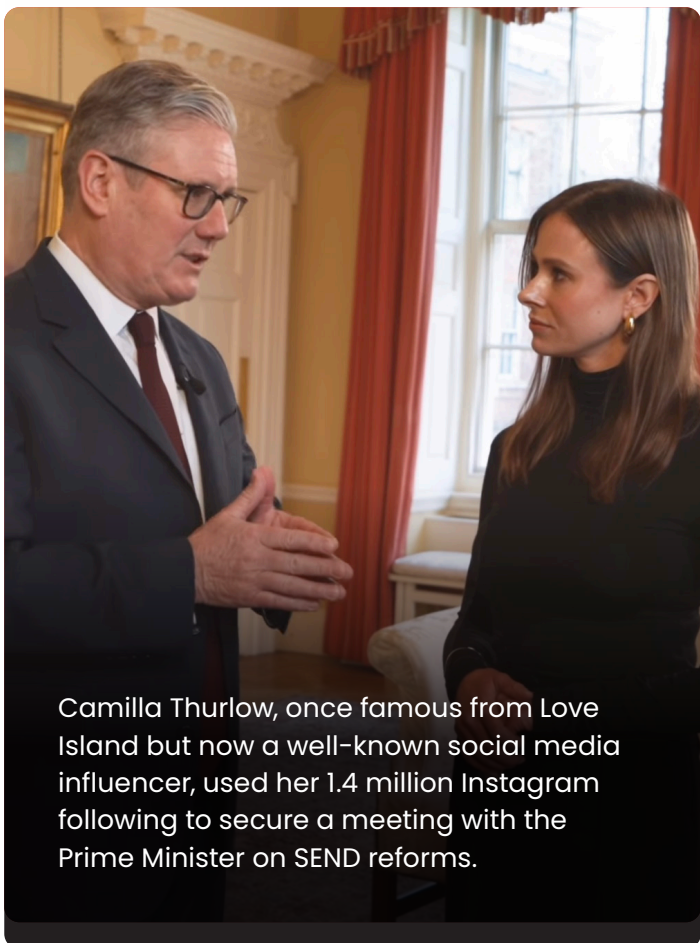
Influencers now attend government press conferences with questions to the Prime Minister and Chancellor.

Meanwhile, Downing Street has begun holding regular influencer receptions as they seek to build relations with these powerful social media stars.

Tangerine has even identified MPs learning from social media influencers on how to speak to alienated audiences.

The “Boshosphere”, a group of male social media influencers, has shown how to engage young men on social and political issues. Thomas Skinner and Big John are amongst the most well-known – now regularly receiving attention from MPs and Party Leaders. They are courted by the Westminster elite as much as business groups. These influencers are not only gatekeepers to audiences, but also an example of how to speak to voter groups who have become alienated from mainstream political parties.

11 frontbench MPs follow either Thomas Skinner or Big John, including The Speaker.



Camilla Thurlow, once famous from Love Island but now a well-known social media influencer, used her 1.4 million Instagram following to secure a meeting with the Prime Minister on SEND reforms.

05

Tangerine's Micro-Lobby – how we use influencers in your campaign

Tangerine's Micro-Lobby is a first of its kind tool that gives corporate communications and public affairs teams a new route into influencing decision makers.

Instead of relying purely on traditional methods such as meetings, emails and events, we also use trusted influencers to capture the attention of politicians and decision makers on social media.

We deliver issue-led content directly into the social feeds of people who matter. Not from brand pages that often get scrolled past, but from influencers' own authentic pages.



How it works?

Tangerine's senior corporate affairs consultants will work with your teams to distill key messages and analyse target audiences.

We then work with credible influencers to create compelling video content on your key message. This will be the point you have been desperate to land with decision makers.

That video is precisely targeted so it reaches specific MPs, officials, civil servants or industry leaders. The result is your message cutting through the noise and busy diaries of decision makers.

Tangerine then produces a detailed report for you to report back to internal stakeholders – proof the message has been on the social media feeds of those you seek to influence.

