



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

1st April 2020



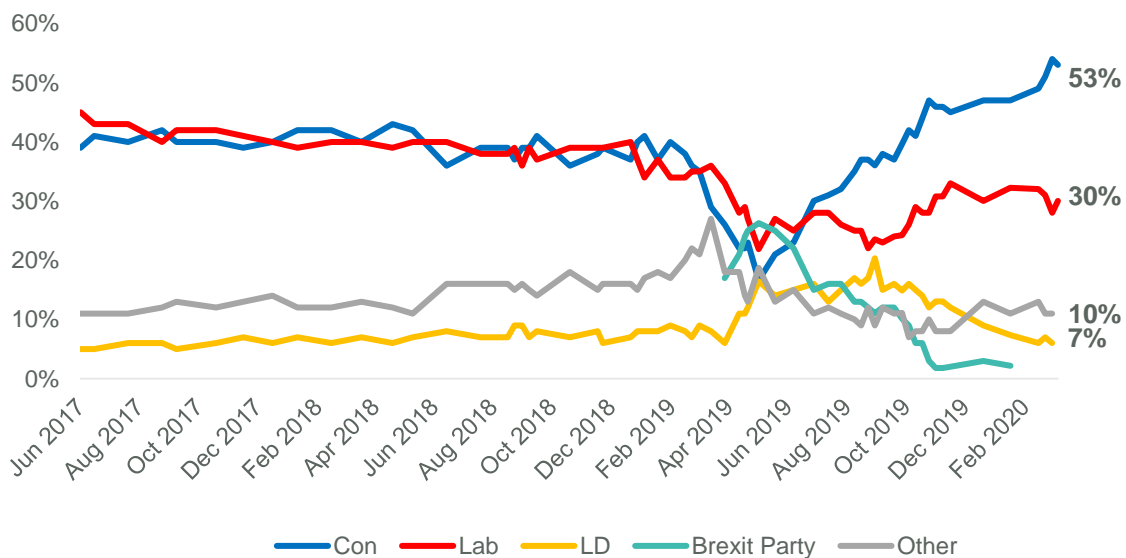
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

1st April 2020

One-minute takeaway

- There are signs that confidence in the government during this pandemic has peaked, with a slight drop in confidence
- Approval of government handling of the coronavirus situation has dropped from net approval of +42% last week to +23% this week
- Confidence in the government’s ability to handle the situation as it develops drops from 57% to 50%
- 63% think the government has not acted fast enough to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, up from 56% last week.
- Trust in the prime minister, health secretary and Chancellor has also dropped in the last week, particularly for the Chancellor
- Two thirds of the public think lockdown measures will be in place beyond May
- Half of those who have been questioned by police when out during lockdown think the police are overreacting in the way they handle the public during lockdown
- Half of the public think preferential treatment should be given to certain patients in times of emergencies, such as a pandemic where hospitals are struggling to cope
- 55% think Corbyn has done a bad job in his role as Labour leader

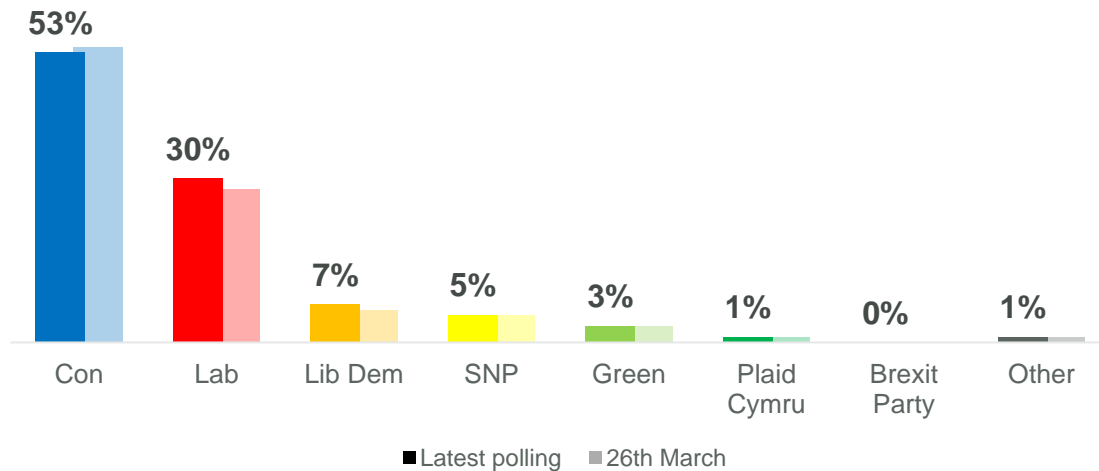
Voting intention since the 2017 general election



The state of the parties

Conservatives maintain strong lead in the polls

The Conservatives lead has dropped 3 points since last week, but still maintains a healthy lead of 23 points over Labour.



