



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 4th June 2020



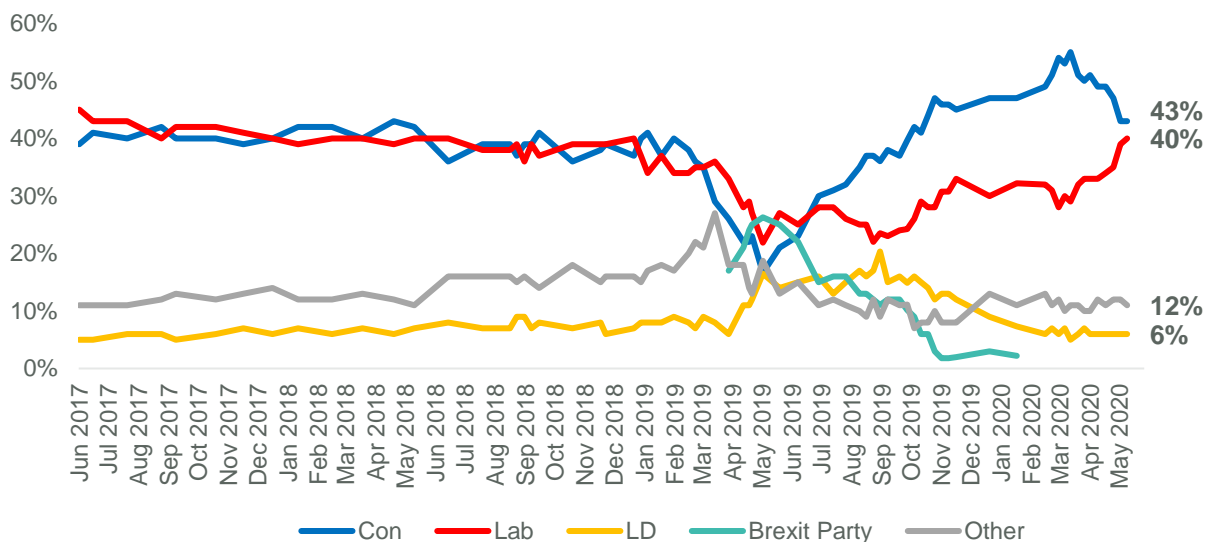
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

5<sup>th</sup> June 2020

# One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead remains narrow at only 3 points, down one from last week
- 44% now disapprove of how Boris Johnson is handling his job as prime minister
- Boris Johnson’s ratings on several metrics have seen a big drop over the past month
- Disapproval of government’s handling of the Coronavirus situation shoots up to 47% disapprove versus only 34% approve
- Almost three in five (57%) think we are coming out of lockdown too fast, as half (50%) now think the government is underreacting to the pandemic.
- Public perception seems to be that there has been a change in the Covid alert level down from 4, despite the level remaining the same since it was announced last month
- Yet expectations for the end of lockdown have moved back a month as majority now think lockdown will continue until the end of August
- Now seven in ten (71%) think Dominic Cummings should be sacked, up from 68% last week

Voting intention since the 2017 general election

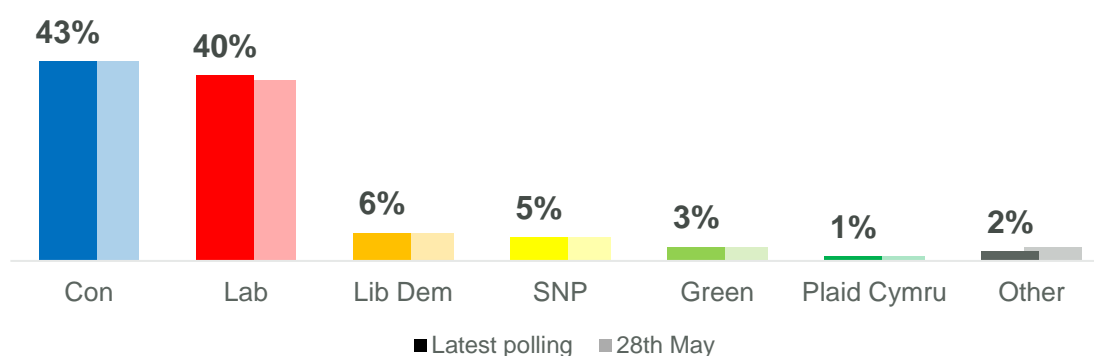


# Headline voting intention

## Labour edges up to cut Tory lead to 3 points

The Conservative's falling numbers have stabilised, but Labour continues to edge up giving the Tories a lead of only 3 points.

