



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

11th June 2020

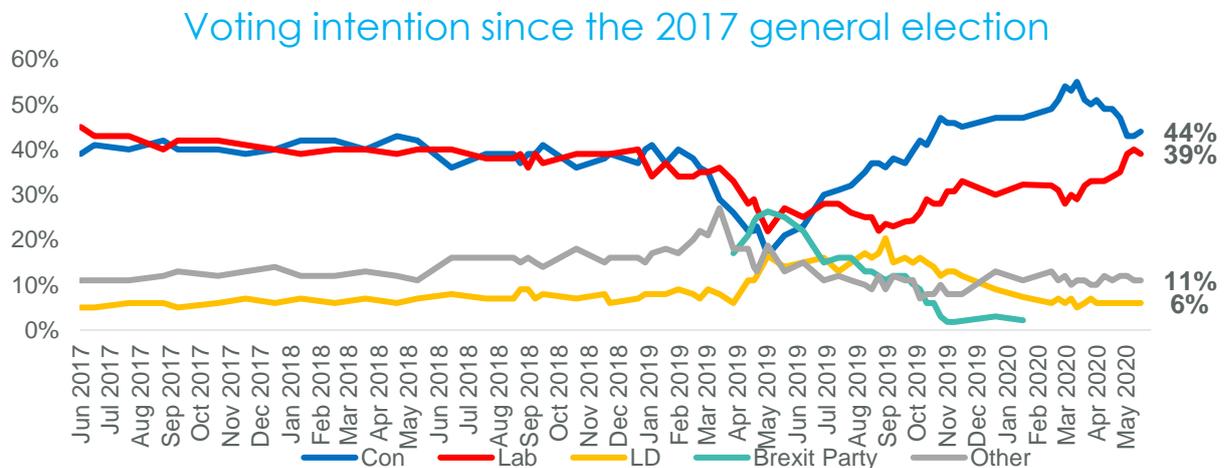


From the Opinium/Observer polling series

11th June 2020

One-minute takeaway

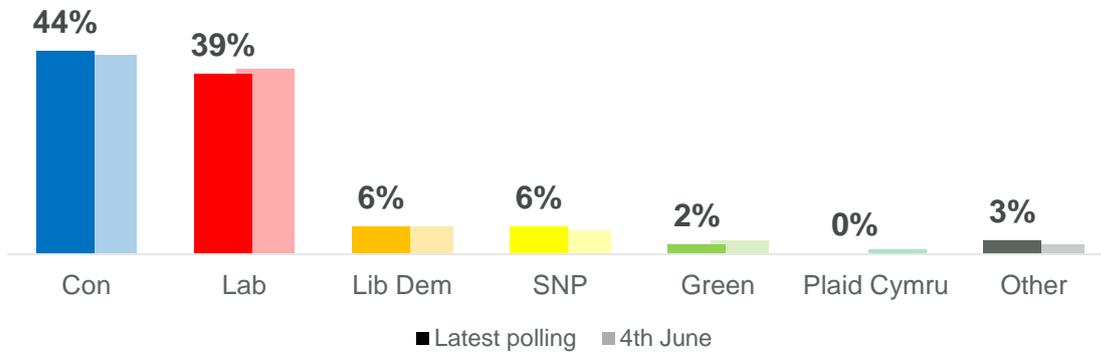
- Conservative lead widens to 5 points
- Disapproval of the way Boris Johnson is acting as prime minister appears to have levelled, with no significant increases in either approval or disapproval over the last three weeks meaning he has a NET approval score of -6
- By comparison Keir Starmer’s approval ratings remain very high on +24%, although this has dropped 4 points since the previous week, as those who disapprove increases from 17% to 21%.
- Approval of the way the government has dealt with the crisis is down 4 points to a new low of just 3-in-10. This gives the government a NET approval rating of -18.
- Perceptions that the economy and personal finances will be better in 12 months than they are currently have slowly improved to pre-lockdown levels.
- The European Union and Brexit, whilst dropping from the most important issue during the election due to the Coronavirus crisis, is slowly but surely making a comeback and now sits at 43%, just 5 points away from being level with the economy.
- Almost 4-in-10 (39%) UK adults now think we’re currently on COVID alert level 3 or below, up from 30% the week before,.
- Support for the government’s handling over the forcible removal of the Edward Colston statue is high, with over half of UK adults saying they disapprove of the protestors who pulled down the statue. Approval for the protestors is highest in London, at 42%.



Headline voting intention

Labour drops back down, and Tories see a slight increase to take their lead back to 5 points

The Conservative's enjoy a slight uptick in voting intent from the previous week (from 43% to 44%) and Labour's charge forward in the polls suffers it's first dip since the second week of April (down 1 point to 39%).



