



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

13th August 2020



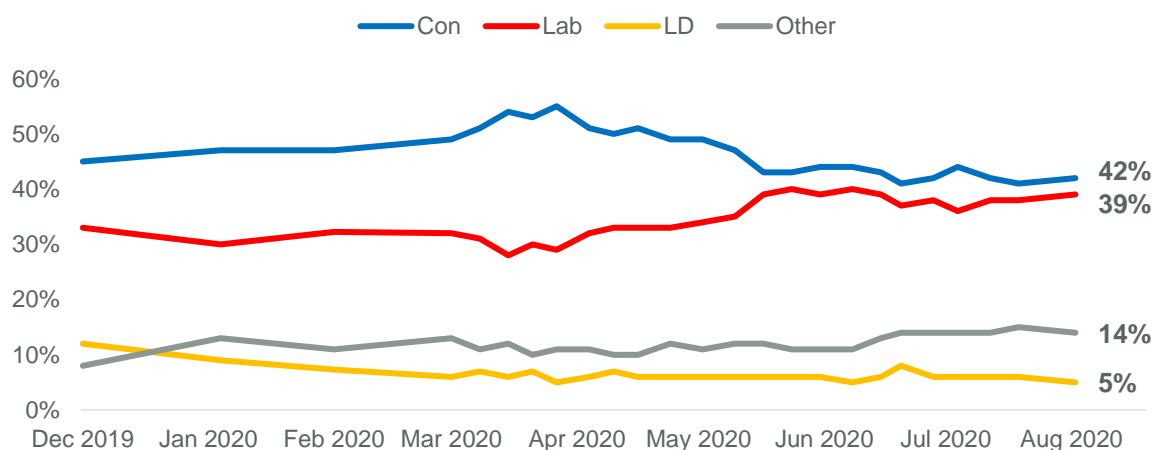
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

14th August 2020

One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead remains at 3 points as both main parties gain a point. Conservatives are on 42% with Labour on 39%.
- The government is still seen to be handling the coronavirus poorly with 49% disapproving and 32% approving. While the net rating (-17) is similar to the end of July when it was -18, the 'disapprove' figure matches the highest we saw at the beginning of July
- The public are split on extending the furlough scheme beyond October. 28% say it should end as intended, 33% say to extend it for sectors most affected by Covid-19, 18% say to extend it for all sectors
- If forced to choose one, voters overwhelmingly (60%) prioritise the re-opening of schools rather than keeping pubs, restaurants and hospitality venues open (10%).
- 50% are confident schools will re-open in September (69% of Conservative voters) vs. 40% who are not confident (54% of Labour voters)
- Voters in England are not sold on the government's handling of GCSE and A-Level exam results with 17% approving and 42% disapproving
- Just 5% believe the moderated results should stand as if they were the actual exam results while most believe students should have the right to appeal based on their teachers' estimates (43%) or mock results (39%) or even to simply sit the exams (43%)

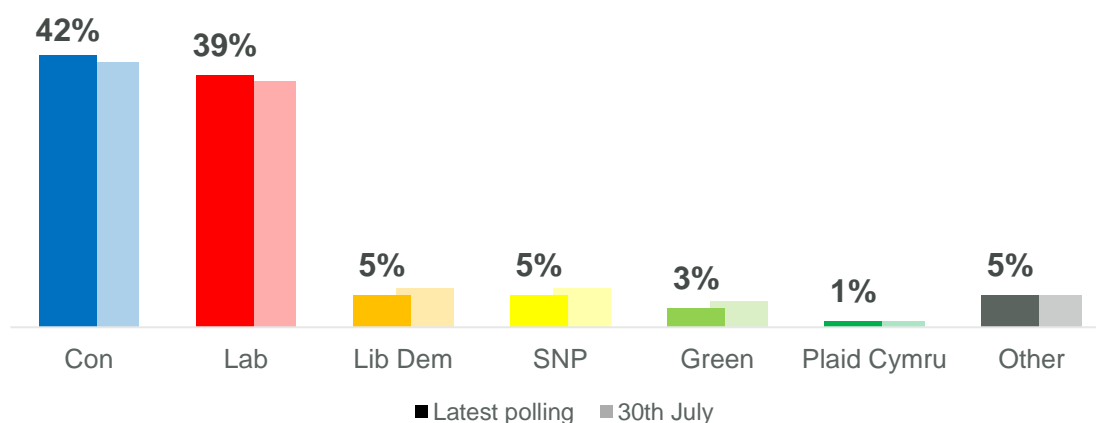
Voting intention since the 2019 general election



Headline voting intention

Tory lead remains at 3 points

The Conservative lead remains at 3 points as both main parties gain 1 while the Lib Dems, SNP and Greens all drop points.