This is, once again, the lowest Conservative lead since Boris Johnson became prime minister.



The Conservatives have held steady on 43% of the vote, the same as last week. However, Labour have managed to build even further on their position from last week, going up 1 point to 40% of the vote. This is the highest Labour vote share since January 2019.

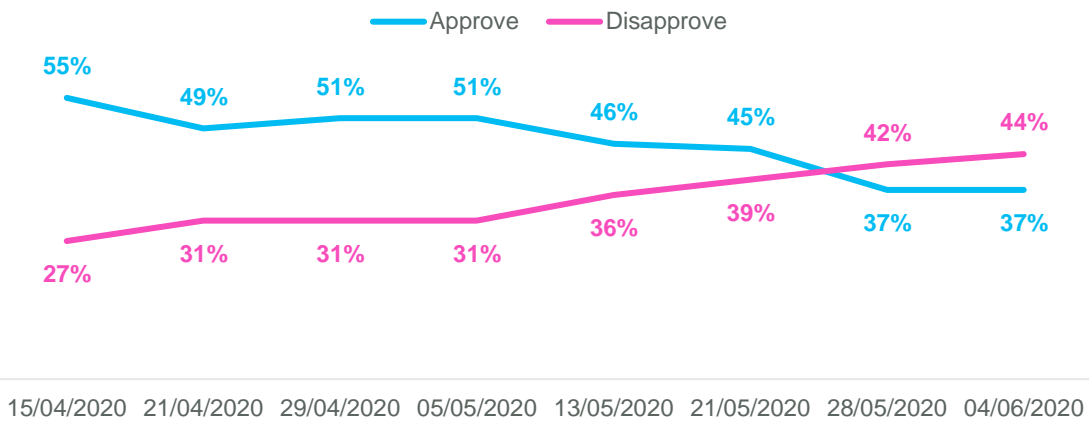
These polling numbers are very similar to the parties' respective performances in the 2017 general election.

# Johnson's ratings drop further

## Now 44% disapprove of the job he is doing

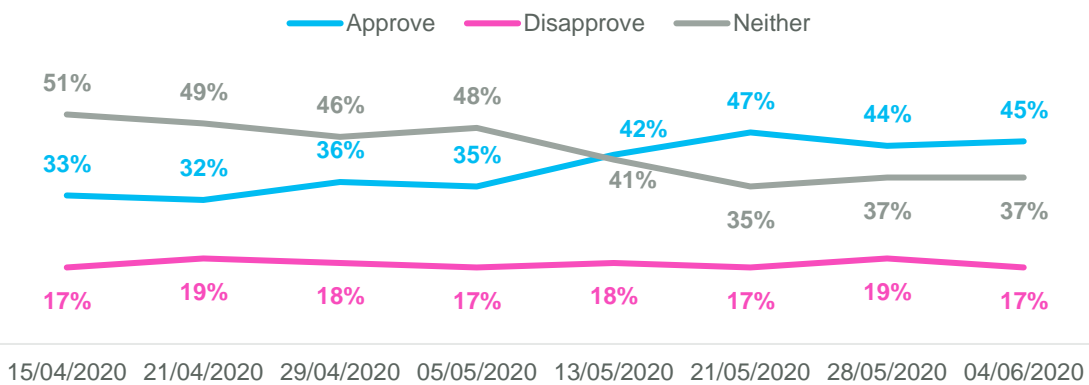
Disapproval of the way Boris Johnson is acting as prime minister has continued to increase with 44% now disapproving, up 2 points on last week. With the level approving of him holding steady on 37%, his net approval ratings have dropped from -5% to -7% this week.

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



By comparison Keir Starmer's approval ratings remain incredibly high on +28%.