The Conservatives are on over half of the GB vote share, on 53%, down 1 point from last week. Meanwhile, Labour has gained two points since last week to 30% of the vote.

There has been a slight decrease in approval ratings for Boris Johnson over the last week, from +29% approval rating last week to +24% this week. Currently half (51%) approve of how he has acted as prime minister, compared to 26% disapproving; last week 55% approved and 26% disapproved.

Lockdown

A third of the public think this current situation will change their lives for good

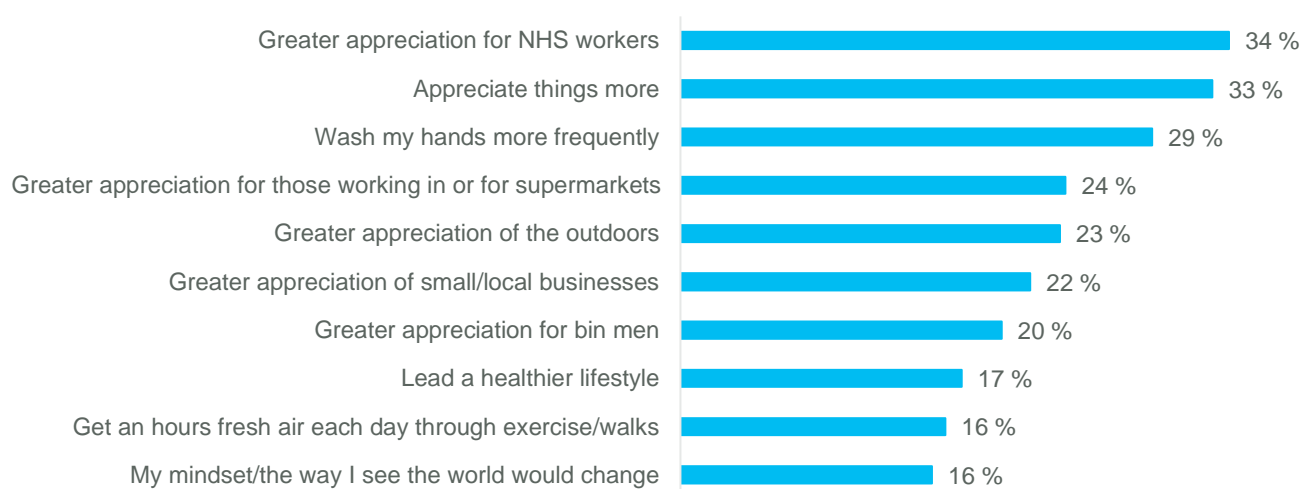
In these unprecedented times, our way of life has changed drastically. Some commentators have already started thinking about how this could have a long-lasting impact once the Coronavirus pandemic is over.

Almost a third (31%) of the public think that this current situation will make their life change for good once society goes back to 'normal', while 53% think the way they live their life will change temporarily but then they will go back to living the way they did before the pandemic. On the other hand, 16% don't think their life will be impacted once things go back to normal.

Thinking about the way their lives will be impacted, the most common responses was greater appreciation, particularly for our heroic NHS workers (34%). Changes to habits were less cited, although over a quarter (29%) say they will wash their hands more frequently than before. Just under one in five (17%) say they will lead healthier lifestyles, while 16% would continue the habit of going out for an hour each day to exercise by walking.

There is a sense that people are missing being able to interact in person. The current situation will not have much impact on public places people frequent. Only 4% said they will go to pubs, cinemas or restaurants less frequently. Less than one in ten (8%) said they would use online apps more to interact with their friends and family after this. In terms of working habits, only 8% said they would work from home more often.

