



Attitudes of the British Public to Business Ethics 2017

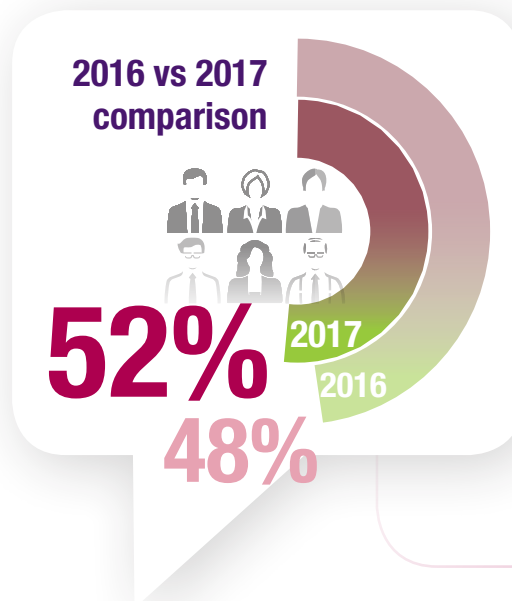
The Institute of Business Ethics has asked the British public about its view on how ethical British Business is for the last 14 years. **This infographic shows the attitudes of the British public to business ethics in 2017.**



Key Findings

Current business behaviour

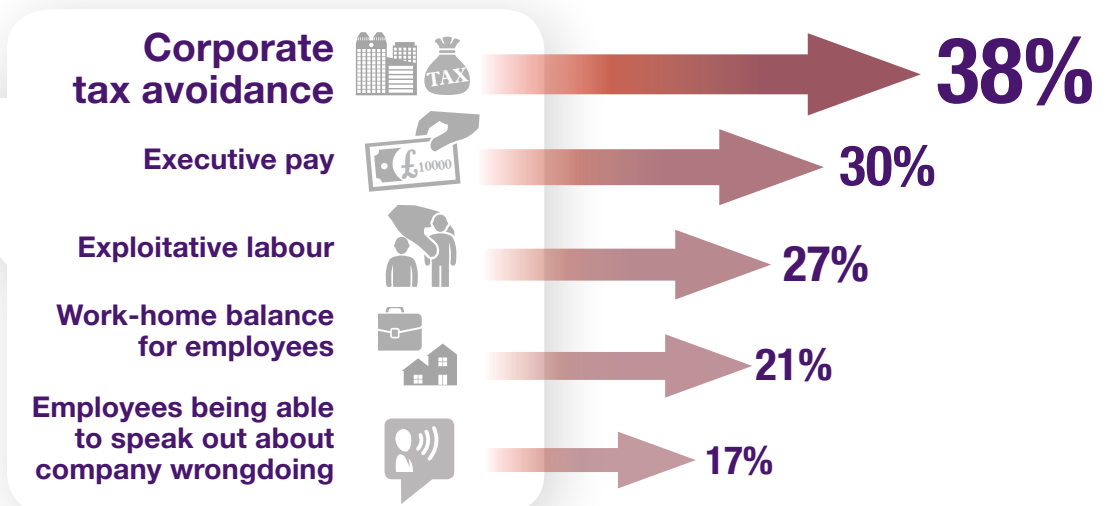
Trust in business to behave ethically has recovered slightly from the dip last year



Summary

- Trust recovers slightly
- Strength of negative opinion is decreasing
- Data protection scores lower for millennials