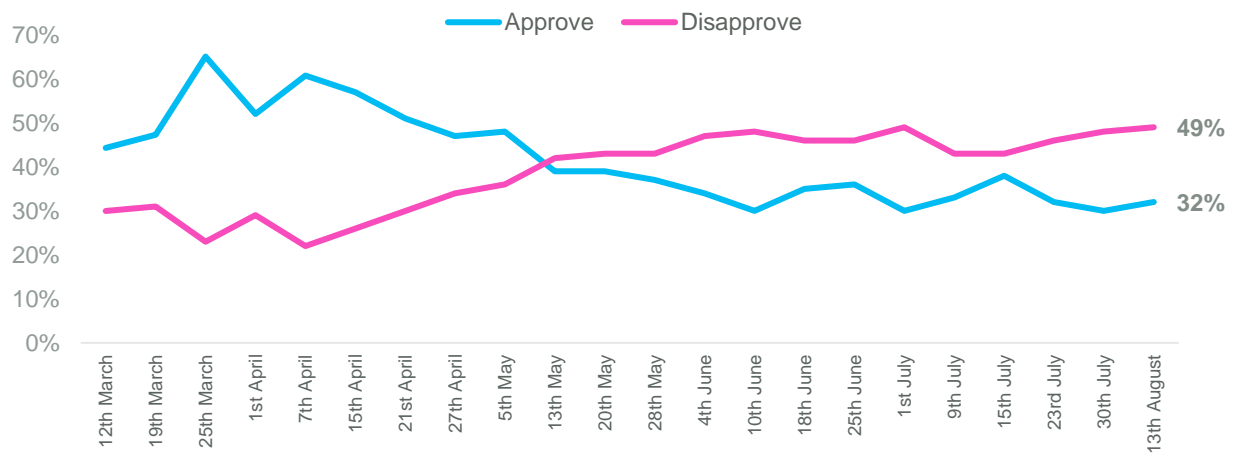


While the Conservatives' lead widened briefly in June, the near-level pegging is a return to the status quo that has been the case for much of the summer.

Covid-19 crisis

Net approval is down slightly but the percentage disapproving has risen

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



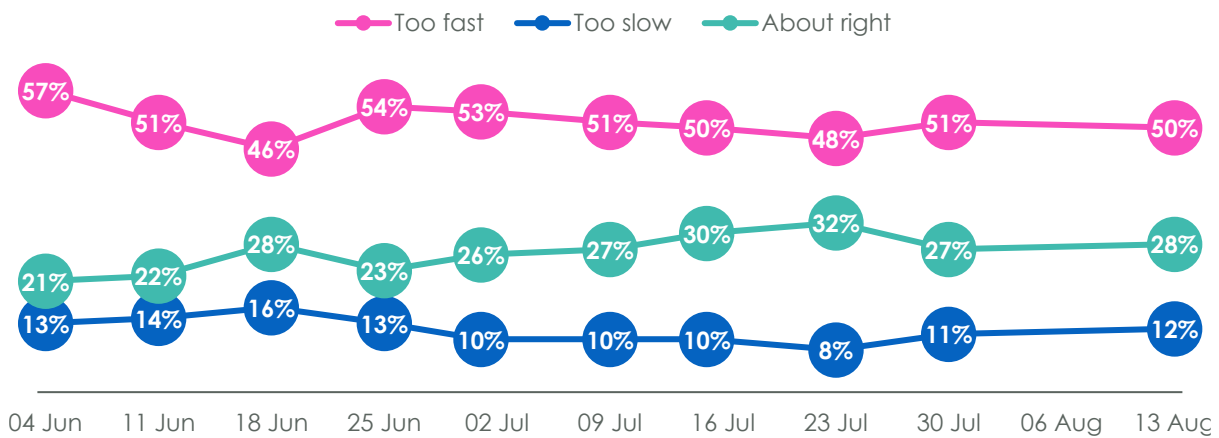
While approval of how the government has handled the coronavirus crisis has ticked up slightly, this is almost matched by an increase in the proportion who disapprove. Those approving has risen from 30% to 32% while those disapproving are now 49%, matching the previous high of early July when it was again 49%.

Easing of lockdown

Little change in public views of lockdown

Compared to our last poll two weeks ago, there is little change in the proportion of UK adults who believe we are coming out of lockdown too fast or too slowly.

