



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 12th March 2021



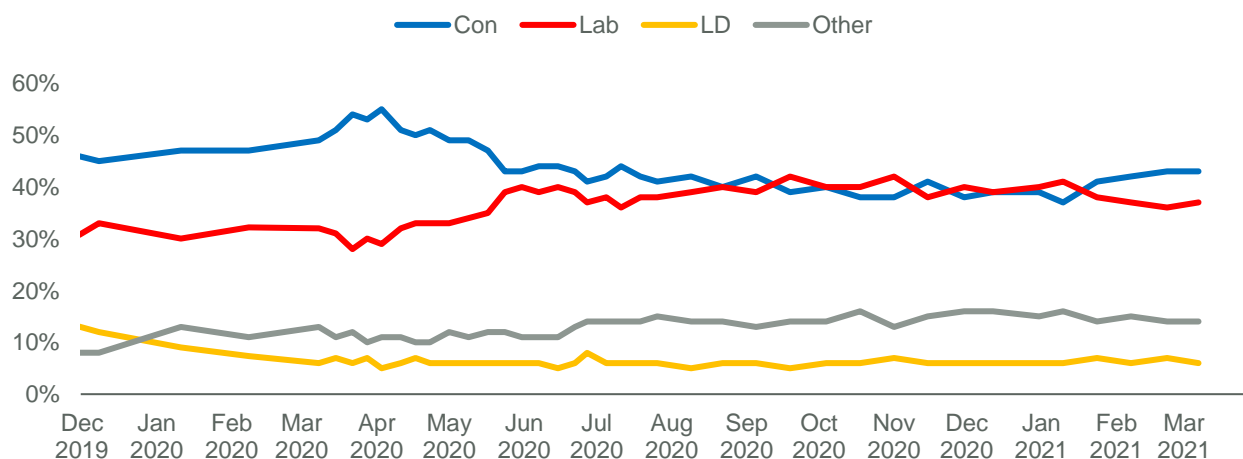
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

12th March 2021

## One-minute takeaway

- The Conservatives have a six point lead in this week’s voting intention. They are on 43% (unchanged) with Labour on 37% (up one point on a fortnight ago).
- Despite the negligible shift in the headline number, Boris Johnson has seen an increase in his personal support, with 45% approving of his job performance (+6) and 38% disapprove (-3). Meanwhile Keir Starmer’s numbers are holding steady, with 34% approving (+1) and 29% disapproving (+1). This is Johnson’s best approval rating since May last year, and the first time his net approval has been higher than Starmer’s since then.
- Similarly, when it comes to who would make the best PM, Johnson beats Starmer 37% to 25%.
- Some of the shine has come off the budget although more still approve than disapprove. Comparing the latest results with those from our snap poll straight after the budget:
  - 39% now approve (-13), with 22% disapproving (+10).
  - 42% now think it is fair (-9) with 29% thinking it is unfair (+10)
  - 38% think it is well thought through (-10) with 32% thinking it is badly thought through (+12).
- The Government still holds a 17 point lead over Labour on the economy, with 42% trusting Sunak and Johnson more (+3) and 25% trusting Starmer and Dodds more (unchanged).
- As many people now approve (41%) as disapprove (41%) of how the government are responding to Coronavirus for the first time since last May.
- 55% now think the UK should continue as a monarchy (-6 on November 2019) with 29% thinking we should be come a republic (+6). This is the highest support we have registered for republicanism in the six years we have been tracking attitudes. There is a massive age divide on this with 18-34s evenly split (37% each) whereas the over 65s are overwhelmingly in favour of the monarchy (72% to 17%).
- 34% think there should be a referendum in the next 5 years on whether to abolish the monarchy, whereas 54% think there shouldn’t be.
- Nearly half (46%) think the Royal Family have been racist in the “Past few years”. However, just 18% think that has been intentional, with 28% thinking it has not been. Meanwhile, 29% think they have not been racist, while 15% say they don’t know.
- But the public agree that questions about the “colour of the child of Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex would be before the birth of their son Archie and Meghan’s suicidal thoughts should be dealt with privately.

