



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

5th May 2020



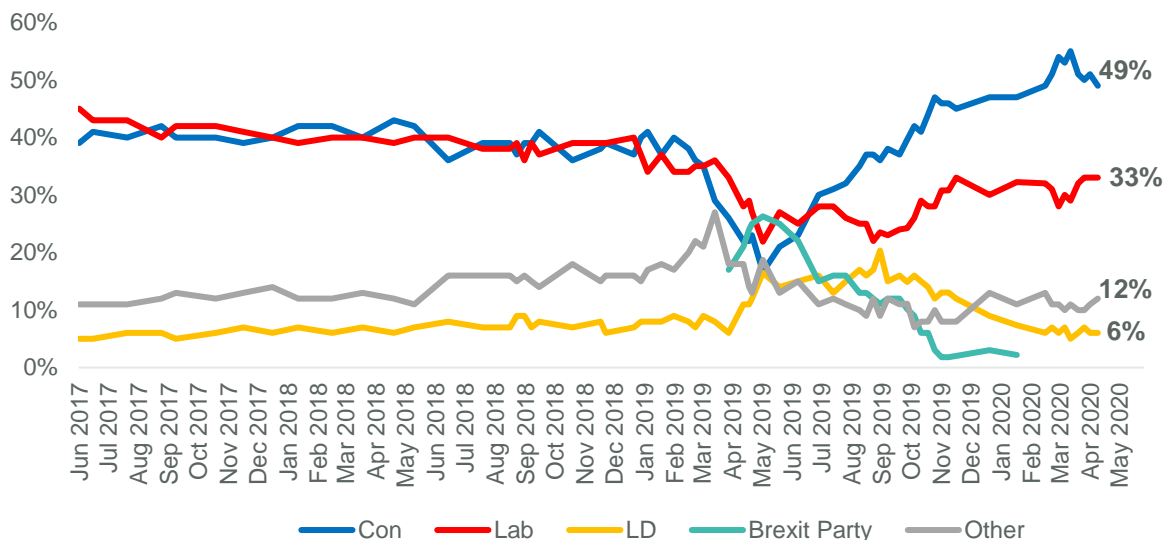
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

5th May 2020

One-minute takeaway

- Government approval on coronavirus has levelled out at its lowest since the crisis began but is still positive at 48% approving and 36% disapproving.
- Approval for PPE and testing are still poor with 60% disapproving despite the government announcing it had hit the 100,000 per day testing target on April 30th
- The UK has slipped down the rankings in terms of which countries voters think have handled things better or worse than the UK.
- Now every country apart from the US is seen as having handled the pandemic better than the UK with Italy and Spain moving from “UK handled better” to “UK handled worse”
- Little support for lifting lockdown measures with the most popular option for schools, shops, restaurants and offices being to re-open only if restrictions are in place, infections are declining and that they close again if infections rise again.
- Even if measures were lifted immediately, most would not feel comfortable using public transport (59% for travelling by bus to 55% travelling by Underground) eating in a restaurant (60%) or going to the gym (46%)
- Half (53%) of the public would be likely to download a contact tracing app
- Parents are more supportive of a partial re-opening of schools in comparison to a full re-opening

