



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 21st April 2020



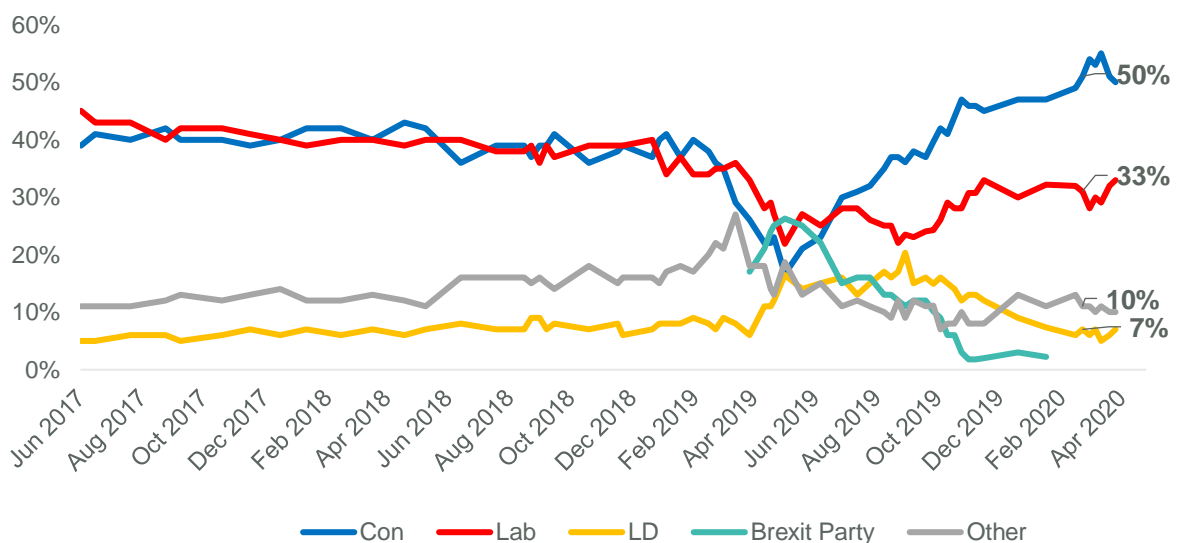
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

21st April 2020

# One-minute takeaway

- Fall in approval of government handling of the coronavirus situation for the second week in a row from a net approval of +31% last week to +21% this week
- Similarly, there is a drop in confidence in government’s ability to handle the Coronavirus situation from +26% last week to +18% this week
- 63% think the government has not acted fast enough to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, up from 61% last week.
- 57% disapprove of government handling of testing, up from 48% two weeks ago
- Trust in the health secretary, Chancellor and Raab have also dropped for the second week in a row
- 71% of the public think lockdown measures will be in place beyond May
- Public support a staggered approach to removing lockdown, with support for periodic closures if necessary
- Public think the UK has handled the pandemic better than the US, but worse than Germany and Australia

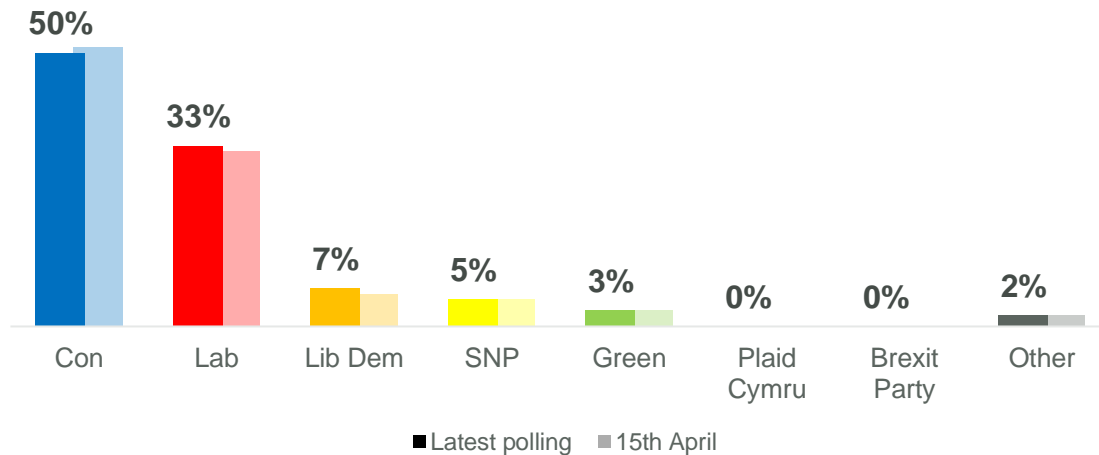
Voting intention since the 2017 general election



# The state of the parties

## Conservatives maintain strong lead in the polls

The Conservatives lead has dropped 2 points since last week, but still maintains a lead of 17 points over Labour.



