



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

11th February 2021



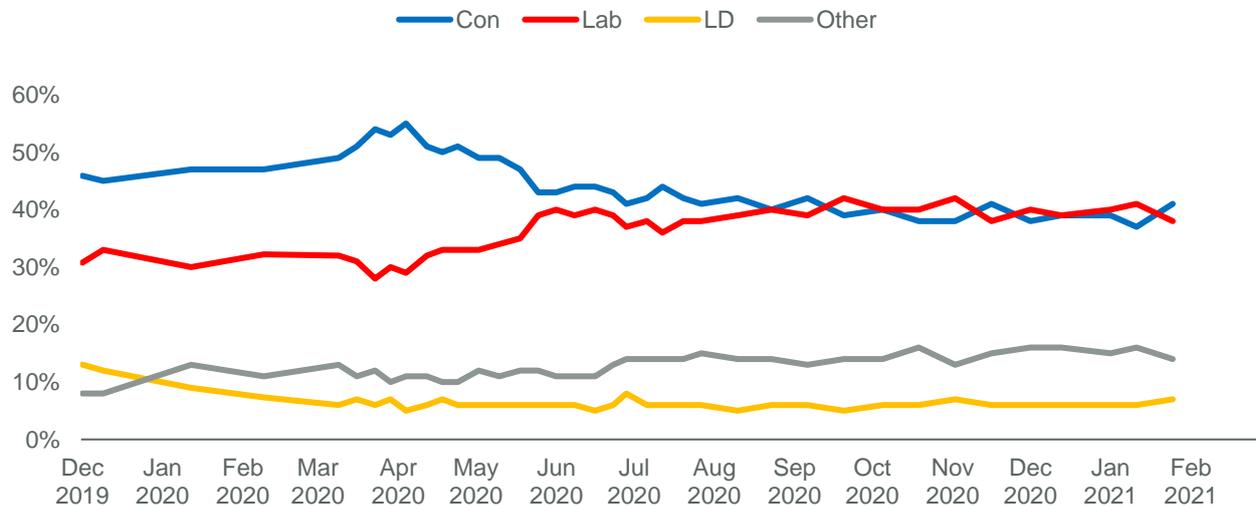
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

12th February 2020

One-minute takeaway

- Conservative lead extends to 5 points over Labour (42% vs 37%)
- The government appears to be getting an anticipated vaccine boost.
 - Active disapproval of government’s Covid handling drops 6 points from 51% to 45%
 - 62% now approve of the vaccine rollout, and 45% name management of the vaccination programme as the aspect the government have handled best
- However, three in five (58%) remain worried that the virus will mutate and the vaccine will become ineffective
- 80% would get the vaccine if they were offered one, while 14% would not
- 38% trust Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak the most to handle the economy (down from 42% in July), while 25% trust Keir Starmer and Anneliese Dodds the most (statistically unchanged from 26% in July).
- While 57% say the state of the economy is currently bad, this is the most positive response on this question since early April.
- 40% think the UK economy won’t recover until 2023 or later.