Issues needing addressing



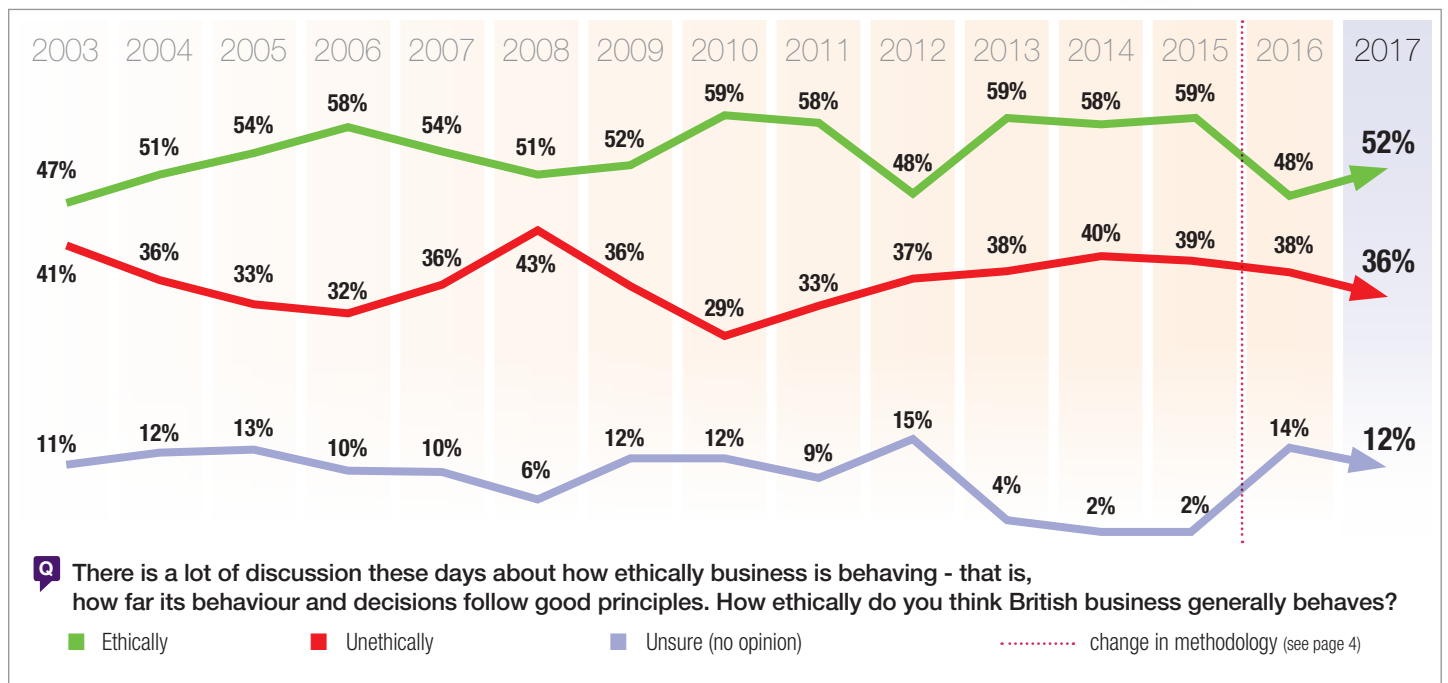
For an explanation of the research methodology and respondent profile see page 4.

Current business behaviour

Q How ethically do you think British business generally behaves?

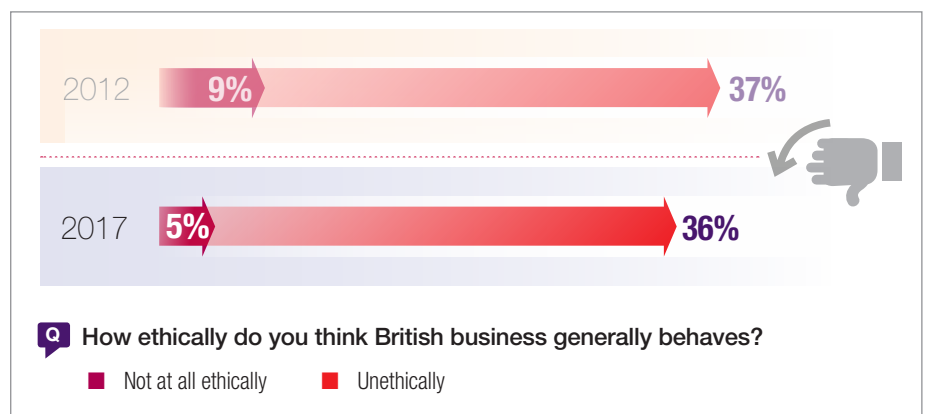
- Trust in business has recovered slightly from the dip last year
- More than half of the British public now trusts business to behave ethically

This increase in public perception may be related to the scandals which have affected other institutions in society over the course of 2017. By contrast, business may seem more responsible in the eyes of the public.