Voting intention since the 2017 general election

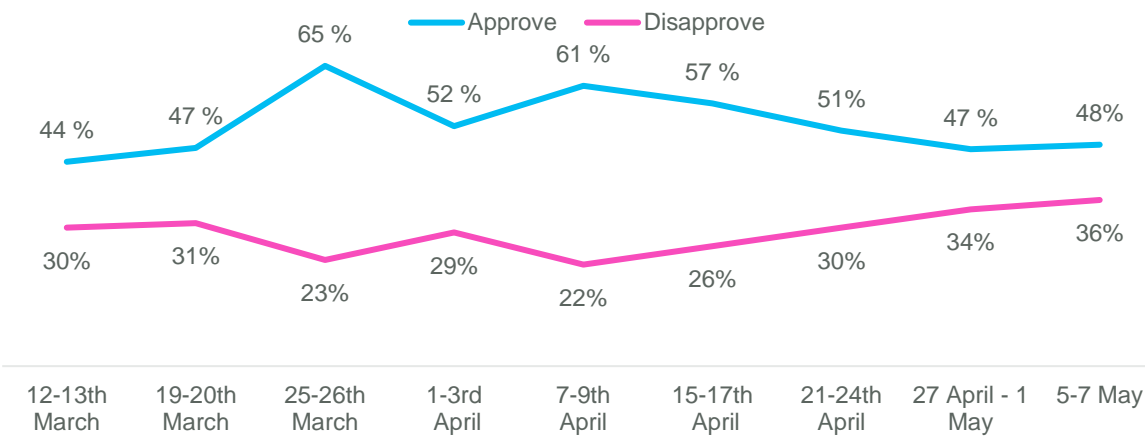


The government's crisis response

Approval levels out at its lowest level since the crisis began

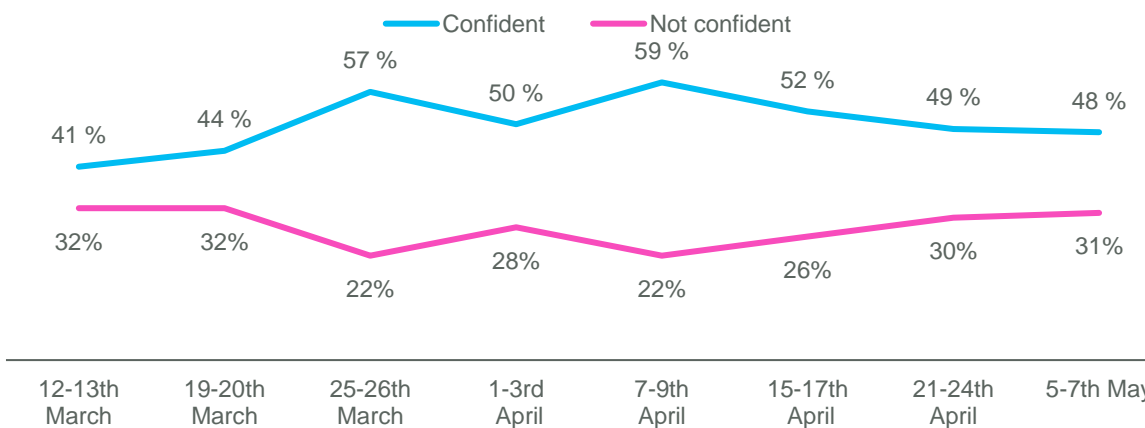
Approval of the government's handling of the situation has levelled out again in the high forties with net approval dropping slightly from +13% to +12%. This is the lowest net approval figure since we began tracking the response in mid-March.

Approval of government's handling of the crisis



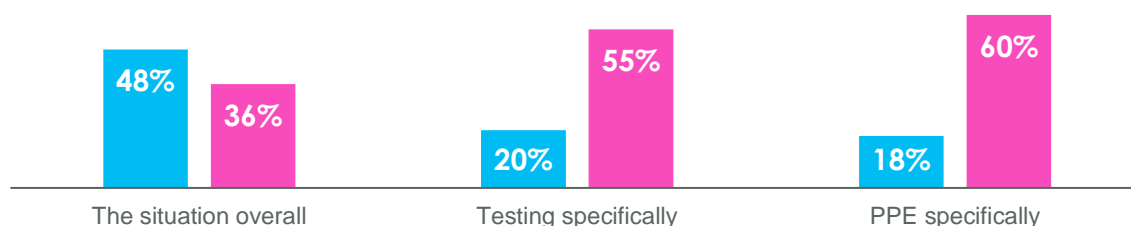
Confidence in the government's ability to handle the crisis has also dipped slightly but is still higher, at net +17%, than it was pre-lockdown.

Confidence in the government's ability to handle the Coronavirus situation



Approval of the government’s handling of specific areas such as PPE and testing remains low although approval of testing is up from 17% to 20% in the wake of the government announcing it had met its 100,000 a day target on 30th April

Do you **approve** or **disapprove** of how the government has handled...



