



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

26th March 2020



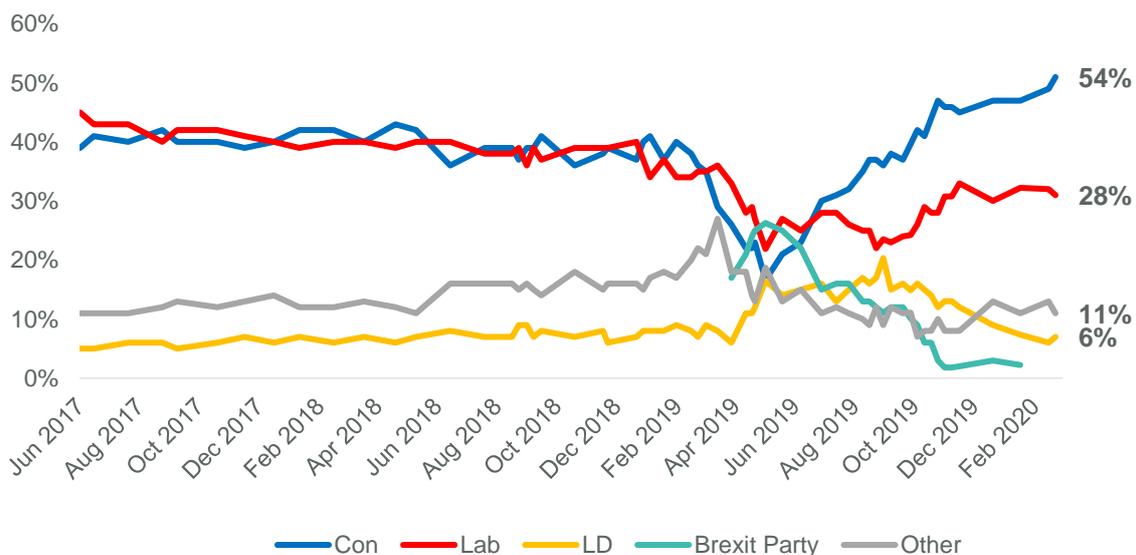
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

26th March 2020

One-minute takeaway

- The Conservatives hold a 26-point lead
- 92% of the public are on board with the current lockdown measures to stop the spread of coronavirus
- But over half (57%) the public think the measures should go even further; a third think there should be a ban on all public transport
- Approval of government handling of coronavirus increases to two thirds (65%) of the public
- However, over half (56%) the public think the Government did not act fast enough to stop the spread of coronavirus
- Trust in information the Prime Minister, Health Secretary and Chancellor provide on Coronavirus have improved considerably in the last week
- One in six (17%) are unclear on government instruction on when to use outdoor space
- Two in five (44%) think there should be a temporary National Government; a quarter (26%) of Conservative voters agree

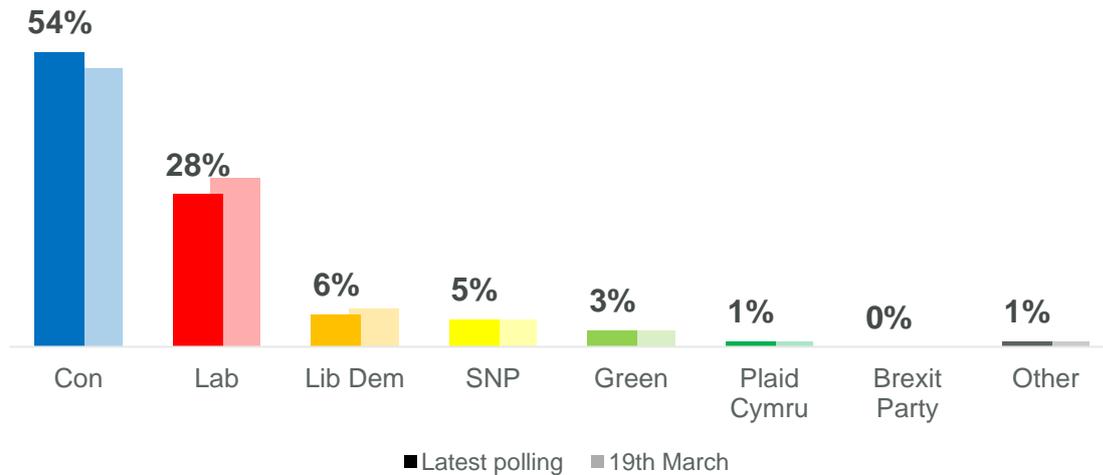
Voting intention since the 2017 general election



The state of the parties

Conservatives maintain strong lead in the polls

The Conservatives lead has from risen six points to 26 points over Labour, the highest an Opinium poll has seen.



