

Public attitudes to the Covid-crisis, week 4

Sunder Katwala, British Future 1st May 2020

Key themes:

- The British public are distinctly cautious about moves to ease the lockdown.
- Government approval has dipped – but public still highly receptive to government advice.

Public caution about relaxing the lockdown – in contrast to the public debate

As debate focuses on an exit plan, there is a big gap between political and media impatience for a plan to lift restrictions and public caution: three times as many people (63% vs 21%) concerned about moving too quickly as too slowly. Older people are the most cautious; the under-24s less so. (Deltapoll)

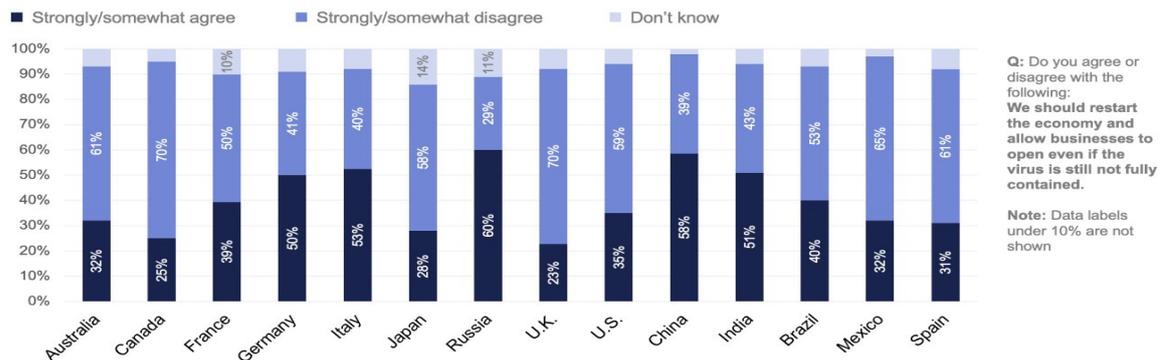
	Gender		Age				
Total	Male	Female	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 54	55 to 64	65+

When it comes to the COVID-19 outbreak, which of the following worries you more?

Britain moving too quickly to lift restrictions	63	59	66	50	56	61	79	68
Britain moving too slowly to lift restrictions	21	24	19	32	28	21	12	15
Don't know	16	17	15	18	15	17	9	17

In comparative surveys, the UK public appears distinctly cautious – with 23% open to restarting economy before virus is fully contained (and 70% opposed). Concern about the economic and social impacts are very broad – including among those with more secure finances personally.

SHOULD THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESSES OPEN EVEN IF THE VIRUS IS NOT FULLY CONTAINED?



28,029 adults polled in 14 countries from April 16-19, 2020



Percentage that think coronavirus is 'quite' or 'very' threatening to each

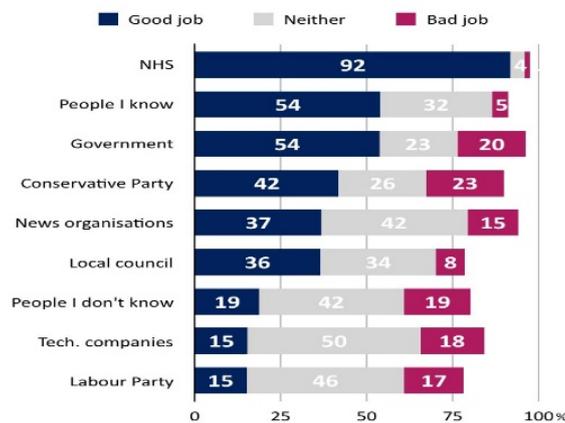


COVID_Threat. How threatening, if at all, is the coronavirus pandemic to each of the following? Base: Total sample: 2,823. Showing 'very' or 'quite' threatening. Source: UK COVID-19 news and information project. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.



