



What people think,  
feel and do

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# The Political Report

## 4th December 2020



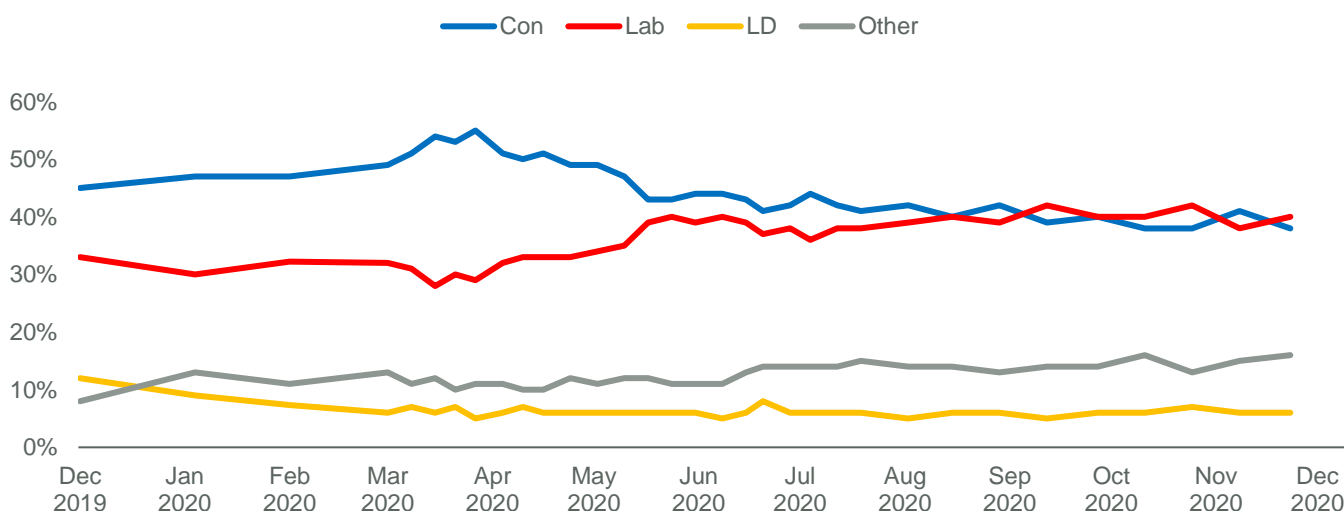
From the Opinium/Observer polling series

4th December 2020

## One-minute takeaway

- The two main parties have swapped places yet again with Labour back ahead with a 2 point lead on 40% vs. the Conservatives down to 38%.
- Leaders approval ratings have not moved in the same direction though, with Johnson's net approval up to -8 from -12. Meanwhile Starmer is down to +9 from +11.
- The public have become much more optimistic about when they will get the vaccine, with 60% now thinking it will be offered to people like them by the end of April. This is up from 49% two weeks ago.
- However, there are still some underlying worries about it. Over a third (35%) say they are unlikely to take it, while 48% worry it won't be safe, 47% worry it won't be effective, and 55% worry that it will have side effects.
- Parents and siblings are facing the axe from Christmas Day plans this year. Just 23% say they will spend Christmas with their parents vs. 35% who normally would. Fewer than one in six (15%) plan to spend Christmas with siblings, nearly half the 27% who otherwise would. More depressingly, twice as many people plan to spend Christmas alone this year – up from 4% to 8%. This rises to 14% of those aged over 65s.
- The loosening of the rules for Christmas is narrowly supported, with 39% supporting the loosening of restrictions, and 32% opposing.
- Boris Johnson is the political leader that people would most want to have over for Christmas dinner. Over a quarter (26%) say they would prefer him, compared to 21% for Nicola Sturgeon, 19% for Starmer, and 14% for Nigel Farage. But despite that, a majority of people (53%) think Boris would end up on Santa's naughty list this year.
- The public think that, if he were on the electoral roll, Father Christmas would be a Labour voter. Excluding those who don't know or think he wouldn't vote, 28% think he would vote Labour, compared to 23% who think he would vote Conservative. 21% say Green.