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

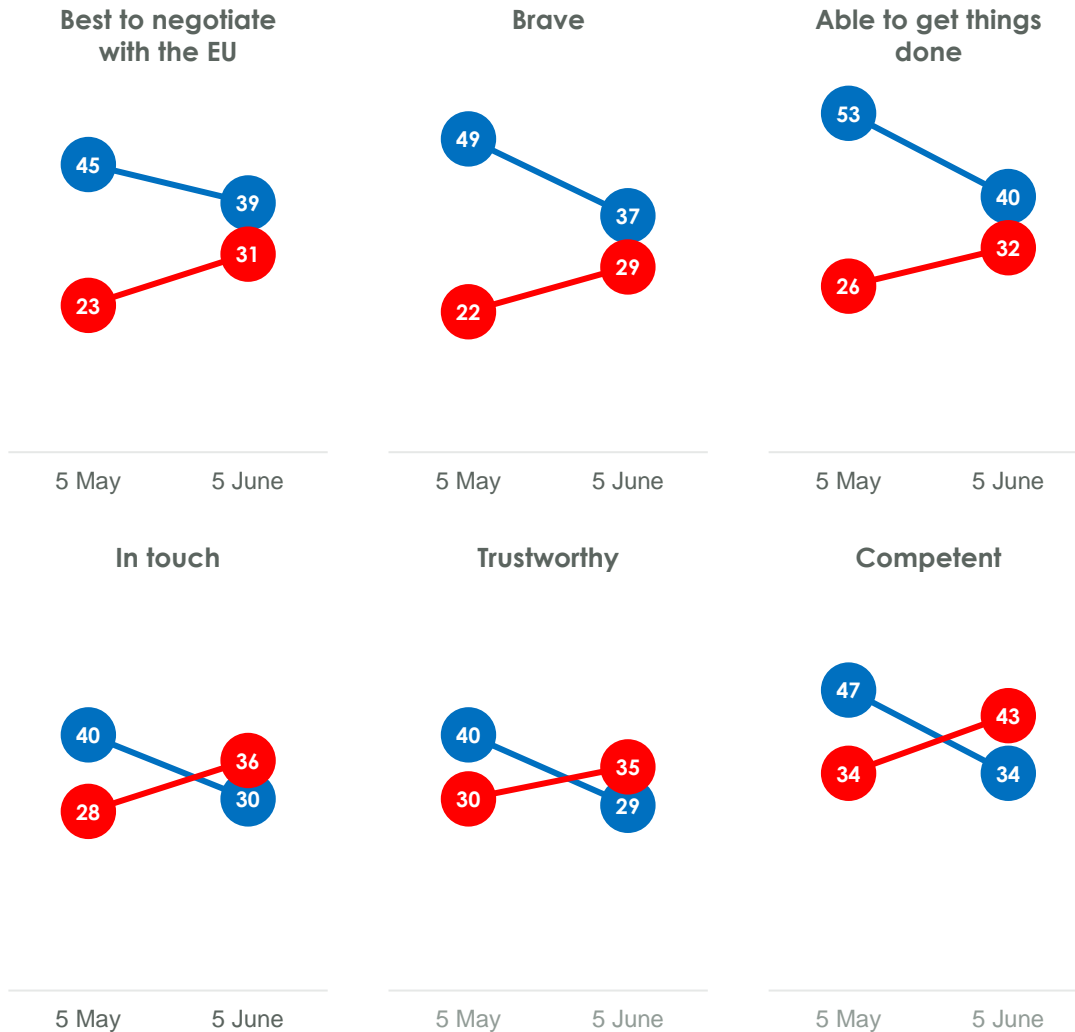


## Boris Johnson only has 1-point lead as best PM

For the first time Boris Johnson's lead as best prime minister has dropped to only 1 point: 36% think he would be the best prime minister (no change), with Keir Starmer on 35% (up 2 points on last week).

## Boris Johnson's ratings drop across the board

Over the past month Boris Johnson's ratings have tumbled across almost every metric. In particular the proportion who think Boris Johnson is able to get things done has dropped 13 points from 53% to only 40%.