The Conservatives are on half of the GB vote share, on 50%, down 1 point from last week. Meanwhile, Labour has gained one point since last week to 33% of the vote.

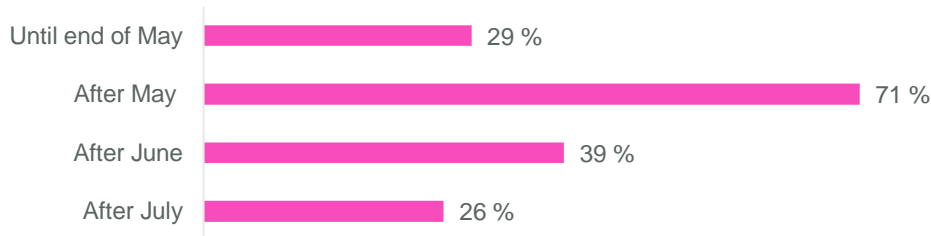
There has been a slight decrease in approval ratings for Boris Johnson over the last week, from +29% approval rating last week to +24% this week. Currently half (51%) approve of how he has acted as prime minister, compared to 26% disapproving; last week 55% approved and 26% disapproved.

# Lockdown

## The public expect the lockdown to be extended

The public expect lockdown measures to be extended once again. Only 3% think that lockdown will be lifted on 7<sup>th</sup> May, the date the current lockdown measures have been extended to. A further 7% think they will be in place until mid-May, and one in five (19%) think they will be lifted in the last week or two of May. However, seven in ten (71%) expect lockdown measures to last beyond May, and two in five (39%) expect it to last beyond June.

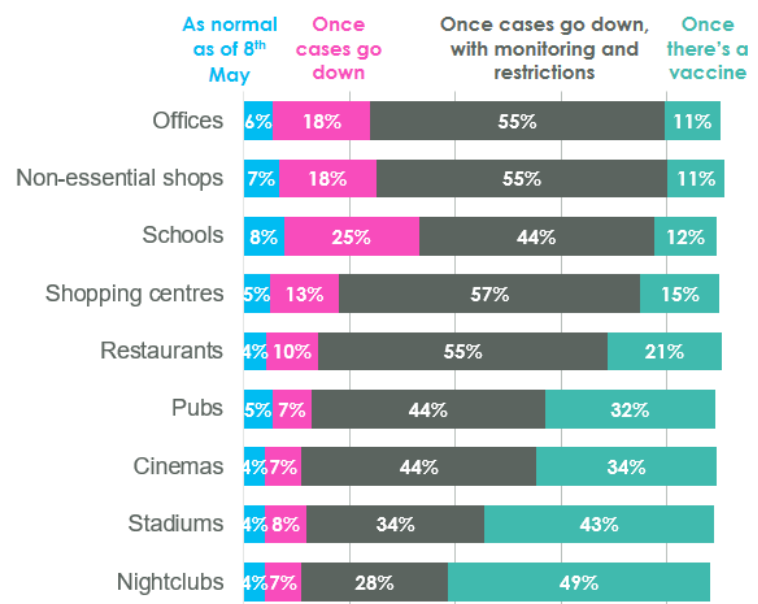
### How long the public think lockdown measures will be in place in the UK



## Public in favour of a staggered re-opening of places, with periodic closures if necessary

Unsurprisingly, schools, shops and offices are the main priorities for the public for re-opening after the lockdown. Asked about when different types of places should be reopened, the most common response for most of them was when the number of new infections goes down, with limitations on the number of people and closures again if the number of infections start to rise.

