



What people think,
feel and do

www.opinium.co.uk
research@opinium.co.uk
[@opiniumresearch](https://twitter.com/opiniumresearch)

The Political Report

23rd July 2020



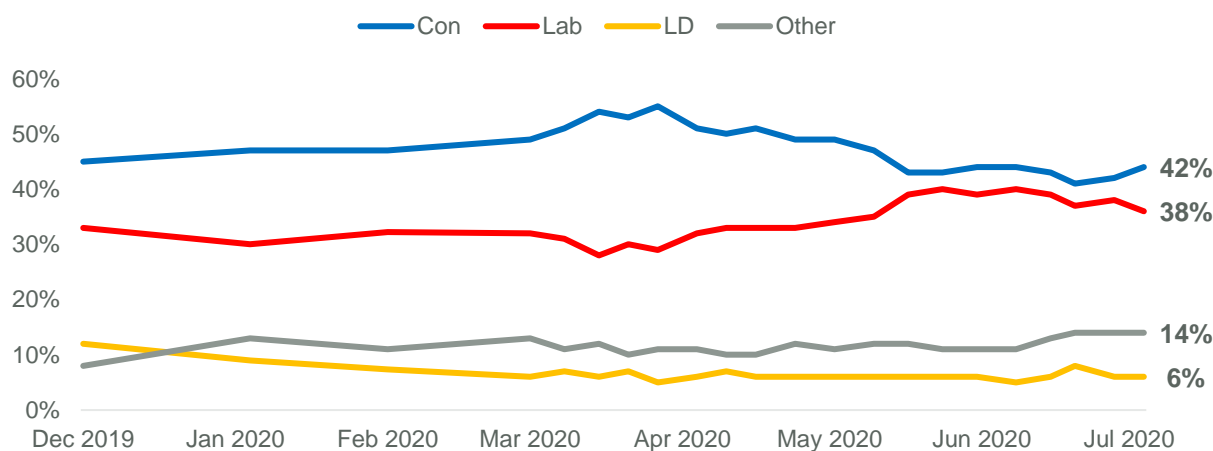
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

24th July 2020

One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead reduces back to 4 points over Labour
- The government's handling of the Coronavirus crisis drops from a net approval of -5 to a net approval of -15
- Johnson's net approval ratings dip from -4 to -8
- Four in five (58%) support banning political parties and campaigns from using targeted advertising on social media
- 70% support social media companies being liable for inaccurate or misleading advertising on their platform
- The public are more likely to think that the Russian government has interfered in the last 3 general elections, and the Scottish referendum and the EU referendum than not
- This interference is generally perceived to be at the benefit of the conservatives, the Leave side and of the yes to independence side
- One in five (19%) of the public think the USA is a threat to the UK

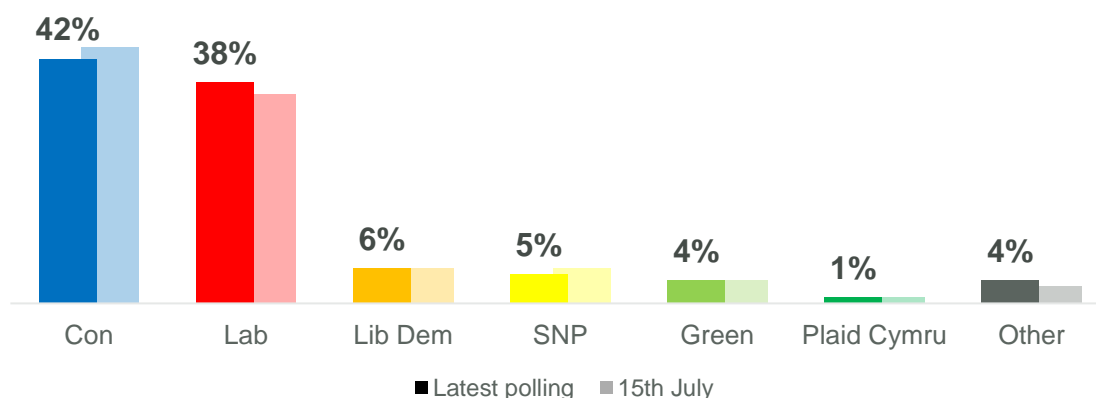
Voting intention since the 2019 general election