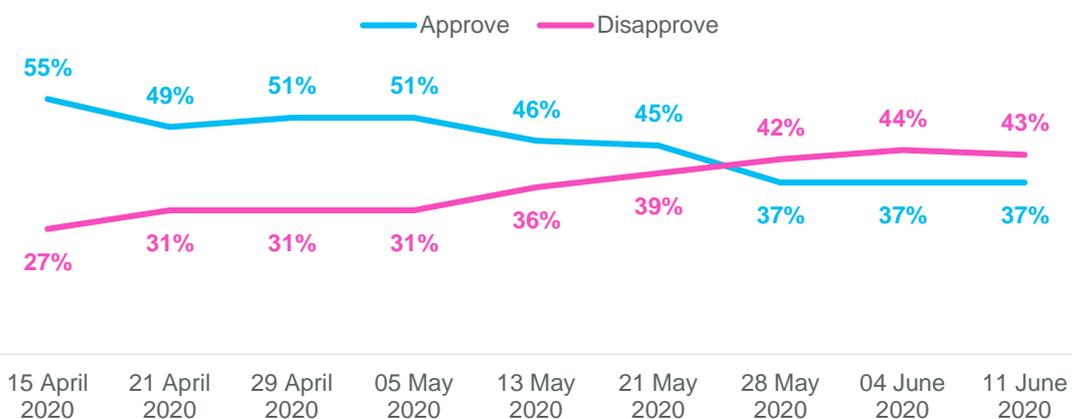
The Conservatives appear to have fully stemmed their falling rating now, having seen their share of the vote tumble since the beginning of April. On the other side, Labour haven't managed to build on their highest share of the vote share since January 2019, and have dropped down 1 point to 39%.

Johnson's ratings remain negative

Disapproval of the job he is doing remains high

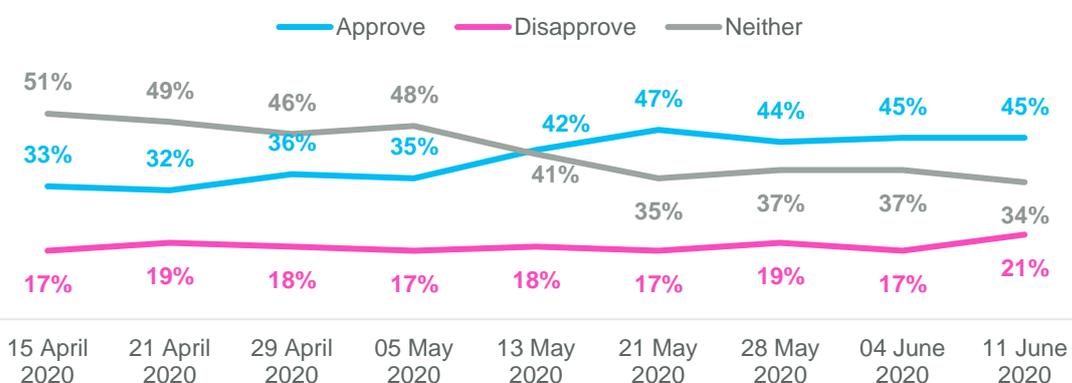
Disapproval of the way Boris Johnson is acting as prime minister appears to have levelled, with no significant increases in either approval or disapproval over the last three weeks. Whilst the level approving of him continues to hold steady on 37%, disapproval has decreased one point, making his net approval -6 this week.

Boris Johnson's approval rating since leaving hospital



By comparison Keir Starmer's approval ratings remain very high on +24%, although this has dropped 4 points since the previous week, as those who disapprove increases from 17% to 21%.

