

17th July 2020

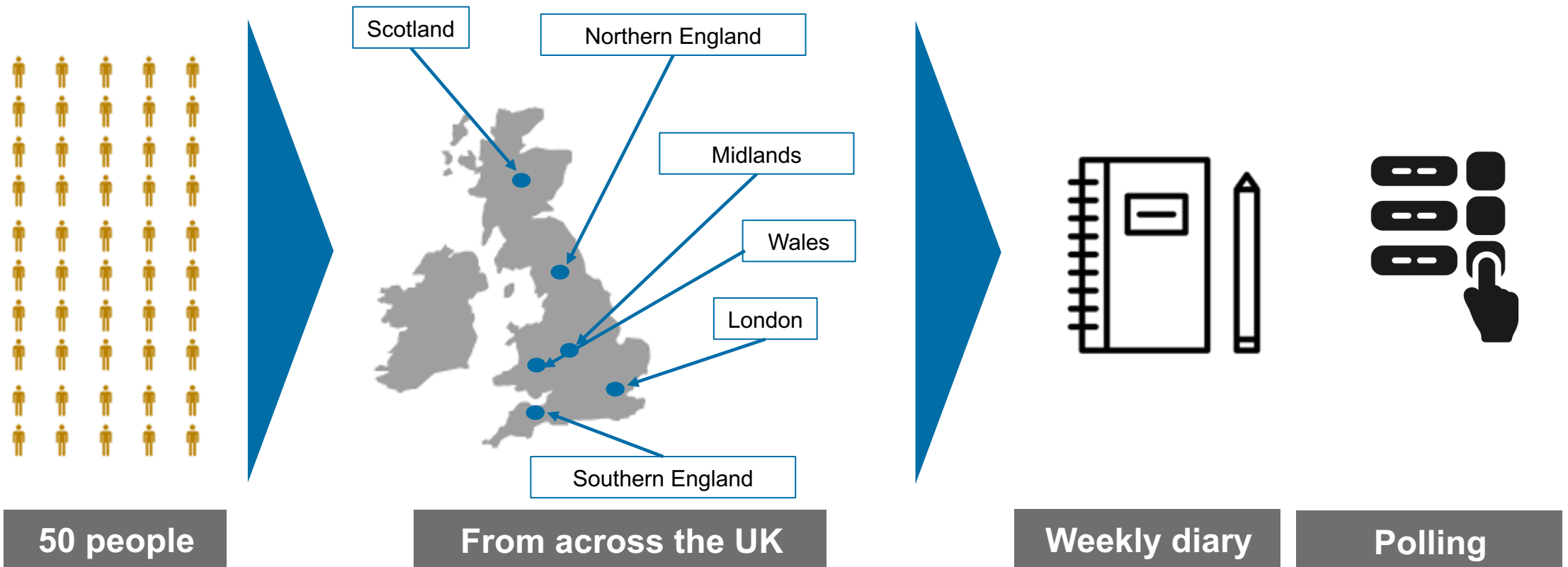
BritainThinks

Coronavirus Diaries

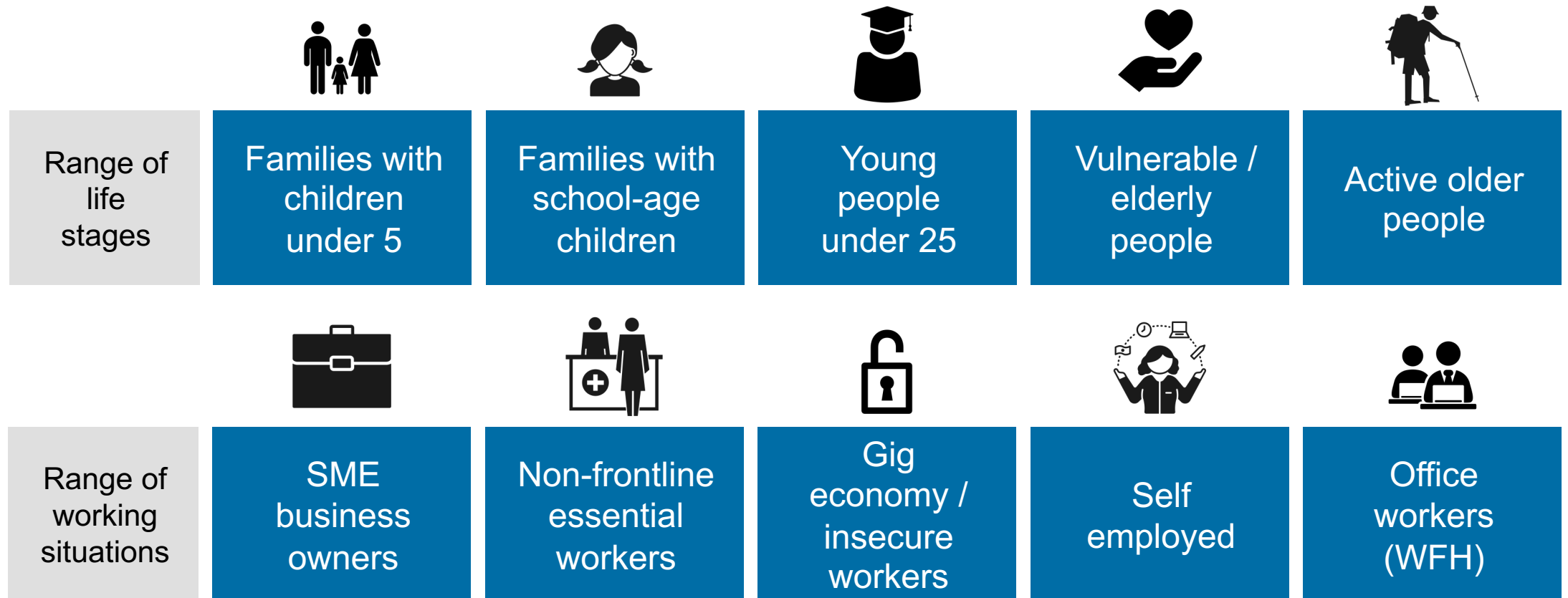
Week 15 Report

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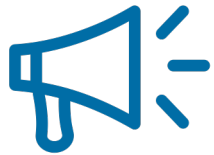
We have been following the crisis as it plays out in people's lives in real time since early April



Our Diarists come from different locations, lifestyles and backgrounds



Each week Diarists tell us about their views and experiences of the pandemic:



Context

The news stories that have stood out to Diarists each week



Mood

How Diarists are feeling each week and what's on their minds



Behaviour

What have Diarists been doing differently and how it makes them feel



Reputation

Perceptions of Government, politicians and brands at this time

Key findings

- 1** The take-out from the news this week is that the situation is **getting better at home and worse abroad**, with the US standing out as a situation that has gotten out of control.
- 2** The mood continues to be **positive**, and the sense that we have **turned a corner is strengthening**. But many are still finding it hard to shake the feeling of dread.
- 3** This week there has been a **noticeable shift in behavior**. Diarists are visiting restaurants, pubs and taking public transport for the first time, and reporting being pleasantly surprised.
- 4** **Government approval is ticking up, and support for economic measures is high**. Rishi Sunak is seen to be the driving force of the economic response and is well liked for this.
- 5** For those who have noticed him, **Keir Starmer has made a strong impression in his first 100 days**. But most in our sample say they don't know much - and rarely hear about - him.

News that's standing out this week is about the improving situation at home and the worsening situation abroad

News stories standing out to Diarists this week

Domestic CV developments:

- **Economic measures announced by the Chancellor**
- **Falling R number**
- Boris Johnson 'blaming' care homes
- Increasing number of redundancies
- Pubs closing due to CV 19 cases

International CV developments:

- **Rising cases in the US**
- Donald Trump wearing a mask
- **Increase of CV cases worldwide**
- Bolsonaro testing positive for coronavirus

Non-CV related news:

- Relations between China and the UK deteriorating
- Kanye West running for President