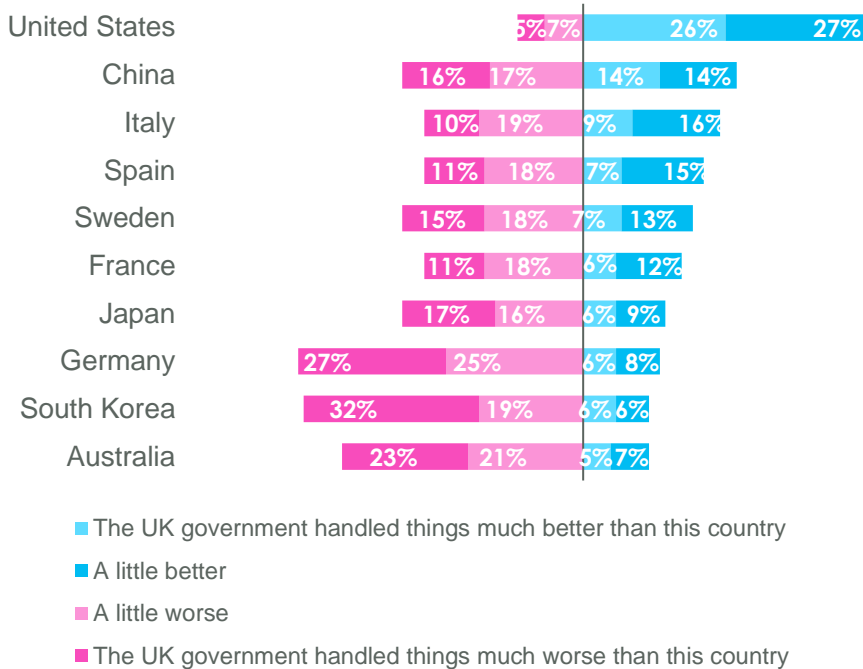
International comparisons

On 21st April we asked whether the UK had generally handled the pandemic better or worse than a number of other countries and repeated these questions on 5th May. Since April, news of the UK’s worsening death toll has seen an increased proportion saying that the UK has handled things worse than these countries with the ongoing exception of the United States.

Two weeks ago British adults said by 30% to 22% that the UK had handled things better than Italy. Today those figures have almost reversed with 29% saying the UK has handled things worse and 25% saying better. Spain also sees a reversal with 29% now saying the UK has handled things worse vs. 21% who said the same thing two weeks ago.

The chart below shows similar changes, specifically for South Korea, Japan, Australia and France. China remains largely unchanged while perceptions of Germany and the United States as having handled things much better and much worse respectively have also stayed static.

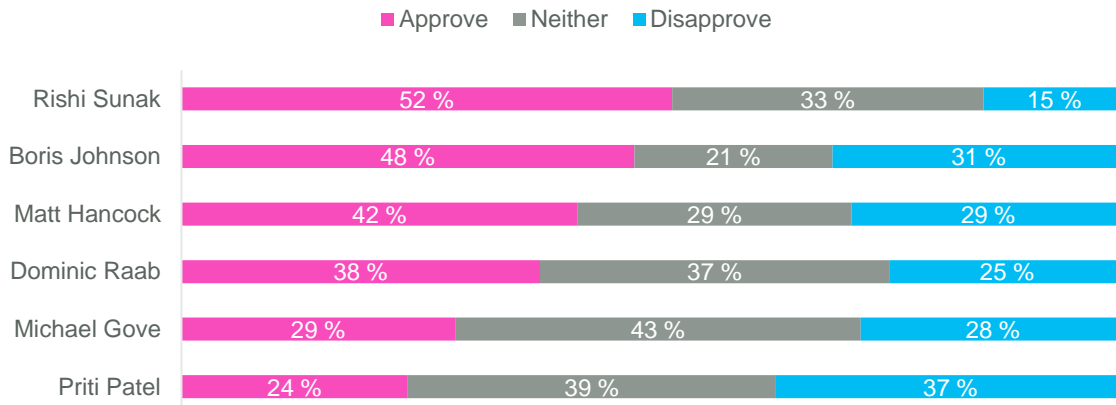
Has the UK handled the situation better or worse than...?