### Voting intention since the 2019 general election

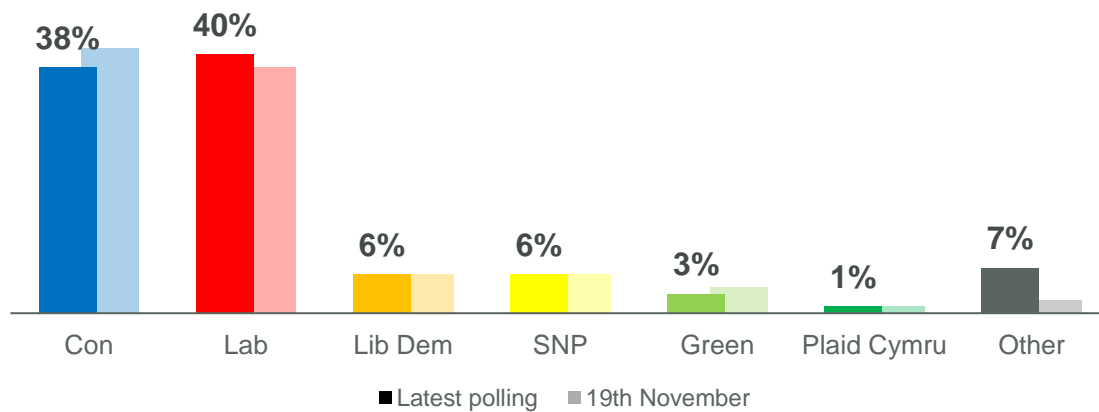


## Headline Voting Intention

### Labour lead by 2 points

Labour are back in the lead, albeit with a very marginal 2 point lead over the Conservative's, on 40% to the Tories 38%.

This backs up the general picture we have been seeing for the past couple of months of a neck-and-neck race between the two major parties, with neither being able to develop a clear lead.



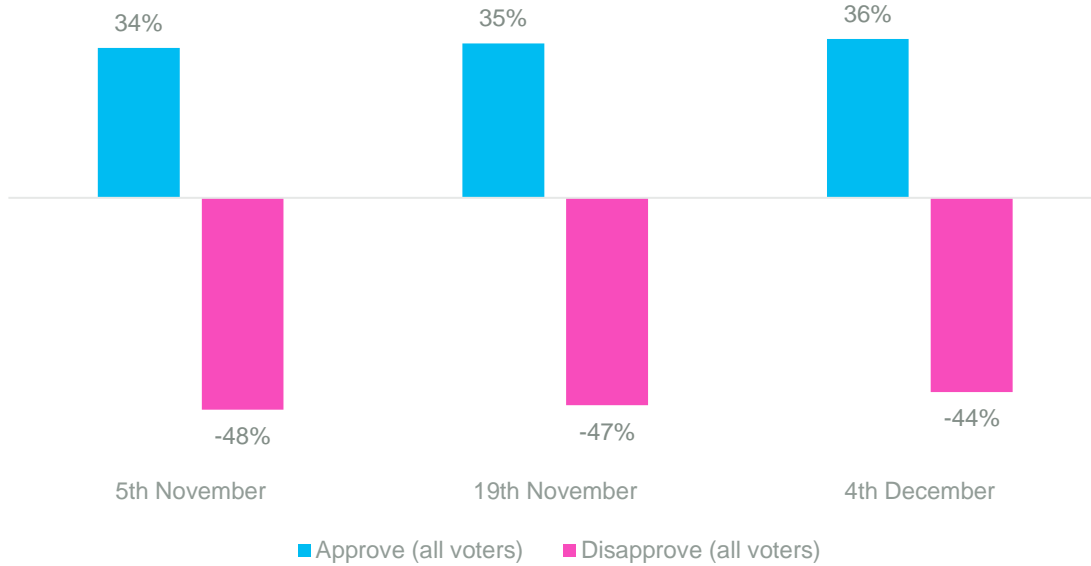
## Leader's approval

### Are we starting to see a trend?

Despite voting intention moving in Labour's direction, leaders approval seems to be continuing the other way. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in a row, Johnson's net approval seems to be up slightly, with Starmer's having dropped down a touch, dropping below the PM in raw approval while remaining ahead on net approval.

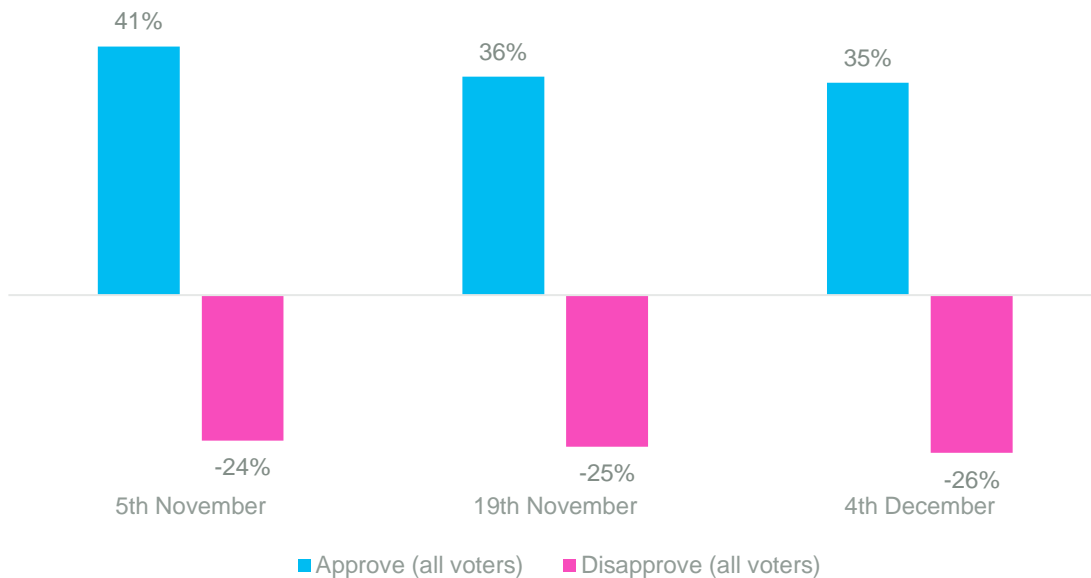
This week, 36% approve of the job Boris Johnson is doing as prime Minister, while 44% disapprove. This puts his net approval at -8, up from -12 two weeks ago, and -14 a month ago.