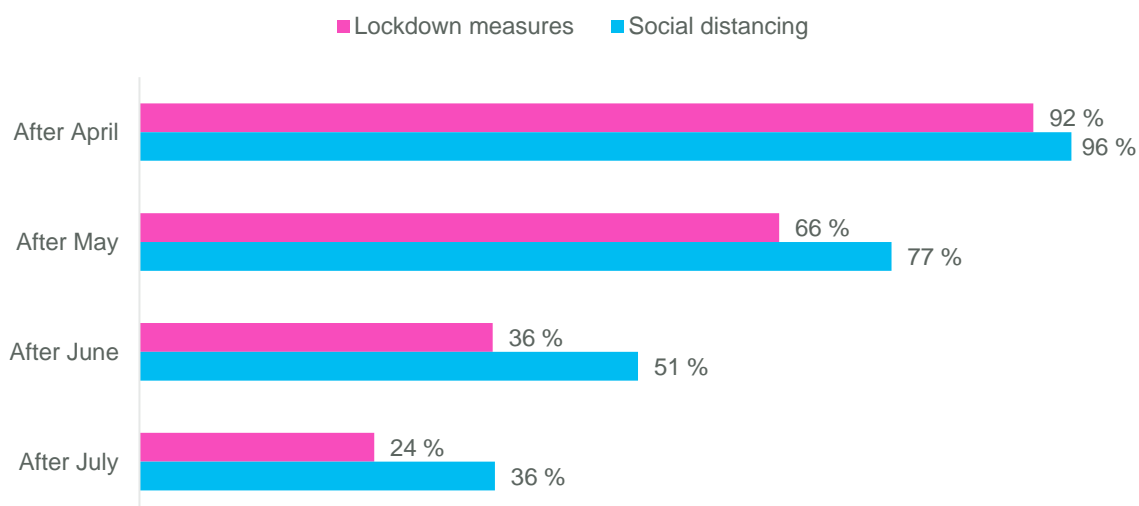
Top ten ways in which the public lives would change after the coronavirus situation is over



A third of the public think lockdown measures will still be in place after June

The public expect lockdown measures to be in place for quite a while, and certainly beyond the government's initial 3-week period review. None in ten (92%) expect the lockdown to extend beyond April, two thirds (66%) expect it to last beyond May, and a third (36%) expect it to last beyond June. Unsurprisingly, the public expect social distancing measures to be in place for even longer, with a third (36%) thinking they will be in place after July.

How long the public think lockdown measures and social distancing will be in place in the UK

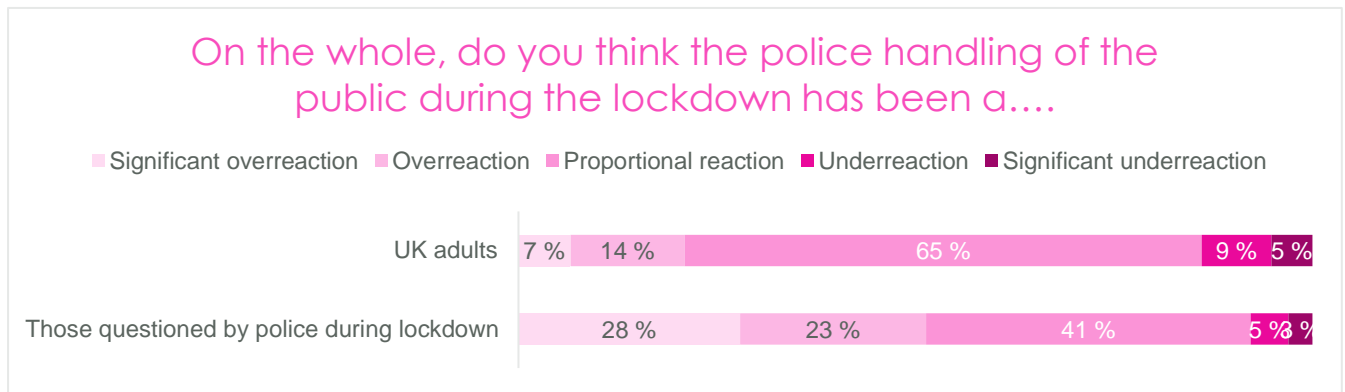


A fifth of cancelled summer holiday plans abroad

With expectations of lockdown and social distancing to be fairly long-lasting many people have cancelled or postponed their holiday plans. Over half (55%) of the public had plans to go on a holiday abroad during the summer months before the coronavirus situation broke out. A fifth (20%) have now cancelled those plans, 14% have postponed, while 17% are waiting to see how the situation plays out before making a decision on what to do.

