



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 18th June 2020



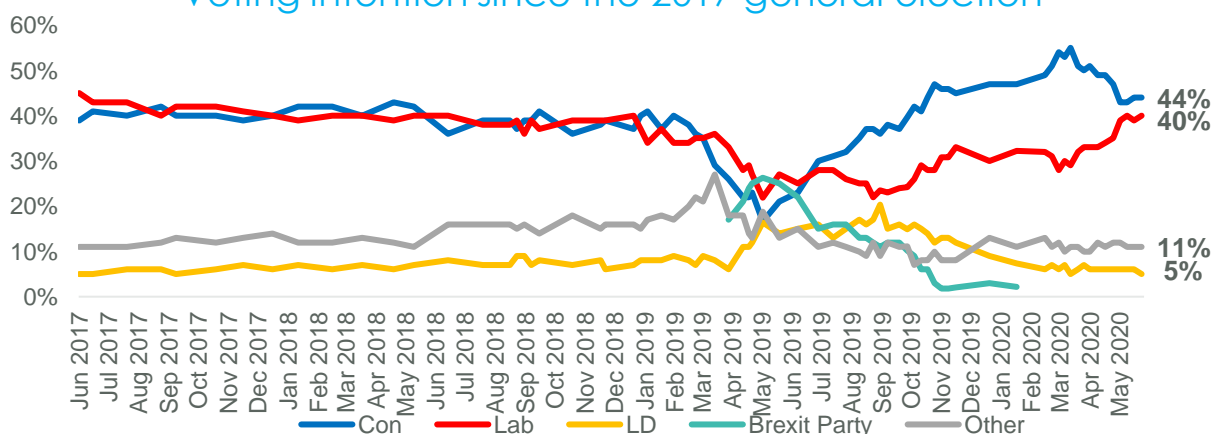
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

18<sup>th</sup> June 2020

# One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead widens sits at 4 points – down by 1 percentage point from last week.
- Approval of the government’s handling of the crisis sees an uptick for the first time since April, moving from 30% to 35%. That said, NET approval remains negative at -11.
- By comparison NET approval ratings for the Labour Party’s response to the crisis are positive at +4.
- Half (53%) of the British public say they view they actions of Marcus Rashford positively as he forced a government u-turn on providing free-school meals during the summer. Two-in-five (42%) say the u-turn has increased their respect for the government.
- In comparison 61% view the actions of Dominic Cummings during this crisis negatively.
- Three-in-five (59%) say the current levels of Covid-19 testing are insufficient with 54% disapproving of the government’s handling of testing.
- As foreign aid became an issue of discussion this week, 53% of the public say it should be focussed on reducing poverty around the globe. This is followed by 25% who say it should primarily be used to protect the national interest and security abroad.
- Half (49%) support the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK, with 24% saying they neither support nor oppose, and 22% saying they oppose it.
- On “taking the knee” in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, 37% say the action makes them view the BLM movement more positively.

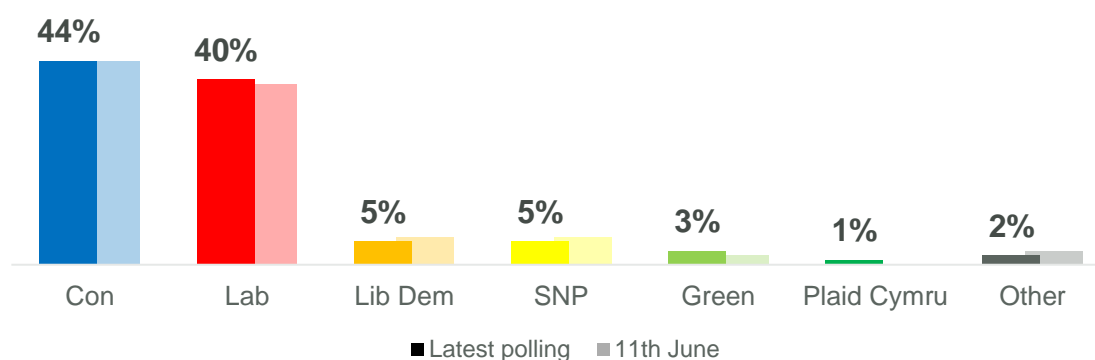
Voting intention since the 2017 general election