Headline voting intention

Tory lead shrinks to 4 points

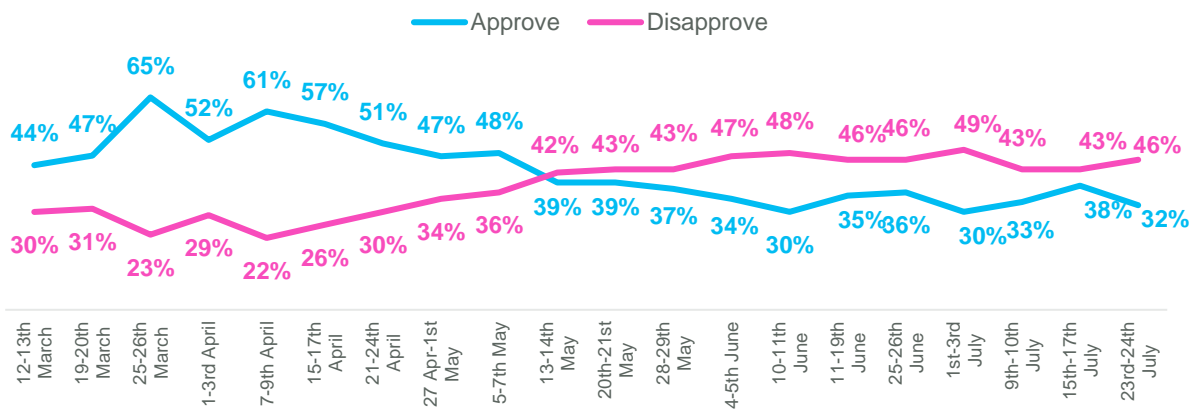
The Conservatives have lost two points while Labour have gained two, taking the overall Tory lead from 8 points to 4. The Lib Dems and Greens remain unchanged on last week.



Covid-19 crisis

Approval of the government's handling of the crisis drops slightly

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



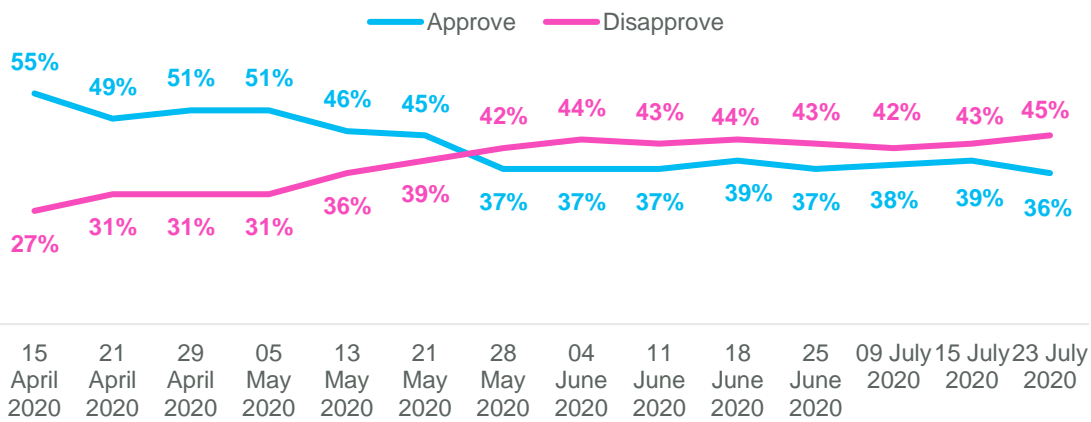
Last week the government's net approval rating for the handling of the Coronavirus crisis was its most positive rating since mid-May, at a net approval of -5. However, this week approval worsened and has now dropped to a net approval of -15. Disapproval rose from 43% last week to 46% this week, while approval has fallen from 38% last week to 32% this week.

Leadership ratings

Johnson's approval ratings dip slightly

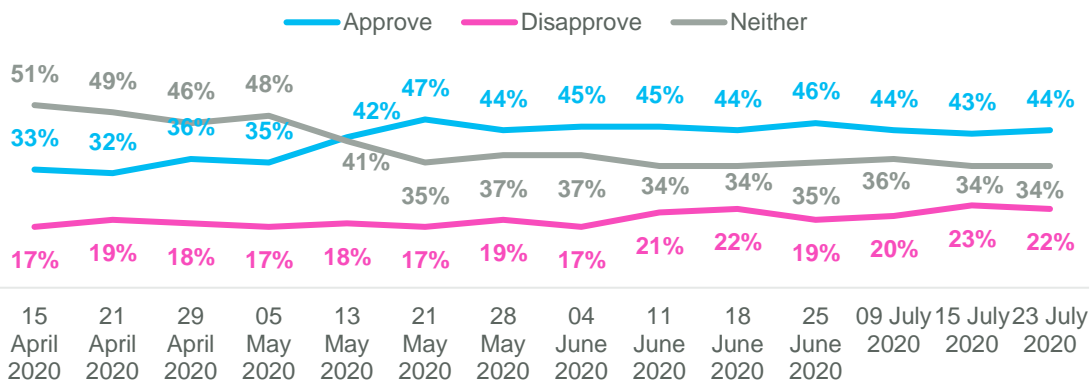
Boris Johnson's approval rating remains underwater with 36% approving and 45% disapproving. His net rating had dropped from -4 last week to -8 this week.