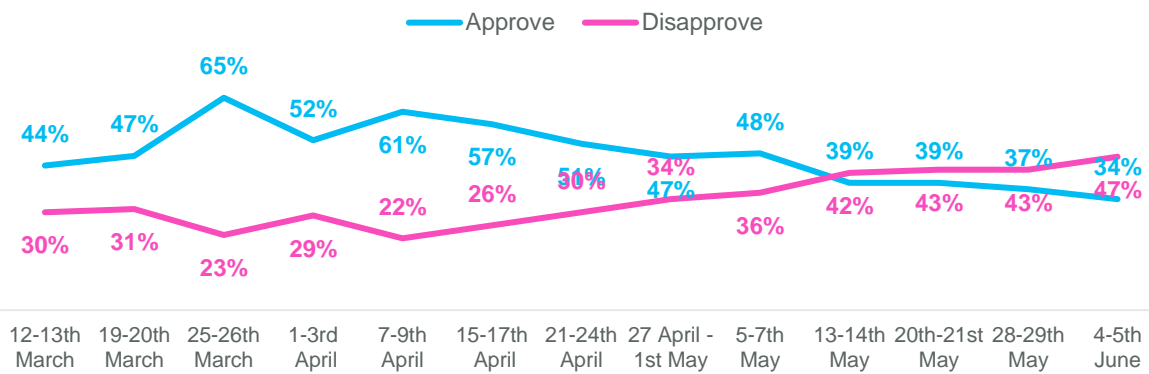
Separately, Keir Starmer now has a lead over Boris Johnson on a range of metrics, such as being in touch (36% versus 30%), being trustworthy (35% versus 29%) and being competent (43% vs 34%).

# The government's crisis response

## Net approval of the government's handling of the crisis remains negative

Discontent at the government's Corona handling has begun to rise again: now just under half (47%) disapprove of the way they have dealt with the crisis (up 4 points), while only a third (34%) approve (down 3 points from last week).

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

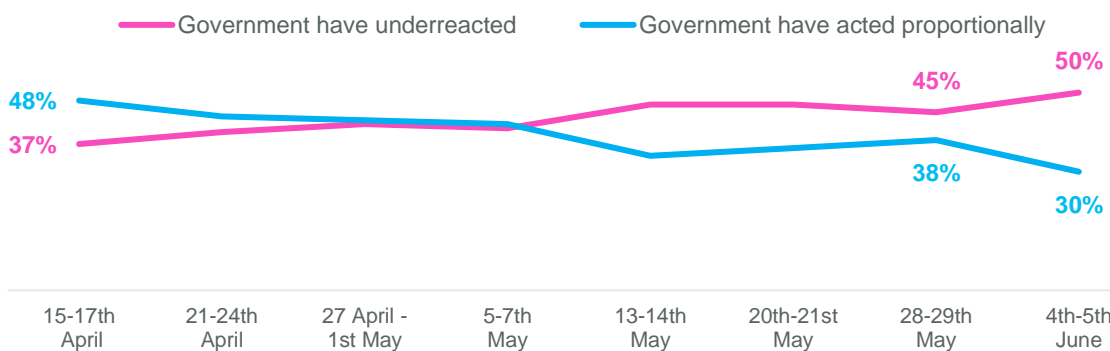


## Public think the government is underreacting

Once again, the perceived inaction or underreaction of the government appears to be a key driver of our deteriorating perception of the government's crisis handling. For the past few weeks the public have narrowly perceived the government to be underreacting.

This week the public strongly perceived the government to be underreacting: 50% thought so versus only 30% believing them to be acting proportionally. Meanwhile, 14% think the government is overreacting.

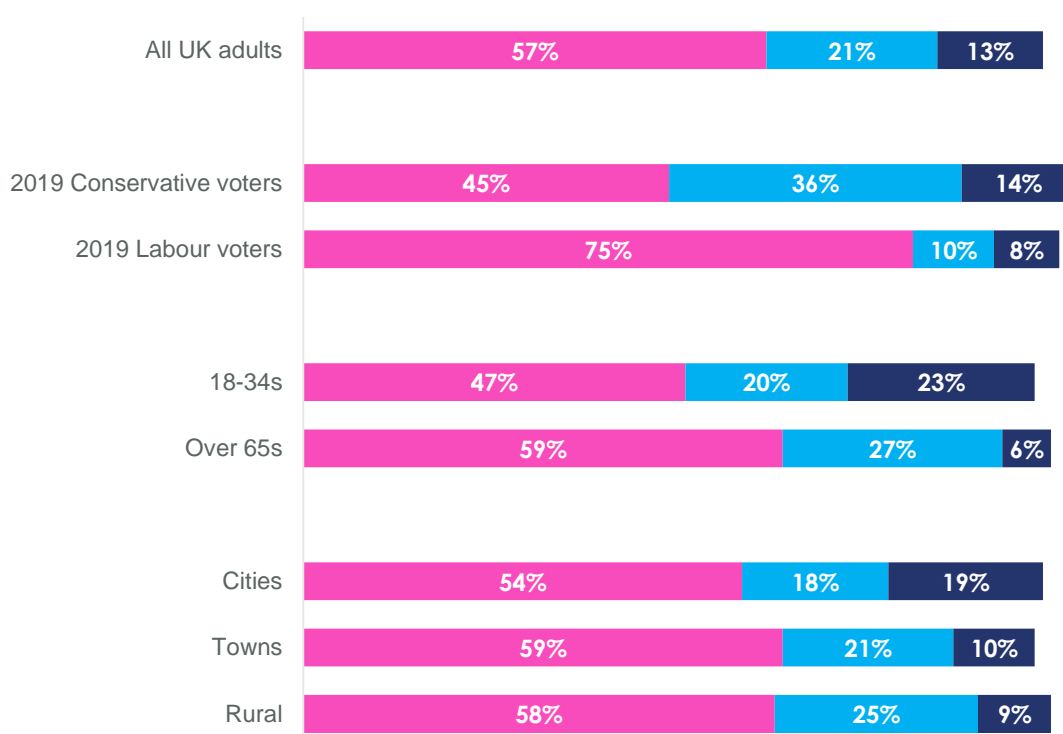
**Perceived inaction or underreaction appears to have dented the public's view of the government**



