



What people think,
feel and do

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The Political Report

28th April 2021



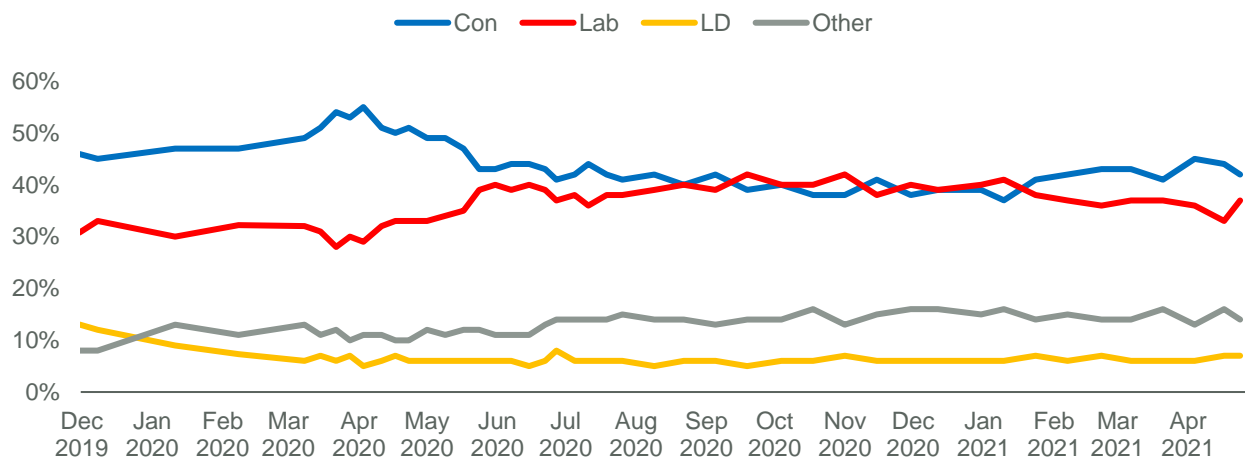
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

30th April 2021

One-minute takeaway

- The Conservative lead has fallen from 11 points to 5 due to the Conservatives losing two points and Labour gaining 4. Conservatives are on 42% (-2) while Labour are on 37% (+4) suggesting that last week's lead was somewhat exaggerated by normal sampling variation
- Boris Johnson's approval ratings have fallen back into negative territory with 37% approving and 43% disapproving, giving him a net rating of -6 vs. +1 last week
- Keir Starmer's numbers have moved in the opposite direction with +8 (38% approving and 30% disapproving) vs. +1 last week
- Johnson retains his lead in the 'best PM' question with 32% vs. 29% for Starmer. However, this is down from a 10 point lead (35% vs. 25%) last week
- By 42% to 30% people say Boris Johnson is corrupt rather than clean, Starmer's numbers are the other way around with 44% for clean and 15% for corrupt
 - Compared to last week, this is movement in the wrong direction for the PM, 37% said he was corrupt last week and 31% clean and honest
- By 52% to 28% people think that Boris Johnson probably DID say his "let the bodies pile high" comment and, if he did say it, the most common reaction is anger (40%), including 17% of Conservative voters
- This is all despite approval for the government's pandemic handling hitting its most positive score since May 2020. 45% approve and 36% disapprove
- 67% of people describe John Lewis as very or fairly posh, higher than Habitat (43%) and IKEA (14%) but lower than Selfridges (73%)
- If the Scottish elections produce a majority of pro-independence MSPs then British voters believe there should be another independence referendum. 49% say there should be if the SNP win a majority vs. 29% saying there shouldn't.