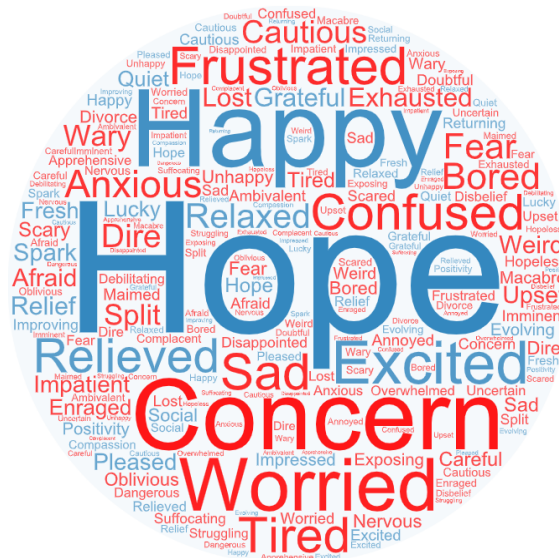
Overall the mood continues to be hopeful, but some Diarists fear this may be an intermission, rather than the end of the crisis

3 words used by Diarists to describe how they feel

w/c 6th July



w/c 13th July



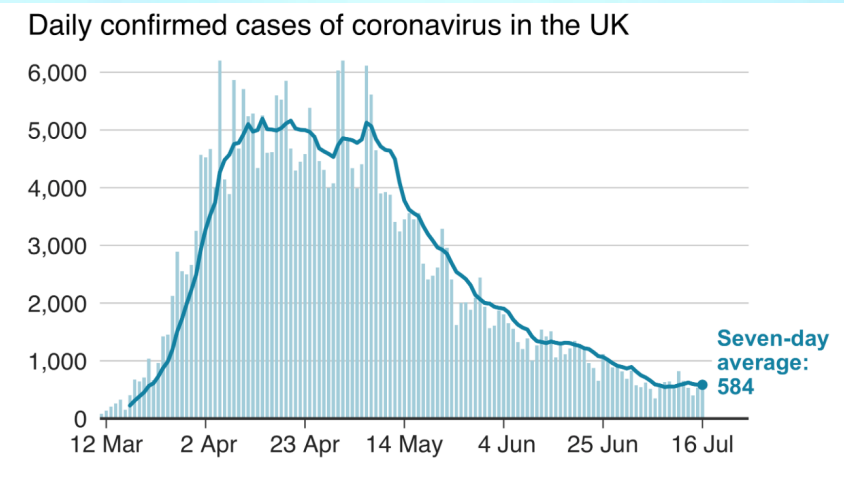
"I think the worst is yet to come, and if a second spike hits, we could fall into an economic depression of the likes we have never seen."

Gig economy worker

“The situation is evolving, it’s not going away. That’s very different to how I felt back in March when I thought this episode would have a beginning, middle and an end!”

Parent with
young children

Diarists are feeling more relaxed about the present, but concern is rising about the coming of winter



- The falling R rate is increasing confidence and hope that the virus may be under control in the UK.
- But news about the airborne nature of the virus, and its ability to spread faster in colder weather has Diarists worried about a second wave in the winter.

“I’m hopeful we can overcome this as lockdown is easing and deaths are falling.”

Essential worker

“I’m very concerned that the optimum temperature for transmission appears to be the usual temperature in January and February.”

Vulnerable person

Diarists are split between those who want to enjoy this moment of respite and those who can't stop worrying about what's ahead

Julie, Over 65, Dorset*

Julie is feeling the most positive she has done in months. She is off to see her grandchildren next week, has managed to get a hair appointment booked, and is going to the shops again.