## Put the brakes on: almost 3 in 5 think we are coming out of lockdown too fast

Almost three in five (57%) think the government is bringing the UK out of lockdown too fast, while only 21% think we're going at the right pace. A further 13% think we're going too slow.

### Are we coming out of lockdown **too fast**, **about right**, or **too slowly**?



The perception that we are moving out of lockdown too fast is a majority opinion across most demographic and geographic areas.

**Political:** Conservative voters are the most likely to say that we are coming out of lockdown at the right speed (36%), but a plurality still think we're coming out of lockdown too fast (45%). By comparison three quarters (75%) of Labour voters think we're coming out too fast.

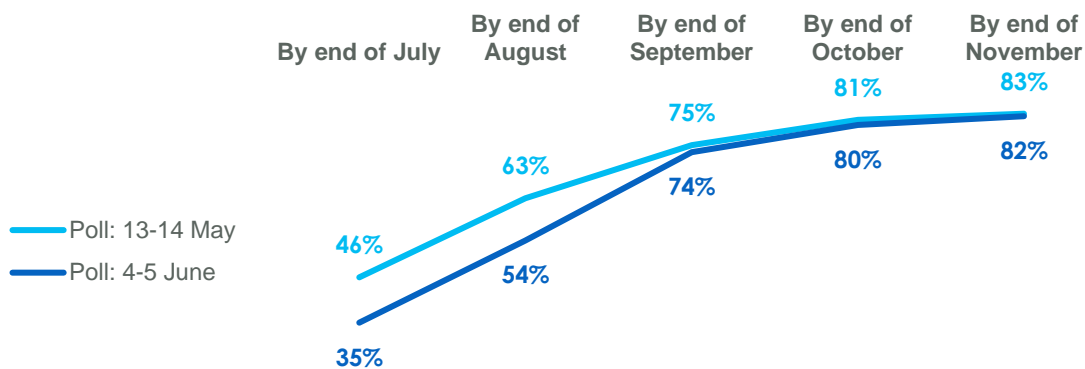
**Age:** Younger Britons (aged 18-34) are less likely than those aged over 65 to think we are coming out too fast: 47% vs 59% respectively. However, a quarter of millennials (23%) think the opposite and want the winding down of lockdown restrictions to speed up (23%).

**Area:** By a small margin Britain's towns and rural areas are more likely to think we are coming out of lockdown too fast than its cities. In particular, there is a sizeable minority opinion in Britain's cities that the winding down of lockdown is happening too slowly (19%),

## Public expectations for the end of lockdown shift back a month

Barely a third (35%) of the public now think lockdown will have finished by the end of July, down from 46% three weeks ago. Similarly, now barely half (54%) of the public think lockdown will have finished by the end of August, when almost two thirds (63%) were confident of this a few weeks before.