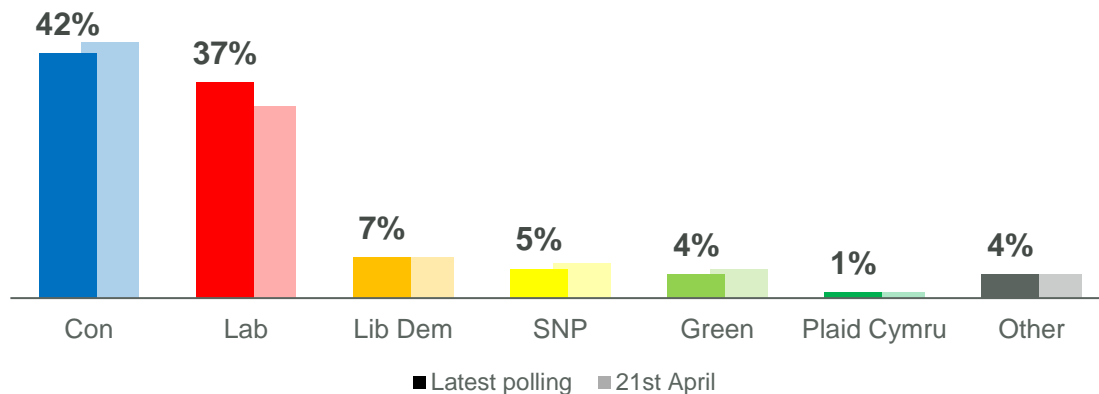
Voting intention since the 2019 general election



Headline Trackers

Conservative lead drops to 5 points

The Conservative lead has dropped back to 5 points, erasing the government's gains in April. Labour have gained four while the Conservatives have dropped two points.



Johnson's approval drops underwater

Recent scandals have taken a toll on Boris Johnson's approval rating, dropping to 37% while 43% disapprove. This ends a run of narrowly positive results for the prime minister with recent weeks seeing him at net +1 and net +3.

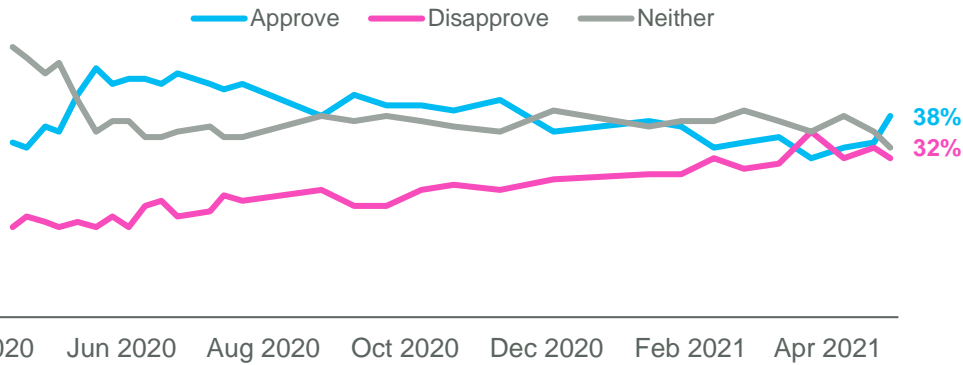
Johnson's numbers have fallen slightly among Conservative voters, from 85% approving and 4% disapproving two weeks ago to 77% and 7% respectively this week.

Johnson retains his advantage on the 'best prime minister' question with 32% vs. 29% for Keir Starmer but this 3 point lead is considerably narrower than his 10 point (35% to 25%) lead last week.

Starmer moves into clearly positive territory

38% of UK adults approve of the job Keir Starmer is doing as leader of the Labour party while 30% disapprove. This is the most positive figure for Starmer since November 2020 when he was on 41% approval and 24% disapproval. On net approval, his +8 rating is his best since he was on +9 in January. This gap is because "neither" declined once Starmer was elected in April before rising slightly in 2021.

Keir Starmer approval rating



Part of Starmer’s recovery comes from his improving figures among Labour voters which, compared to Conservative voters’ views of Johnson, were less universal.

Two weeks ago 63% of Labour voters approved of Starmer’s performance, this is now 71%. Similarly, the percentage of Labour voters disapproving has dropped from 15% two weeks ago to 11% now. This may be down to the pending local elections causing Labour voters to “come home” and give more consistent answers.