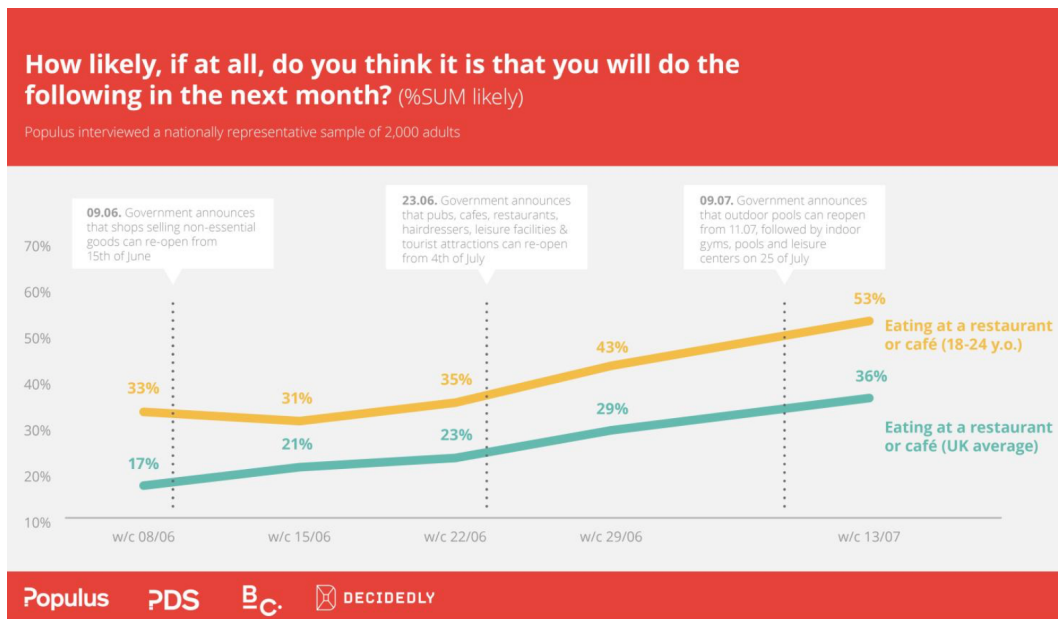
"I have felt better this week as things have opened up. We are still being very careful and wear masks indoors in public spaces and keep our distance."

Luke, Under 25, Kent*

Luke is confused as to what he should be doing. He thinks the risk of the virus is still high and wonders why others around him seem to be giving it so little thought.

"Everyone seems oblivious, happy to go about their day-to-day lives without worrying about coronavirus. It makes you question your own stance. Should I be more carefree? Or am I just being overly paranoid?"

Despite concern that things are moving too fast, the public (and our Diarists) are starting to embrace the freedoms already granted



- 51% of the public think we are coming out of lockdown too fast, with only 27% saying we're going at the right pace, and only 10% saying we're going too slowly.
- However, tracking data shows that confidence is slowly returning.
- In our work we've seen a noticeable shift this week in the number of Diarists who are willing to go to restaurants, pubs etc. Many report good experiences...

Diarists who have taken advantage of new freedoms report feeling impressed by the measures in place, and say they feel safe



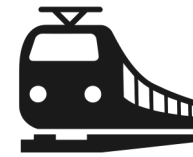
*"I went to eat inside a restaurant for the first time. **It felt safe and well-managed** which gave me hope that physically-distanced social events can still be fun."*

SME owner



*"I had my hair cut for the first time in 4 months as I was in the shielding category. **Everyone was following the guidelines wearing masks and visors** and I felt very safe. I felt so much better afterwards."*

Vulnerable



*"I used public transport (train) for the first time in four months, and it was actually fine. There were about 6 people in my carriage, all wearing facemasks. **Everyone was sat at least one row away from each other. I was pleasantly surprised.**"*

Office worker WFH

However, there are clear limits to this; foreign travel is still seen as out of the question for most

Willingness to travel abroad

"I'm not comfortable sitting on a plane for hours with so many people. I will think about going abroad next year, but again will depend on my comfort levels with having an underlying health condition."

Vulnerable

"We would like to see how things go with regards to further spikes, and how safe air travel really is. If things improve, and the risk becomes less, and this is a big IF, we would consider going to Cyprus perhaps in September/October time."

