



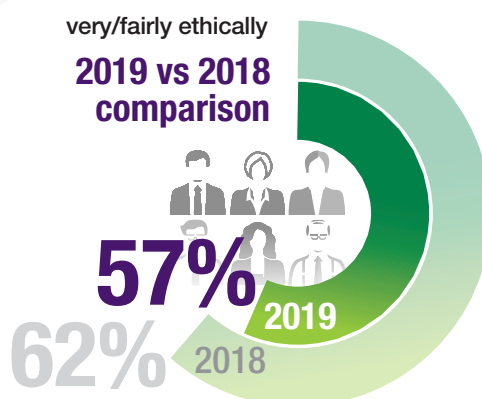
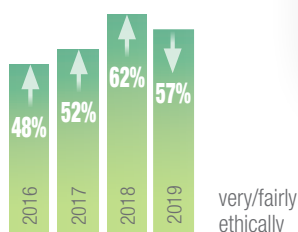
Attitudes of the British Public to Business Ethics 2019

For 17 years the Institute of Business Ethics has asked the British public (GB adults 18-65) about its view on how ethical British Business is. **This infographic shows how the British public's attitudes have changed since the survey began in 2003.**



Key Finding

Fewer people believe that business behaves ethically since last year, when it was at its highest point since the start of the survey in 2003.



Headline findings



Environmental responsibility

is still a top issue that need addressing after re-emerging in the top 3 last year after 7 years



Executive pay

returns to being the second most common issue



The most common issue **differs between men and women** – for **women** is environmental responsibility, for **men** is tax avoidance

Issues needing addressing ¹

Corporate tax avoidance



33%

Executive pay



29%

Environmental responsibility



28%

Exploitative labour
Work-home balance for employees



18%

18%

For an explanation of the research methodology and respondent profile see page 4.

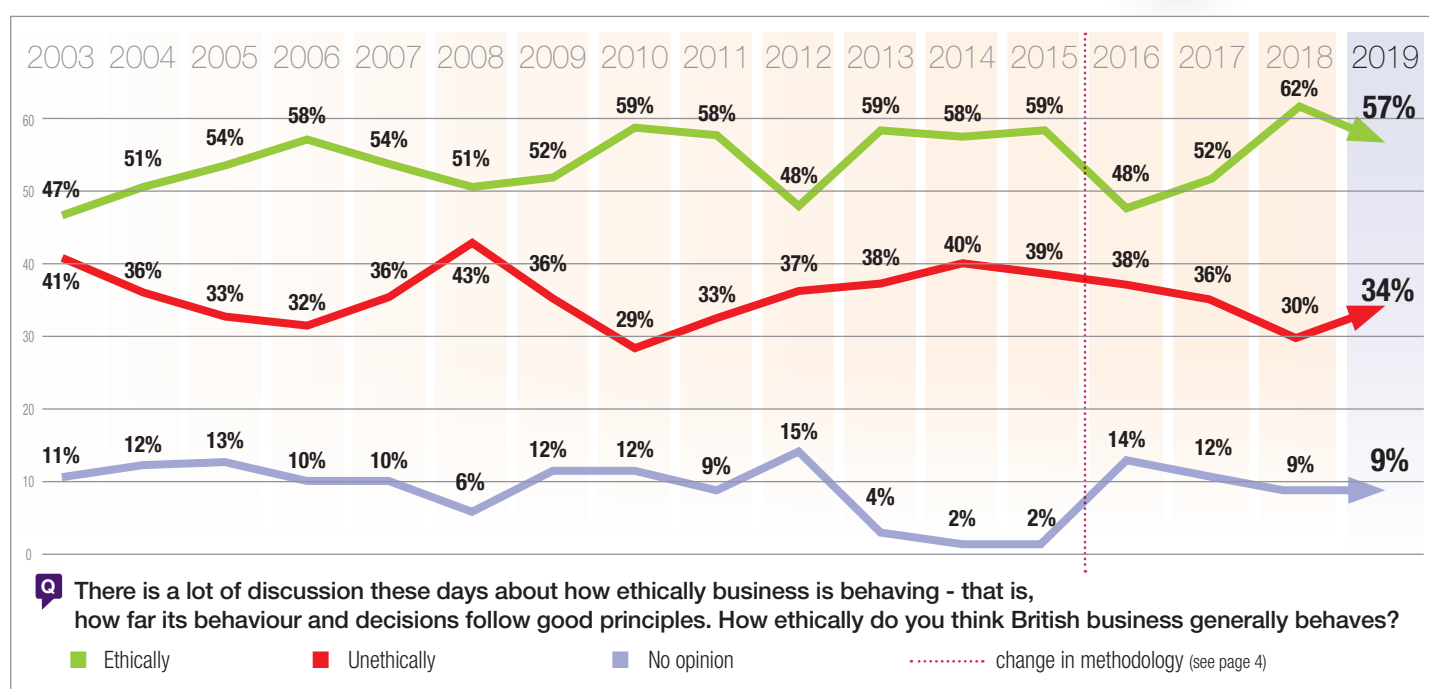
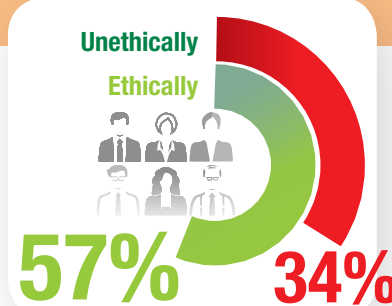
¹ Full results to this question can be found here - <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/six-ten-gb-adults-believe-british-businesses-behave-ethically>

