



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

1st July 2020



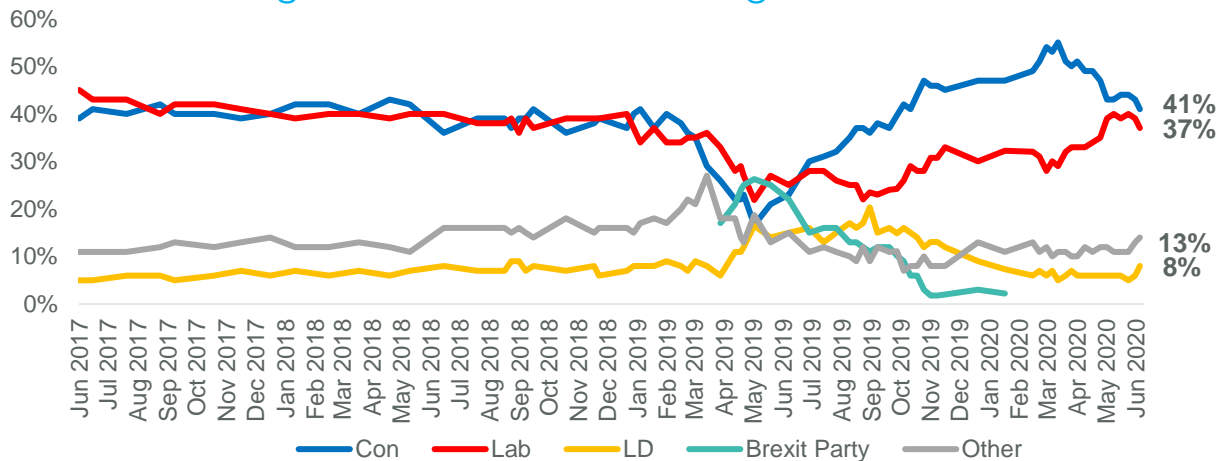
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

3rd July 2020

One-minute takeaway

- Little change in share of the vote, Conservatives and Labour both down by 2 points, Liberal Democrats gain 2 points to 8%
- Boris Johnson’s approval rating remains largely unchanged while Keir Starmer’s ratings have fallen slightly. The Labour leader is still ahead of the prime minister on net and raw approval but his net rating has dropped from net +27% to net +21% and has fallen just behind Johnson in preferred prime minister again.
- Government approval drops to its lowest level since the beginning of the crisis, 49% disapprove vs. 30% who approve. This is a sharp drop on last week and is a tiny fraction worse than their previous low on 10th June when it was 48% disapprove and 30% approve.
- 52% say that reopening the hospitality sector is happening too soon vs. 24% saying at the right time and 8% too late.
- This is about the same as the figures for easing lockdown overall, 53% say too fast, 26% say right speed, 10% say too slowly
- 55% expect us to go back into full lockdown at some point before a vaccine becomes available and 73% expect a second outbreak of coronavirus some time this year
- 46% expect Brexit to have a negative impact on the economic recovery from the pandemic vs. 18% expecting a positive impact, 20% no impact

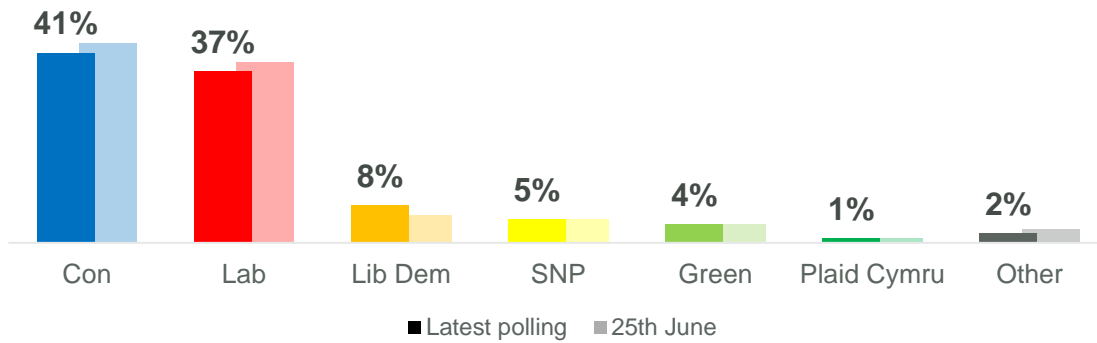
Voting intention since the 2017 general election



