

# Why British MPs Resigned from Politics?

Did abusive language play a role?

Case Study

by



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## Disclaimer:

This case study is solely an educational exercise and does not necessarily reflect the position of Citispotter on this issue. Strong language (verbatim) is shown using word cloud in the report depicting hate speech and abuses faced by MPs. We do not endorse any use of hateful or abusive language.

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## Executive Summary

This case study investigates "Why British Members of Parliament (MPs) Resigned From Politics " at a critical time when the United Kingdom was struggling with a crucial decision to leave the European Union. The prime objective of the case study was to assess whether hate speech and abuses served as motivator for the MPs decision to resign or step down from politics.

We scraped a total of 10,261 tweets over the period of 6 months related to the Heidi Allen, Tom Watson, Justine Greening, Amber Rudd, Nicky Morgan, Stephen Twigg and Alan Duncan. Tweets were classified for hate speech and offensive language with the help of Citispotter Proprietary APIs and then analysed for correlation among various factors.

### Research Questions:

- Is there any correlation between abusive language and MPs' resignations?
- What were the public sentiments towards MPs in the tweets?
- What were the frequently used words in abusive tweets?

## Introduction

It was alarming to witness that more than 50 British MPs announced to step down from British Politics at the General Election on 12 December 2019, and 18 of them being female candidates. It was an unusual event and hard to digest that several high-profile women politicians have cited abuse as a significant factor in their decision.

Recently, British MPs became targets of abuse in the form of hate speech and malicious language, and some women politicians say they were bearing the brunt of it. Abuses included threats of rape and death, which has become a common occurrence for women MPs. For example, UK Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan received many threats including phone calls from 64-year old Robert Vidler telling her that "her days are numbered". To which she replied, being an MP had a "clear impact" on her family "because of how strongly people feel about the current political situation" in the time of Brexit deliberations.

Similar abuse was encountered by Liberal Democrat and former Tory MP Heidi Allen, who also stepped down. She received a death threat from a fake email address claiming to be a 51-year-old Jarod Kirkman. In a letter to her constituents, the Remain campaigner said: "Nobody in any job should have to put up with threats, aggressive emails, being shouted at in the street, sworn at on social media, nor have to install panic alarms at home".

### In the case study, we looked at the impact of :

1. **Positive tweets:** Tweets that contain positive sentiment.
2. **Negative tweets:** Tweets that contain negative sentiment.
3. **Hate speech:** Abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially based on race, religion, or sexual orientation.
4. **Offensive tweets:** Insulting, unpleasant, disgusting, abusive language, causing anger or annoyance to the senses.

In this case study, we were looking for a correlation between the resignation of MPs and abusive language, including hate speech.

## Methodology

After collecting tweets using scraping, they were labelled using Citispotter's APIs for sentiment, hate and offensiveness.

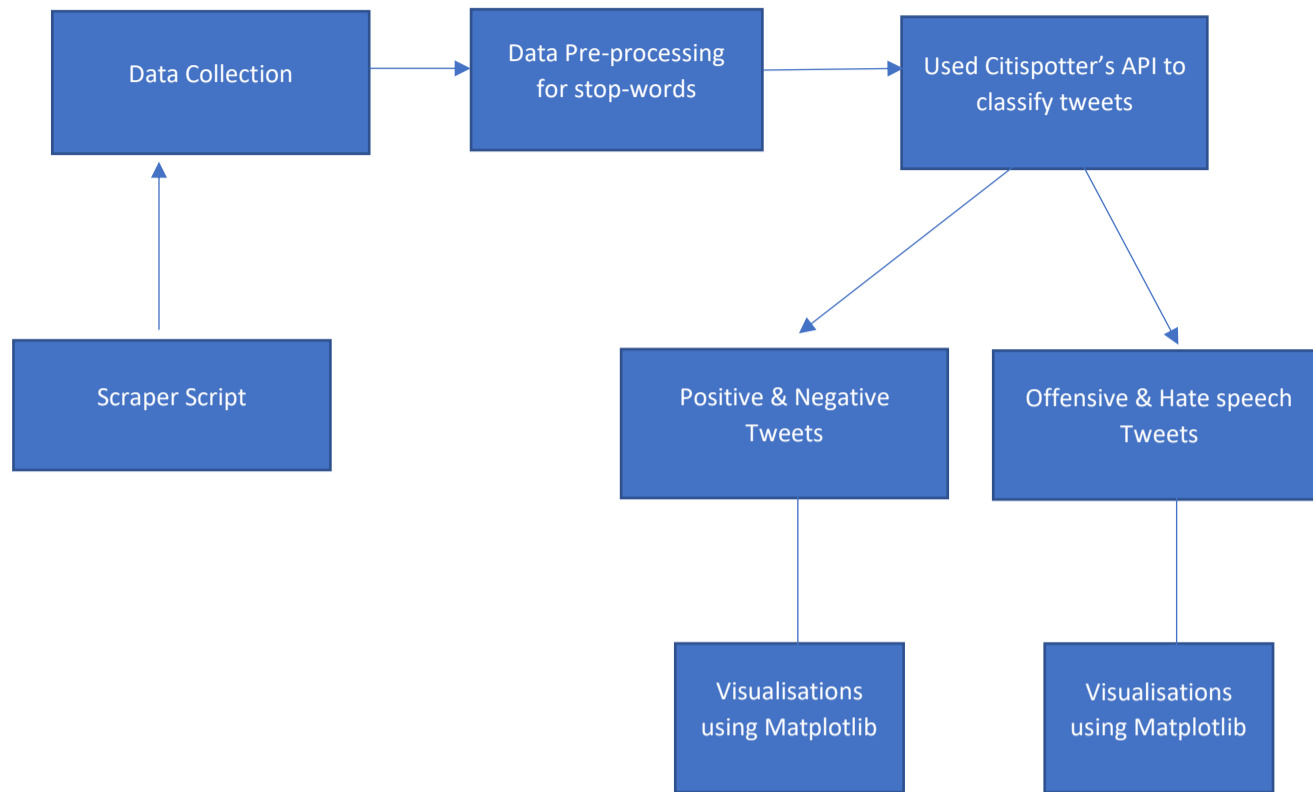
## Dataset Details

10,126 tweets were collected in total for Heidi Allen, Tom Watson, Justine Greening, Amber Rudd, Nicky Morgan, Stephen Twigg and Alan Duncan.