## Headline voting intention

### The Tory lead returns to four points as both parties vote shares stabilise

Last week the Conservative's enjoyed a slight increase in their lead over Labour (from 4 points to 5) but it returns to four points this as Labour's see an uptick of 1 point (from 39% to 40%). The Tory share holds at 44% from last week.



The broader picture suggests that, for now at least, the vote share for the two main parties has stabilised after a period that saw a relatively big Labour surge

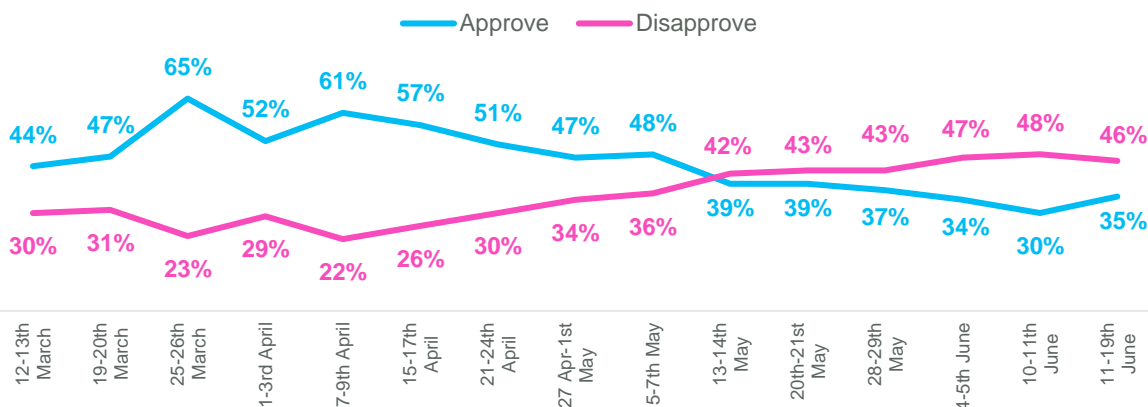
## Perceptions of the crisis response

### Net approval of the government's handling shows cautious signs of improvement for the first time since April

Discontent at the government's handling of the crisis has been rising for weeks, reaching a high last week with 48% of UK adults expressing disapproval. However, for the first time since April the disapproval has dropped by more than point from 48% to 46%

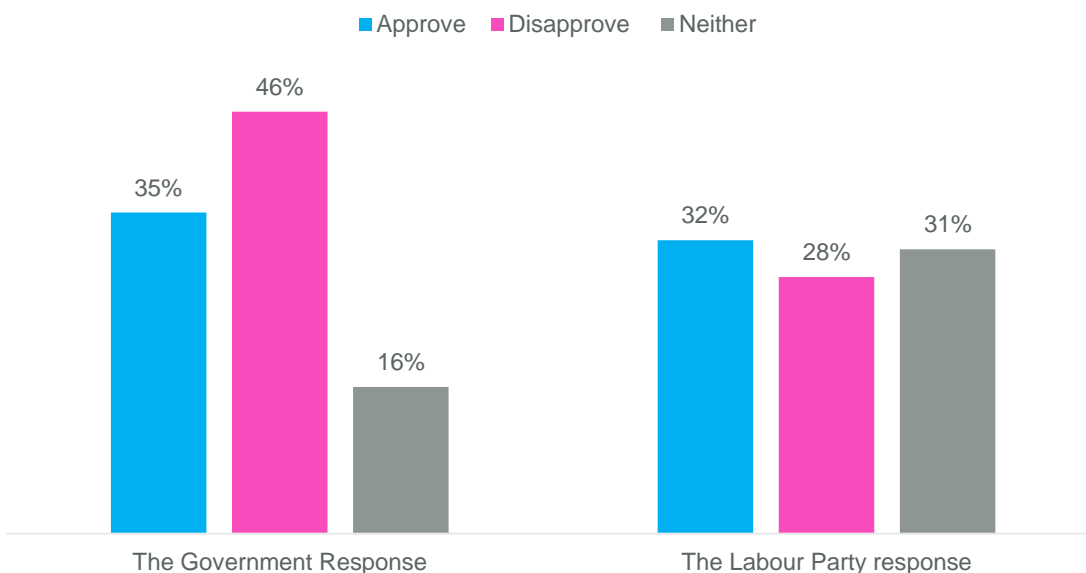
Combined with the fact that approval has risen from 30% to 35%, NET approval is now at -11 from -18 last week. Although far from positive it could indicate the possibility of a change in the public mood in coming weeks.

