



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

13th October 2021



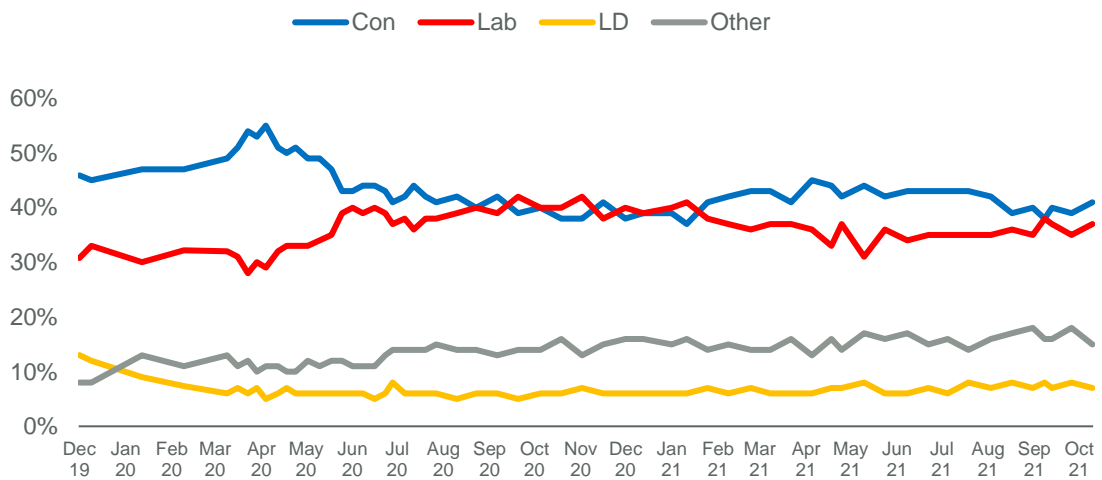
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

15th October 2021

One-minute takeaway

- **Headline:** The Conservatives retain a four point lead (41% to 37% for Labour) with both main parties gaining 2 points from our last poll and minor parties all dropping one.
- **Boris Johnson's approval rating** drops to the lowest we've seen since the general election at -18% (32% approve, 50% disapprove). However, Keir Starmer continues to tread water on -8% (30% approve, 38% disapprove) and trails Johnson on best prime minister (26% to 32%)
- **Covid:** Government's handling of Coronavirus drops again to -10% (35% approve, 45% disapprove).
- **Labour:** 39% think a Labour Government would have done a better job at making decisions around lockdown. More than the 21% who think it would have done a worse job.
- **Energy Crisis:** 66% think the government has responded badly to the HGV driver shortage, down from 69% a fortnight ago. 64% say it has had at least some impact of their life, down from 73% a fortnight ago.
- **Cost of Living:** 50% of Brits say the cost of living has risen more than their household income in the last year. 55% expect this situation to be the same in the coming year.

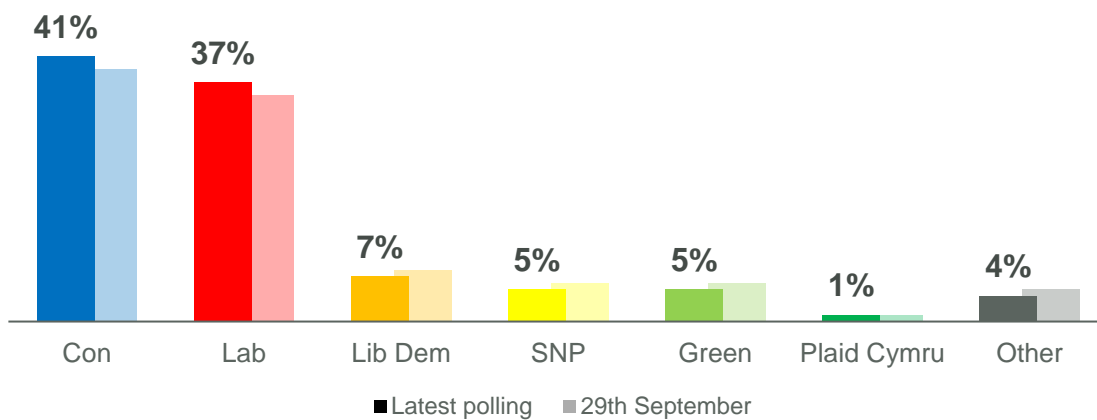
Voting intention since the 2019 general election