The tweets were collected before resignation or standing down of the MPs.

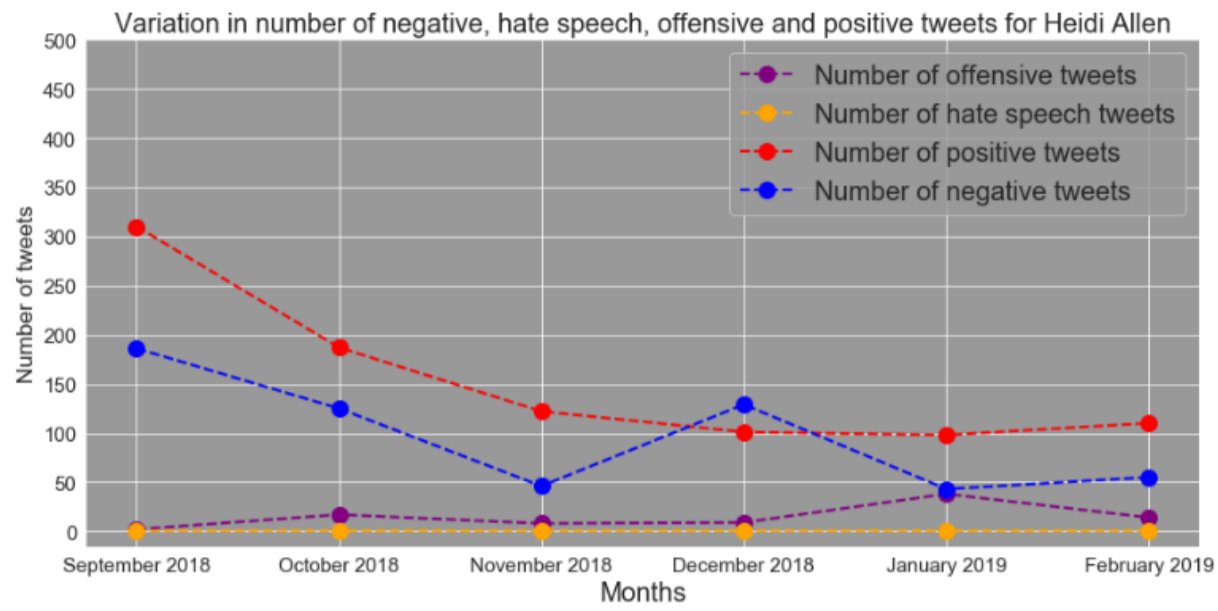
Member of Parliament	Tweets	Hashtags	Start Date	End Date
Heidi Allen	1297	#heidiallen	1 Sept 2018	28 Feb 2019
Tom Watson	959	#tomwatson	1 June 2019	14 Nov 2019
Justine Greening	1859	#justinegreening	1 April 2019	30 Sept 2019
Amber Rudd	1005	#amberrudd	1 April 2019	30 Sept 2019
Nicky Morgan	2499	#nickymorgan	1 May 2019	31 Oct 2019
Stephen Twigg	1326	#stephentwigg	1 Feb 2019	31 July 2019
Alan Duncan	1181	#alanduncan	1 Feb 2019	31 July 2019

## Flowchart for Overall Process



**FIGURE 1: FLOWCHART FOR THE OVERALL PROCESS**

# 1) Heidi Allen



**FIGURE 2: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR HEIDI ALLEN**

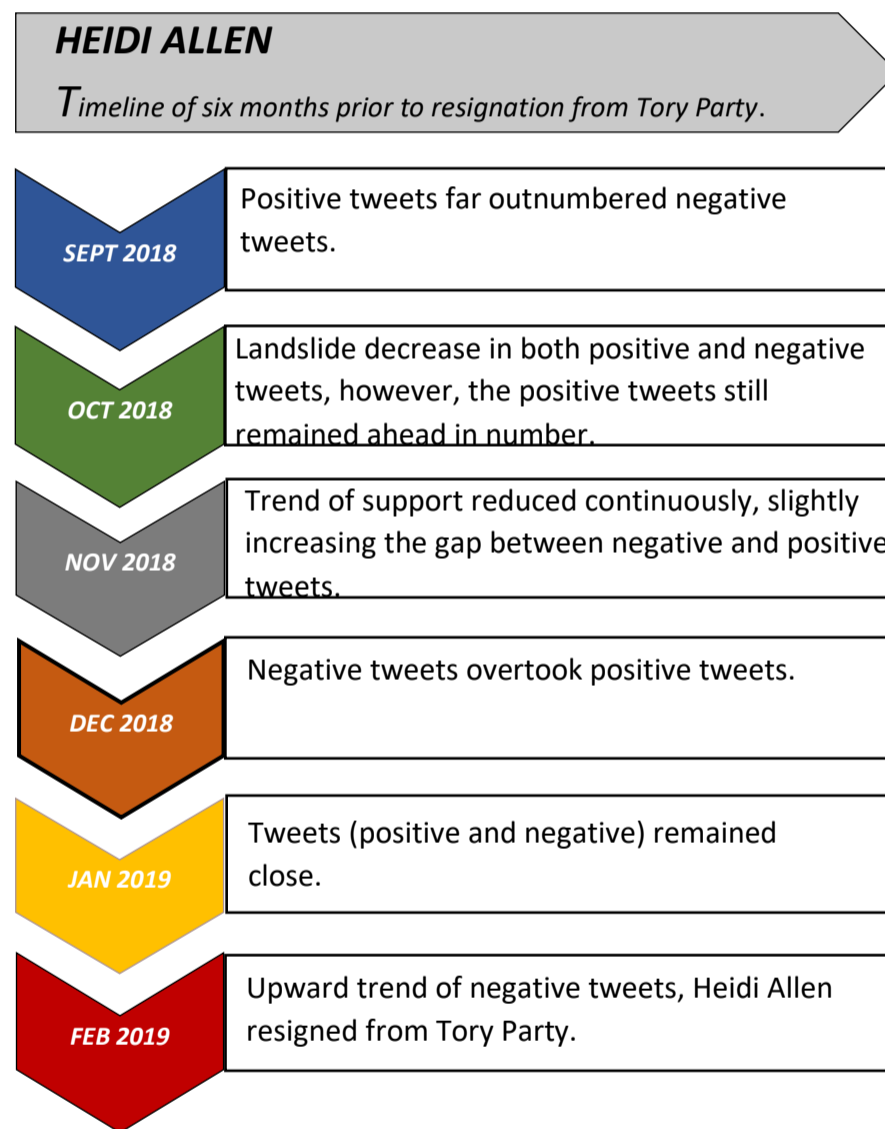
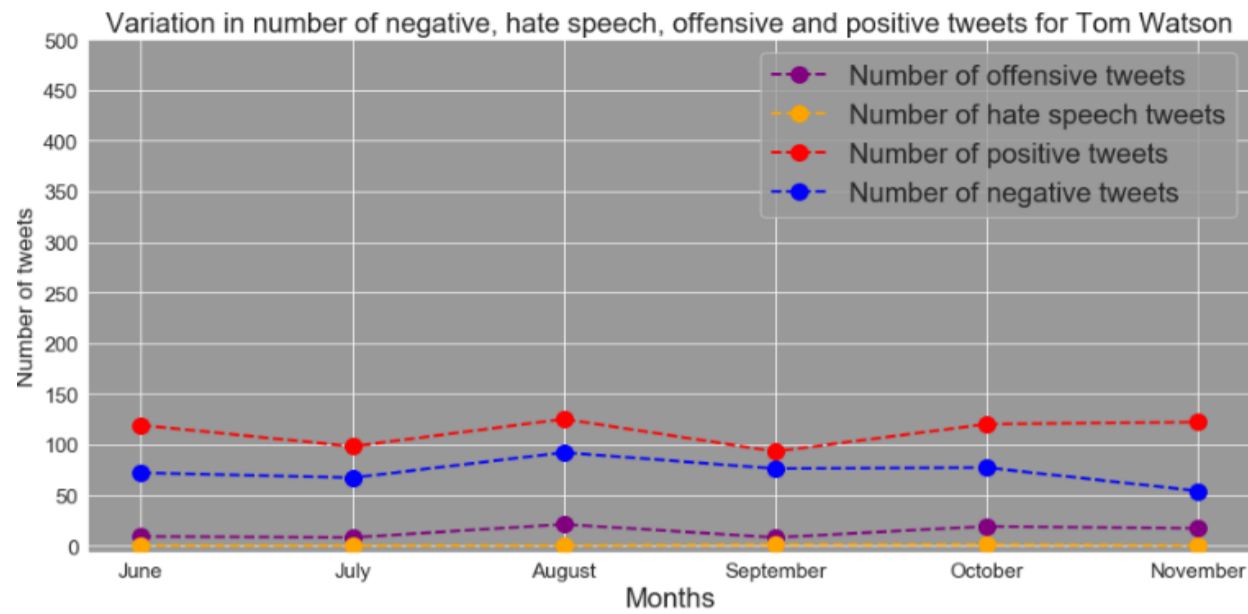