### When do you think the following should reopen?

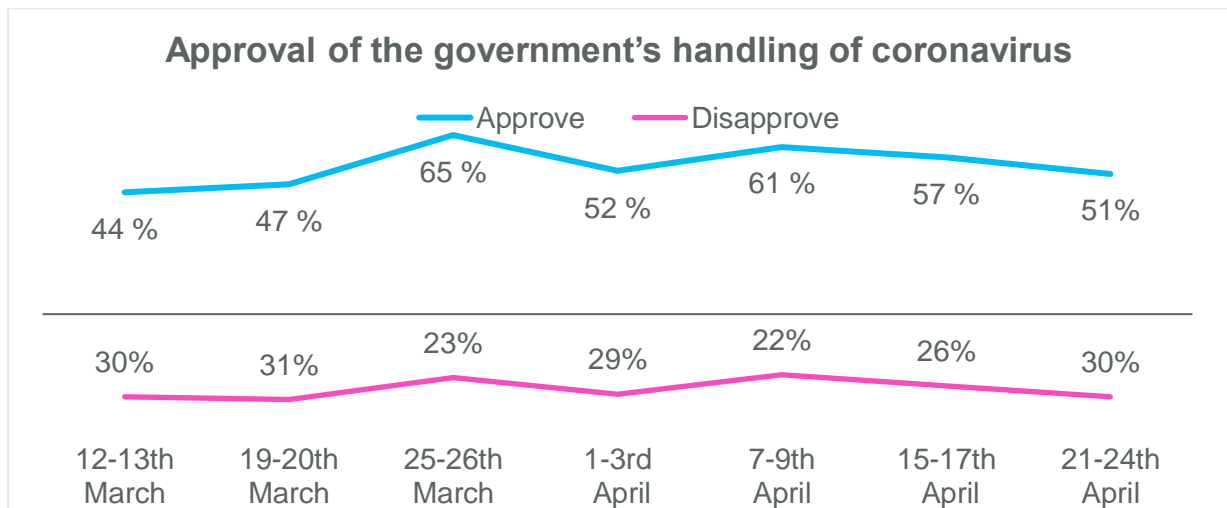


The exception are nightclubs and stadiums, where most think they should only reopen once a vaccine is available.