Boris Johnson's approval rating since leaving hospital



Keir Starmer remains firmly in positive territory and fairly stable compared to last week. 44% approve of his job performance, while 22% disapprove. His net rating has increase from +20 last week to +22 this week. .

Keir Starmer's approval rating since becoming Labour leader



On the question of who would be the best prime minister, Johnson and Starmer remain close with 35% choosing the incumbent, 33% choosing the Labour leader and 16% answering "none of these".

Elections

Public support a ban on parties using targeted advertising on social media for elections

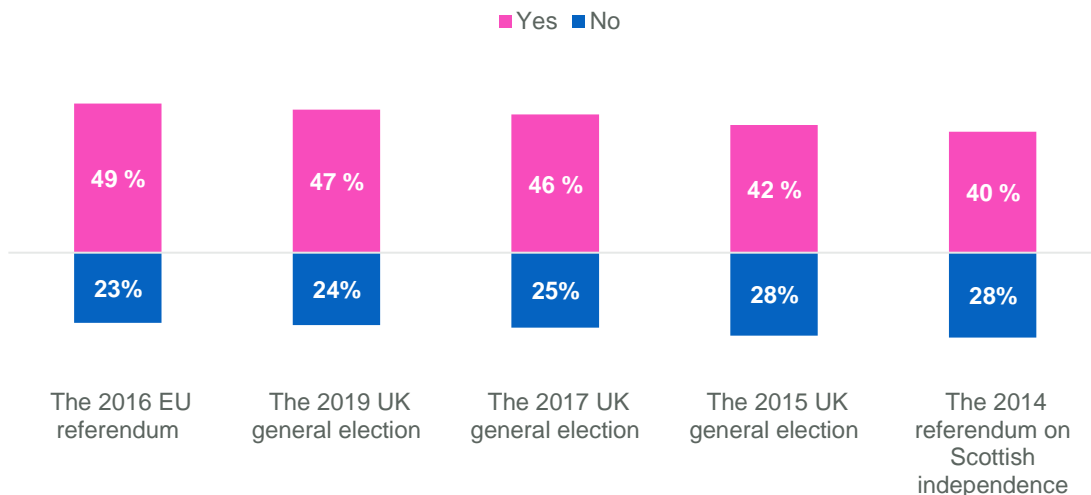
Thinking about election conduct, the public want to see a ban on political parties and campaigns being able to use targeted advertising on social media during elections (58% support this band). Additionally, seven in ten (70%) support social media companies being made liable to for inaccurate or misleading advertising on their platform.

Russian interference

This week the UK Parliament’s Intelligence and Security Committee released their report into Russian activity in the UK. Three in four (75%) UK adults had heard about this.

We asked people to think about several elections and to tell us their thoughts on whether there was any involvement from Russia in them. We asked this about the last 3 general elections, the EU Referendum and the Scottish Referendum. For each of these, the public were more likely to think that the Russian government had interfered than not. Generally, more people were likely to think that the Russian government interfered in more recent elections.

From what you have heard, please tell us whether or not you believe the Russian government interfered with each of the following electoral events in the UK:



Half (49%) of the public believe that the Russian government interfered in the EU referendum, while 47% think they interfered in the recent general election. 40% think they interfered in the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum.

Remainers were more likely to think that the Russian government interfered in the EU referendum (63% vs 39% of Leavers). However, more Leavers were likely to believe that the Russian government interfered in that election than not (39% believe they did, vs 32% believing they didn't).

Turning to the 2019 general election, 70% of Lib Dem voters and 62% of Labour voters believed the Russian government interfered compared to 39% of Conservative voters. However, again, more Conservative voters were likely to believe that the Russian government interfered in that election than not (39% believe they did, vs 33% believing they didn't).

Russian interference perceived to benefit Leave side and the Conservatives

Of those who believe that there was Russian interference in the Scottish referendum, half (52%) thought it was to the benefit of a particular side, with 30% believing it benefitted the yes to independence side and 21% thinking it benefitted the no to independence side.

Meanwhile, over two thirds (69%) of those who believe there was Russian interference in the EU referendum think it benefitted a particular side, with most (58%) thinking it benefitted the Leave side, while only 10% think it benefitted the Remain side.

- 71% of Remainers who believe there was interference think it was to the benefit of the Leave side, with only 11% thinking it did not benefit any particular side
- Meanwhile, Leavers are much more split on who benefitted. One in three (35%) Leavers who believe there was interference think it benefitted the Leave side, while a similar number (36%) think it did not benefit a particular side.