Approval of leading Conservative politicians handling of their role in this outbreak

Approval for how individual members of the government have handled things remains largely unchanged from the same question run last week. No minister's approval or disapproval numbers have moved by more than 2 percentage points. This week's figures are below.

Approval of the way the following have handled their role in the government's coronavirus response so far



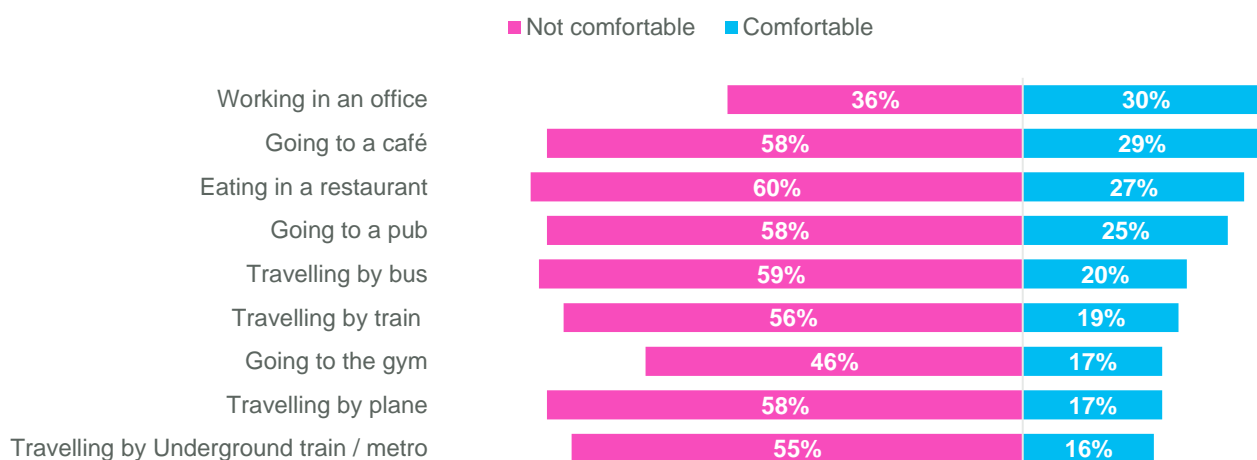
Lockdown lifting

Public are uncomfortable with returning to public places

With lockdown restrictions potentially being eased next week, the majority are still cautious about re-opening public places. Fewer than one in ten think schools (8%), offices (8%) and non-essential shops (9%) should re-open this weekend.

Similarly, the public are very much uncomfortable with the idea of visiting public places or using public transport once restrictions are lifted. Three in five (60%) would not feel comfortable eating in a restaurant, while over half would feel uncomfortable using the metro (55%) or travelling by bus or train (59% vs 56% respectively). Meanwhile, there is a more polarised view on returning to offices; over a third (36%) would feel uncomfortable going back to working in an office, while 30% would feel comfortable.

The public do not feel comfortable visiting public places or using public transport if lockdown restrictions are lifted



Half of UK adults would be likely to download a contact tracing app

As a part of returning society back to some form of normality, the idea of a contact tracing app has been discussed, which was widely used effectively in South Korea as part of their Coronavirus response. This would involve people downloading a smartphone app that tracks who they have come into contact with. If they then developed the symptoms of Coronavirus, the app could alert people they had come into contact with that they should self-isolate. This would also allow the NHS to track the spread of Coronavirus. Half (53%) of the public say they would be likely to download this app while 21% would be unlikely to.