Headline voting intention

The Tory lead remains at four points with both main parties dropping by two

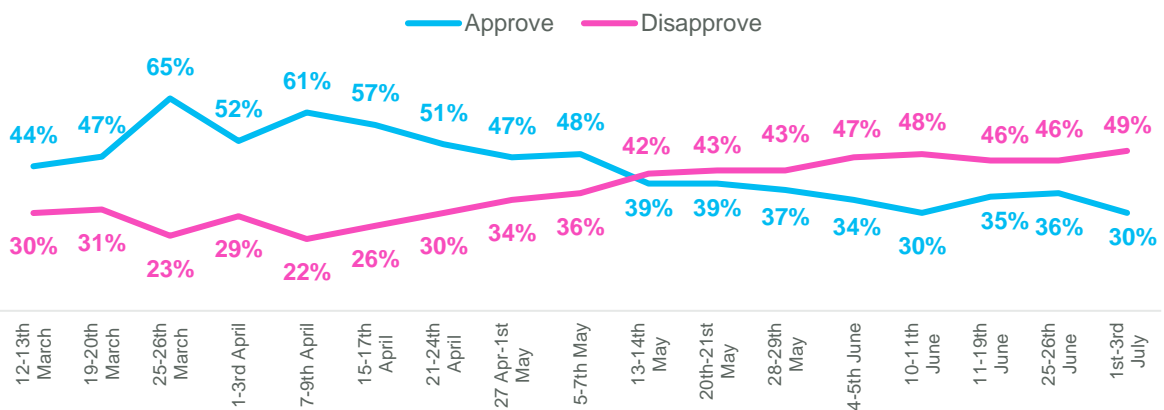
The Conservative's maintained their 4-point lead over Labour this week, with both parties again dropping by two points. The Conservatives are on 41% this week, down from 43% last week, while Labour is on 37%, down from 39% a week ago. The Lib Dems are two points up on 8% vs. 6% last week. The SNP are two points up on 5% vs. 3% last week. The Greens are two points up on 4% vs. 2% last week. Plaid Cymru are two points up on 1% vs. -1% last week. Other parties are two points up on 2% vs. 0% last week.



Perceptions of the crisis response

Net approval of government's handling of the crisis returns to record low

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



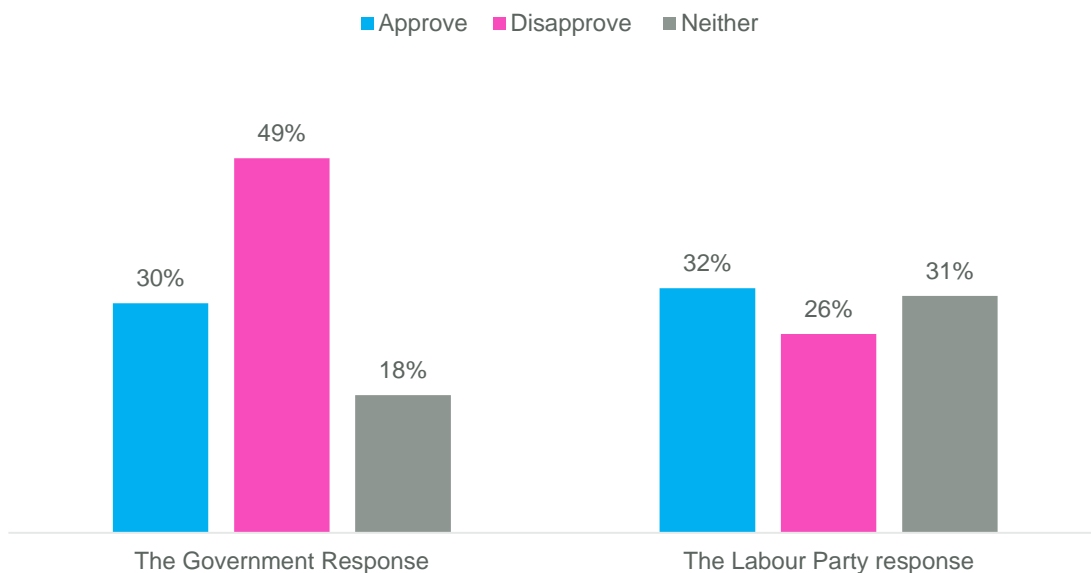
Views of the government’s handling of the crisis have returned to their lowest level yet with a net score of -19%. This comes after two weeks in which perceptions, while still negative, were less extreme than this week’s result.