The Conservatives are on over half of the GB vote share, on 54%, up three points from last week. This is the first time we have seen the party poll at this level. Labour has dropped three points since last week to 28% of the vote.

There is continual movement towards the prime minister and his performance as prime minister. Last week his approval rating was +14%, but it has risen this week to +29%, with 55% approving of how he has acted as prime minister, compared to 26% disapproving.

Lockdown

Nine in ten agree with current measures to stop the spread of coronavirus

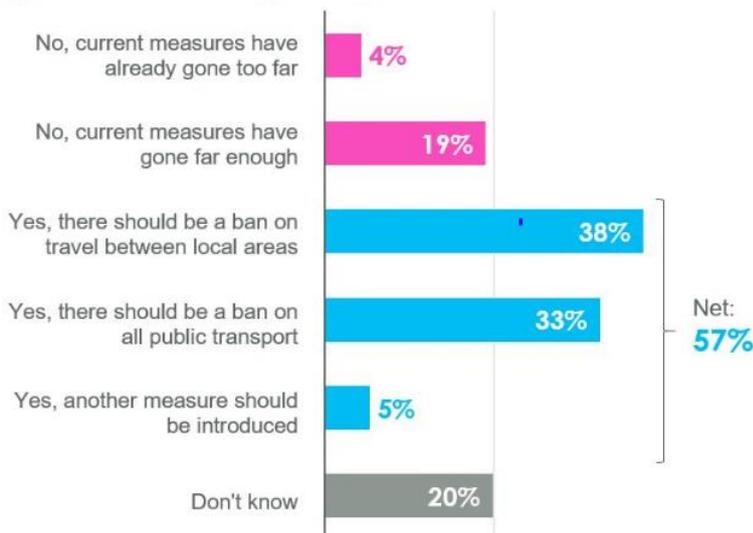
Monday saw the announcement of lockdown measures, that brings the UK into line with many other European countries. Under these measures, people are to stay at home and are only allowed to go outside for food, health reasons, or work (but only if you cannot work from home), for exercise once a day, for medical reasons, or to provide care or help a vulnerable person.

The overwhelming majority (92%) of the public are behind these measures to curb the spread of coronavirus, with only 4% thinking this was not the right thing to do.

Boris Johnson announced that the lockdown measures would be in place for three weeks, with a review after that. The public are not expecting the lockdown measures to be lifted by then, with 82% anticipating it extending beyond 3 weeks. Only 8% expect lockdown restriction to be lifted in 3 weeks times.

There is an appetite for further measures to stop coronavirus

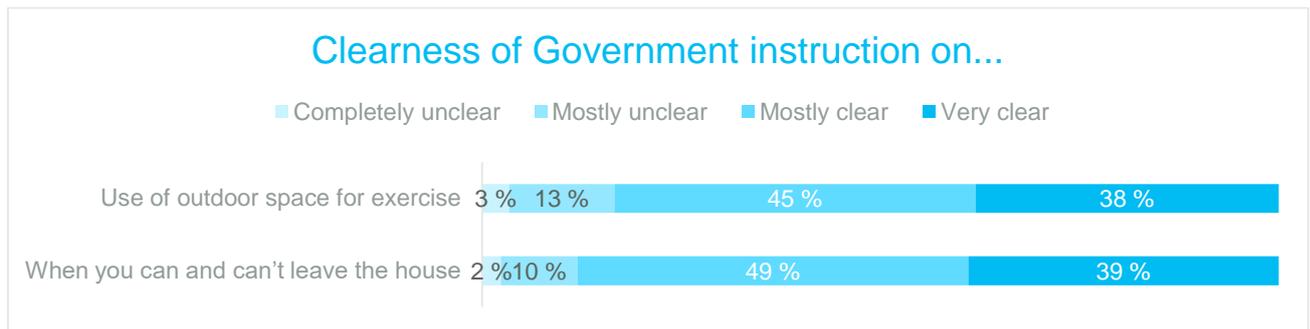
Do you think further measures should be implemented to stop the spread of coronavirus?



The public, however, are not as unified on whether the current measures go far enough; a quarter (23%) think current measures are sufficient or already have gone too far, while over half (57%) think further measures should be implemented to stop the spread of coronavirus. A third (33%) of the public think there should be a ban on public transport, while 38% think there should be a ban on travel between local areas.