Gig economy worker

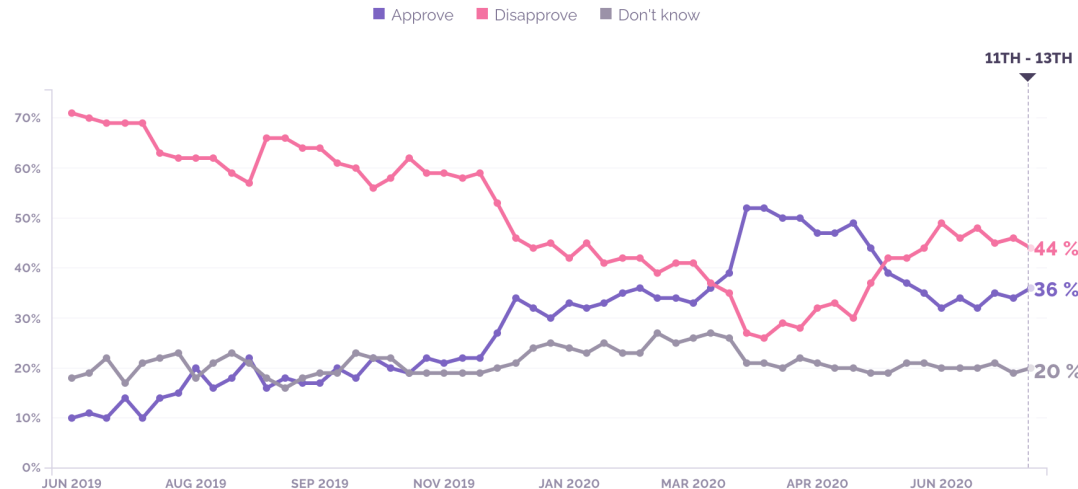
"I would consider taking a break to Europe in the autumn if I was confident that infection rates are lower. I think Europe mainly because of short flight times and the ability for it to only be a short weekend trip."

Under 25.

- **When asked whether they would consider going abroad this year, the vast majority of Diarists said 'no'.** This was driven as much by concerns about the journey (particularly air travel) as about the possibility of contracting the virus in another country.
- **Those who said 'yes' said this wouldn't be until later in the year,** and was dependent on the risk level falling, both in the UK and in the destination country.

Government approval is ticking upwards as the public start to feel confident that the situation is under control

% saying they approve or disapprove of the government



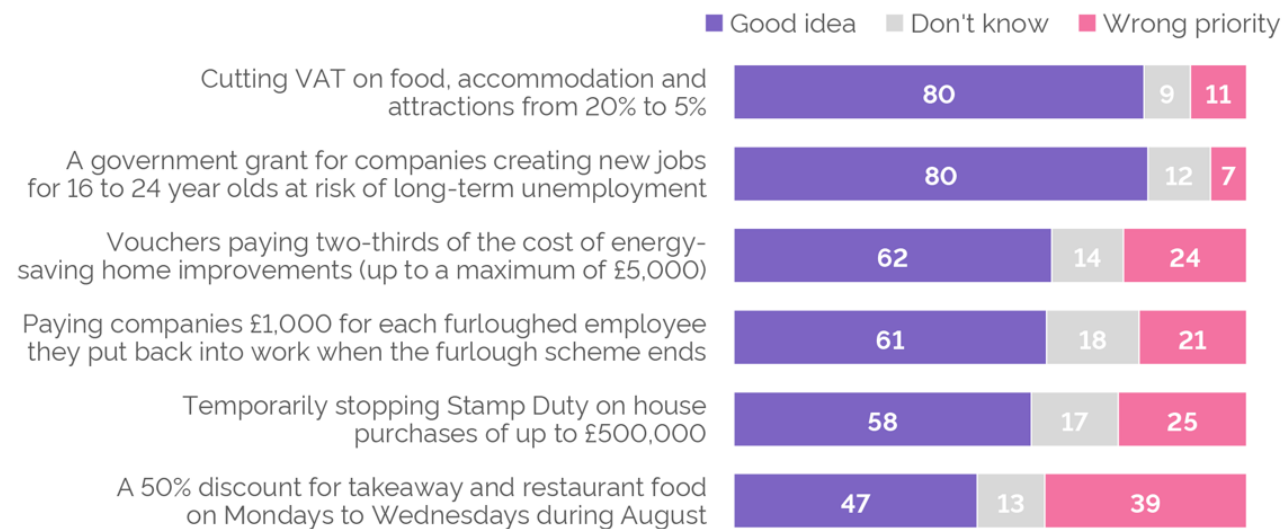
- Approval of government handling of the crisis is improving although most still consider it to be performing poorly (43% disapproving versus 33% approving).
- In our work, we can see that some feel that recent announcements show the government has turned a corner.