### Approval of government's handling of the crisis



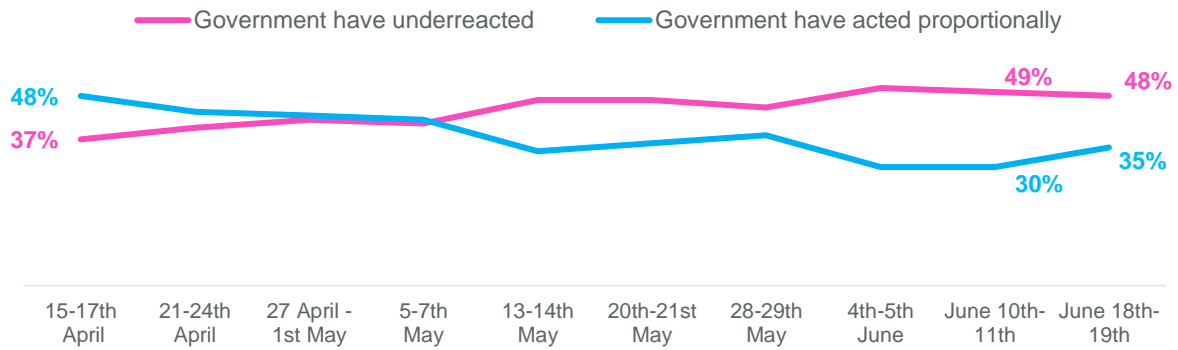
On the other hand, the Labour Party's response to the crisis receives a positive NET approval rating of +4. That said, this may have much to do with the fact that almost a third (31%) of the British public are neutral on the Labour Party's response, neither approving nor disapproving.

### Approval ratings of response to the crisis



In terms of how people perceive the scale of the government's reaction, the public remain strongly convinced that the government has underreacted (48% compared to 49% last week).

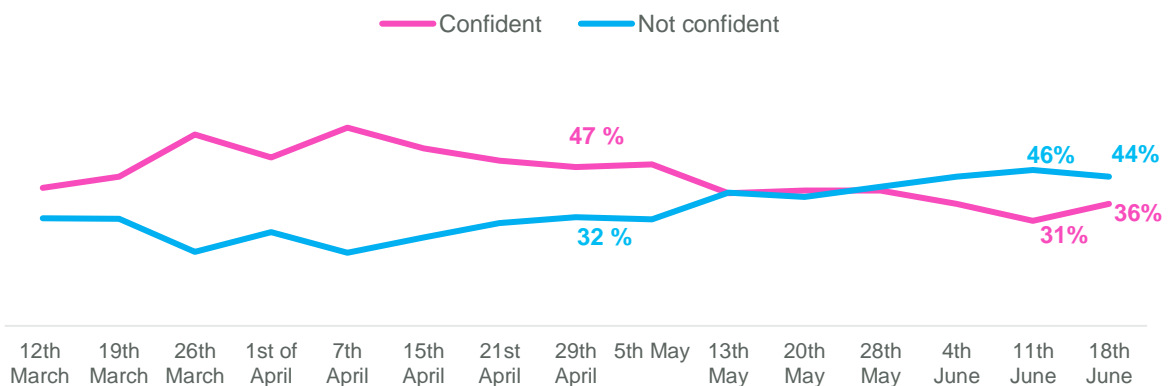
### Perceived inaction or underreaction appears to have dented the public's view of the government



