

POLL SHOWS UKIP LEAD AHEAD OF VOTE

Press Association

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Nigel Farage's Ukip leads an opinion poll less than a month before the European elections

Ukip has surged into the lead in the European election contest despite a bruising week of controversies, according to a poll.

Nigel Farage's party recorded 31% support in YouGov research for the Sunday Times, three points ahead of Labour, with the Tories languishing in third on 19%.

It is the first time the company has given Ukip an outright advantage in the race, with ballots due to be cast in less than a month.

The results are in line with a ComRes poll for the Sunday Mirror and Independent on Sunday last month, which put Ukip on 30%, Labour on 28%, and David Cameron's party on 21%.

The finding suggest Mr Farage has not sustained significant damage from recent furores over his expenses, "racist" posters, criticism of misleading campaign literature, and dubious comments from activists.

Former Tory donor Paul Sykes, said to be worth £650 million, has pledged to plough more money into Ukip after funding one poster campaign.

He told the Sunday Times there would be "at least another two waves" of adverts before the European elections.

"I'm not giving up," he said. "That will warn the Conservatives what is going to happen.

"We will get more democracy in Britain if it skints me."

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