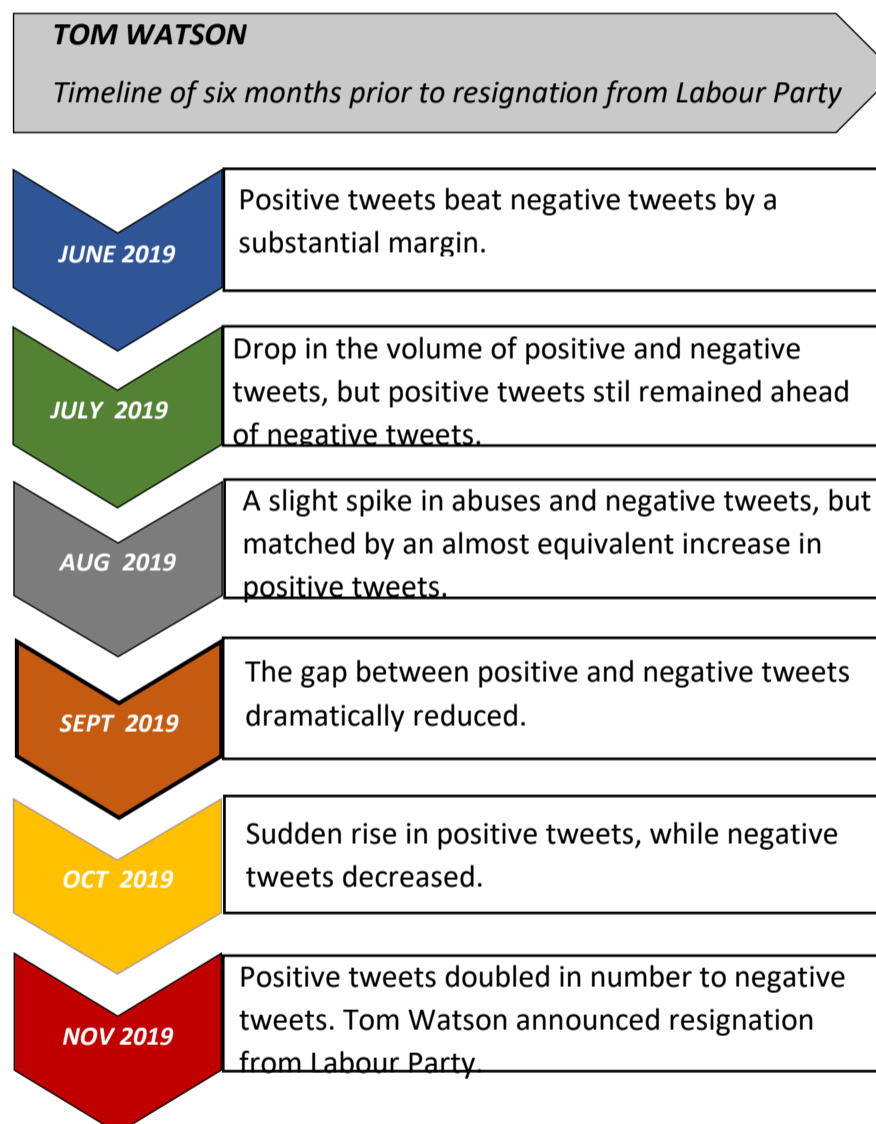
Figure 3: Timeline of six months prior to resignation from Tory Party