Turning to the 2019 general election, two thirds (66%) of those who think there was interference think it benefitted a particular side, with almost half (47%) thinking it benefitted the Conservatives, compared to 9% thinking it benefitted Labour.

- Only just half of Conservative voters (45%) who think there was interference think it benefitted a particular side, with one in five (21%) believing it benefitted the Conservatives and 17% thinking it benefitted Labour.
- Meanwhile 82% of Labour voters who think there was interference think it benefitted a particular side, with three in four (73%) thinking it benefitted the Conservatives while only 4% think it benefitted Labour.

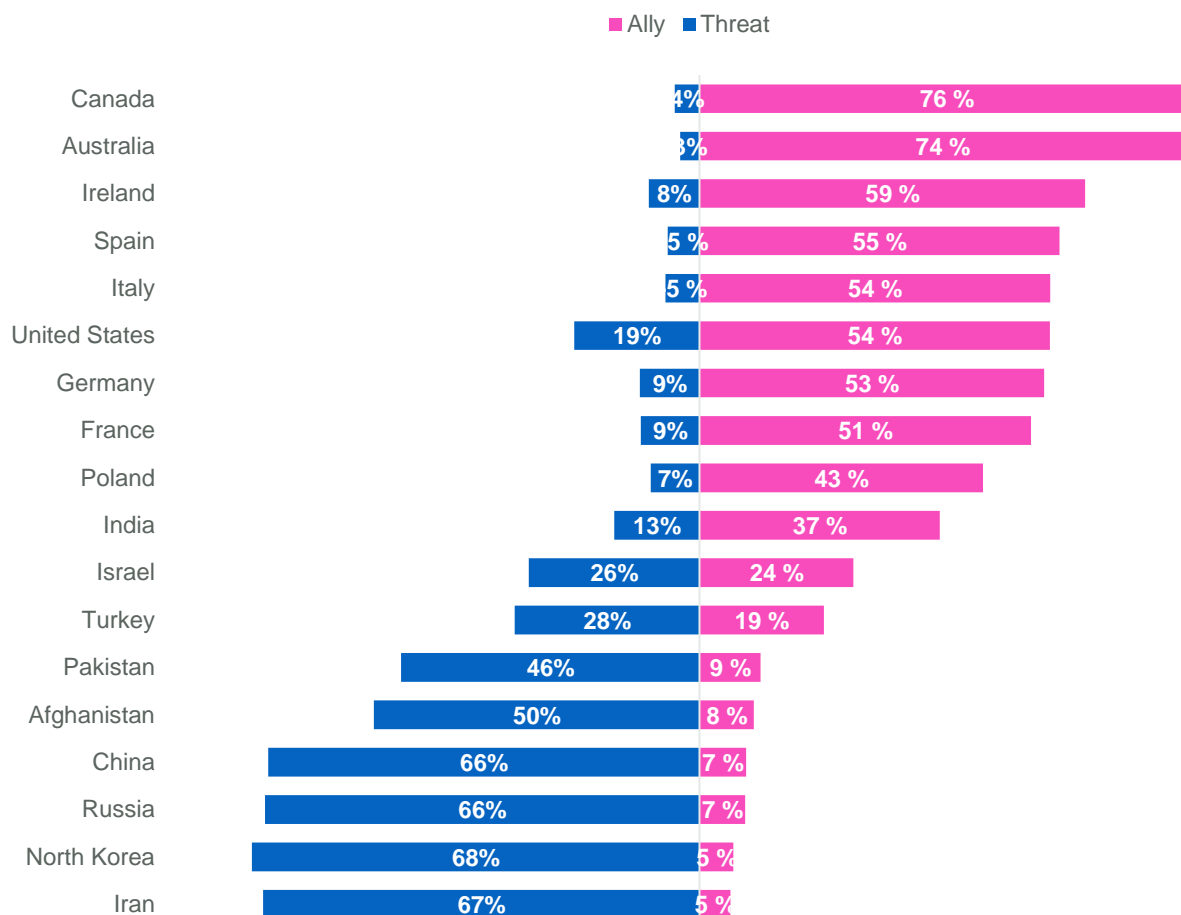
Britain's ally and enemies

One in five think the USA is a threat to the UK

Three quarters of the public perceive Canada and Australia to be the UK's allies (76% and 74% respectively). Meanwhile, half (54%) think of the USA as an ally, while 19% perceive the USA to be a threat to the UK. Out of all the Western countries asked about, the USA was most likely to be perceived as a threat.

Meanwhile two thirds see North Korea (68%), Iran (67%), Russia (66%) and China (66%) to be a threat to the UK.

To what extent, if at all, do you think the following countries are allies, or threats, to the UK?



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.

www.opinium.com | research@opinium.com | 0207 566 3190

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