- **Who do the public think is having a 'good' crisis?**
 - The NHS is off the charts. We are confident about "people I know" (54-5, +49) but mostly on the fence about how "people I don't know" are responding. (Reuters Institute)

Percentage that think each has done a good job of responding to coronavirus



UK_Political. Do you think each of the following is doing a good job or a bad job in responding to the coronavirus pandemic? Base: Total sample: 2,823. Note: Don't knows not shown. Source: UK COVID-19 news and information project. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.



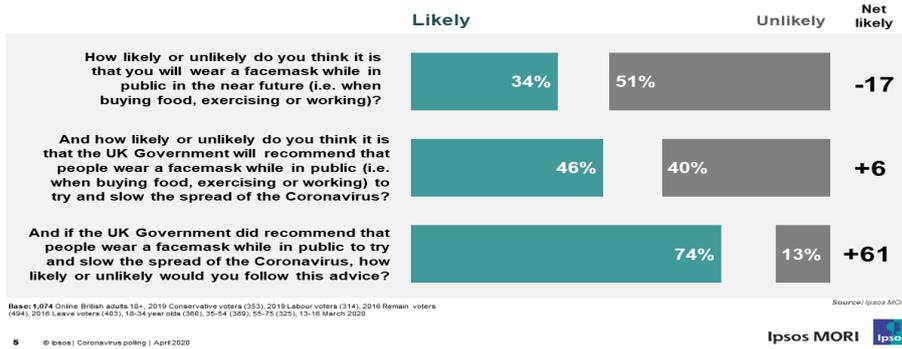
Approval of the government's handling of the crisis fell across April, after rising in March ...

51% approval (April 21st) down from 57% a week earlier, and 61% before that. (Opinium)

... but the public are highly receptive to influence and advice from the government

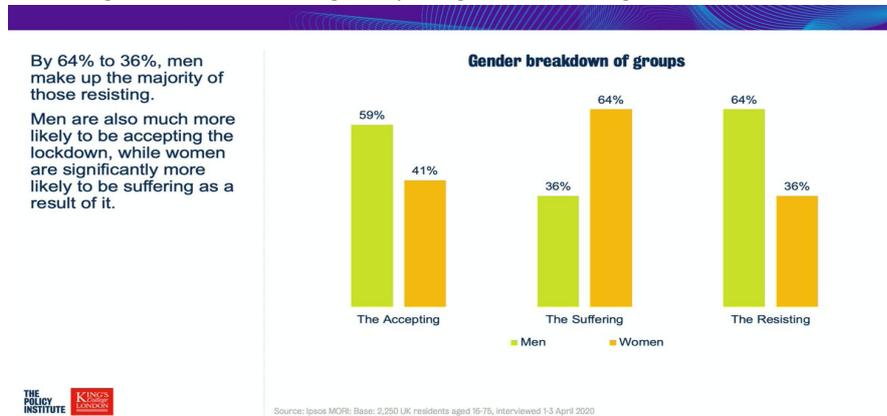
16% of the UK public say they have worn a face-mask – among the lowest scores internationally. But three-quarters would do so if advised by the government. (57% say they would do so only if advised by the government). This illuminates public sensitivity to official advice, and a desire to follow recommendations as well as rules.

Wearing facemasks in public



Gender differences in experiences of lockdown

Kings College have divided the population into the Accepting (48%), the Suffering (44%), the Resisting (9%). The resisting are younger (median age: 29) and two-thirds male.



Sources and links

Ipsos-Mori: One month in, British public attitudes

<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/one-month-british-public-opinion-covid-19-coronavirus>

Kings College London: life under lockdown segments

<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/the-three-groups-reacting-to-life-under-lockdown>

Reuters Institute, April 2020 factsheet (focus on media trust)

<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/UK%20COVID-19%20News%20and%20Information%20Factsheet%201%20FINAL%20%281%29.pdf>

Deltapoll: lockdown restrictions (April 27th)

<https://www.deltapoll.co.uk/polls/lockdown-restrictions>

Opinium weekly tracker

<https://www.opinium.co.uk/public-opinion-on-coronavirus-21st-april/>