Headline Trackers

Conservative lead remains at 4 points

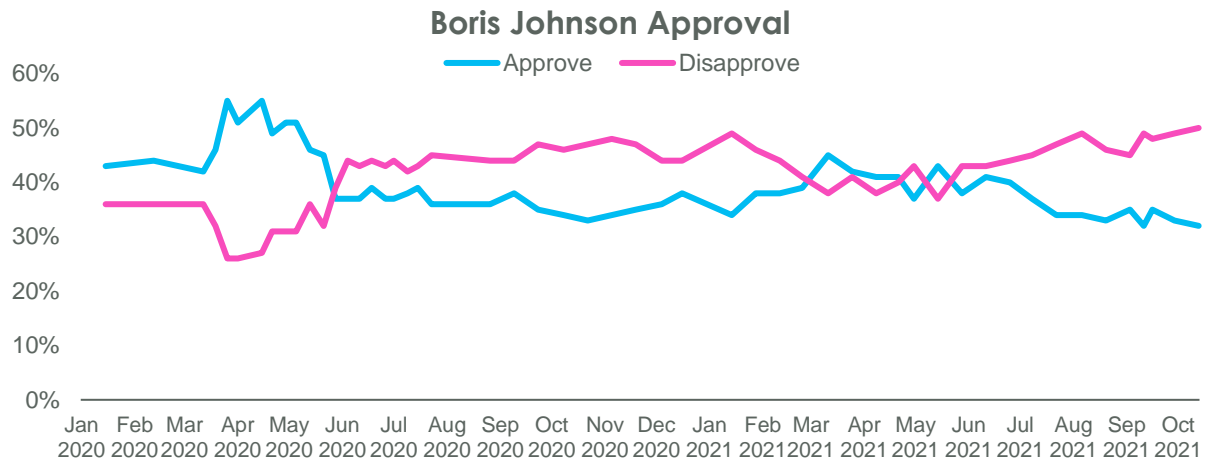
Both main parties have gained two points from the minor parties since our last poll two weeks ago with the Conservative lead remaining at 4 points. The Conservatives are on 41% (+2) while Labour are on 37% (+2). The various minor parties have dropped a point each.



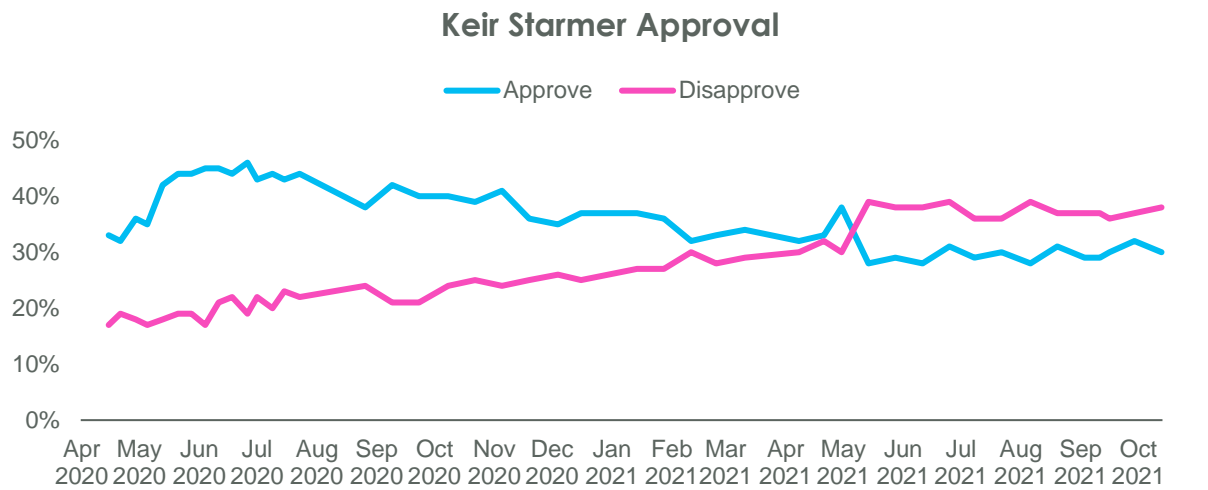
The Conservatives and Labour are each holding onto the vast majority of their respective general election voters with 86% of 2019 Conservatives backing the Tories and 85% of 2019 Labour voters backing Labour. However, this is filtered to those who make it through to our headline voting intention question (meaning they chose a party and are likely/certain to vote). When we look at the unfiltered question, the Conservatives are holding onto 69% of 2019 Tories vs. Labour holding onto 74% of 2019 Labour voters.