## 2) Tom Watson



**FIGURE 5: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR TOM WATSON**

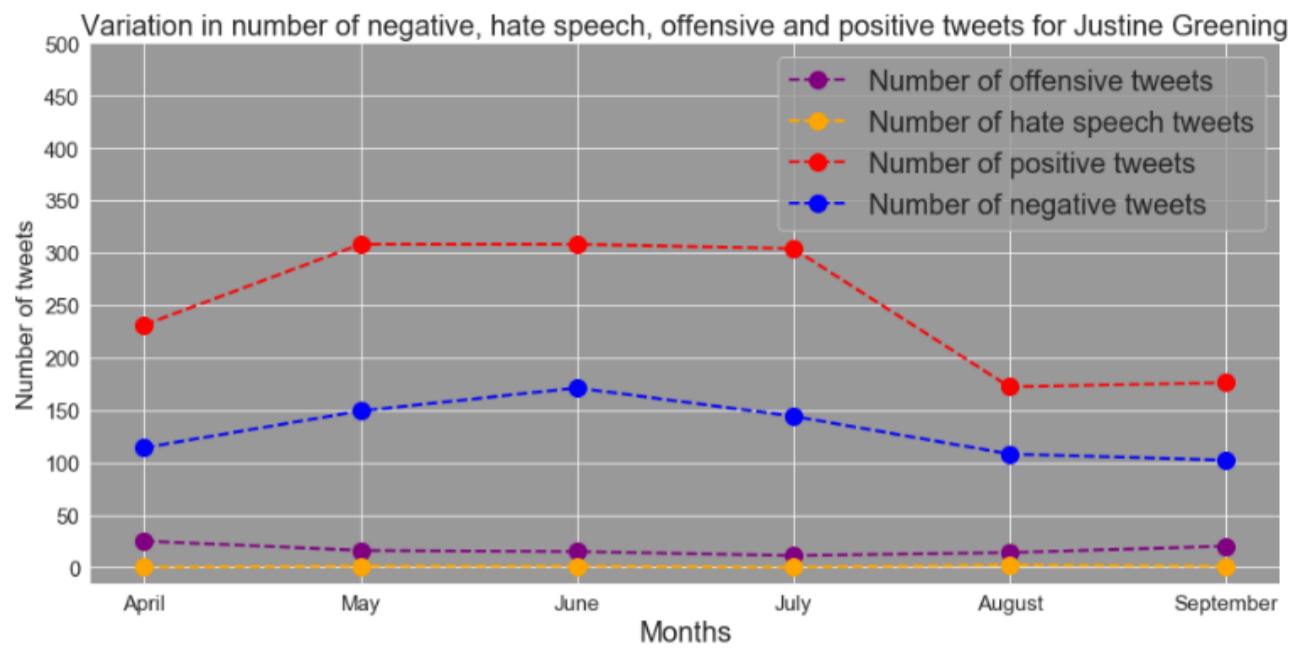


**FIGURE 6: TIMELINE OF SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO RESIGNATION FROM LABOUR PARTY**

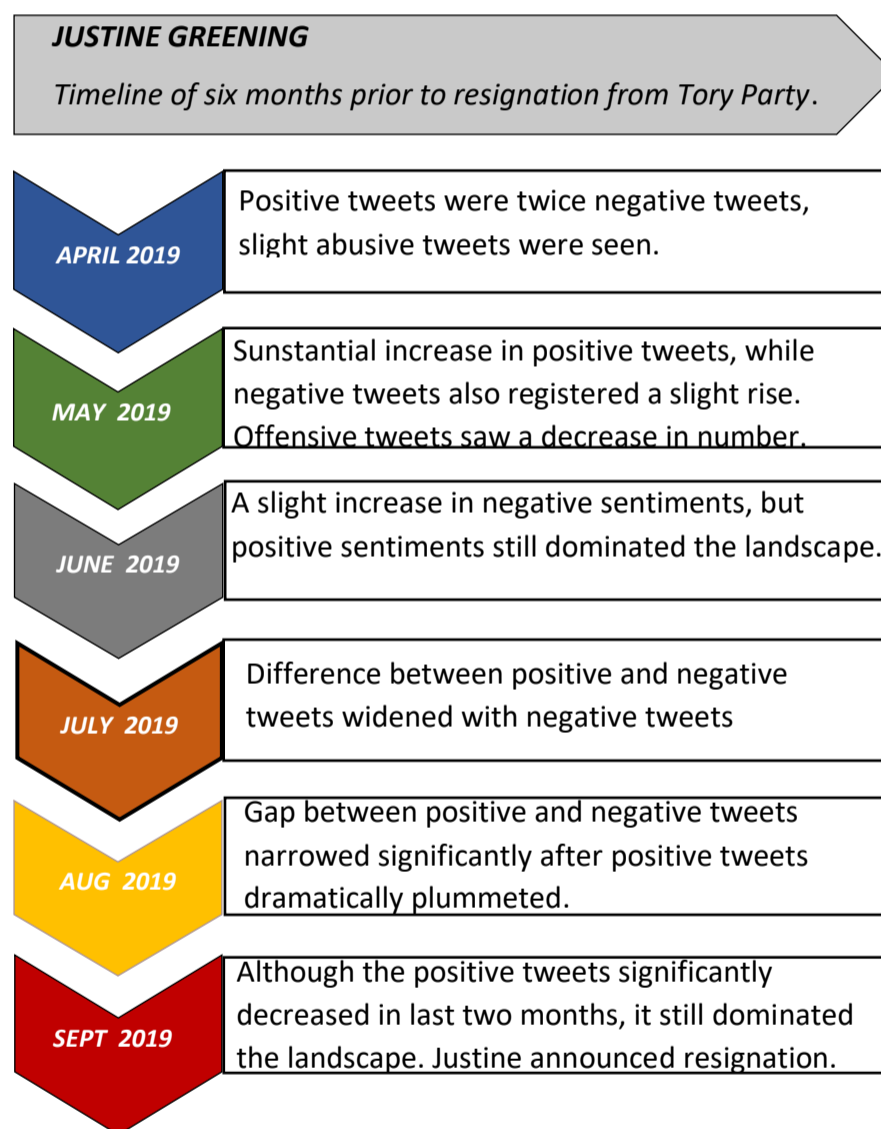