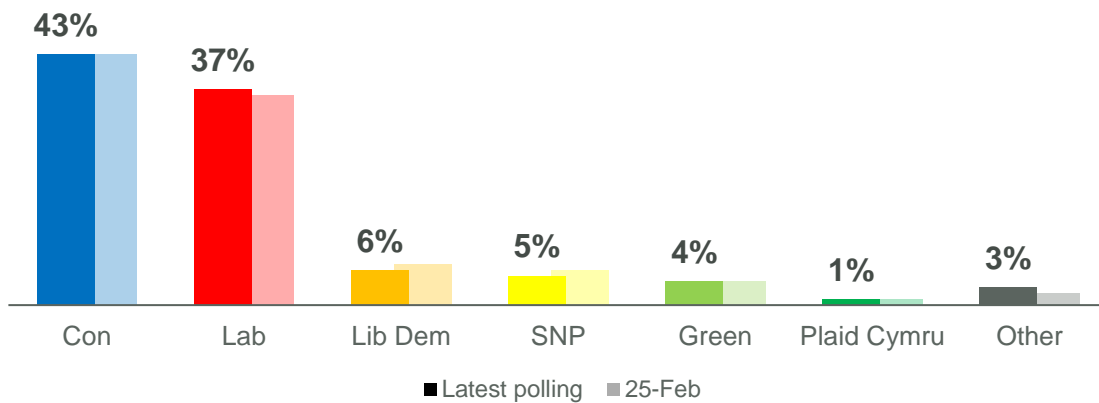
### Voting intention since the 2019 general election



# Headline Trackers

## Six-point Conservative lead

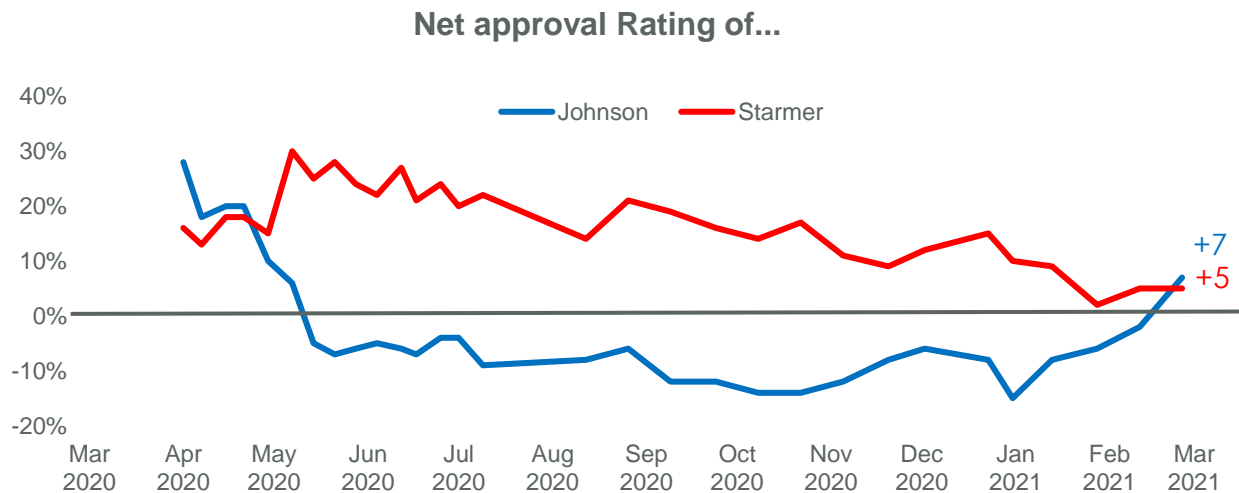
The Conservatives lead now stands at 6 points. They are on 43% (unchanged), while Labour are on 37% (+1). The Lib Dems are on 6% (-1) with the Greens on 4% (unchanged).



## Johnson overtakes Starmer

There has been a significant rise in Boris Johnson’s job approval rating this week, with 45% now approving of him (+6) and 39% disapproving (-3). This gives him a net score +7.

Meanwhile Keir Starmer’s approval is steady with 34% approving of the job he is doing (+1) and 29% disapproving (+1). This gives him a net score of +5.



This is the first time more people have approved of the job that the Prime Minister is doing than disapproved since May 2020. It is also the first time his net approval has been higher than Starmer’s since then.