Voting intention since the 2019 general election

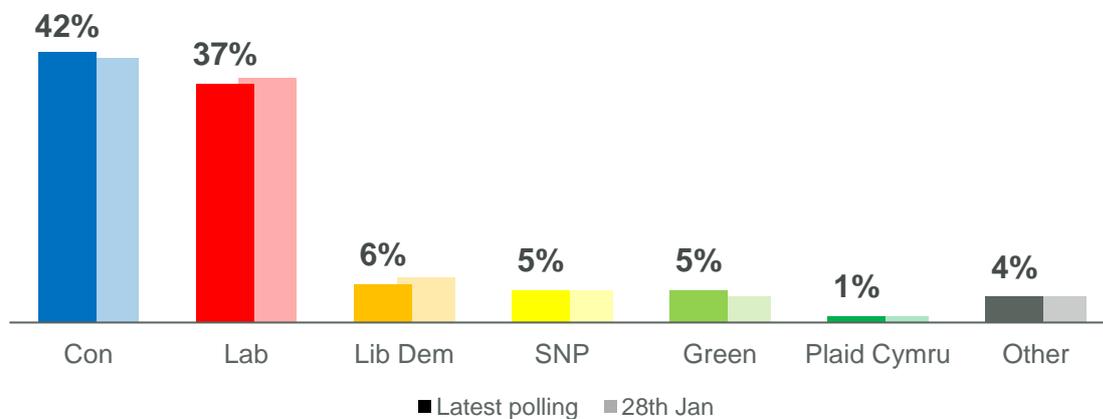


Headline Voting Intention

Conservatives increase their lead

The Conservatives have increased their lead to 5 points, up from 3 points a fortnight ago.

The Conservatives are now on 42% (up 1 point from two weeks ago), while Labour are on 37% (down 1 point). The Lib Dems are on 6% (down 1 point)



Leaders' approval

Starmer's approval ratings drop

Boris Johnson's approval rating has improved again, with 38% approving of how he is doing his job (no change from a fortnight ago) and 44% disapproving (down from 46%). This gives the prime minister a net approval rating of -6%, up from -8% a fortnight ago.

Meanwhile, Keir Starmer has seen a drop in approval ratings. In total, 32% now approve of the job he is doing (-4), with 30% disapproving (+3). This gives the Labour leader a net approval rating of +2%, down from +9% a fortnight ago.

Johnson maintains his lead on 'best PM' question

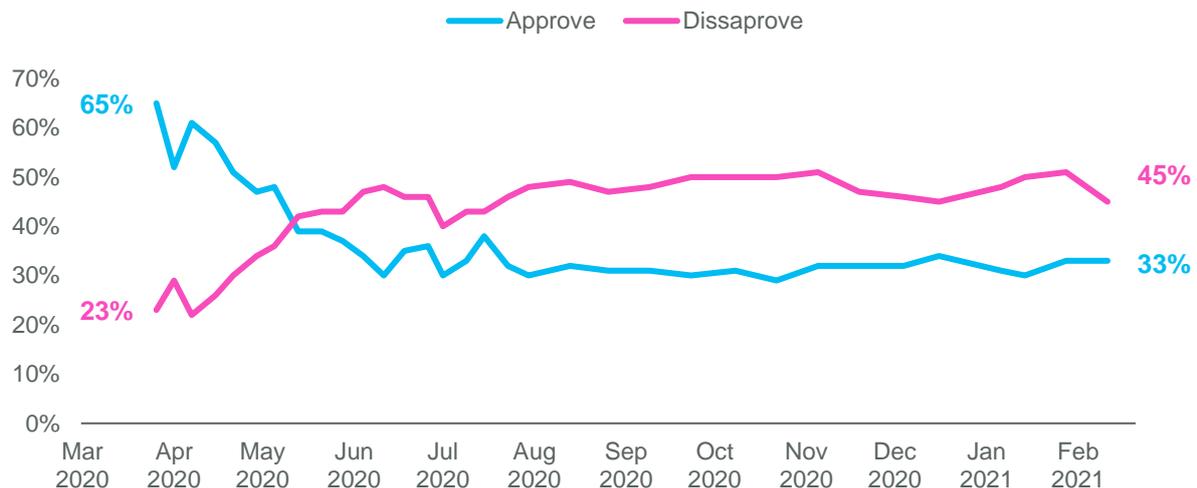
Boris Johnson maintains his lead on who would be the best prime minister: 32% now select Johnson (-1) while 27% think Keir Starmer would make the best PM (-2). Meanwhile 25% said neither and 16% said they don't know.

Coronavirus handling

Vaccine rollout sees disapproval of government fall while approval remains flat

Active disapproval of the government's Coronavirus handling drops 6 points, from 51% two weeks ago to 45%. While the percentage approving is largely flat, this now means that net approval on this measure is -12% (45% disapprove, 33% approve) compared to -18% two weeks ago (51% disapprove, 33% approve).

Approval of the governments handling of Coronavirus



In line with this, for only the second time since May 2020, more people think government is acting proportionally (39%) to the crisis than think they are underreacting (38%). This is a very different situation to a month ago, where 30% of the public thought the government was acting proportionally compared to half (51%) who thought they were underreacting.