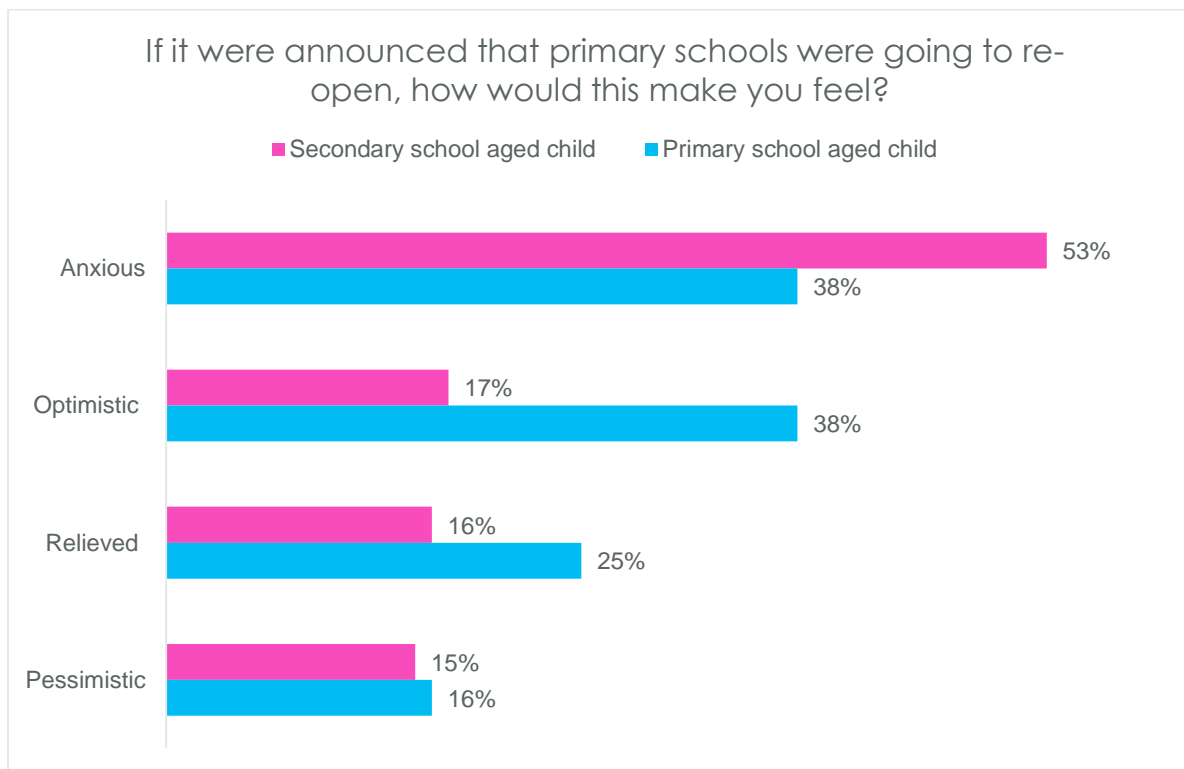
Parents views

Many parents feel anxious at the idea of schools reopening

This caution among the public on lifting lockdown, is also apparent amongst parents.

The idea of schools reopening is an anxious feeling for half (53%) of parents with secondary school aged children and almost two-fifths (38%) of parents with primary school aged children.