### 3) Justine Greening



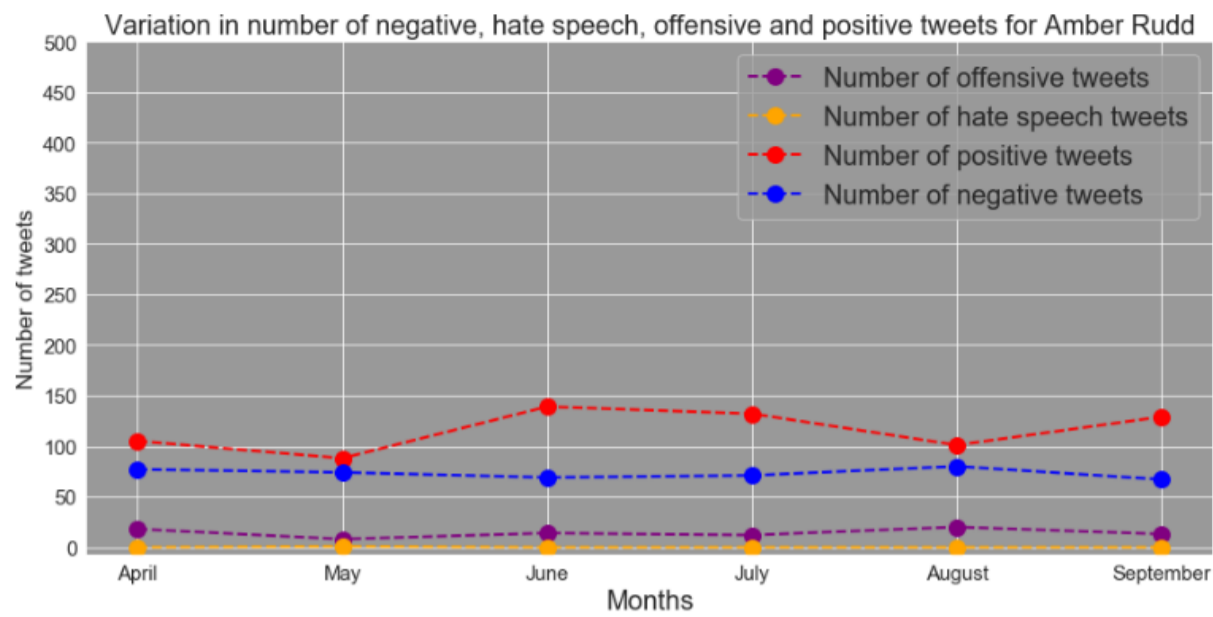
**FIGURE 8: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR JUSTIN GREENING**



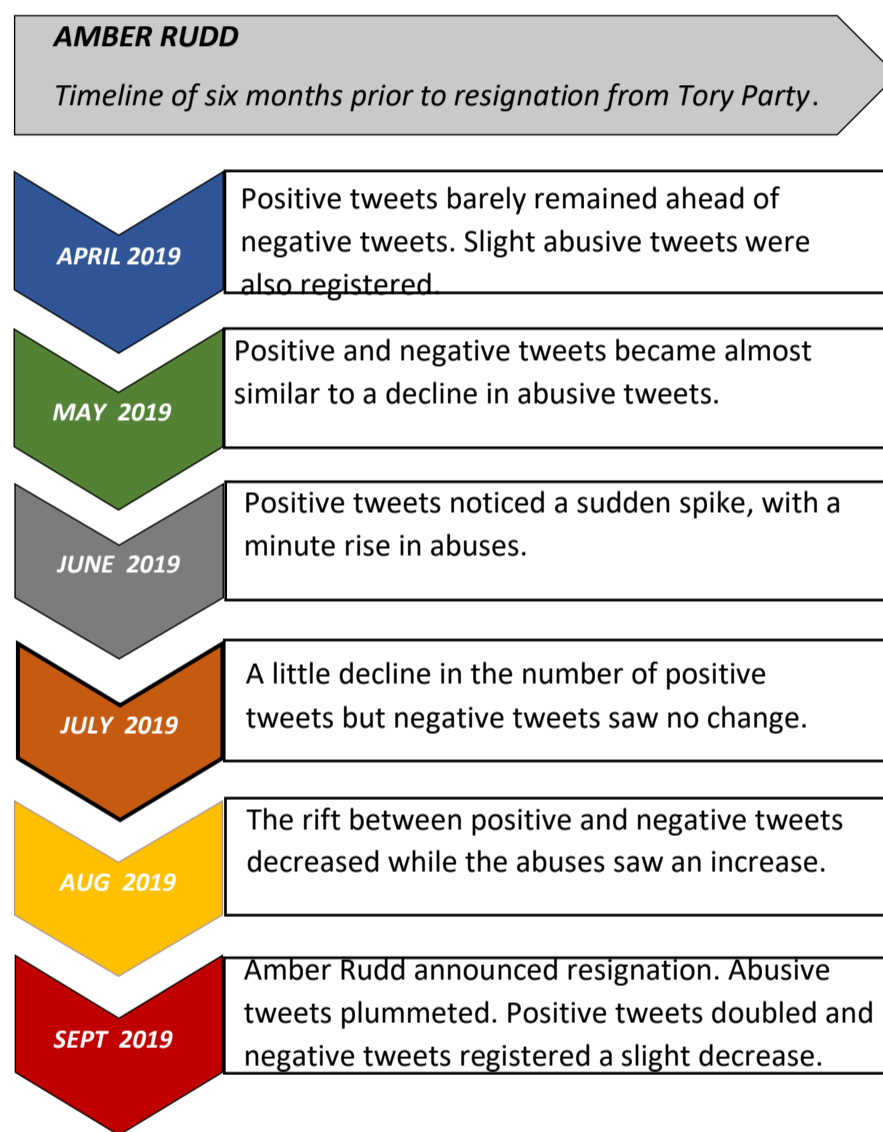
**Figure 9: Timeline of six months prior to resignation from Tory Party**