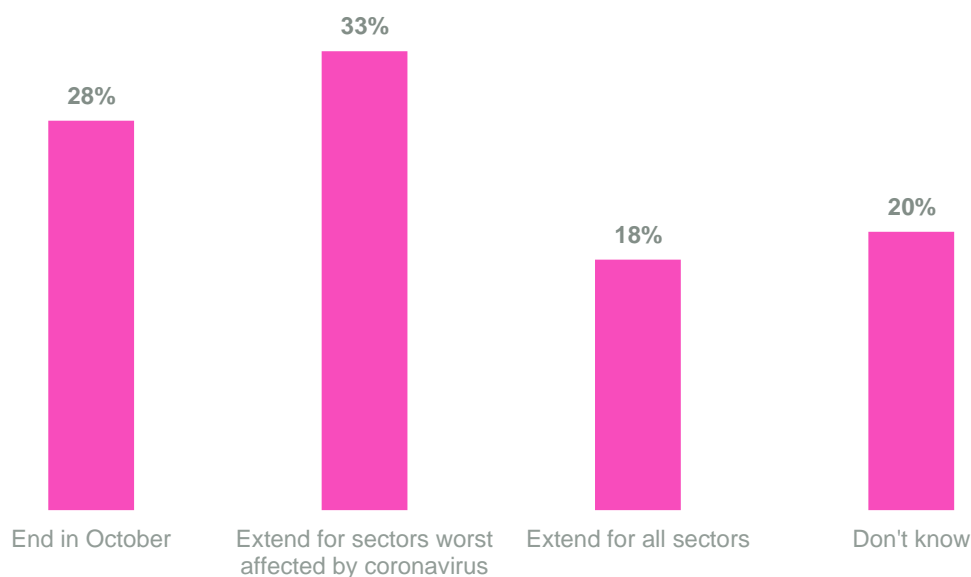
View on government approach to coming out of lockdown



Furloughing the furlough scheme

Public split on whether to extend the furlough scheme

What should happen to the furlough scheme?



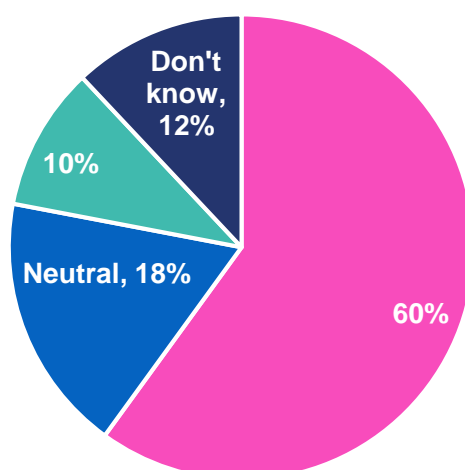
Among those who want the scheme to be extended for some sectors, the most popular were:

- Hospitality and leisure (59%)
- Food and drink (38%)
- Transport (24%)
- Education (23%)
- Healthcare (22%)
- Manufacturing (19%)

Among those who said “extend” in any form, 25% said until the end of the year, 35% said “as long as is needed”, 12% said until there is a vaccine available for coronavirus.

Schools, not pubs

Should we prioritise **schools** or **pubs/restaurants/hospitality venues** if we can only keep one open?



Participants were asked to think about a situation where we can only keep one of the two open while keeping Covid-19 cases at a safe level. The overwhelming majority chose schools while 18% were neutral and 10% chose pubs and restaurants.

In a separate question, we presented a list of locations and asked people to tick the three that they would prioritise if we had to restrict the number of types of places kept open to keep coronavirus under control. Schools won out here as well:

- Schools (67%)
- Shops (62%)
- Public transport (50%)

Re-opening in September

The public are split on whether schools will re-open in September or not. 50% are confident while 40% are not confident.

The partisan split here is what one would expect, 69% of Conservative voters are confident vs. 54% of Labour voters who are not confident.

A failing grade on exams

The government's handling of the exam results situation is not seen as particularly successful with only 17% of voters in England approving and 42% disapproving.

Even Conservatives voters struggle to muster much enthusiasm. While supporters of other parties are predictably negative, Conservative voters split evenly with 27% approving and 27% disapproving.

Once we include Wales and Northern Ireland, only 5% of voters believe a student should be forced to accept their moderated estimate as if it were the actual exam result.

- 43% believe they should be allowed to appeal to use their teacher's estimate instead
- 43% believe they should be allowed to simply sit the exam as intended
- 39% believe they should be allowed to appeal to use their mock exam results instead

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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