Among Conservative voters, 63% approve while 19% are neutral and 16% disapprove. Among supporters of other parties, views are more uniformly negative.

Labour response still net positive but down after last week’s high

Views of the Labour Party’s response to the crisis remain net positive but this has fallen since last week, returning to net approval of +6% compared to +13% last week. Given that the week before was +4%, this suggests reversion to the mean rather than any dramatic change in Labour’s fortunes with the number giving a neutral response remaining at 35%.

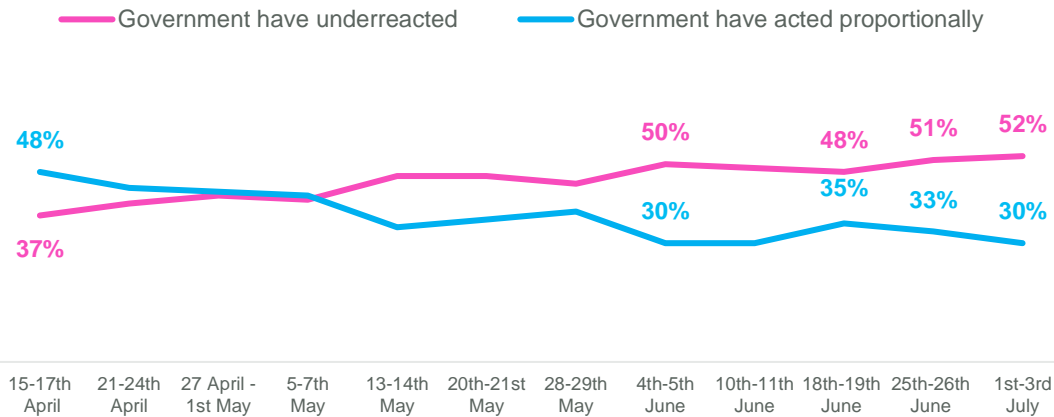
Approval ratings of response to the crisis



More believe government is underreacting to the crisis

The percentage of people saying the government has underreacted to the crisis remains above 50% with 52% selecting this option vs. 30% saying they are reacting proportionately. This continues the trend of the last three weeks.

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



Coming out of lockdown too fast

53% believe the UK is coming out of lockdown too fast while 10% believe it is too slow and 26% believe it is happening at the right speed.

These are virtually identical to last week's figures when 54% believed lockdown was being released too fast, itself an increase on 46% the week before.

Looking at the hospitality sector specifically, with restrictions on pubs and restaurants set to be lifted, 52% believe this is happening too soon, 24% happening at about the right time and 8% who believe it is happening too late.