#### 4) Amber Rudd



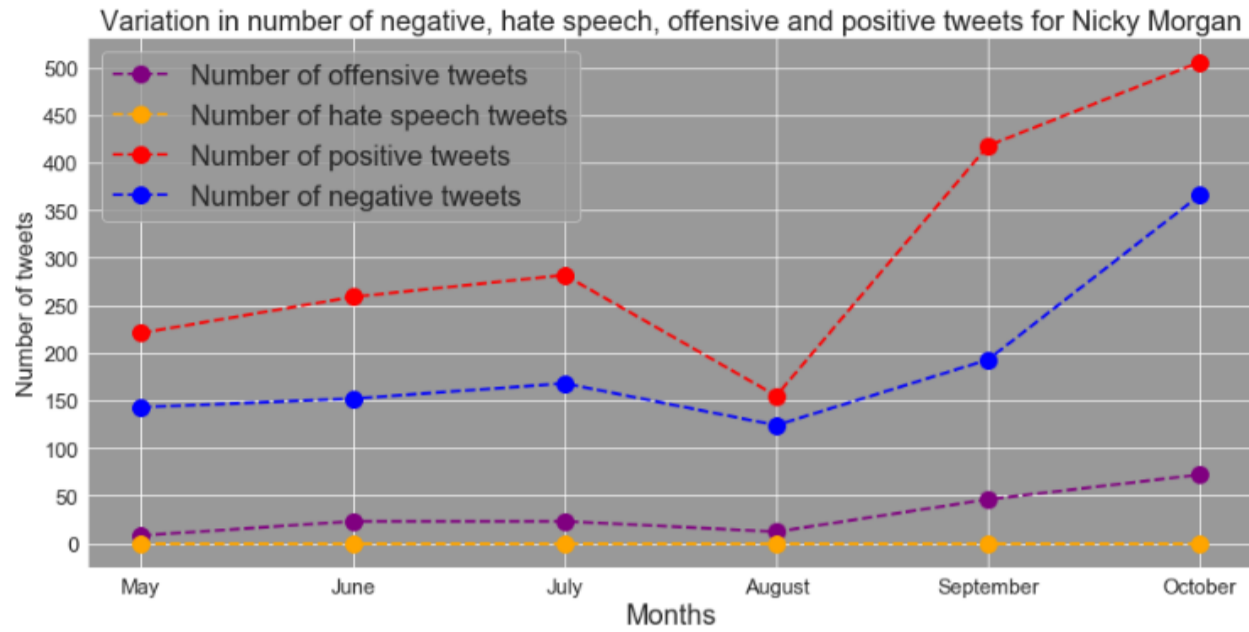
**FIGURE 11: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR AMBER RUDD**



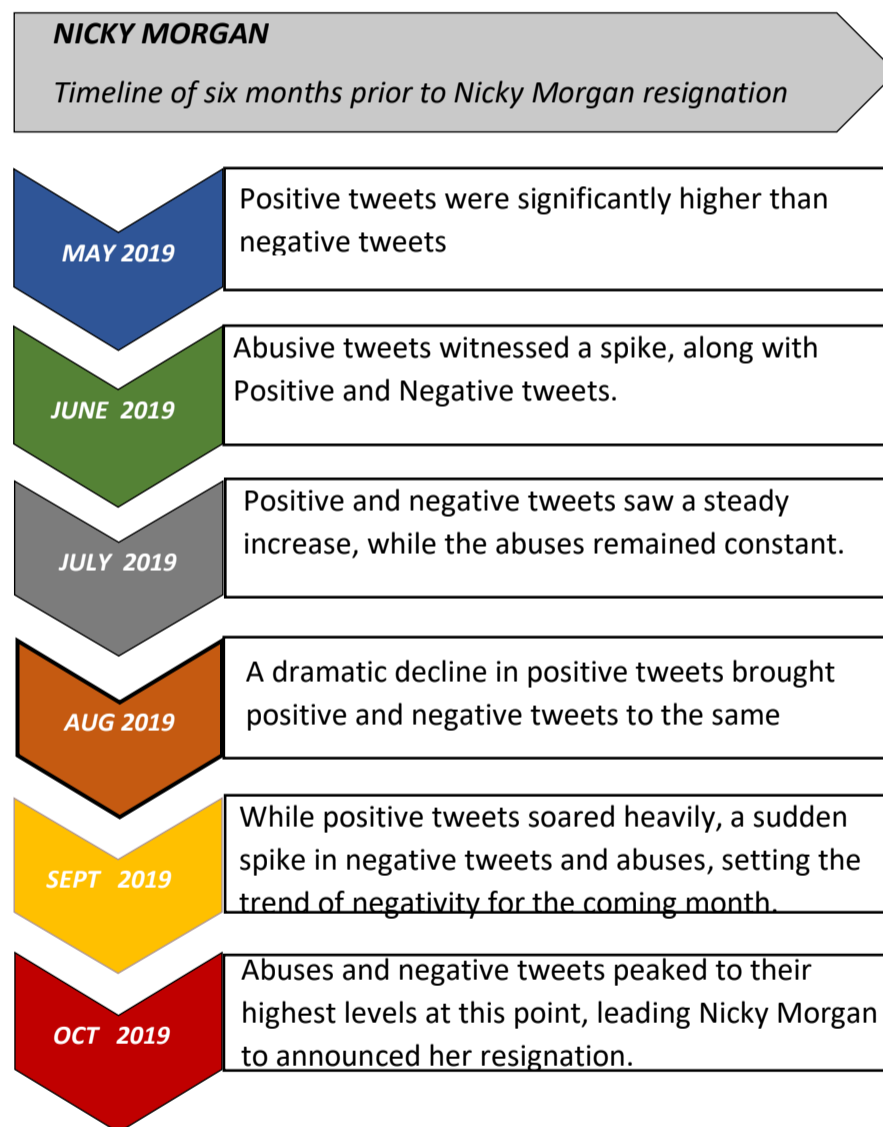
**Figure 12: Timeline of six months prior to resignation from Tory Party**