Johnson's approval rating drops to worst since the general election

Boris Johnson's net approval rating sits at -18 with 32% approving and 50% disapproving. This is the lowest we have recorded for the PM since the 2019 general election, edging just below the -17% he had in early September and continuing his generally negative trend since August.



Labour leader Keir Starmer continues to tread water with his net approval rating on -8% suggesting some slight progress since his numbers went negative in May but at a very slow rate of improvement.



The most encouraging statistic for Keir Starmer in this week’s poll is that the difference between his raw approval number (30%) and Johnson’s (32%) is the smallest it has been for some time.

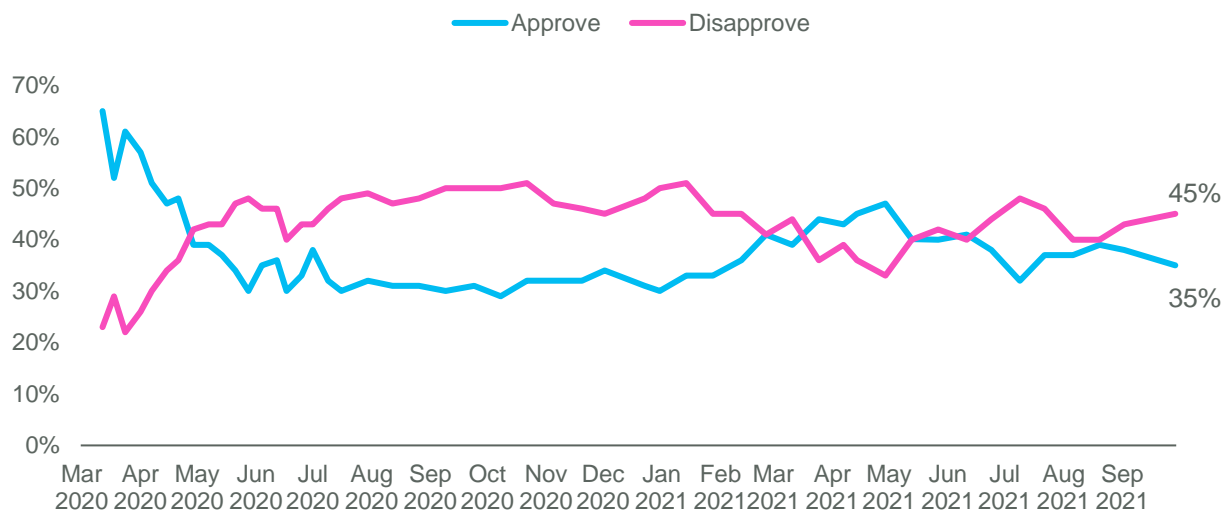
However, he remains 6 points behind Johnson on the “best prime minister” question (26% vs. 32% for Johnson) which has seen little change since August. 30% said “none of these” and 12% said “don’t know”

Covid

Views of the government's pandemic handling slip negative again

Net approval of the government's handling of the pandemic has dropped into negative territory again, down to net -10% with 45% approving and 35% disapproving, suggesting that the 'vaccine bounce' has fully worn off. However, the percentage not selecting approve or disapprove (19%) has remained fairly constant since August and the proportion of people worried about the pandemic overall has also stayed fairly constant over the same period.