Part of this is down to government's difficulties with establishing a viable test and trace system and approval for all of these areas remains very poor:

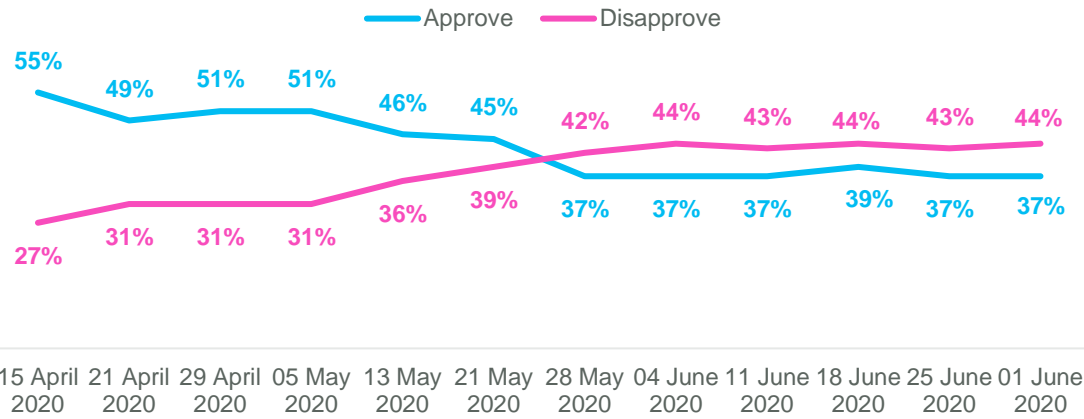
Do you approve or disapprove of the government's handling of...	% approve	% disapprove
...testing	18%	56%
...PPE for NHS staff and essential workers	20%	56%
...test and trace / contact tracing	15%	58%

Johnson's ratings remain negative

Ratings remain negative but stable

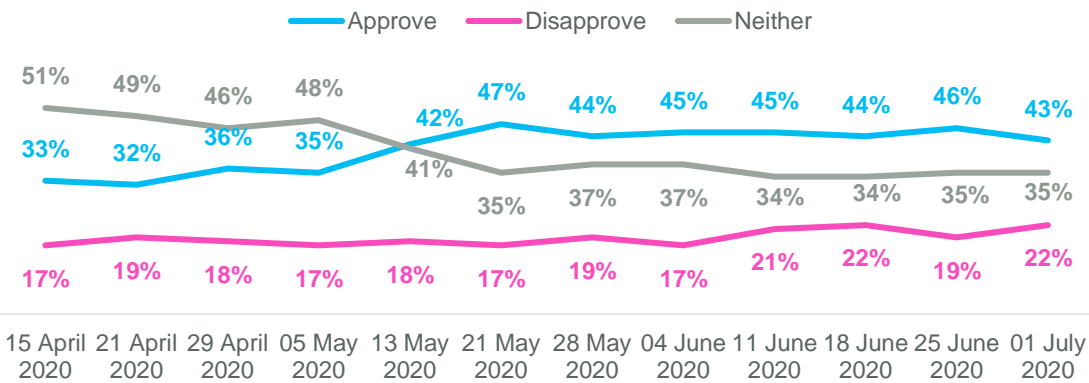
Net approval of Boris Johnson's performance as prime minister remains stable but underwater.

Boris Johnson's approval rating since leaving hospital



Labour leader Keir Starmer has seen a slight drop in his approval and uptick in his disapproval ratings but remains firmly in positive territory and ahead of Boris Johnson on both raw approval and net approval:

Keir Starmer's approval rating since becoming Labour leader



Starmer has also dropped behind Johnson again in the preferred prime minister question although both leaders have seen their scores here drop.

When we probe in more depth, Johnson leads Starmer on those who disapprove of both leaders:

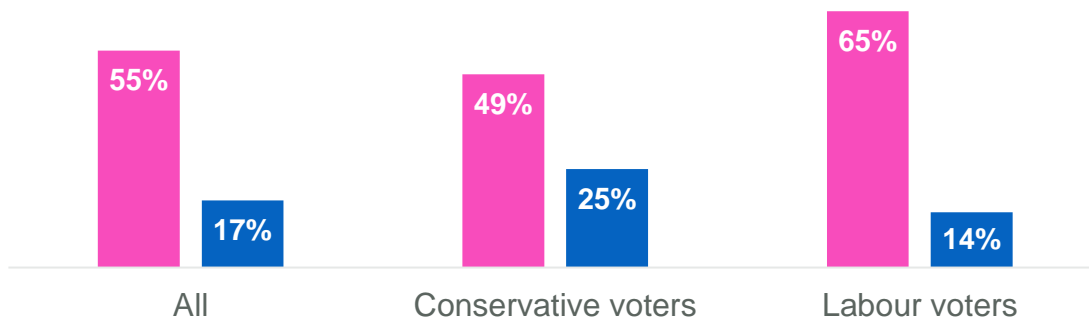
- "I am satisfied with Boris Johnson" – 30%
- "I am dissatisfied with Boris Johnson but prefer him to Keir Starmer" – 14%
- "I am dissatisfied with Boris Johnson, and prefer Keir Starmer" – 37%

Second wave incoming

55% expect a second full lockdown before a vaccine becomes available

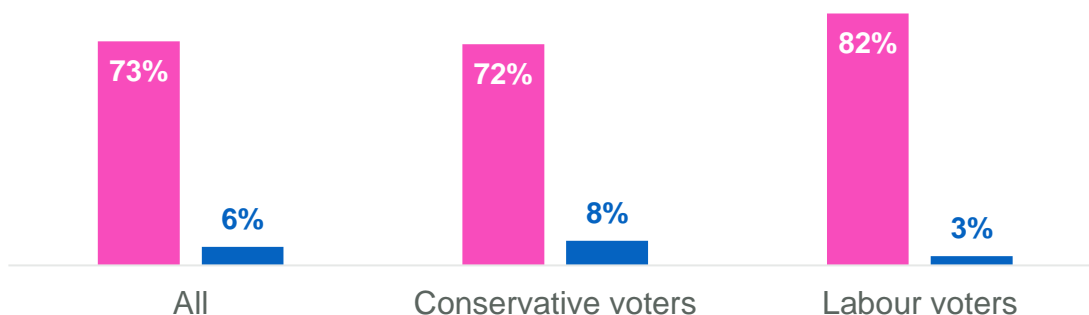
17% believe this to be unlikely and there is a partisan split here:

Do you think a second full lockdown is **likely** or **unlikely** before a vaccine is available?



The figures are more certain for a second outbreak of some sort and here the partisan split is less severe.

Do you think a second outbreak is **likely** or **unlikely** before a vaccine is available?



People are less certain about the severity of any further outbreak:

- 35% expect it to be bigger than the initial wave
- 28% expect it to be smaller
- 27% expect about the same scale

Priorities over the next 12 months

Public split on how the government should increase intervention in the economy

Thinking about the next year, the British public think that the Chancellor should focus on economic growth and recovery (45%). The top 5 issues that the public think the Chancellor should focus on include:

- Economic growth/recovery (45%)
- Unemployment/ jobs (39%)
- Investing in public services (30%)
- Supporting businesses (24%)
- Inequality/poverty (24%)

Meanwhile 13% think the Chancellor should prioritise investing in infrastructure.

When asked more specifically about the government increasing intervention in the economy, the public is split on what the government should prioritise. Almost two in five (38%) think the government should bring forward sending on government building projects and investments to stimulate the economy, compared to a third (32%) who think the government should prioritise continuing with direct financial support for business workers.

Brexit

Half of the public think Brexit will have a negative impact on the UK's economic recovery

Almost half (46%) of the public think Brexit will have a negative impact on the UK's economic recovery from the pandemic. Despite many thinking this, if the UK and EU are unable to agree a new trade relationship by the 31st December, a third (35%) of the public think the UK should leave the single market and customs union on December 31st even if it means leaving with no trade deal. Meanwhile, a quarter (24%) think the transition period should be extended until we can negotiate a deal that is acceptable to both sides. On the other end, 27% think that the UK should cancel Brexit in this scenario and request to re-join the European Union after all

About Opinium

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