Three fifths (62%) of the public now approve of the vaccine rollout (up from 60% two weeks ago), compared to just 10% disapproving. In line with this, 45% name management of the vaccination programme as the aspect the government have handled best regarding Coronavirus, up from 39% two weeks ago.

However, there are concerns that the vaccine could become ineffective, with three in five (58%) remaining worried that the virus will mutate and the vaccine will become ineffective.

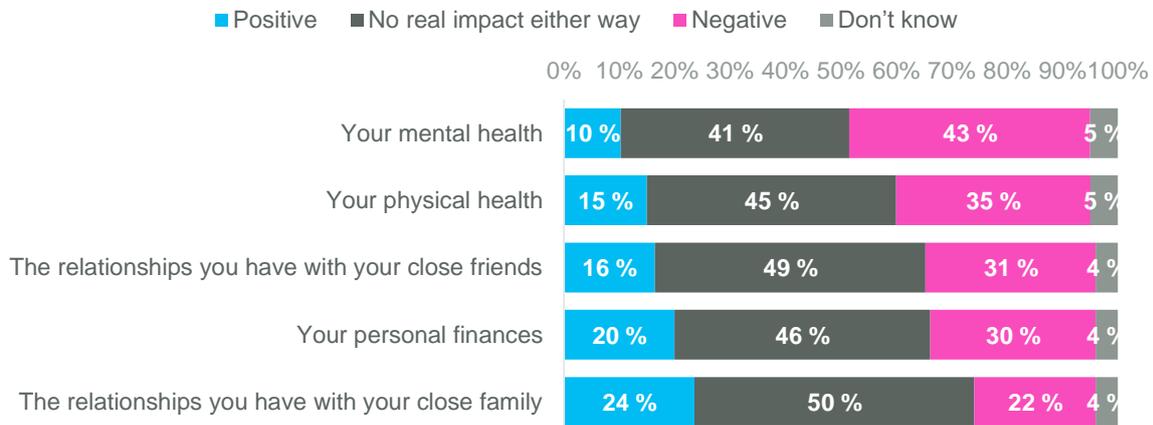
Four in five (80%) would now get the vaccine if they were offered one, down from 82% a fortnight ago. Conversely, the proportion who would not get the vaccine has increased slightly from 12% to 14%. However, these changes are all within the standard margin of error.

Impact of Coronavirus

Two in five say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health

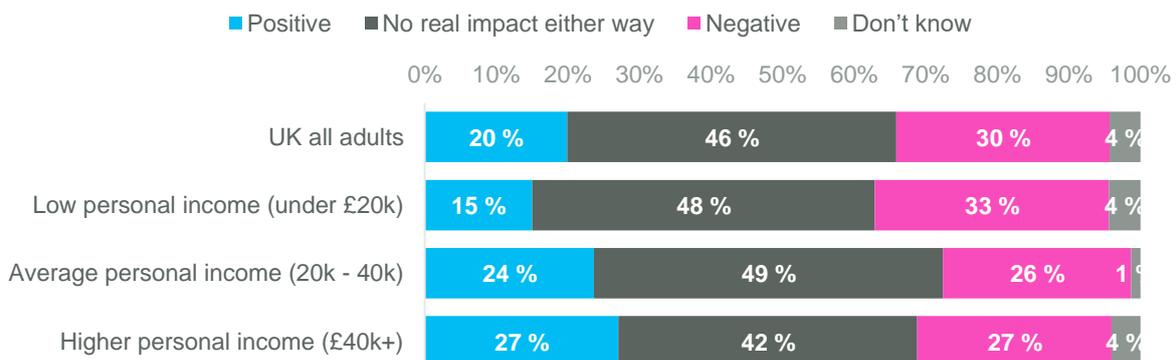
The Coronavirus pandemic has had a range of negative impacts on people. Two in five (43%) say their mental health has worsened as a result of the pandemic, while a third (35%) said the impact on their physical health has been worse.