## Johnson maintains his lead on 'best PM' question

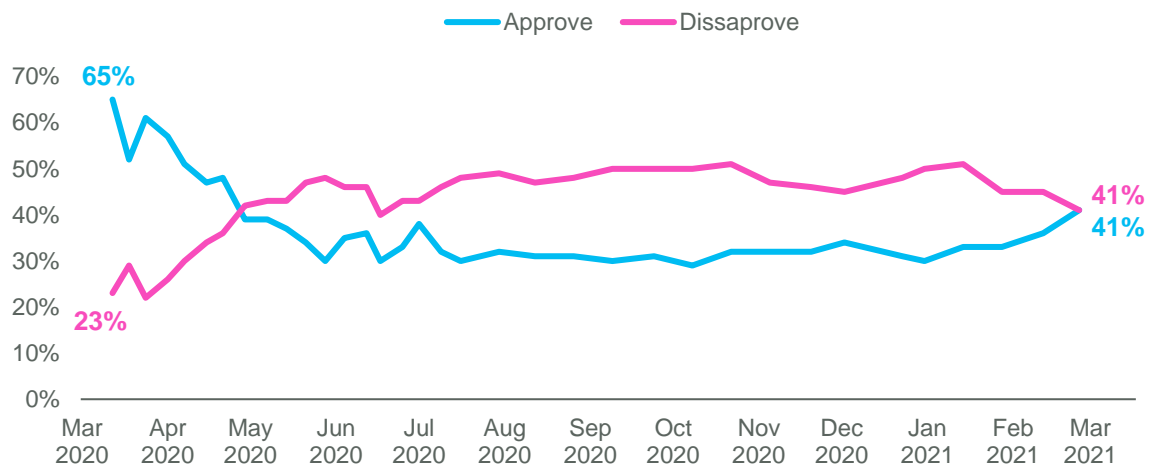
Johnson has extended his lead on who would make the best Prime Minister. In total, 37% think that Johnson would make the best Prime minister (+4), while 25% think that Starmer would (unchanged). Meanwhile, 23% think that neither would, and 15% say they don't know.

## Coronavirus

### Support for governments handling on Coronavirus up again

Approval of the government's handling of Coronavirus has risen again this week, meaning that as many people now approve of how they are doing (41%) as disapprove (41%). Meanwhile 17% neither approve or disapprove, and 2% say they don't know.

Approval of the governments handling of Coronavirus



Approval of how the government is handing the supply of vaccines is fairly steady, with the 69% approving of the job they are doing (+1) and just 9% disapproving (-3). Even among Labour voters, far more approve (70%) of how the government is doing on vaccines than disapprove (13%).

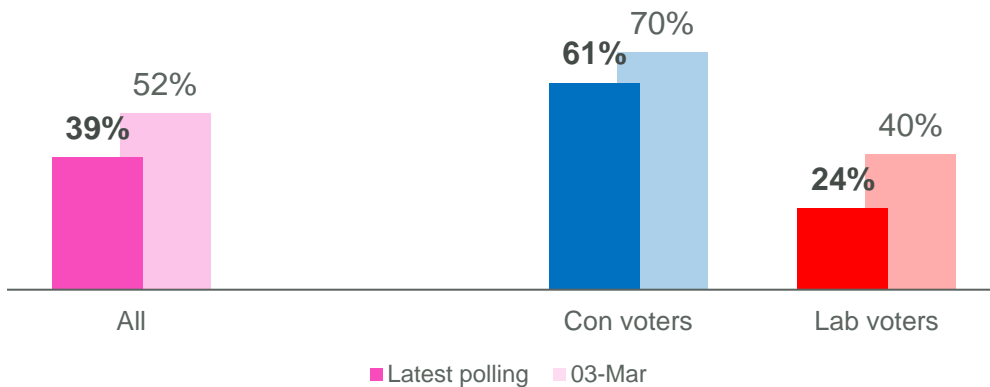
# The budget

## Support is down, but the public still have a positive view of the budget

Our snap poll showed an incredibly positive response to Rishi Sunak’s budget last Wednesday. But since then there has been a lot more criticism of the announcement that nurses will only get a 1% pay rise.

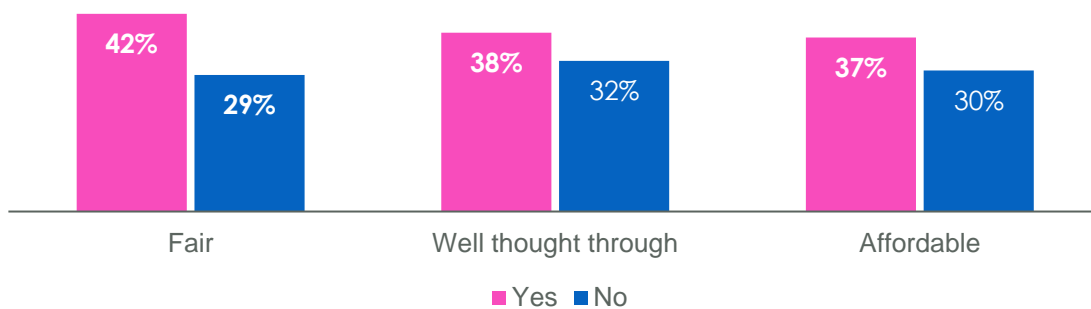
The number who said they support the policies announced is now 39%, down from 52%. Meanwhile the number who disapprove has increased from 12% up to 22%. Most of the drop in support has come from Labour voters – with more now opposing the budget (39%) than supporting (24%).