Approval of the government's handling of Coronavirus

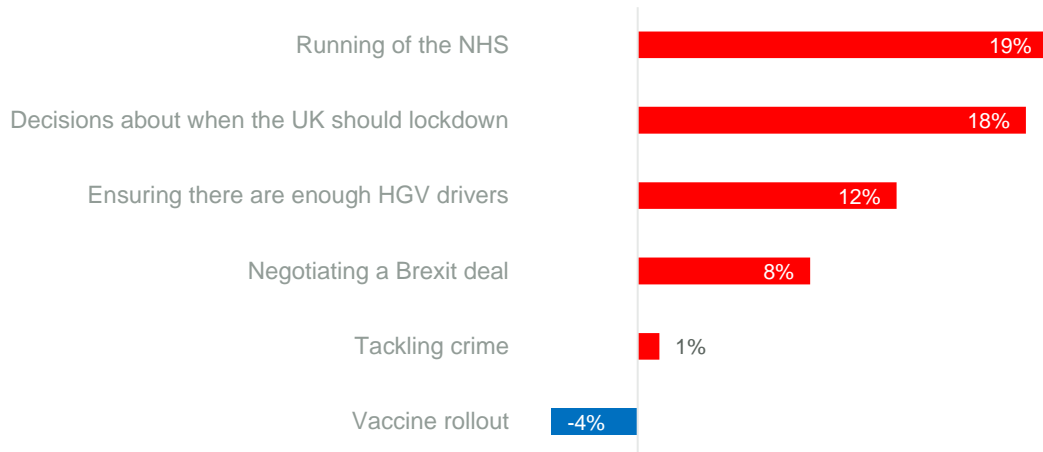


Labour vs Tory: Perceptions of Government

Two-in-five think a Labour government would have made better decisions about lockdowns

When asked to think about how a Labour government would have dealt with a range of issues compared to the Conservative, two-in-five (39%) say they think a Labour government would have done a better job at making decision around when the UK should have gone in to lockdowns. 27% think they would have fared much the same and 21% think they would have done worse. We can look at this another way and say they a NET of 18% think Labour would have done better.

Those who think Labour would do/would have done a better job than the current government (NET Better minus Worse)



The energy crisis

Two-thirds think the government has responded badly to the HGV driver shortage

Two-thirds, 66%, of the general public think the government has responded badly to the ongoing shortage of HGV drivers and the knock-on effects for the energy market and the economy. A quarter (26%) think it has responded well.

Even among Tory voters, 42% think the government response has been bad compared to 47% who think it has been good.

Two-thirds say the crisis has had at least a little impact on their lives

Almost two-thirds (64%) say the crisis has had at least a small impact on their lives so far, down from 73% two weeks ago. This breaks down as 53% who say the impact had been small and 11% who say it has been large. Just under a third (31%) say it has no impact at all.

In terms of the effects felt, 27% said they had been able to get what they wanted in the shop or supermarket. This is followed by 21% who they had not been able to buy fuel.

Most (38%) expect it to get better in the next few weeks with just under one-in-five (18%) say they expect it to get worse.

Cost of living

Half say their cost of living has risen more than their household income

As well as an energy crisis to contend with the cost of living is also a major concern for many families. Half (50%) say that over the past year their cost of living has risen more than their household income.

This is more true of Labour voters, where 61% say this is the case, than Tory voters where the figure is 44%.

Similarly, 55% expect this situation to continue over the next year with only 7% expecting household income to rise more than their cost of living.

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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