Keir Starmer's approval rating since becoming Labour leader



Boris Johnson still only has a 1-point lead as best PM

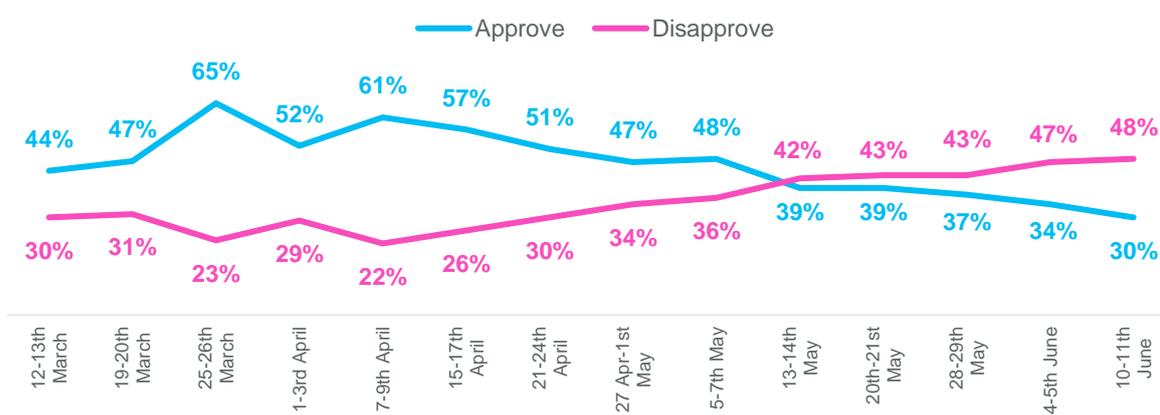
Last week we saw Boris Johnson’s lead as best prime minister drop to only 1 point for the first time, with Keir Starmer up 2 points on the week before. This week those scores remain level, with Johnson on 36% and Starmer on 35%.

The government’s crisis response

Net approval of the government’s handling of the crisis slumps even further

Discontent at the government’s Corona handling continues to steadily rise, creeping up to 48% of UK adults and the highest level posted to date. Meanwhile approval of the way they have dealt with the crisis is down 4 points to a new low of just 3-in-10. This gives the government a NET approval rating of -18 in responding to one of the greatest threats this country has faced.

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



As reported last week, the perceived inaction or underreaction of the government appears to be a key driver of our deteriorating perception of the government’s crisis handling. This week the public remain strongly of this opinion, with 49% saying the government has underreacted, and only 3-in-10 saying they have acted proportionally.

Economic perceptions cautiously improve

At the beginning of March, perceptions for the next 12 months in terms of both the UK economy and personal finances were dire and continued to decline into the beginning of April. Although we have seen perceptions slowly improve to pre-lockdown levels, the overwhelming view is still negative.

	THE ECONOMY		PERSONAL FINANCES	
	Better	Worse	Better	Worse
12 th March	17%	55%	18%	33%
19 th March	13%	67%	12%	45%
7 th April	12%	67%	12%	40%
13 th May	16%	68%	16%	35%
11 th June	19%	65%	18%	32%

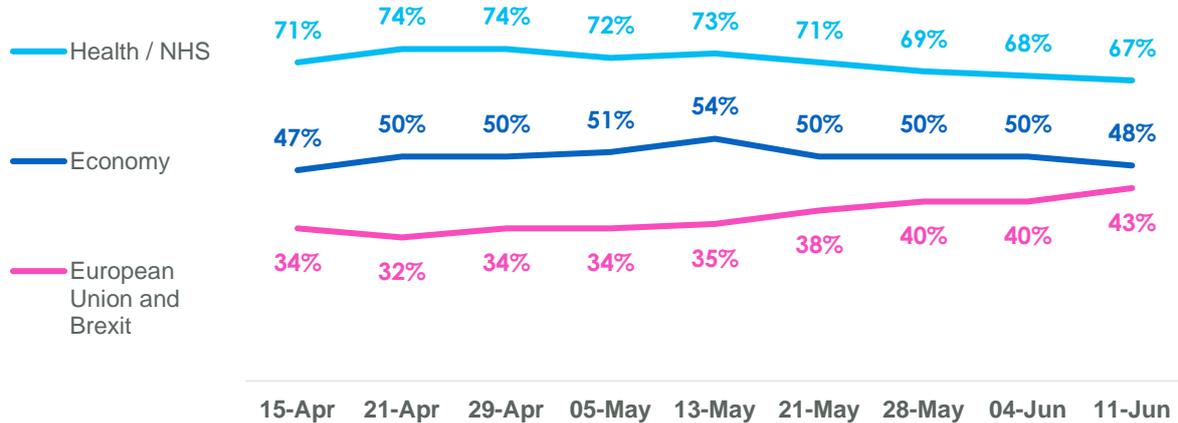
This could in part be due to the amount who think they will lose their job remaining at around a quarter of workers throughout the crisis, and despite peaking at 31% last week, has dropped back down to 26% this week.

Unsurprisingly, support for the Government's attempt to provide financial support for workers and business throughout the crisis is high, with two thirds (66%), saying they approve.

We're bringing Brexit back

Whilst health and the NHS remains the most important issue facing the country, this has declined from its peak in late April (from 74% to 67%). During this time the economy has remained the second most important issue, sitting consistently around 50%. However, the European Union and Brexit, whilst dropping from the most important issue during the election due to the Coronavirus crisis, is slowly but surely making a comeback and now sits at 43%, just 5 points away from being level with the economy.