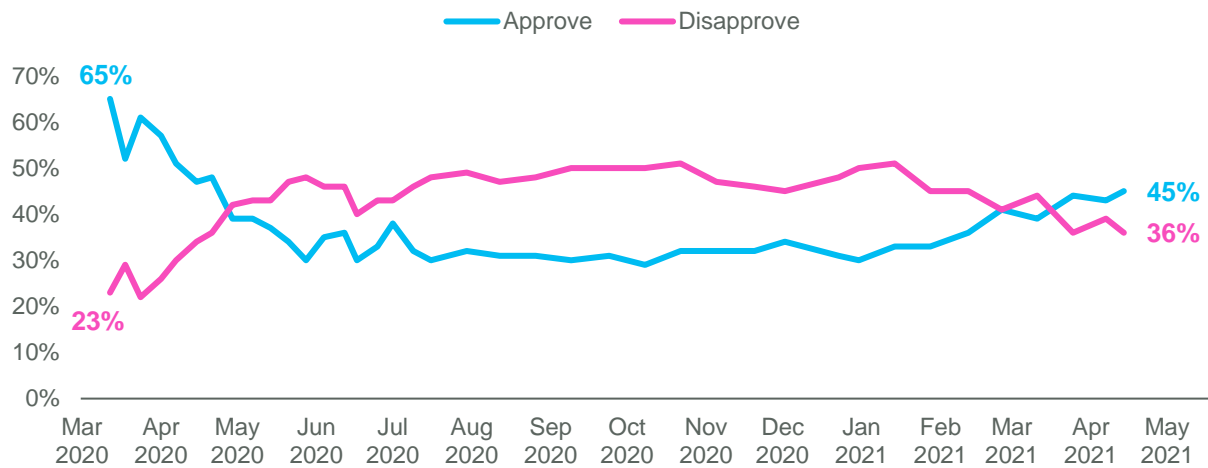
Coronavirus

Government maintains positive ratings

Whether or not the various cronyism scandals have “cut through” to the public is a matter for debate but it is notable that the Conservatives’ and Boris Johnson’s polling dip has come when views of the government’s pandemic management are maintaining their first clearly positive run since May 2020.

The government’s handling of the pandemic has a net +9 approval rating and views of the vaccine rollout remain fixed at 72% approval and 7% disapproval.

Approval of the governments handling of Coronavirus



Other trackers such as views of different parts of the pandemic management, vaccine hesitancy or concerns and compliance with lockdown rules are largely unchanged.

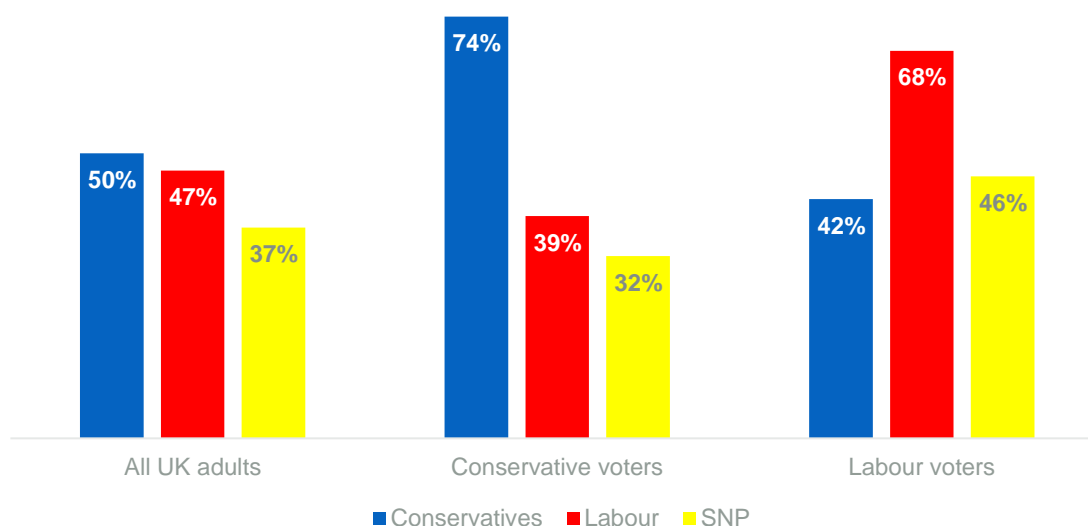
'Super Thursday'