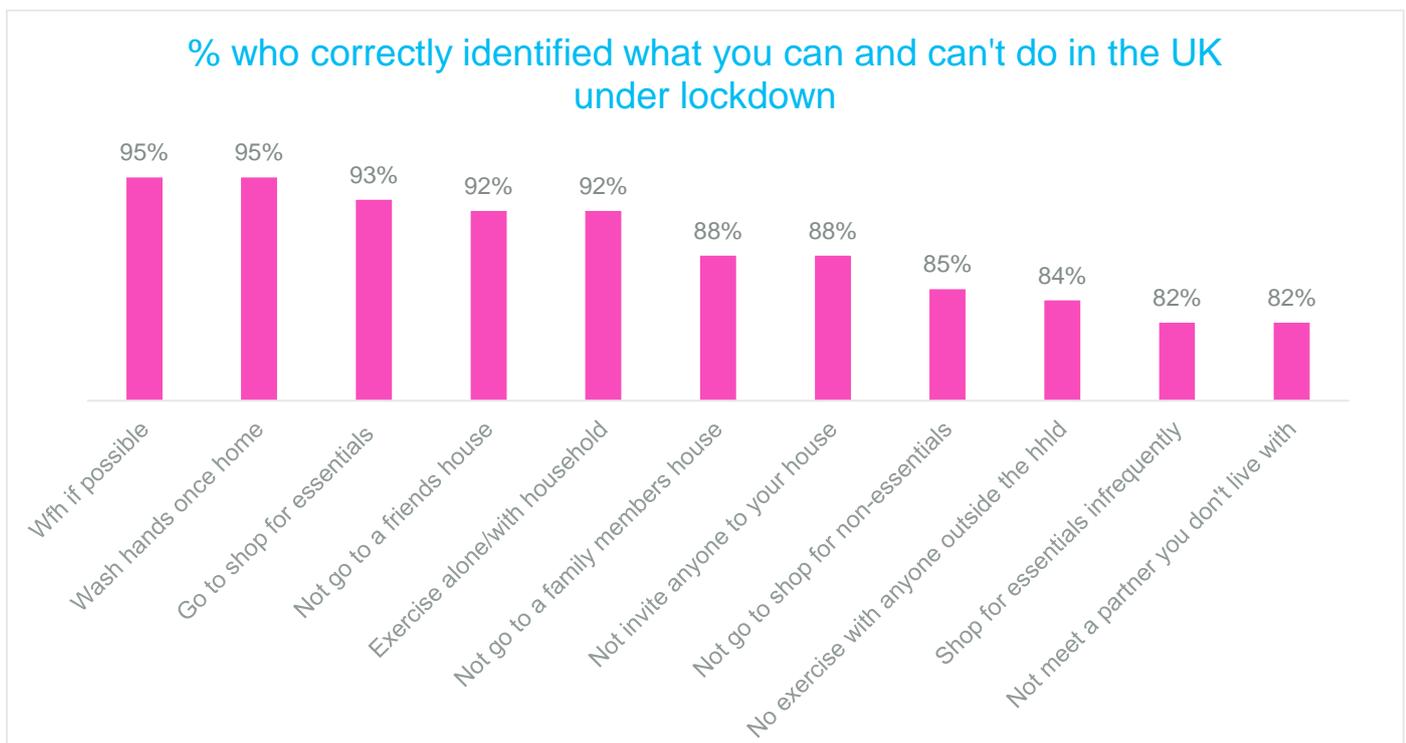
Over four in five are clear on the government's instructions on what you can and can't do

There have been various commentators over the past week mentioning that government advice on what to do during this pandemic is not altogether clear. However, put to the public, 88% have felt that government advice on when they can and can't leave the house has been clear, although 12% feel it has been unclear. Similarly, four in five (83%) feel Government instruction on when they can use outdoor space for exercise has been clear, whilst 17% feel it has been unclear.



In line with the above, when we tested understanding on a range of instructions and announcements, most of them had landed in the minds of the public:

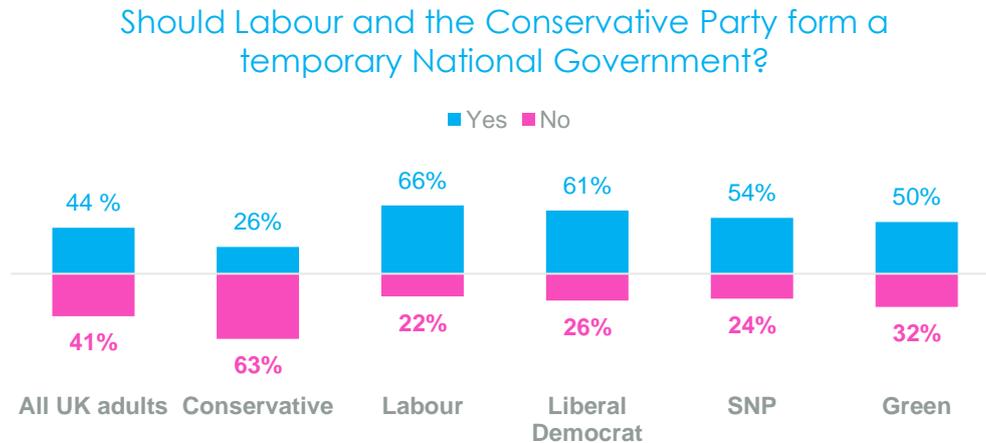
- 90% correctly identified that you should stand 2 metres away from people outside your household (3% said 1 metre)
- 81% correctly identified that you should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds, with an additional 15% thinking it should be longer than 20 seconds



We also asked a series of true and false statements around a number of measures the government has discussed in recent weeks. The statements were asked generally in the positive (e.g. You can visit a family member’s house). Again, the majority of people were able to identify which were correct or incorrect. Having said this, while most messages have registered well, there could be more done to make clear that people should shop for essentials as infrequently as possible, and that you should not be meeting a boyfriend/girlfriend if you do not live together.