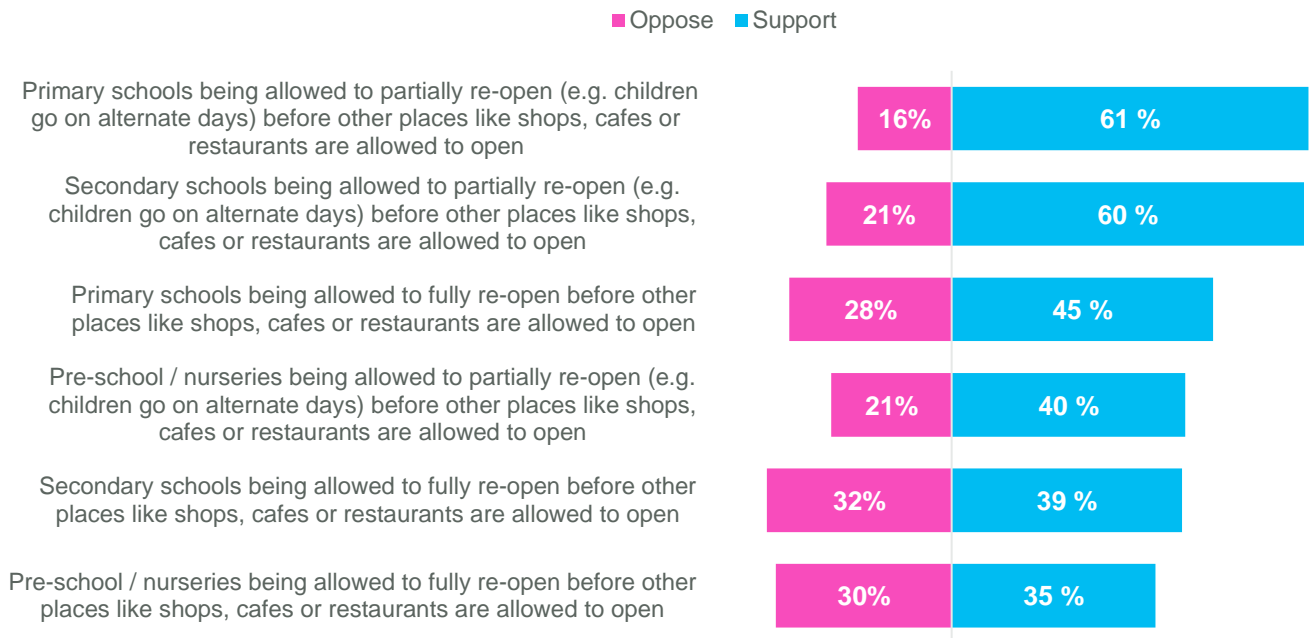
There is a difference in types of feeling according the age of your child. Those with primary school aged children are more likely to say that they would feel relieved or optimistic if it were announced that schools were reopening than those with secondary school aged children. This is despite 44% of parents with secondary school aged children saying their child's education and development is generally suffering as a result of being at home, compared to 33% of parents with primary school aged children.



Parents are more supportive of a partial re-opening of schools than a full re-opening