Half of those questioned by police during lockdown think the police are overreacting

There have been several news stories in the past week and a half of police forces efforts to ensure that the public abide by the lockdown instructions in place. On the whole, two thirds (65%) of the public think that the police have reacted proportionally to the situation, while a fifth (21%) think they have overreacted. Perceptions of police handling worsens when the public have direct interaction with the police. Among those who have had police question them during lockdown on why they are outside, half (51%) think the police are overreacting in the way they handle things

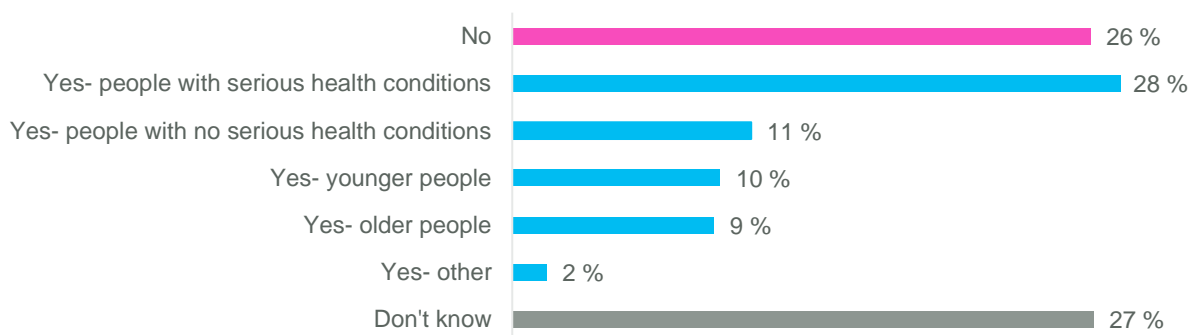


Half of the public think preferential treatment should be given to certain patients in times of emergencies

Going forward, once the Coronavirus situation is over, half (47%) of the public think there should be general rules in place on who should be given preferential treatments in hospitals at times of emergencies such as a pandemic where hospitals are struggling to treat everyone. On the other hand, three in ten (31%) don't think there should be general rules on this.

Similarly, 47% think there should be preferential treatment given to particular groups of patients. Over a quarter (28%) think preferential treatment should be given to those with serious health conditions.

Do you think in times of emergencies, such as a pandemic where hospitals are struggling to treat everyone, preferential treatment should be given towards certain types of patients?



The government's crisis response

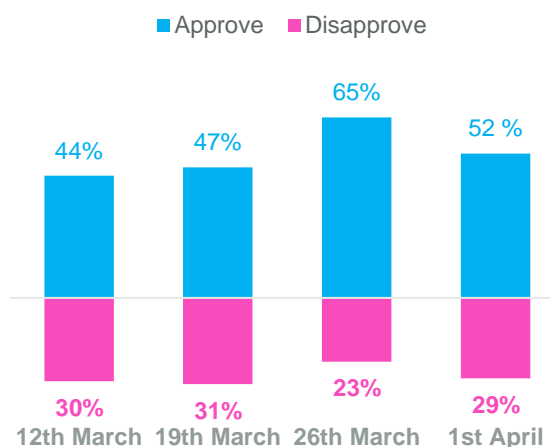
Fall in approval of the government's handling of the crisis

In a week that saw a lot of questions over the handling of testing in the UK, there has been a fall in approval of the government's handling of the Coronavirus crisis. Last week two thirds (65%) approved, and this week that has fallen to 52%. Meanwhile 29% disapprove. This gives the government's handling of the crisis a positive net score of +23%, a big drop from +42% last week.

On a broader, long-term level, confidence in the Government's ability to handle the situation has dropped from 57% last week to 50% this week. The proportion who do not feel confident has gone up from 22% last week to 28% this week.

In line with the above, this week over three fifths (63%) think the government has not acted fast enough to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, up from 56% last week.

