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WAKE

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UP

**TO BETTER
BUSINESS**

**A study exploring UK public opinion
around the role of business**

April 2023

better business

act



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01 ABOUT THE DATA

QUANTITATIVE



A 2,000 person
nationally and politically
representative survey

QUALITATIVE



Two focus groups,
with 10 members of the
general public

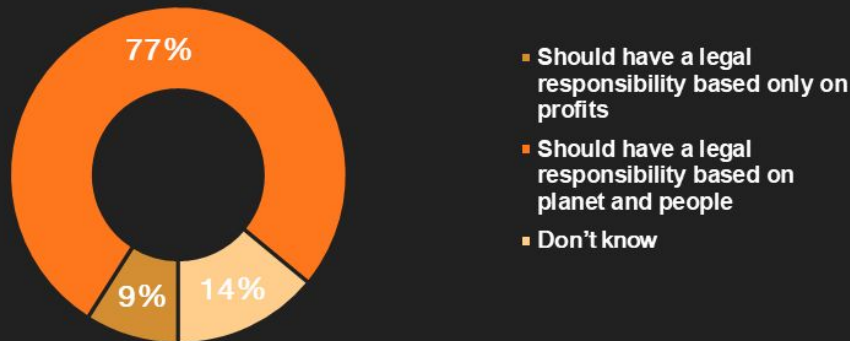
- Field work: 22nd to 24th March 2023
- 2,052 UK adults
- Weighted to be politically and nationally representative

- 2 x 90 min focus groups on 5th April 2023
- Members of the British public aged 18+
- Range of political views, regions and education levels

02 BUSINESS' RESPONSIBILITY

Three quarters of the public agree businesses should have a legal responsibility to the planet and people.

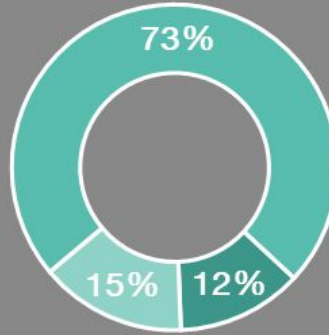
% OF SUPPORT FOR LEGAL BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY TO PLANET AND PEOPLE



- Participants express concern over their local area and believe that businesses' have a role to play in ensuring the planet is cared for, utilising profits to do so.
- However, some are surprised that this sentiment is shared among the general public based on individual actions to improve the environment.
- Some also question the potential for increased prices for consumers, particularly in the current economic climate, if such policies go ahead.

"I think is that employers, or big businesses, should try to support their suppliers and the communities that they operate in, both from a production and distribution and sales environment. We do see a lot of evidence of that, and whilst we've only got one shop in the village where I live, it's actually a cooperative store and they are very actively involved in the local community and if you're a member of the co-op, you can nominate local groups for a percentage of the spend that you have with them." – Don, 65+, East of England

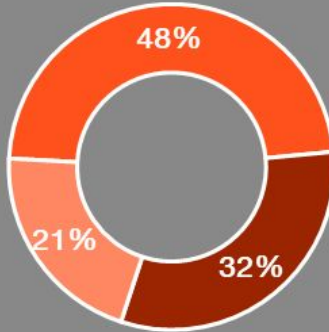
Currently, the general public believe businesses are not doing enough to support wider society.



- NET: Should have a responsibility
- NET: Should not have a responsibility
- Don't know

73%

Agree - Businesses should have a responsibility to protect the environment.



- NET: Should have a responsibility
- NET: Should not have a responsibility
- Don't know

48%

Agree - Businesses should have a responsibility to solve social issues.

**Recent events
have influenced
public
expectations of
businesses.**



53%

Had their views
changed by the cost of
living crisis

Cost of living has reshaped the face of the local high street and increased pressure for larger businesses to give back where possible.



44%

Had their views
changed by energy
windfall profits

Participants perceive that a minority are benefiting or finding loopholes in existing legislation to the detriment of the wider public.

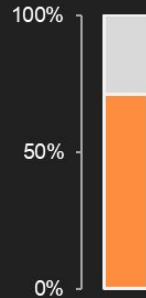


18%

Had their views
changed by COP26

Although COP26 was not front of mind, more broadly the pandemic has meant that the local environment is a concern for more people.