### Approval of the budget



There has also been a decrease in the number who think the budget is well thought through (38%, down 10), fair (42%, down 9), and affordable (37%, down 2).

### Views of the budget



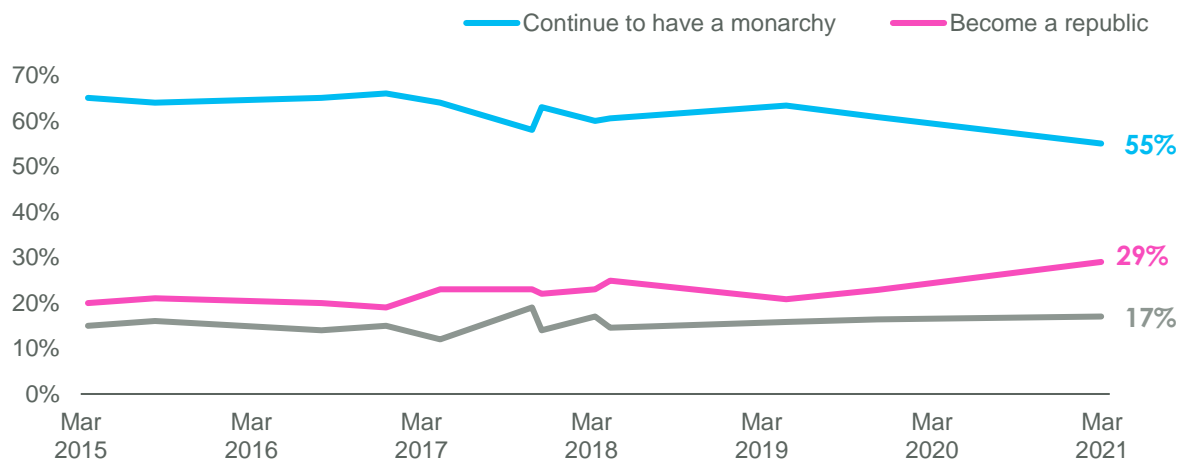
# The Monarchy

## Record high support for republicanism but still a minority

After Meghan and Harry’s interview with Oprah last week we have looked at what impact that has had on views of the British Monarchy.

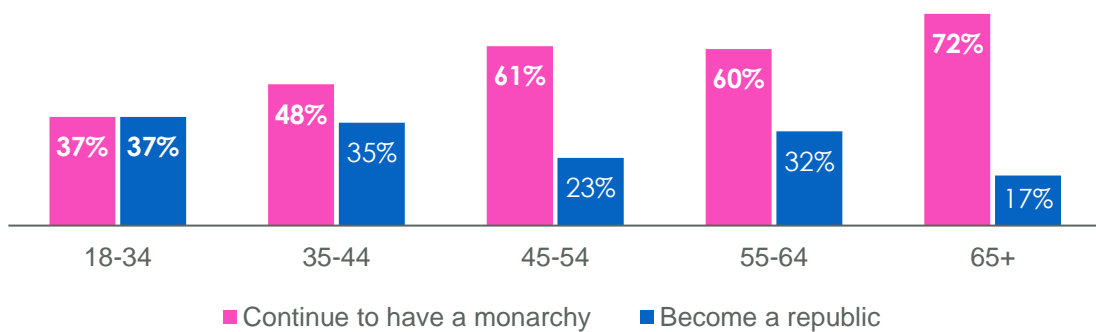
While it is only a small shift, 29% say they now think Britain should become a republic, the highest level since we started tracking attitudes in 2015. However, a majority (55%) think Britain should continue to have a monarchy, with 17% saying they don’t know.

Monarchy Vs Republic over time



There is a noticeable age divide on this question, with those aged under 35 just as likely to think we should become a republic as think we should keep the monarchy (37% each). However, among the over 65s 72% support a monarchy with just 17% thinking the UK should becomes a republic

Monarchy Vs Republic by age



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## “Accidental racism” in the Royal Family

When it comes to wider perceptions of the family, 46% think they have been racist in the past few years. However, just 18% think that has been international with 28% thinking it hasn't been. The remainder either think the family hasn't been racist (29%) or say they don't know (15%).

But the public do agree with the Royal Family's assertion that the accusations raised should be dealt with privately by the family. For example, when it comes to the alleged questions about the “colour of the child of Prince Harry and the Duchess of Sussex” 56% think it should be dealt with privately, and just 31% think those discussions should happen publicly.

# 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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