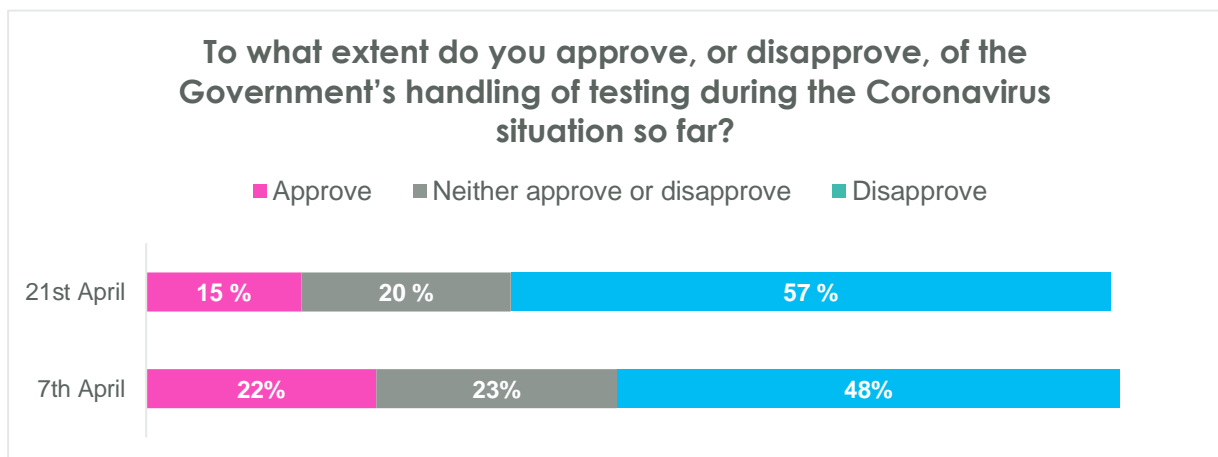
# The government's crisis response

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

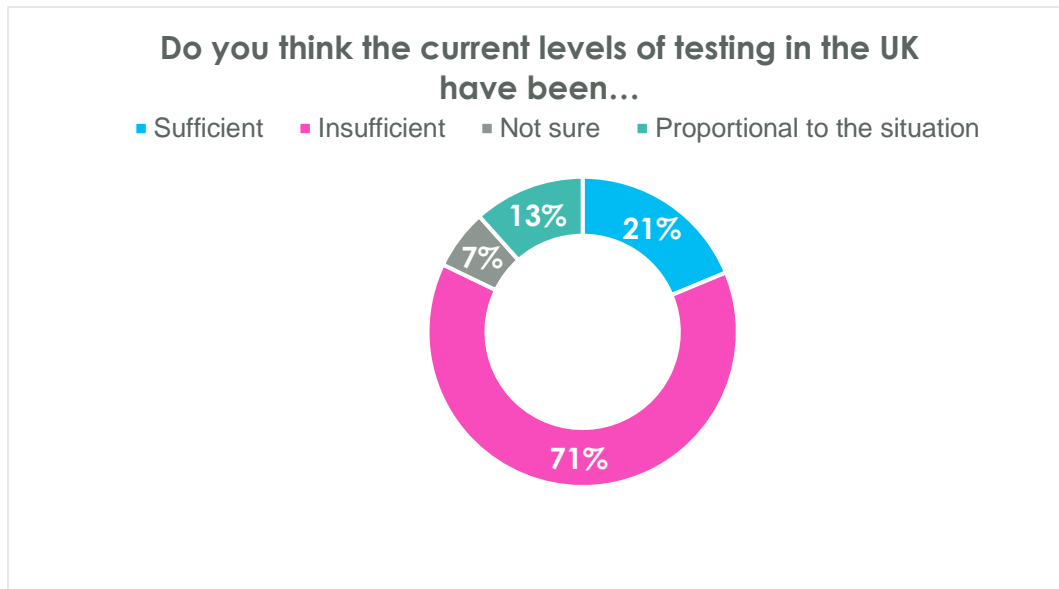
At the start of the Coronavirus crisis, support for government handling of Coronavirus was at 44%. This increased with the introduction of the lockdown restrictions. Recent weeks through have seen fluctuations in support, often in line with key headlines dominating that week on government response on various aspects such as testing. This week again, we see a fall in levels of approval, albeit still remaining high at 51%. Meanwhile 30% disapprove, giving the government's handling of the crisis a positive net score of +21%, a big drop from +31% last week.



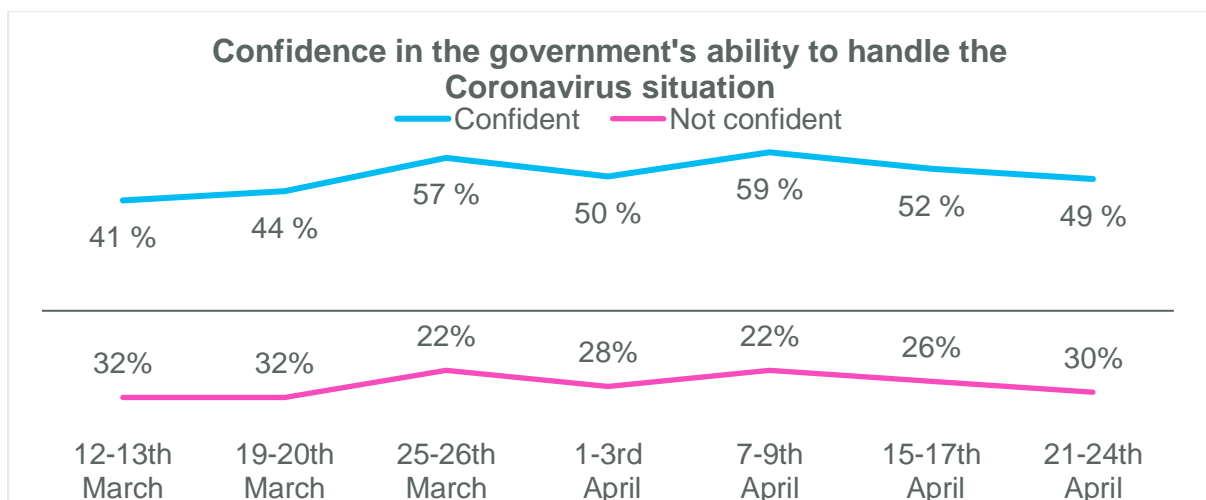
Turning to approval of more specific elements of their response, almost three in five (57%) people disapprove of the way the government has handled of testing so far, which is an increase in disapproval from 48% two weeks ago.