As many parents feel anxious at the idea of sending their children back to school, we found that across the board, parents of children in nursery or school are more comfortable with the idea of their child returning to school before other places open if it is a partial re-open (e.g. children go in on alternate days) rather than a full reopening.

Thinking about the possibility of schools re-opening (either fully or partially), please tell us whether you would support or oppose each of the following



The leaders

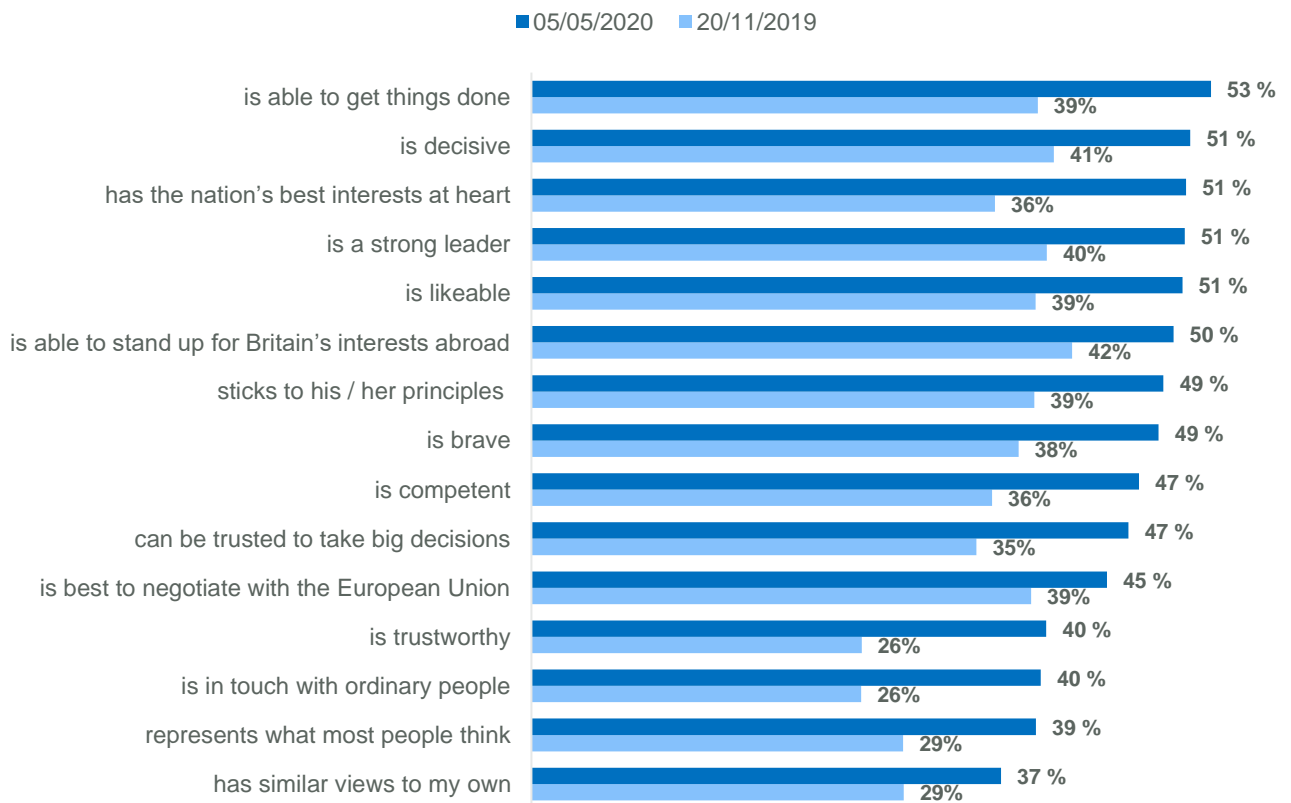
Perceptions of Johnson have improved from last year