Top 3 most important issues facing the country

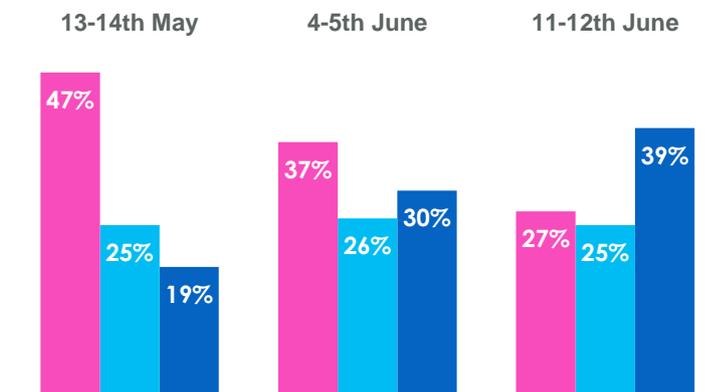


Coming out of lockdown

Covid Alert Level: A concerning misunderstanding of which level the UK is at

What Covid Alert level are we on?

■ Level 3 or below ■ Between level 3 and 4 ■ Level 4 or above



Almost 4-in-10 (39%) UK adults now think we're currently on Covid alert level 3 or below, up from 30% the week before, showing a massive shift in public perception towards what is acceptable under current guidance. This is despite the actual level remaining on 4 since it was unveiled a month ago.

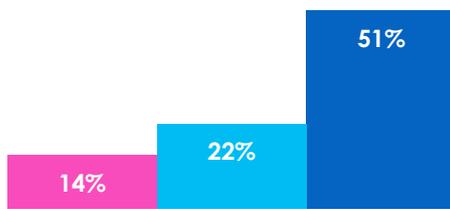
Now only 27% think the UK is on level 4 or above, down from 47% in the second week of May.

Despite this perception, the majority of people in the UK currently believe we are coming out of lockdown too fast (51%).

Which describes your view on the govts approach to coming out of lockdown?

■ Too fast ■ About the right speed ■ Too slowly

11-12th June



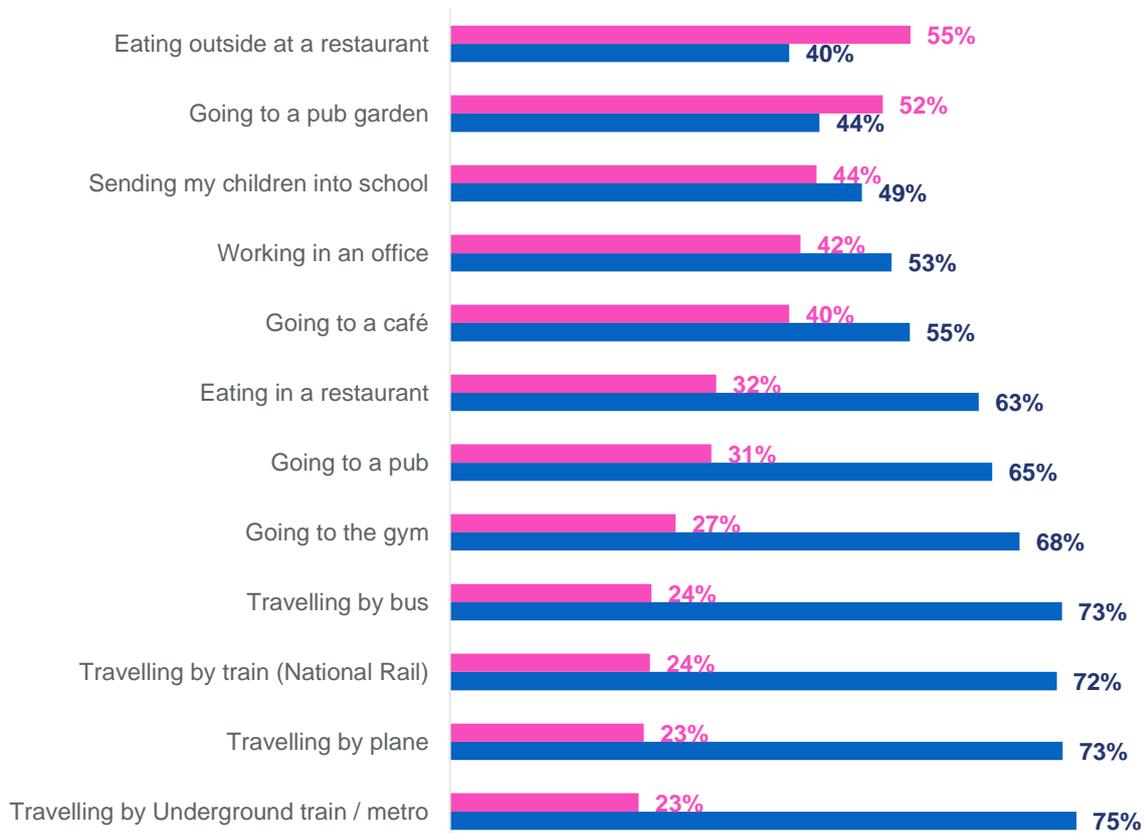
Just over 1-in-5 believe that we're coming out of lockdown at about the right speed, and 14% think we're coming out too slowly.