Strength of negative opinion is decreasing

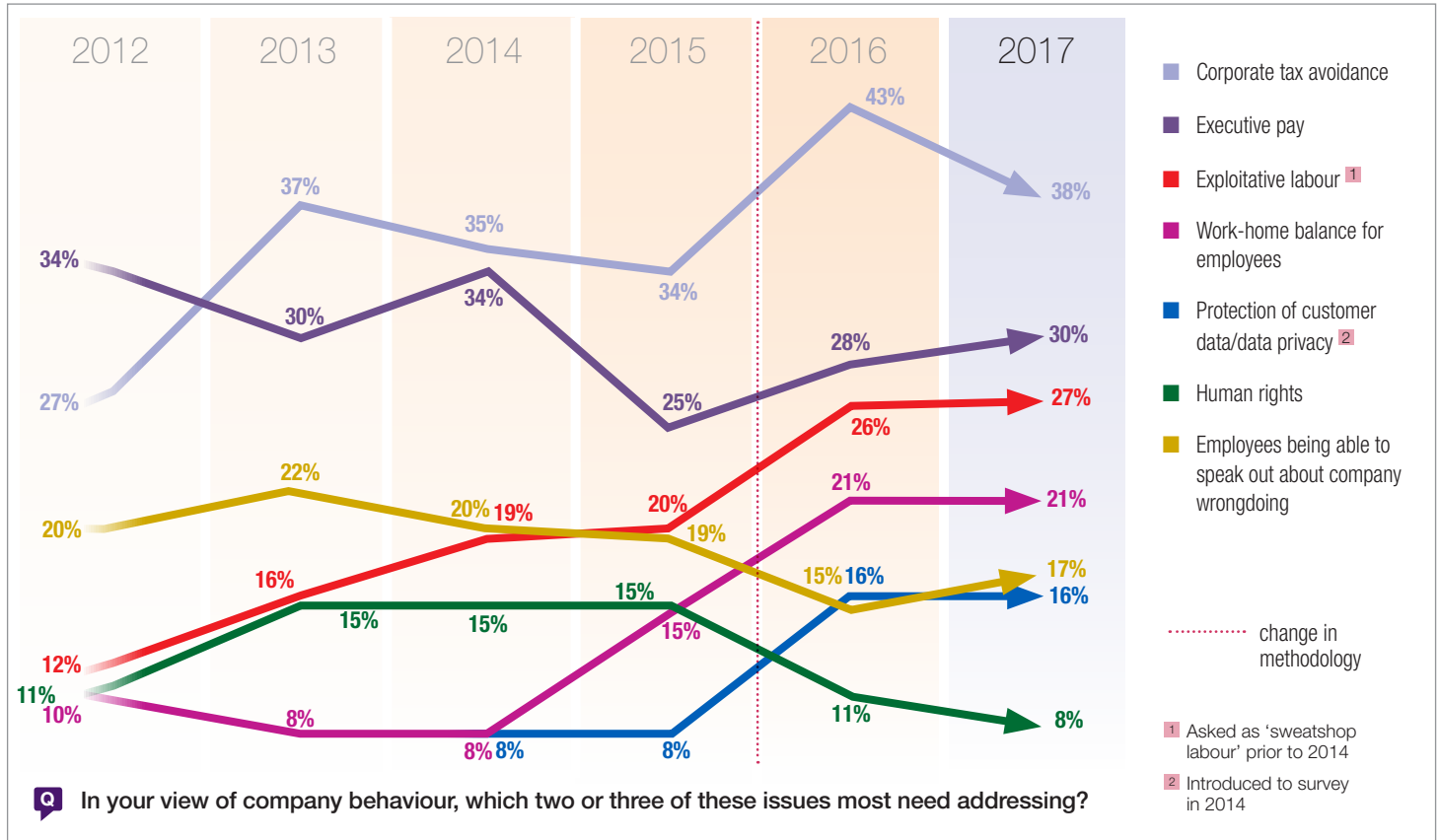
The 'Unethically' line (above) is the total of two individual scores ("not very ethically" and "not at all ethically"). Compared to 2012, fewer people feel strongly that business is behaving unethically with the "not at all ethically" score falling from 9% to 5%.