The Coronavirus crisis has in many ways transformed opinions on Johnson, although whether temporarily an inflation due to the unusual times, or a trend that can be sustained going forward post-coronavirus, remains to be seen. Across every personality attribute measure, Johnson has seen an improvement in perceptions.

Half (53%) of the public now think that Johnson is able to get things done, up from 39% in November. The biggest increase has been in the number of people who think that Johnson has the nations best interests at heart, with a +15% point increase.

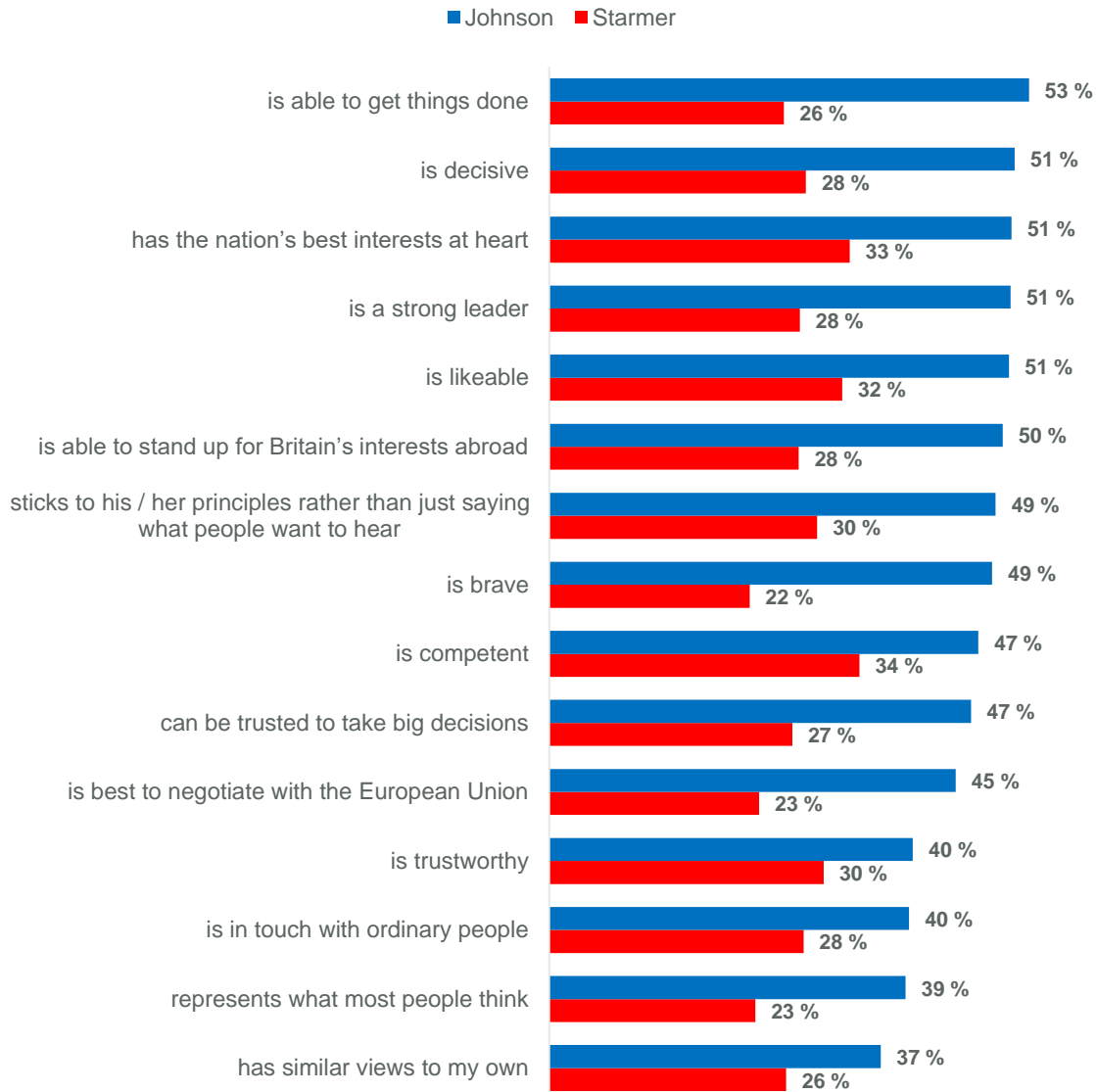
This improvement in perceptions is also seen among people who are not typical Johnson Supporters. For instance, in November 2019, when the political situation was more focused on negotiations to leave the European Union, 18% of Remainers thoughts Johnson had the nation’s best interests at heart. Now, with the focus very much on the Coronavirus pandemic, this has almost doubled to 35% of Remainers.

This crisis has transformed opinions on Johnson



We also asked about perceptions of Keir Starmer. Comparisons at this stage have the significant caveat that Starmer is not as well known as Johnson yet, so less people will have a solid opinion of him. Starmer’s strongest attributes so far are that he is perceived to be competent (34%), have the nation’s best interests at heart (33%) and to be likeable (32%).

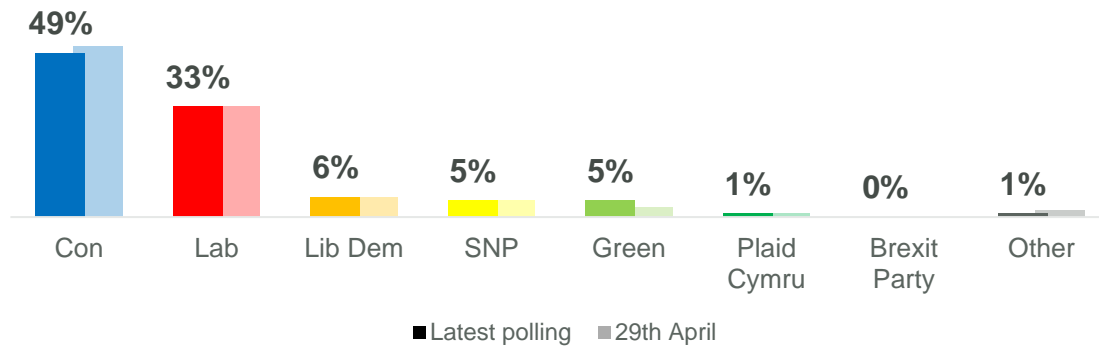
Whether each statement applies to each leader



Headline voting intention

Conservatives maintain strong lead in the polls

The Conservatives are on half of the GB vote share, on 49%, down 2 points from last week, reducing their lead from 18 points to 16 points. Meanwhile, Labour remains steady at 33% of the vote.



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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