Has the coronavirus pandemic, and subsequent lockdowns, had a positive or negative effect on...?



Meanwhile, three in ten (30%) say their personal finances are worse as a result. There are apparent differences depending on income level. A third (33%) of those on a low income (under £20k) say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their personal finances, while only 15% have said their personal finances are better. On the other hand, those on an average (£20k-£40k) and higher income (£40k+) are more split on what the impact has been on their personal finances.

Impact of the Coronavirus on personal finances



The economy

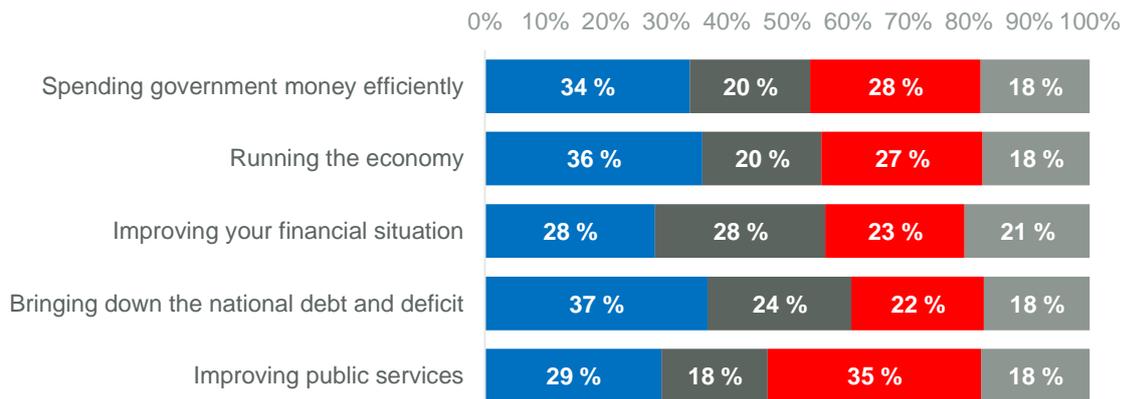
The Conservatives are still seen as better on the economy than Labour

In terms of handling the economy, 38% say they trust Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak the most to handle the economy, which is down slightly from 42% in July 2020. Meanwhile, a quarter (25%) trust Keir Starmer and Anneliese Dodds the most (statistically unchanged from 26% in July).

Similarly, the public are more likely to say that they think a Conservative government led by Boris Johnson would be better at handling different aspects of the economy and finances than a Labour government led by Keir Starmer. This is particularly the case for bringing down the national debt and deficit (37% vs. 22% respectively), and for running the economy (36% vs 27% respectively). However, the one area that Labour are seen to be better at is improving public services (35% vs 29% saying a Tory government).

Which government do you think would be better at...?

- A Conservative government led by Boris Johnson
- A Labour government led by Keir Starmer
- Neither
- Don't know



The public are not optimistic about the economy but are slightly less pessimistic

Thinking about the state of the economy, while 57% think it is currently bad, this is the most positive response on this question since early April. However, going forward the outlook is still negative; 40% think the UK economy won't recover until 2023 or later.

Despite being generally pessimistic, the public are more positive about the future than any point since early March. Currently 25% think the state of the economy will at least improve over the next 12 months, compared to 48% who think it will get worse. In terms of personal finance, the public are divided on whether their own finances will change: 19% think they'll get better, 24% think they'll get worse over the next 12 months.

The public are divided on preferences to approaching the economy and finances

With the Budget around the corner, the public think the biggest priority for the Chancellor and the government over the next 12 months should be economic growth/recovery (44%), followed by unemployment/jobs (37%) and investment in public services (28%).

Meanwhile, the public are divided on how best to approach the economy and public finances in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis. While 30% would prefer that taxes are raised to increase spending, a similar proportion (27%) would prefer reducing government spending and investment so that taxes could be cut.

Similarly, the public are divided on the best approach to take if the government continues its increased spending and investment to assist the economy in wake of the Coronavirus crisis. While 29% would prefer to raise taxes to finance this spending, 25% would prefer to borrow more instead.