### When the public think lockdown will have finished by

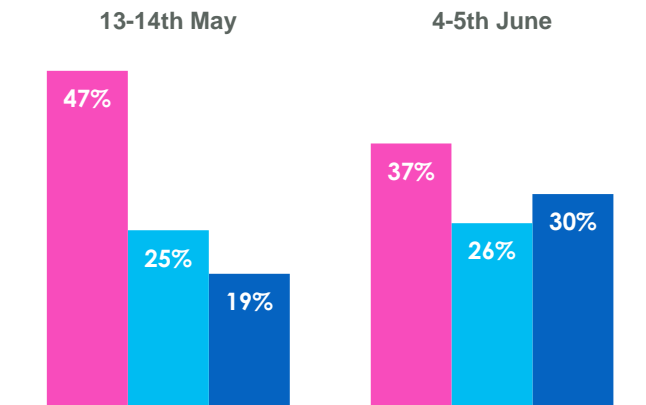


However, roughly three quarters (74%) of us still think that lockdown will have ended by the end of September.

## Covid Alert Level: Public seem to think there's been a change despite continuation of Level 4

### What Covid Alert level are we on?

■ Level 3 or below ■ Between level 3 and 4 ■ Level 4 or above



Three in ten (30%) UK adults now think we are currently on Covid alert level 3 or below, up from 19% three weeks ago. This is despite the actual level remaining on 4 since it was unveiled a month ago.

Now only 37% think the UK is on level 4 or above, down from 47%.



# Impact of Dominic Cummings row

## Seven in ten think Dominic Cummings should go

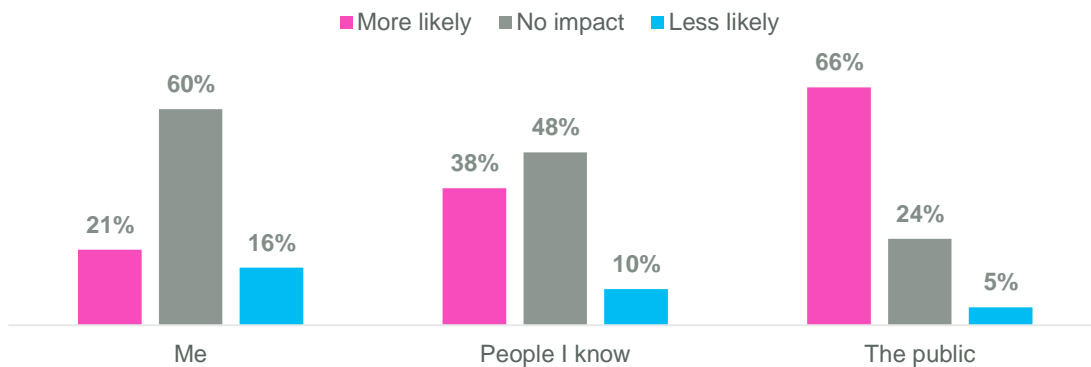
The proportion of the public that think Dominic Cummings should be sacked has risen slightly from 68% last week to 71% this week. Now only a fifth (20%) of UK adults think he shouldn't be sacked.

All the signs are that the story has embedded itself, with the negative perceptions of Mr Cummings and the government being the same or higher this week.

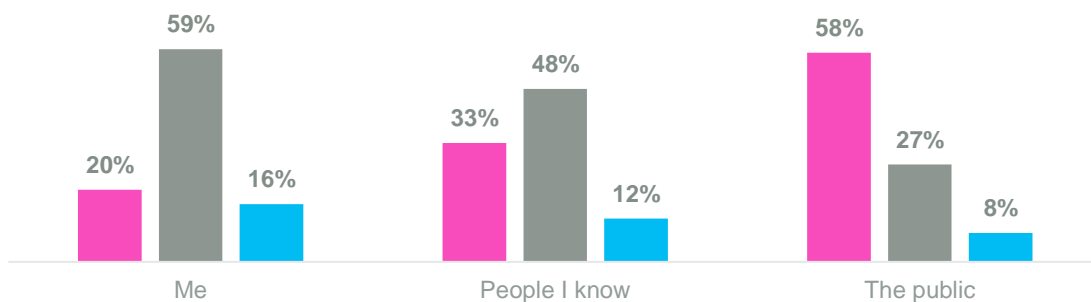
## Concern at impact of the story on the public

Perceptions that Dominic Cummings' actions have damaged lockdown has increased, despite the public no more likely to say that they will break the rules themselves. Two thirds (66%) now believe that the public are more likely to break the rules, up from 58% last week.

### Whether the Cummings story will make the following more/less likely to break the rules



### Results last week:



# 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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