### Confidence in the government's ability to handle the crisis is lower than at the height of the crisis

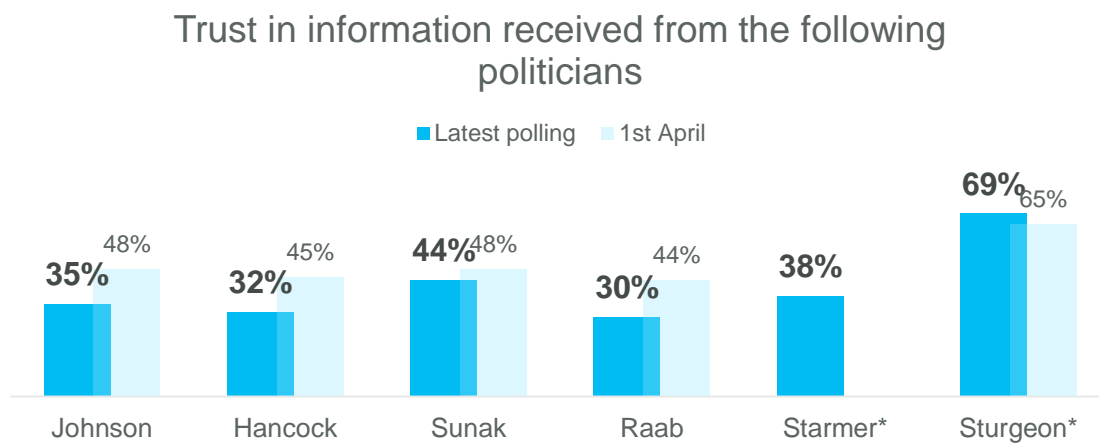
Confidence in the government's ability to handle the crisis is lower now than it was at the height of the crisis. On the 29<sup>th</sup> April, when the country was seeing a very high daily death count, 47% of the public were confident in the government's ability and NET confidence was at +15. Despite a slight uptick from last week, confidence levels are now at a NET of -8.

### Confidence in government's ability to handle the crisis



## Trust in key politicians has fallen when compared to early April

When it comes to the degree to which the public trust the information on coronavirus provided by the following politicians, levels have dropped across the board with the notable exception of Nicola Sturgeon.



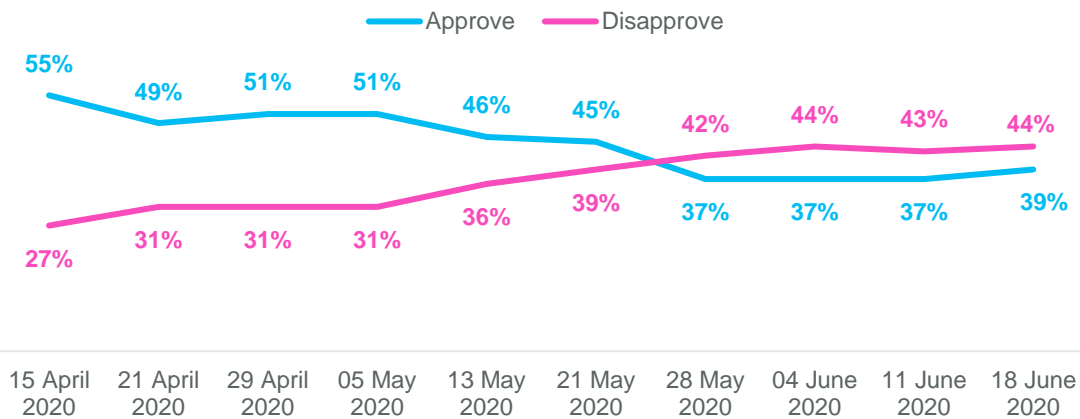
\*For Starmer no previous data. For Sturgeon previous figure is from the 29<sup>th</sup> of April.