44% think there should be a temporary National Government

Some commentators have suggested that in a time of extreme crisis, a National Government should be formed. The public are largely split, unsurprisingly based on party lines, on whether Labour and the Conservative Party should form a temporary National Government during the Coronavirus pandemic. Only a quarter (26%) of Conservative voters find the idea appealing, rising to two thirds (66%) of Labour voters.



The government's crisis response

Public concern about Covid-19 growing

Almost nine in ten (87%) UK adults are now worried about Coronavirus, up from 80% last week. More concerning, the proportion who described themselves as “very worried” by the crisis is up from over a third (35%) last week to 42% this week.

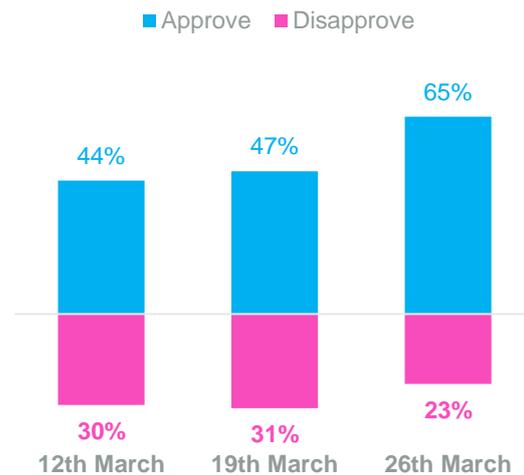
The public are increasingly getting behind the government's handling of the crisis

Two thirds (65%) now approve of the way the Government has handled the Coronavirus situation, while 23% disapprove. This gives the government's handling of the crisis a positive net score of +42%, up considerably from +16% at the end of last week.

On a broader, long-term level, 57% have confidence in the Government's ability to handle the Coronavirus situation as it continues to develop, while a fifth (22%) do not. This is up from last week.

However, over half (56%) of the public think that the government has not acted fast enough to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, while a third (36%) believe the government did act fast enough.

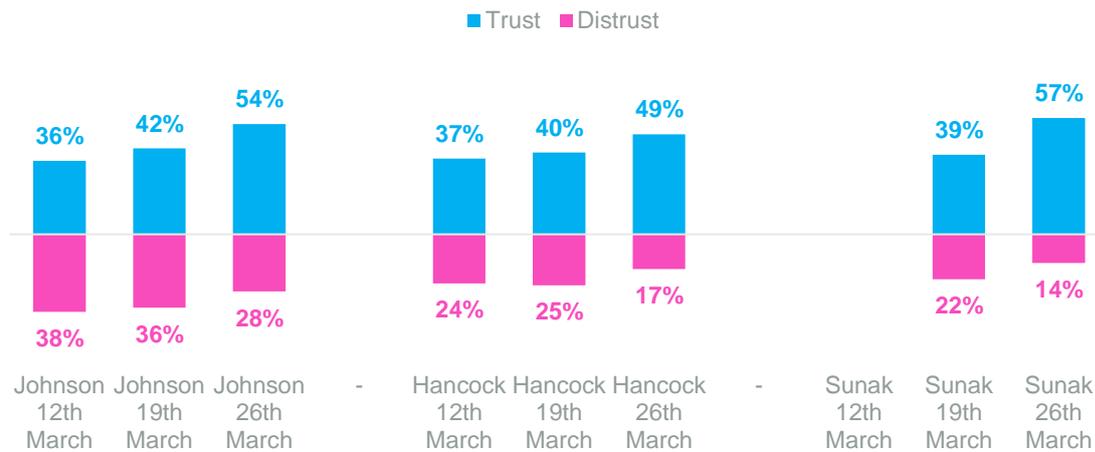
Approval of government handling of Coronavirus



Trust in politicians has improved substantially in the last week

The prime minister, the health secretary and the Chancellor have all seen an increase in public trust based on the information on coronavirus they provided from last week.

Trust in information from following politicians



Trust in both Professor Chris Witty (66% trust) and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (60% trust) have also increased.

About Opinium

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people **think, feel** and **do**. Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.

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