And they hold high expectations for businesses of all sizes to positively impact the areas where they operate.



71%

Agree - Businesses should play a greater role towards helping tackle social and environmental issues.



16%

Disagree - Businesses should not play a greater role towards helping tackle social and environmental issues.

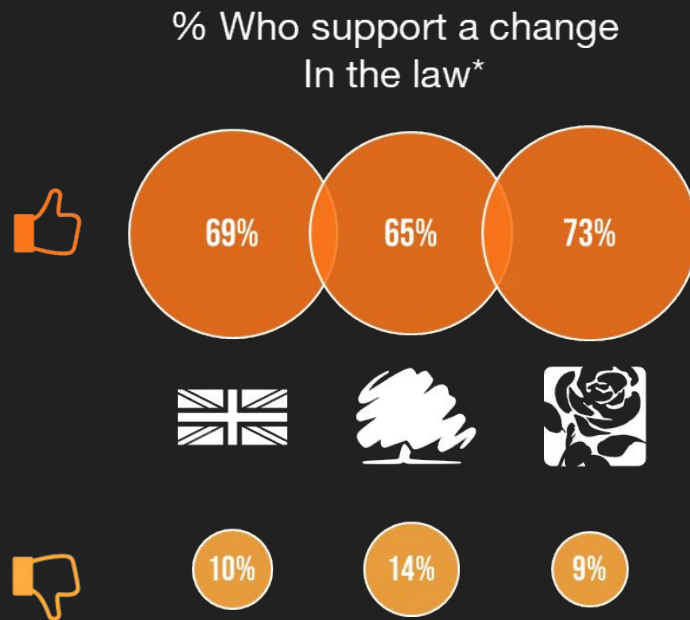
- Initiatives such as business recycling, conserving electricity, and offering bottle/clothes banks at retail outlets are seen as hygiene factors that all businesses should offer to positively tackle social and environmental issues.
- Beyond this, participants expect businesses to provide a positive impact to the wider communities that they operate in, often visibly e.g. supporting local charities and noticeboards to report impact.
- However, there is some concern that larger businesses may be greenwashing to portray they are generating more impact than reality.

"But it is really difficult to work who's truly doing the right thing, or better things than others, because as [redacted] says, there's not a universal standard for it. It's not like traffic light nutrition labelling, even though actually, not everyone does that either. But yes, it's difficult to get a standard for this sort of thing."

- Stefan, 18-25, Yorkshire and Humber

03 BETTER BUSINESS ACT CAMPAIGN

The majority of the public support the Better Business Act campaign – emphasising the urgency of change.



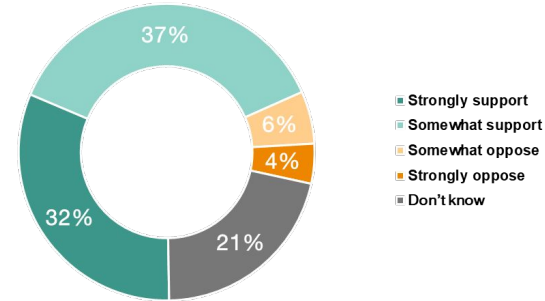
- Participants emphasise that it is important that large scale changes like this are maintained when there are changes in political parties to ensure that momentum is not lost and impact keeps driving forward.
- Additionally, they believe that if politicians identify the importance of investing in their green credentials, then they are more likely to prioritise policies related to social and environmental responsibility.

*Party logos reflect those who would consider voting for each party.

04 RECOMMENDATIONS

However, it is important that they understand what this change would mean in practice.

% OF SUPPORT / OPPOSITION TO BETTER BUSINESS ACT REFORMS.



- While the majority of participants had not heard of the BBA campaign, there was support for an initiative to help drive change for businesses.
- Additionally, participants thought a business-backed non-partisan approach could be successful.
- For all participants it was important for them to understand the details of how it would impact businesses of all sizes, including business processes and reporting:
 - There was some concern for the potential impact on smaller businesses who did not benefit from dedicated staff who could handle administration and may be more at risk of closure due to financial constraints.

CONTACT

Please contact act@betterbusinessact.org if you have additional questions about the study or would like to receive the full report.