Current business behaviour

Q *How ethically do you think British business generally behaves?*

The British public's positive view of how ethically business behaves has dropped since last year and a higher proportion now think business behaves unethically.

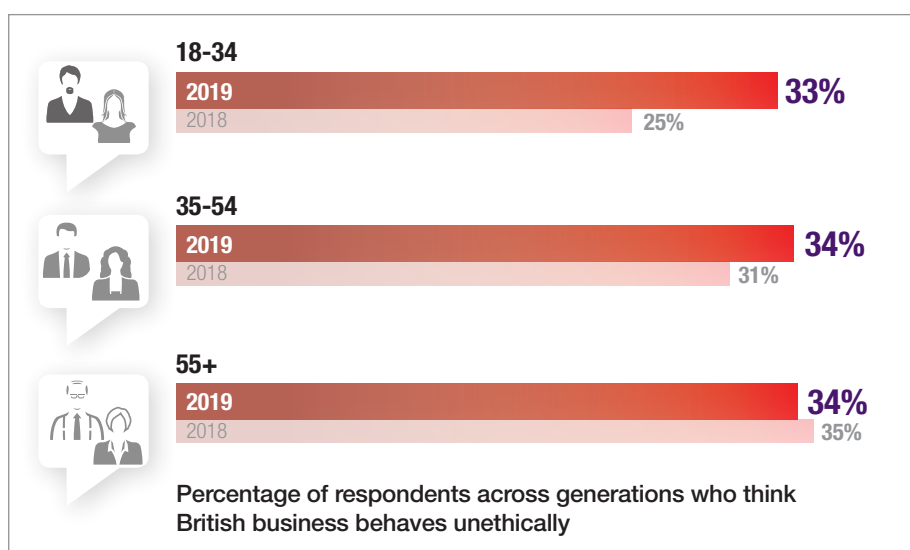
This change might be the result of a levelling out after a spike last year – in fact, this year's result is in line with many other years. While some high-profile news stories come to mind (such as those involving the collapse of Thomas Cook and Boeing's 737 Max airplanes), these might not be sufficient to explain this dip.



Younger people have strong, polarised opinions

While only 5% of those aged 35-54 and 3% of those aged 55+ perceive business to be behaving 'very ethically', the figure for younger people, aged 18-34, is 12%.

However, when it comes to perceptions about business behaving unethically, the differences across the across the age groups are not significant.