"I believe they're managing it quite well now, especially with the travel restrictions, compulsory face masks and gradual easing of lockdown restrictions."

Office worker WFH

The government's latest announcements on economic measures are very popular; overall 64% approve of the new measures

Support for key policies announced by the Chancellor on 8th July



Our Diarists welcomed them as bold, creative and ambitious, though there are concerns over how the country can afford this.

"I think they've made some tough decisions, and have been good at finding a balance. I'm a Labour supporter but I can commend this government's response."

Office worker WFH

Rishi Sunak gets credit for this success; he is currently the most popular Chancellor since Gordon Brown



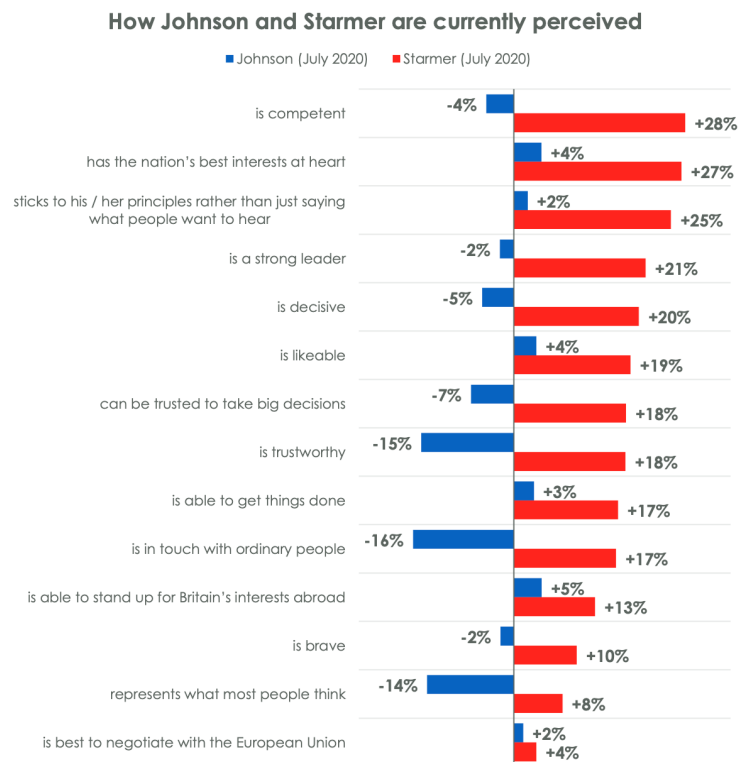
64% think Rishi Sunak is doing a good job as Chancellor of the Exchequer

- Amongst our Diarists there is surprisingly high spontaneous awareness and praise for Rishi Sunak; he is seen as the driving force of the economic approach and is thought to be a competent, likeable politician.

“Rishi Sunak's stimulus measures were bold and creative. The Chancellor is on a roll.”
SME owner

“The one person I have been impressed by is Rishi Sunak. Though in charge of the coffers, he has put his neck on the block to keep the economy going.”
Active 65+

Keir Starmer has made a good impression on some; 49% say their view of Labour has improved over his first 100 days



- Polling shows Keir Starmer is performing better than Boris Johnson on nearly every metric.
- However, these numbers are not as dramatic when the 'don't knows' are taken into account. In our work we can see that most people still don't feel they know much about Keir Starmer, and don't feel they are hearing much from him either.

"He doesn't seem to stand out in the news much. I did pick up on how he stood against Johnson about the track and trace numbers."

Parent with school aged children

Thank you

For more information:

Ben Shimshon bshimshon@britainthinks.com

Michaela Rhode mrhode@britainthinks.com

Isabel Gill igill@britainthinks.com

Katharine Allen kallen@britainthinks.com

+44 (0)207 8455880

BritainThinks

Somerset House

Strand

London

WC2R 1LA

britainthinks.com