### Boris Johnson job approval



Meanwhile, 35% now approve of Keir Starmer’s performance, compared to 26% who disapprove. This puts his net approval at +9, down from +11 two weeks ago, and +17 a month ago.

### Keir Starmer job approval



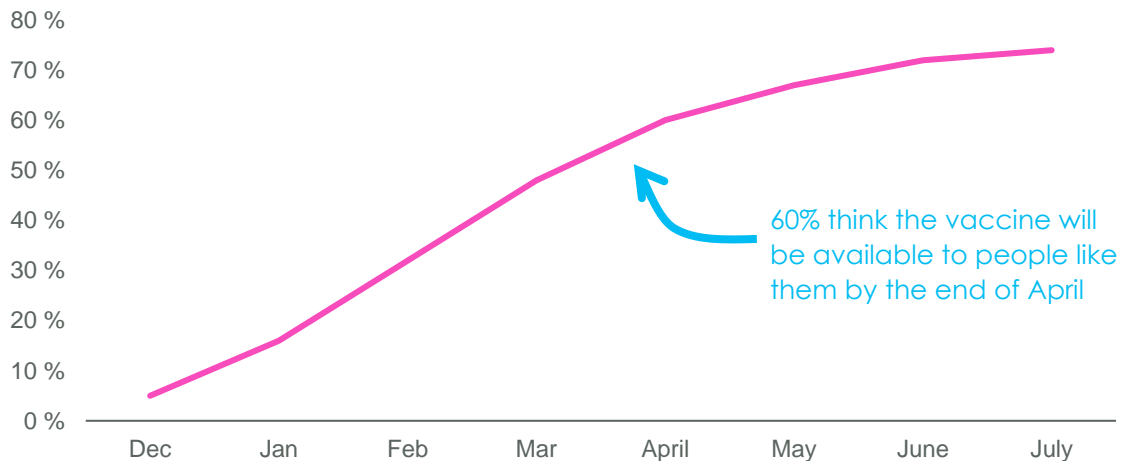
While Starmer is still ahead overall on net approval, Johnson holds a small lead on who would make the best Prime Minister. While 30% think Starmer would make the best Prime Minister, 32% think Johnson would. Just under a quarter (24%) say neither, while 14% don’t know. The two leaders have periodically alternated in a similar manner to overall voting intention.

## Covid Vaccine

### Six in ten think the vaccine will be available to them by the end of April

With the news of the vaccine rollout beginning early next week, people are getting more optimistic about when they will be able to receive the jab. Six in ten (60%) now think the vaccine will be available to “people like them” by the end of April, compared to just 49% two weeks ago.

#### The proportion who expect to have the vaccine available to people like them by the end of...



Given their status in the priority list, it is unsurprising that older people are even more optimistic, with a majority (52%) now thinking they will get it by the end of February.

In a blow to the “wisdom of the crowds” it is noticeable how wrong people were about when a vaccine would be available. In our poll just two weeks ago only 16% thought one would be online by the end of December. Naturally, that number has now increased dramatically to 45%.

### But worries about the vaccine still remain

Despite this week’s good vaccine news, and increasing levels of optimism about when it will be available, there are still many people who have concerns about taking it.

Nearly half (48%) say they are worried the vaccine won’t be safe, while 47% worry it won’t be effective, and a majority (55%) are worried about side effects.

## Concerns that a vaccine...



However, despite these overarching concerns, just one in five (20%) say they are unlikely to take it if it is available and the government recommend they take it, down from 24% two weeks ago. Over two thirds (68%) now say they would be likely to take it in those circumstances, up slightly from 67% two weeks ago.