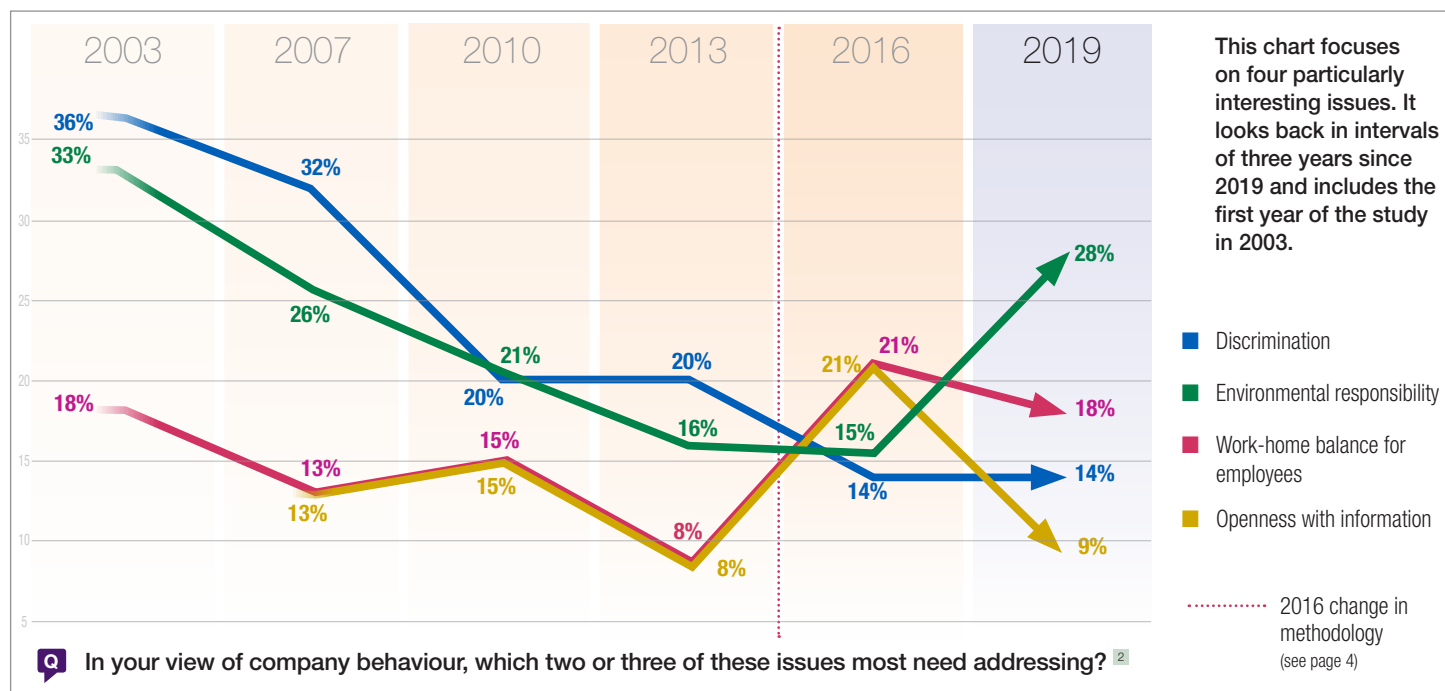


For an explanation of the research methodology and respondent profile see page 4.

Four significant movements

Q In your view of company behaviour, which two or three issues most need addressing?

17 year trends



• Discrimination

The prominence of discrimination as an issue has fallen significantly since this survey began in 2003. In IBE's experience, there may be a number of reasons why this is the case, including that the effect of discrimination is felt most severely by individuals, rather than society at large, or, that organisations may now be considered to be embracing diversity and inclusion better than they were in the past, and therefore the public is less concerned about it. As such, although society continues to debate identity and issues associated with it, business does not seem to be at the centre of negative views about this.



• Openness with information

This issue reached its peak in 2008 and has fluctuated since. The current low percentage concerned with this issue may suggest that the public is potentially in the dark about how their data is being used, or it may indicate that many believe they have little to be concerned about.



• Environmental responsibility

As reported last year, environmental responsibility also remains a significant issue. The changing narrative of the 'climate emergency' in the British media, as well as the publicity given to activists such as Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion, may help explain this. This year's figure is still lower than that of 2003.



• Work-home balance for employees

This issue has risen and fallen over the history of the research. After a dip in 2013, this issue has gained more prominence in recent years. Experts suggest that ensuring a good balance between the time spent at work and leisure is key in protecting employees' mental wellbeing. In 2019, almost one in five respondents (18%) think that this is an issue that needs addressing, suggesting that there is an opportunity for business to do more on this topic.

For an explanation of the research methodology and respondent profile see page 4.