## 5) Nicky Morgan



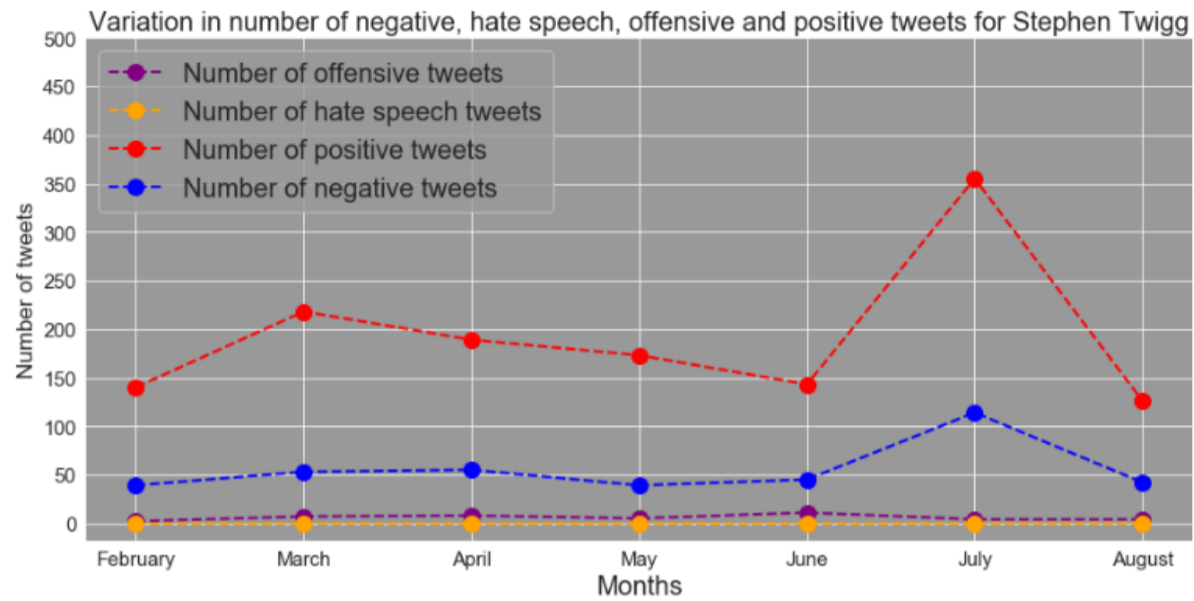
**FIGURE 14: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR NICKY MORGAN**



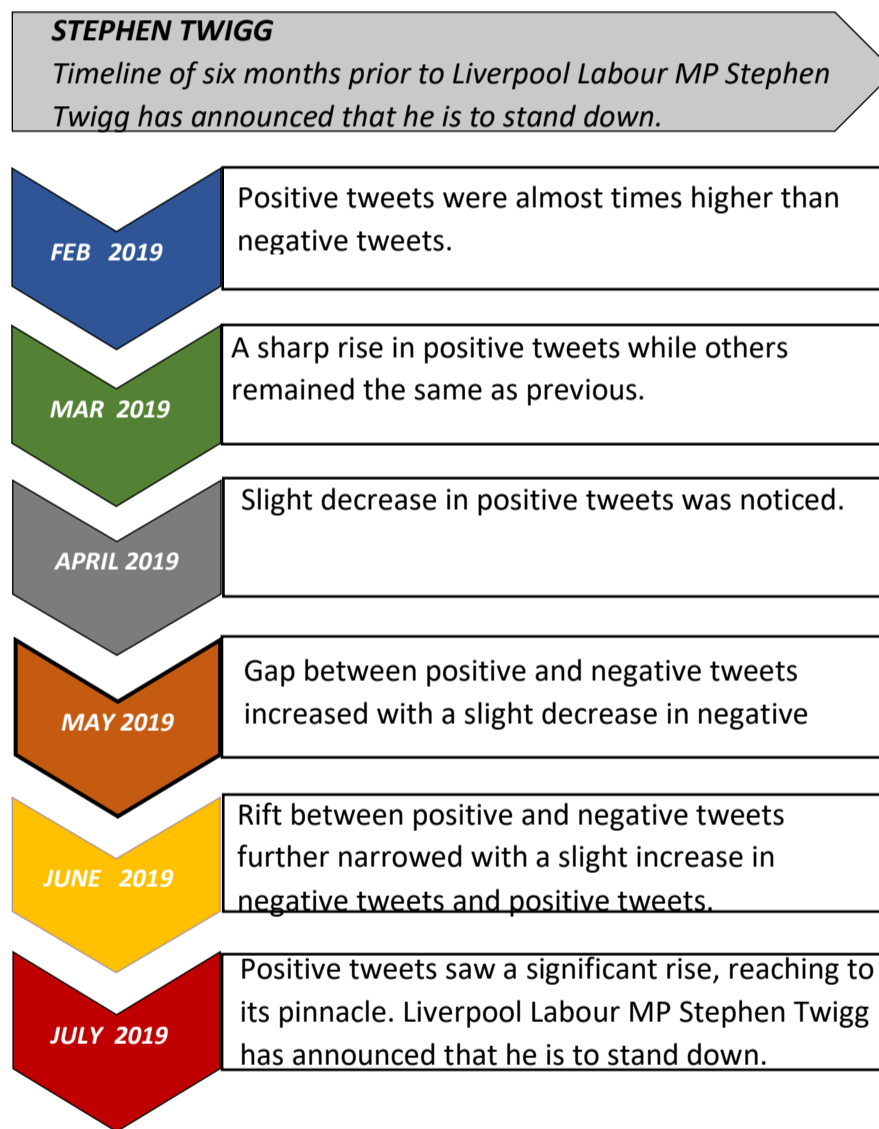
**Figure 15: Timeline of six months prior to Nicky Morgan resignation**