## Brexit didn't help

After a tumultuous and divisive few years it is always welcoming to find a Brexit related question that unites the country. This week's comes in the form of whether the UK leaving the European Union has meant a vaccine could be approved quicker, as was claimed by Matt Hancock earlier this week.

Just 11% think Brexit helped the approval process, including just 6% of Remain voters, and 14% of Leave voters. A quarter (24%) think Brexit actually hindered the process, while nearly half (48%) thought it made little difference either way.

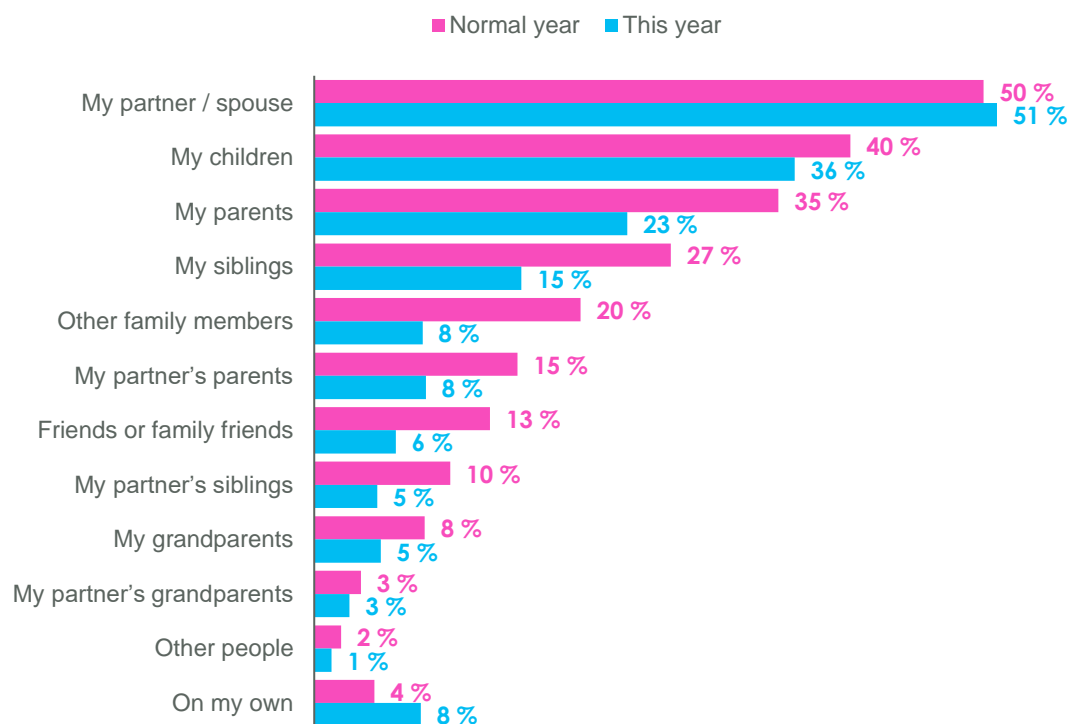
## A very different Christmas dinner

### The public are spared a Christmas with the in-laws, but also their own parents and siblings

When trying to make the case for further lockdown restrictions earlier this year Boris Johnson got into hot water by trying to sell the upside that at least it will “spare public Christmas with the in-laws”.

It seems the public have been following the advice though, with just 8% planning to spend Christmas with the in-laws this year, a little over half the 15% who would in a normal year.

#### Who do people spend Christmas with...



Note: excludes 5% who do not celebrate Christmas

However, parents and siblings also face the axe from the dinner tables, with just 23% planning to see their parents, down from 35% in a normal year. Likewise, 15% plan to spend Christmas with the siblings, compared to 27% in a normal year.

More depressingly, 8% now plan to be on their own this Christmas period, twice the 4% who would in a normal year.

Family aside, we also asked people which political leader they would prefer to spend Christmas with. Johnson topped the list, with 26% saying they want to share the Turkey with him. Nicola sturgeon was next on 21%, followed by Keir Starmer on 19%, and then Nigel Farage on 14%. One in five (21%) said they don't know.

## Boris can be expecting a lump of coal in his Stocking this year

After a year in which his poll lead has evaporated and his approval rating has crashed, it is perhaps no surprise that the public think that Boris Johnson will be on Father Christmas's naughty list this year. A majority (53%) think he will be on the naughty list, compared to 31% who think he will be on the nice list. Health Secretary Matt Hancock (49%) and Nigel Farage (60%) should also be expecting lumps of coal.



However, there are some political leaders who can be expecting their requests to Santa to be fulfilled. More people think Rishi Sunak will be on the nice list (45%) than the naughty list (31%). The same is true for Nicola Sturgeon (41% to 26%) and Keir Starmer (39% to 33%).



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