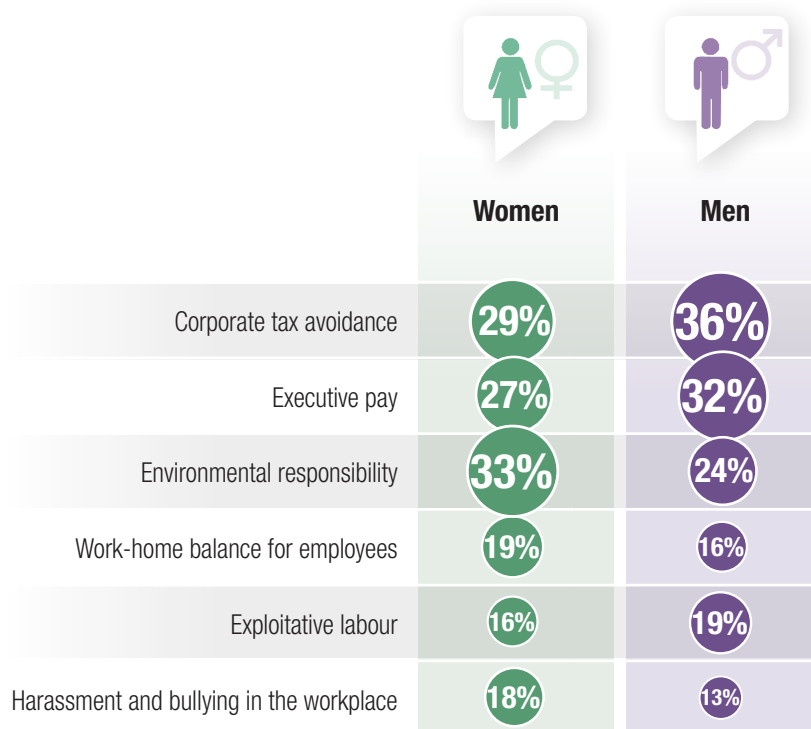
² This question was prompted with the following response options: Corporate tax avoidance, executive pay, environmental responsibility, work-home balance for employees, exploitative labour, protection of customer data/data privacy, harassment and bullying in the workplace, discrimination, employees being able to speak out about company wrongdoing, human rights, fair and open pricing of products and services, safety and security in the workplace, bribery and corruption, openness with information, treatment of suppliers, advertising and marketing practices, ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Interesting findings

Q *In your view of company behaviour, which two or three issues most need addressing?*

The gender divide

- For both women and men, four of their top five issues that most need addressing are consistent (corporate tax avoidance, environmental responsibility, executive pay and work-home balance). However, both their relative and absolute position differ.
- Particular relative differences are seen on the issue of corporate tax avoidance and executive pay (rank higher among men), and work-home balance and harassment and bullying (rank higher among women). For men, protection of customer data/data privacy is as concerning an issue as work-home balance for employees (both 16%).
- Women are more concerned about environmental responsibility than men. It ranks first in the list of issues that concern them the most, whilst it is third for men.
- Men are more concerned about exploitative labour than women. It ranks fourth in the list of issues that concern them the most, whilst it is joint seventh for women alongside employees being able to speak out about company wrongdoing (both 16%).



Top six mentions among all participants

Research Methodology

The research is conducted on behalf of the IBE by Ipsos MORI. It has been conducted since 2003 and each year circa 2,000 responses were collected. This year, 2000 GB adults aged 18+ completed an online survey between 11-28 October 2019. Data has been weighted to reflect the adult population (18-65) in the UK in terms of age, gender, region, class, ethnicity, housing tenure and occupational status.

Change in Methodology

In 2016 the study moved from face-to-face interviewing to online surveying. It is widely acknowledged that online surveys elicit more 'don't know' responses compared to face-to-face surveys, as respondents are considered to be more comfortable in saying that they are unsure about something when not responding face-to-face. However, this does not appear to have significantly changed the number of respondents indicating that they have 'no opinion'.

| Unweighted Respondent Profile | TOTAL | Male | Female | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ | ABC1 | C2DE | Working |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|---------|
| | 2,000 | 49% | 51% | 35% | 45% | 20% | 67% | 33% | 73% |

The Institute of Business Ethics

The Institute of Business Ethics, whose purpose is to promote high standards of business behaviour based on ethical values, is an important partner to any business wanting to preserve its long-term reputation by doing business in the right way.

The IBE is a registered charity funded by corporate and individual subscriptions.

Subscribe today and be part of a network sharing good practice in business ethics.

www.ibe.org.uk