Issues needing addressing

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

5 year trends



• Corporate tax avoidance

Corporate tax avoidance reached a peak in 2016, so, even though its prominence fell in 2017, it remains the number one issue of concern for the British public. Prior to the Paradise Papers, headlines on corporate tax practices had been much less prominent during 2017.



• Exploitative labour

Exploitative labour saw its biggest increase in 2016; it now remains at this elevated level. Clearly, the British public continues to believe that businesses need to do more to combat this.



• Executive pay

Executive pay has seen significant movements in both directions over the last five years. Although it is currently reported at a lower level than in 2012, it has seen a sharp upturn in prominence since 2015. Executive pay is a complex issue. Although there haven't been as many headlines on this issue in 2017, when something is perceived to be unfair, public reactions remains strong.



• Work-home balance

Many organisations now promote flexible working arrangements for their employees. However, the prominence of this issue suggests that members of the public may not yet be experiencing the benefits.



• Speaking up

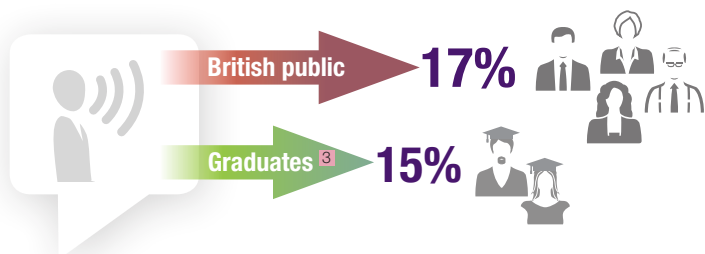
The freedom to raise concerns without fear of retaliation is a core component of a supportive ethical business culture.

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

Interesting findings

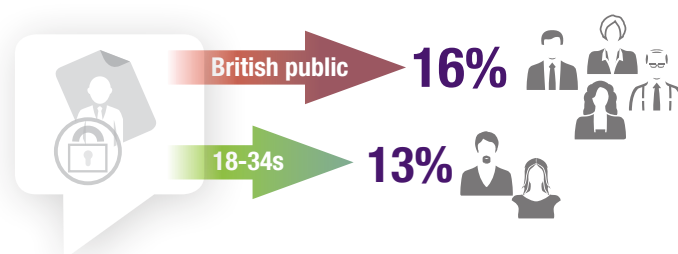
Q *In your view of company behaviour, which two or three issues most need addressing?*

• **Speaking up scores lower for Graduates**



Graduates are known to be vocal around this agenda, and more willing to challenge on ethics matters. They demonstrate greater confidence in speaking up and therefore the perception may be that existing speak up arrangements may be sufficient.

• **Millennials (18-34s) are less concerned about data privacy**



This generation grew up as digital natives, widely sharing data across the internet. Other research suggests that as they are more familiar with technology, they are more trusting of it than older generations who have migrated online. Looking forward, organisations will need to continue to engage their younger workers regarding appropriate use of technology and particularly data protection.

Research Methodology

The research is conducted on behalf of the IBE by Ipsos MORI. This year, 2,003 GB adults aged 18+ completed an online survey between 08-15 September 2017. 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 acknowledged that studies suggest 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.

Respondent Profile	TOTAL	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	ABC1	C2DE	Working	Graduate
	2,003	50%	50%	36%	44%	20%	55%	45%	75%	46%

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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.

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