There is a level of partisanship here, with 37% of Conservative voters saying we're coming out too fast, compared to 73% of Labour voters.

When asked how likely it is that the UK will go back into full lockdown, almost of half (48%) believe this to be likely.

Many wouldn't feel comfortable to make the most of loosened restrictions

■ Comfortable ■ Uncomfortable



If restrictions on the lockdown were to be relaxed and the government said that it was safe to do a range of things, the only things Brits would feel more comfortable than uncomfortable doing is eating outside at a restaurant (NET +15) or going to a pub garden (NET +8).

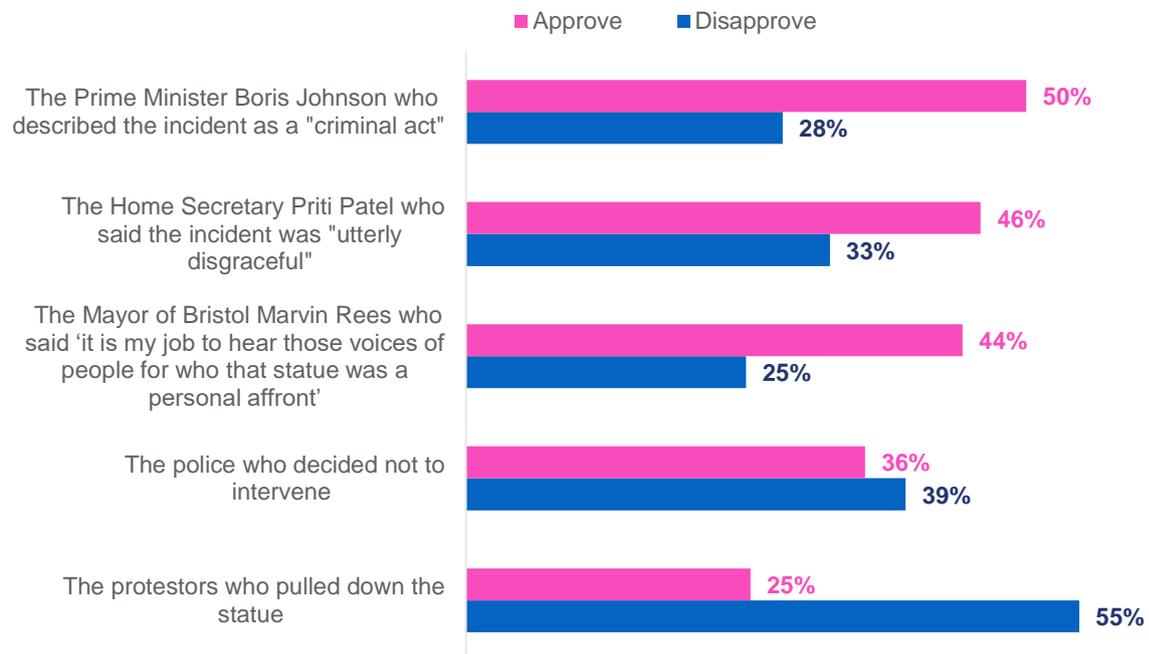
Travel for many seems to be a large concern, with bus (73%), train (72%), plane (73%) and underground (75%) the things people would feel the most uncomfortable doing, even when told it would be safe to do so by the government.

Statues

Views are split on the pulling down Edward Colston in Bristol

Whilst 39% would have supported the removal of the statue of the slave trader and philanthropist Edward Colston by the local authority, 31% actively would have actively opposed this.

Whilst current Labour voters are more supportive of the action through the local authority (68%), in the seats Kier Starmer needs to win back, that is Labour seats lost since 2005, the view is a lot more split, with only 34% supporting this hypothetical.



Support for the government's handling over the forcible removal of the statue is high, with over half of UK adults saying they disapprove of the protestors who pulled down the statue. Approval for the protestors is highest in London, at 42%.

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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