## Johnson's ratings remain negative

### Disapproval of the job he is doing remains high

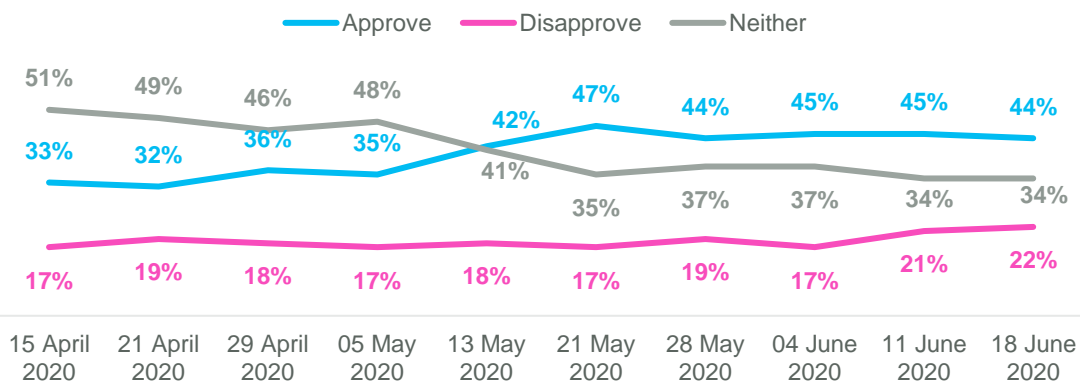
Disapproval of the way Boris Johnson is acting as prime minister appears to have levelled, with no significant increases in either approval or disapproval over the last three weeks. Whilst the level approving of him takes a slight uptick to 39%, disapproval has increased one point, making his net approval -5 this week.

### Boris Johnson's approval rating since leaving hospital



By comparison Keir Starmer's approval ratings remain high on +22%, although this has dropped 2 points since the previous week.

### Keir Starmer's approval rating since becoming Labour leader



## The public approve as Rashford secures a win at Westminster

When asked to say how positively or negatively they view the actions of various prominent vocal figures during the crisis, 53% of the public say they perceive Marcus Rashford’s actions positively. This comes off the back of his role in forcing a government U-turn on the issue of extending free-school meals for children in need over the summer holidays.

In comparison, over a third (34%) view Piers Morgan negatively, and almost two-thirds (61%) feel the same way about Dominic Cummings.

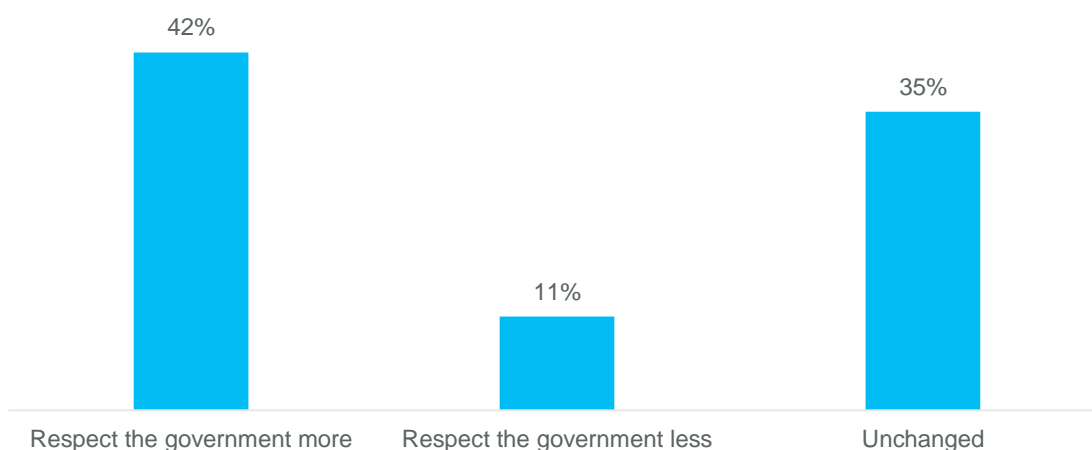
## Schools meals U-turn gets a positive response