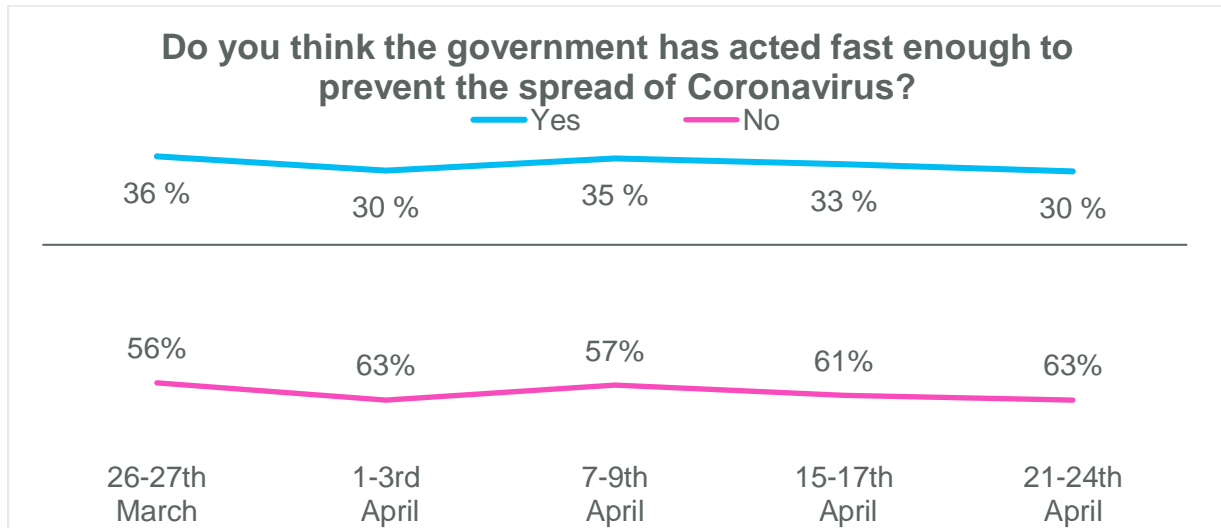
In line with the above, seven in ten (71%) think current levels of testing have been insufficient, with only 7% thinking testing levels have been sufficient, and 13% saying they have been proportional to the situation. This has barely shifted since two weeks ago.



This fall in approval of handling of the situation, also mirrors the trend we are seeing elsewhere. While confidence in the government’s ability is higher than it was before lockdown measures were introduced, in the last week we have continued to see a drop in confidence levels, falling from 52% approval to 49%. Meanwhile, the number of people saying they do not feel confident has increased from 26% to 30%



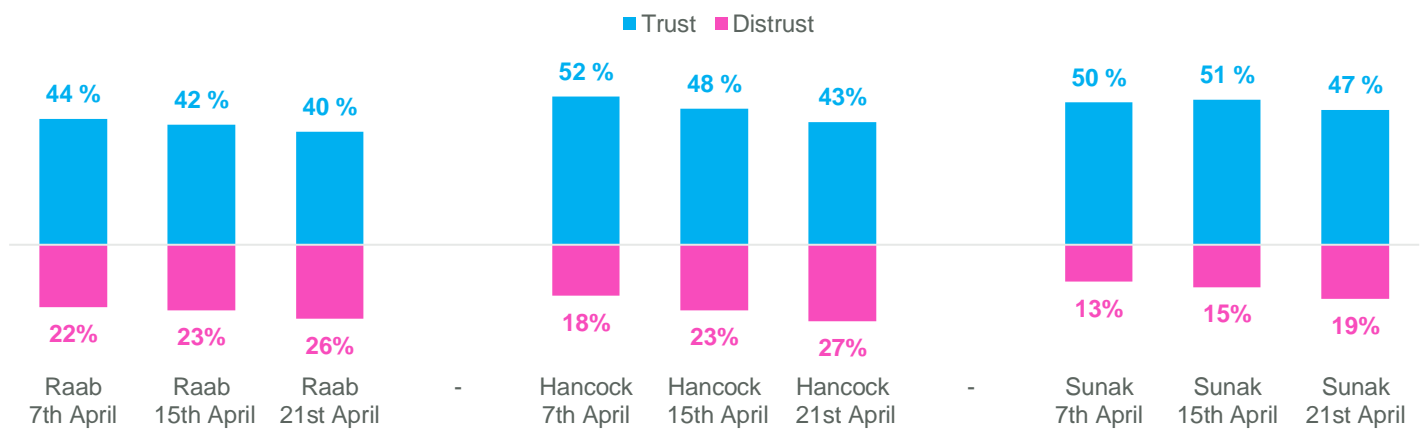
Similarly, this week over three fifths (63%) think the government has not acted fast enough to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, up from 56% last week.