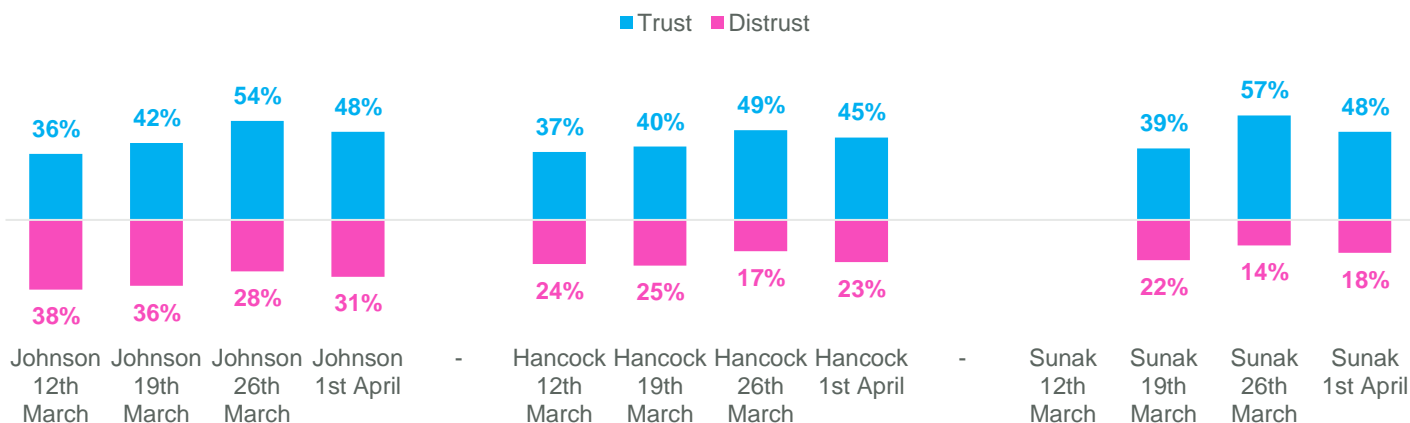
Approval of government handling of Coronavirus



Trust in politicians has dropped in the last week

The prime minister, the health secretary and the chancellor have all seen a decrease in public trust of the information on Coronavirus for the first time. Johnson has dropped from a net trust of +26% last week to +17% this week, Hancock has dropped from a net trust of +33% to +22%. Meanwhile, Sunak has witnessed the biggest drop, from a net trust of +43% last week to +29% this week.

Trust in information from following politicians



Labour leadership

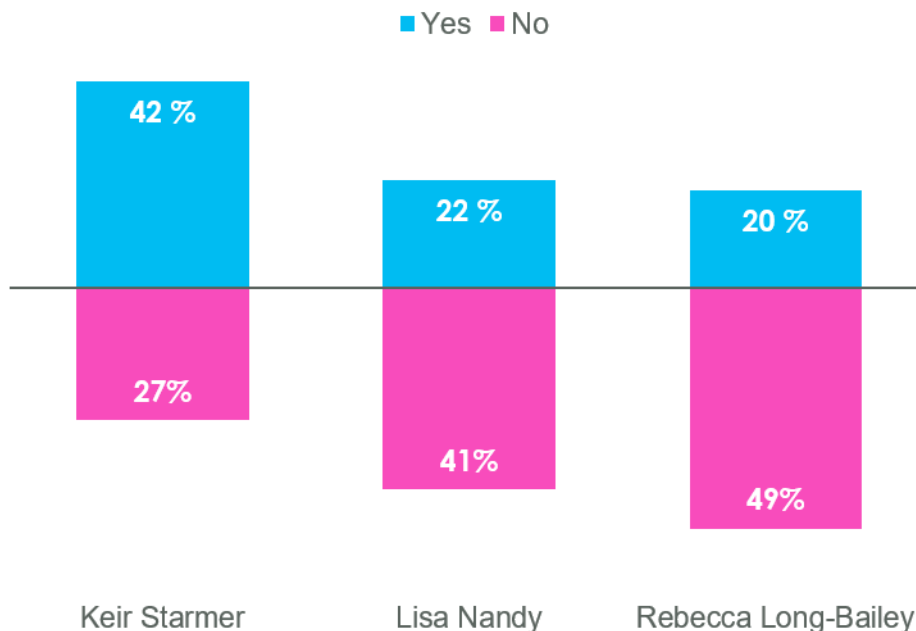
This weekend will see the election of a new Labour leader. The public are not too impressed with Corbyn’s time as leader, with half (55%) thinking Jeremy Corbyn did a bad job in his role as Labour leader; only 18% think he has done a good job. Among people in seats which the Conservatives gained in the 2019 General Election (many of which were ex-Labour seats), 58% think he did a bad job.

Of the three Labour candidates for next leader, the public believe that only Keir Starmer is likely to become prime minister (42% could see him in this role, 27% could not). For Lisa Nandy, 22% said they could see her as PM, 41% could not; and 20% could see Rebecca Long-Bailey in the role, but 49% could not.

Starmer was the only candidate that the public were more likely to see as Prime Ministerial material than not



Thinking about each of the following Labour leadership candidates, would you say you can imagine them as prime minister?



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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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