The public largely support the outcome of the government U-turn on free school meals; 61% of those in England say they support the setting up of a “Covid summer food fund” in England.

On a related note, half (54%) of English adults say they would support a permanent scheme of food fund during school holidays, so that low income families would be entitled to free meals paid for by government vouchers.

As for the effect of the U-turn on perceptions of the government, 42% say it makes them respect the government more. Further to this, half (49%) say U-turns show the government is listening compared to 21% who say it shows weakness.

The impact of the U-turn on respect for the government



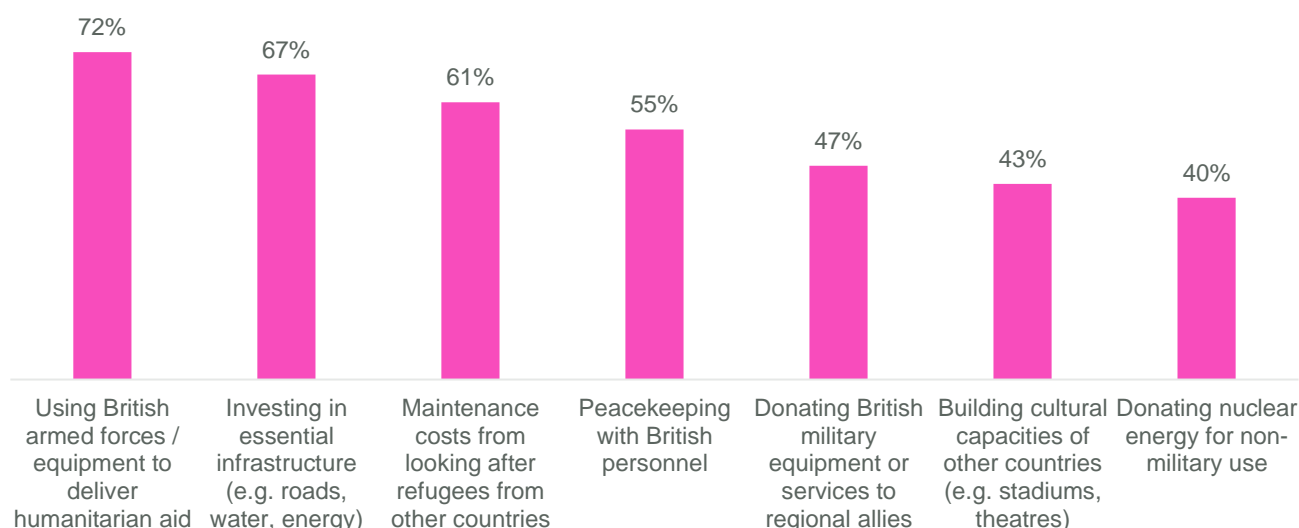


## International aid

### Seven-in-ten say using British armed forces to deliver humanitarian aid should be counted as international aid

The merger of DFID and the Foreign Office resurfaced the debate this week about the nature of the UK's international aid. When asked what should be counted as international aid, seven-in-ten (72%) say it should include the use of British armed forces to deliver humanitarian aid. This is followed by 67% who say it should include investing in essential infrastructure.

