

# Ethical Lifestyles - UK - 2021

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## This report looks at the following areas:

- The impact of COVID-19 on consumers' ethical behaviours and attitudes.
- The extent to which consumer groups consider the environment when making decisions.
- Frequency of selected environmentally friendly behaviours.
- Motivators behind environmentally friendly behaviours.
- Attitudes towards corporate sustainability and societal ethics.
- Consumer perceptions of what makes an ethical company.
- Categories consumers are most likely to consider ethics when buying.

The coronavirus pandemic was undoubtedly a distraction from environmental and sustainability concerns, as governments, businesses and consumers alike became focused on limiting transmission of the virus and protecting people. However, within this worrying climate, it is also perhaps encouraging to see that 26% of all adults consider the environment to be a higher priority now than before the COVID-19 outbreak.

In some respects, the outbreak posed a reprieve for the environment, as lockdown measures helped to significantly curb greenhouse gas emissions around the world. And yet, as PPE became mandatory in a range of out-of-home scenarios, single-use masks and gloves began to accumulate in the environment. 75% of all adults say that the focus on hygiene caused by the COVID-19/coronavirus pandemic is causing a surge in waste, underpinning opportunities for businesses to further enhance their efforts to cut waste and help to clear up the environment.

But to be seen as ethical is not just about being green, and consumers are increasingly expecting brands to be more vocal on social issues. This is particularly true for the young, with a high proportion agreeing that brands should be involved with campaigning for social equality. Many brands were quick to speak out in support of the 2020 BLM protests around the world, but have since come under fire for not doing enough to drive real social change,



“The coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly been a distraction from environmental and sustainability concerns for many people, businesses and the government. However, it is important to note that for many consumers it has only strengthened their resolve to do more to protect the planet.”

- Katie Martin, Research Analyst

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illustrating the high standards that consumers are holding brands to when it comes to being ethical.

Brands can take a more actionable approach when it comes to tackling social issues by showing what they are doing to drive change. Just as businesses are embedding sustainability into their core ethos, it is important that they are also making the structural changes needed to cultivate real diversity in the workforce and to foster an atmosphere of inclusivity.

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