With next Thursday set to see the largest electoral event outside of a general election for years, voters are split on whether they expect each main party to do well.

Conservative voters are slightly more bullish about their party's prospects with 74% expecting the party to do well compared to 68% of Labour voters expecting Labour to do well.

While Labour and Conservative voters are more bearish on the SNP (although this is partly a function of higher "don't know" figures for the SNP outside Scotland), SNP voters themselves are uniformly optimistic in expecting a triumph in May.

% expecting each party to do well on Thursday



Voting in the off-year elections

Most of those voting (42% of all adults) expect to vote for the same party locally that they do nationally, this is higher for the main parties (58% of Conservatives, 57% of Labour) but 15% say they expect to vote for a different party.

Labour has a slightly bigger problem in retaining their voters than the Conservatives, 15% of Labour voters will be voting for a different party locally vs. 11% of Conservatives.

- 35% of people said they'd had some sort of contact from the Labour party
- 33% said the same for the Conservatives
- 23% said they'd been contacted by the Lib Dems
- 40% said they had not seen or heard anything from any party about the elections

Scotland (still)

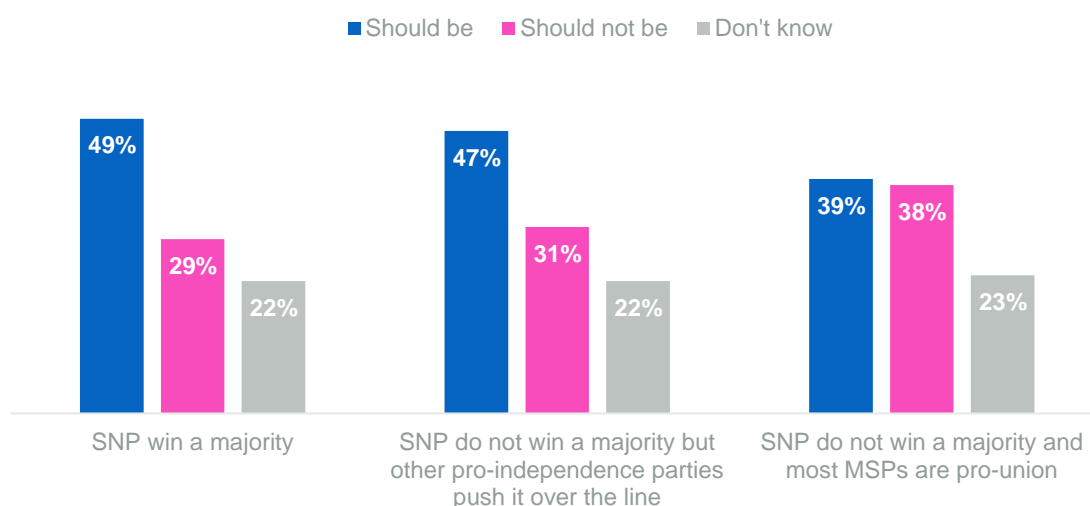
SNP majority should lead to a referendum

We tested three scenarios to ask if people in the whole of the UK believe there should be another independence referendum.

If Holyrood has a majority of pro-independence MSPs, either via an SNP majority or a coalition, a clear plurality believe another referendum should happen.

If Holyrood does not have a majority of pro-independence MSPs then opinion becomes much more divided.

Should another Scottish independence referendum happen if...



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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