Percentage who believe the following should be counted as international aid

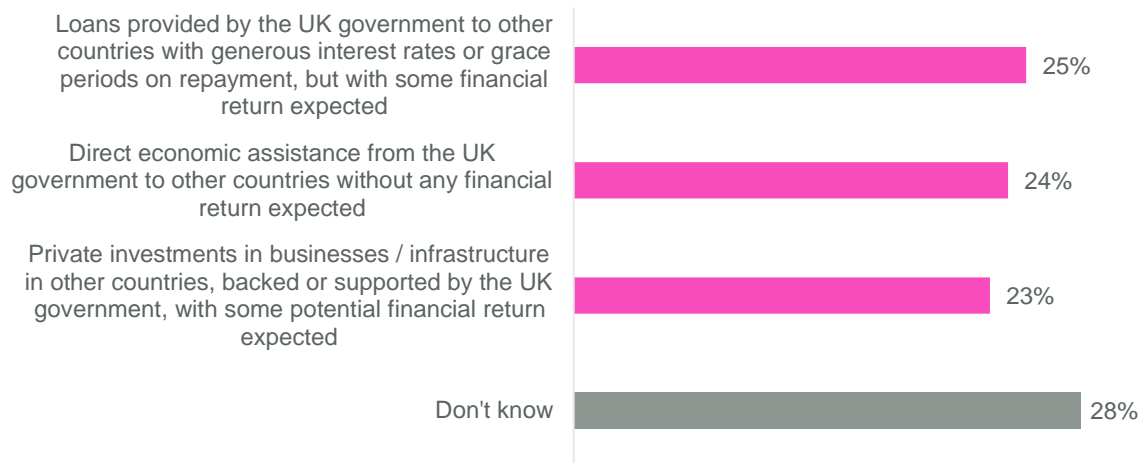


Some interesting differences emerge depending on previous voting patterns. For example, Remainers are more likely to say the delivery of humanitarian aid should be counted as international aid (76% vs. 70%).

### The public are divided on the best way to provide aid

On which area should play the biggest role in the UK's international aid the public are divided. A quarter (25%) say it should consist mostly of loans provided by the UK government to other countries with generous interest rates or grace periods on repayment, but with some financial return expected. This is followed by 24% who say it should be mostly direct economic assistance from the UK government to other countries without any financial return expected. Meanwhile, 23% think it should be mostly in the form of private investments in businesses/infrastructures, with some potential financial return expected.

Which of the following do you think should play the biggest role in how the UK provides international aid to other countries in future?



Over half (53%), say UK aid should be focused on reducing global poverty. This breaks down as 38% who say it should aim at reducing poverty in the worst cases around the world and 15% who say that reducing poverty should align with the UK's national interest around the world. Meanwhile, one in four (25%) think UK aid should be focused on UK national interests and security abroad.

Two in four (40%) think the UK is effective in delivering its international aid and development goals, while 27% are not effective.

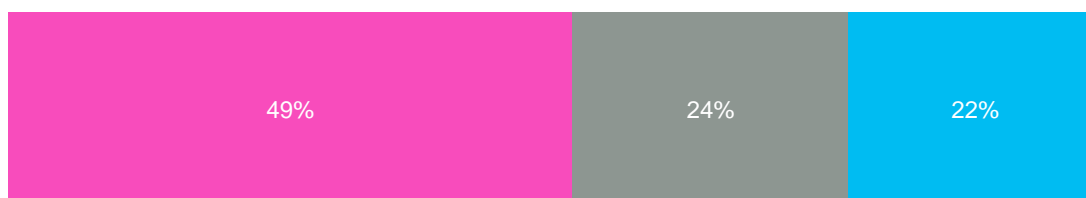
# Black Lives Matter

## Half say they support the Black Lives Matter movement

Half of the UK public (49%) say they support the Black Lives Matter movement. This is followed by 22% who say they oppose it and 24% who say they neither support nor oppose.

### Half support the Black Lives Matter movement

■ Support ■ Neither support nor oppose ■ Oppose



On the subject of taking the knee as a symbol of support for the movement, 37% say the action makes them view the movement more positively compared to 20% who say it makes them view it more negatively.

# About Opinium

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