## 6) Stephen Twigg



**FIGURE 17: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR STEPHEN TWIGG**

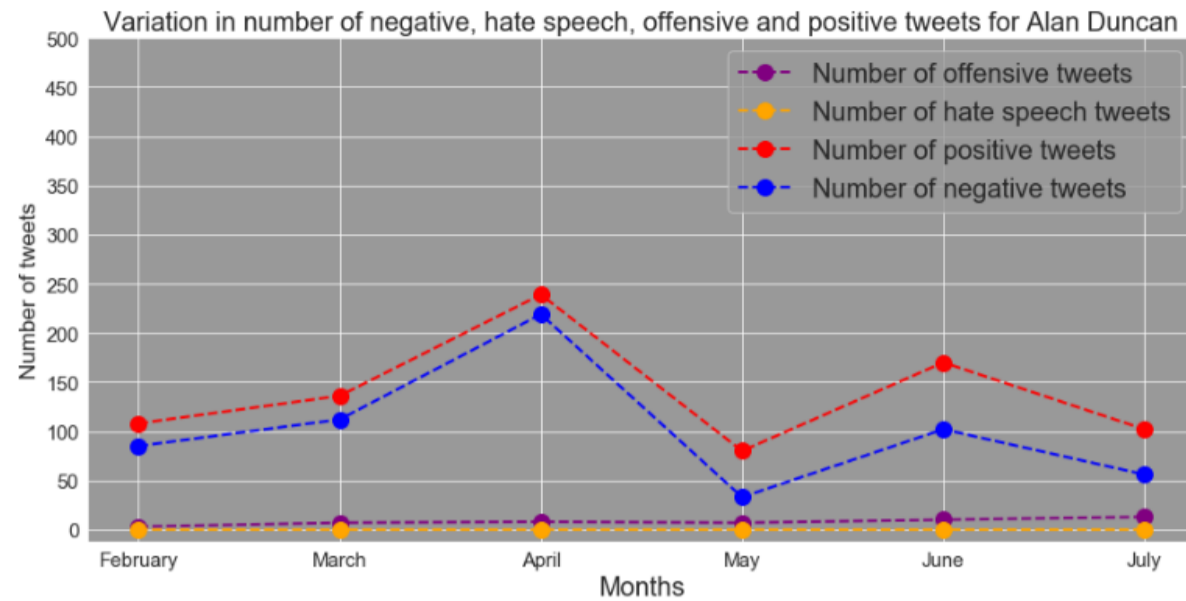


**FIGURE 18: TIMELINE OF SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO LIVERPOOL LABOUR MP STEPHEN TWIGG HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE IS TO STAND DOWN.**

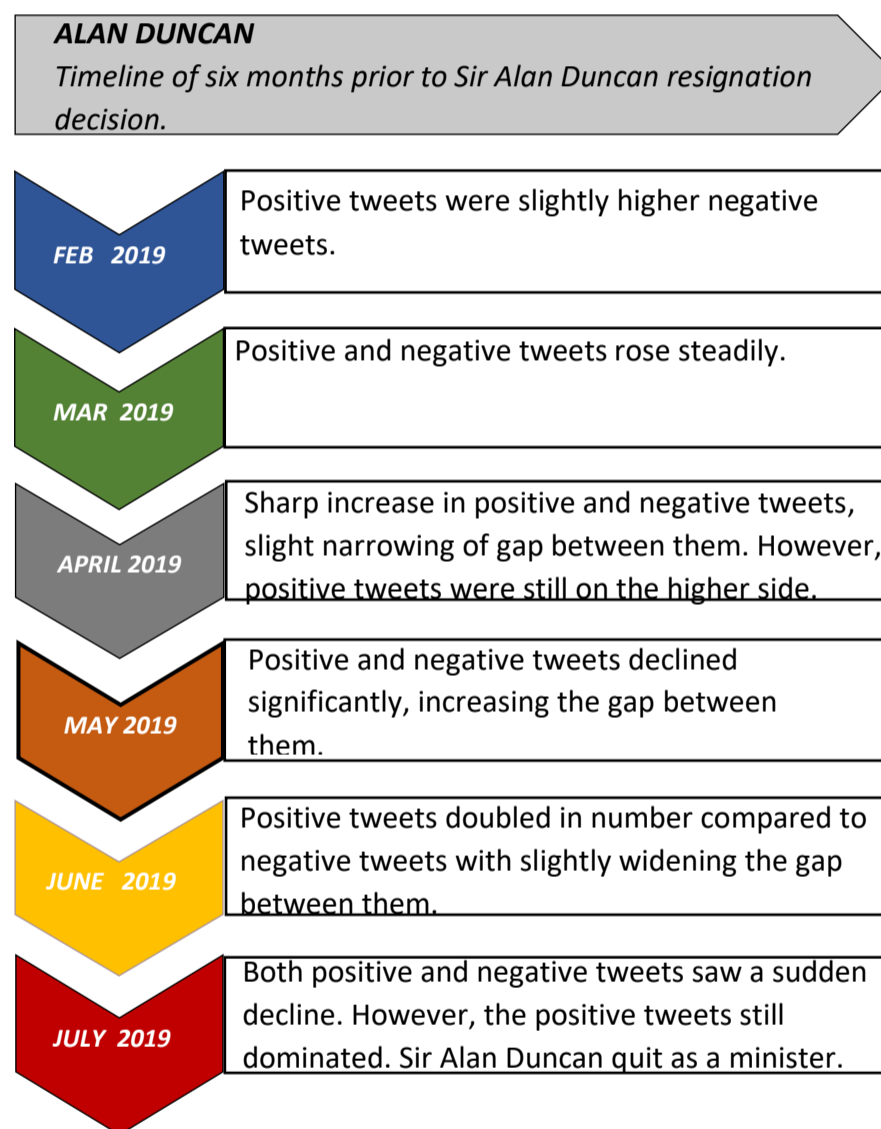




## 7) Alan Duncan



**FIGURE 20: VARIATION IN THE NUMBER OF TWEETS DEPICTING NEGATIVE SENTIMENT, HATE SPEECH, OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SENTIMENT FOR ALAN DUNCAN**



**Figure 21: Timeline of six months prior to Sir Alan Duncan resignation decision.**



## Conclusion

Our case study reveals that the number of offensive tweets was highest for **Nicky Morgan**.

Abusive tweets were prominent reason in the resignation or standing down of MPs in case of **Nicky Morgan, Heidi Allen, and Amber Rudd**.

Nevertheless, the scenario with **Tom Watson, Justin Greening, Stephen Twigg, and Alan Duncan** was different. Our comprehensive analysis could not find a strong correlation between abuses and their resignation.



Citispotter offers disruptive AI-enabled content analysis technologies for Businesses (Media, Brands, Advertisers, UGC Platforms) to detect and filter-out harmful content.

**UGC Platforms:** Detect and filter harmful content on their platforms

**Brands & Media:** Detect harmful signals in content before publishing it.

**Advertisers:** Prevent ads from being displayed on harmful content.

**Parents, Institutions, & organisations:** Protect children, students or employees from online harmful content

### **Acknowledgement**

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Data Collection: Nikita Pande; Data Analysis and Visualisations: Abhishek Kumar Saxena; Technical Proofreading and Review: Yatharth Mathur.

### **Contact**

For further information about the report and the capabilities of Citispotter to help solve challenges faced by your organisation in terms of Fact-Checking, Click-bait detection, Sentiment analysis, Emotion Analysis, Abuse Analysis, Hate Speech Detection, and Stance detection or harmful content detection please get in touch with Pallav Sethiya, Co-founder and CEO of Citispotter.

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