## Net trust in politicians has dropped for the second week in a row

The Health Secretary, the Chancellor and Raab have all seen a decrease in public trust of the information on Coronavirus for the second week in a row. Raab has dropped from a net trust of +19% last week to +14% this week, Hancock has dropped from a net trust of +25% to +16%. Meanwhile, Sunak has witnessed a drop from a net trust of +36% last week to +28% this week.

### Trust in information from following politicians



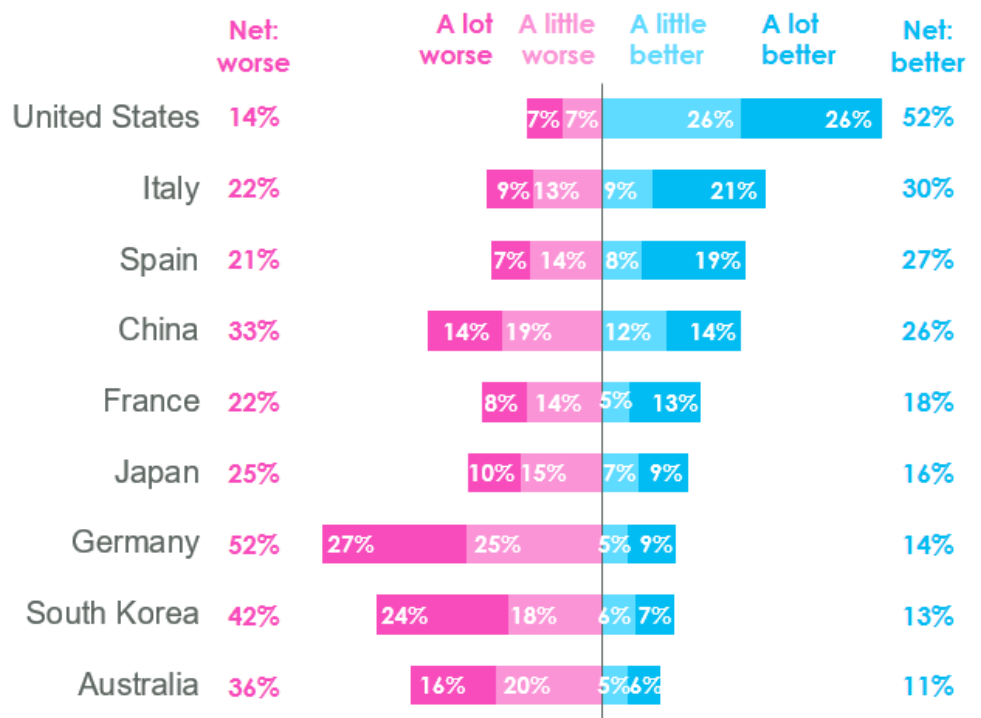
# Response comparative to other countries

The UK is perceived to have handled the situation worse than Australia, Germany and South Korea

In terms of how the public think the UK government compares to other countries in their response to the pandemic, there is a mixed picture.

The UK is perceived to have handled the situation much worse than Germany, South Korea or Australia. Half (52%) think the UK has performed worse than Germany, while 42% think the UK has performed worse than South Korea with their extensive testing drive to combat coronavirus cases.

Has the UK handled the situation better or worse than...?



On the other hand, the UK is perceived to have handled the situation much better than the US (52% think the US has performed better).

Opinions are more polarised on the way the UK has handled the situation compared to Italy, Spain, China and France. While 30% think the UK has done better than Italy, a fifth (22%) think the UK have done worse. Similarly, a quarter (26%) think the UK has handled the situation better than China, while a third (33%) think the UK has handled it worse.



# 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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