



EDELMAN TRUST BAROMETER 2019 – A DISUNITED KINGDOM

LONDON, Monday 28 January - The first detailed picture of how the United Kingdom is now the Disunited Kingdom is laid bare today by the Edelman Trust Barometer 2019 - the largest survey of institutional trust in the world. This year's results reveal a country that is deeply divided and uneasy with itself. And it is Brexit that has exposed those deep divisions.

In the year that the country is poised to leave the European Union, four in ten of us now believe there is an increased likelihood of others taking part in violent protest in the UK, seven in ten of us believe Britons are angrier about politics and society since the referendum, and one in six of us say they've fallen out with friends and family over Brexit. Our research tells us that the country feels betrayed by politics and politicians, anxious we are travelling in the wrong direction and driven by a hunger for more fairness in society.

Our key findings show:

- Since Brexit 4 in 10 Britons feel others are *more* likely to take part in violent protest
- 69% of us say our fellow citizens are angrier about politics and society since the referendum
- 1 in 6 of us have fallen out with relatives or friends over the issue of leaving the EU
- 6 in 10 Britons believe Government doesn't listen to "people like them", regardless of whether they supported remain or leave in the referendum
- Two-thirds of us believe the country is on the wrong track
- 7 in 10 Britons feel that life is unfair
- Half of us believe the socio-political system is broken
- Both Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn have suffered significant falls in trust

Ed Williams, UK & Ireland CEO and Vice Chairman, EMEA, Edelman commenting on the findings said: "We are a Disunited Kingdom – a country that is seen as increasingly unfair, less tolerant and headed in the wrong direction. Brexit has exposed fractures that have split families and divided friends, made us meaner and angrier as a society, and stoked fears of violent protest and civil disorder. The divisions exposed by our decision to leave the European Union are not binary. They are far more complex. But the consequences are clear – as a country we see our politicians and our political leaders as out of touch, and we lack faith in their ability to heal the divide. Instead we are looking increasingly to business and to our employers to lead and to act with social purpose."

HOW BREXIT HAS BROKEN OUR FAITH IN GOVERNMENT, POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

The Trust Barometer paints a picture of a society that for the most part feels ignored and abandoned by its political class. Brexit appears to be at the heart of that division.

Regardless of whether they voted leave or remain, six in ten people say the government do not listen to people like them.

Overall, more than two-thirds of Britons (65 per cent) feel their country is on the wrong track. Of those who say they voted Leave in the 2016 referendum 43 per cent are unhappy with the direction of national travel, whilst 82 per cent of self-proclaimed Remainers feel the same way. Sixty per cent of people who identify themselves most with the Conservatives said the country was heading in the right direction, while only 20 per cent of Labour-leaning respondents said it was on the right track.



Four in ten of us believe people in Britain are now more likely to take part in violent protest, while seven in ten think their fellow Britons have become angrier about politics and society since the referendum. One in six Britons say they've fallen out with friends or family as a result of the vote.

The verdict on negotiating Brexit is damning. Only one in five of those questioned thought the government had done a good job negotiating our exit. And, when asked what people consider to be the greatest challenges faced by business in the UK today, six in ten of us choose Brexit, more than any other area of concern.

Party politics is clearly failing many Britons. Some 61 per cent say they feel their views are not represented in British politics, a figure that was unaffected by whether the respondent voted Leave or Remain. Of those who lean toward Labour (66 per cent) were more likely to feel unrepresented than those who lean toward the Conservative Party (43 per cent).

Trust in Britain's main party leaders remains at rock-bottom and appears to be falling even among those who call themselves supporters.

Only 35 per cent of those surveyed said they trusted the Prime Minister to do what is right, and just 26 per cent of Britons said they trusted the Leader of the Opposition to do what is right.

For those who identified themselves as Conservative supporters' trust in Mrs May has fallen 10 points to 68 per cent, whilst for those who identified themselves as Labour supporters, trust in Mr Corbyn has dropped 12 points to 56 per cent.

Asked which of the institutions that Edelman studies was the most broken – 44 per cent of us chose government, compared with just 8 per cent for media, 4 per cent for business and 4 per cent for NGOs.

People are anxious about how Britain will escape from this feeling of fracture. When asked which of our institutions would lead the country to a better future "Don't Know" at 35 per cent, came out on top.

TRUST, FAIRNESS AND CHANGE

The Trust deficit in our core institutions - government, business, media and NGOs - between the Mass and the Informed public has never been bigger. In the UK only 40 per cent of the Mass public say they trust in institutions, compared to 64 per cent of the Informed public – a record breaking 24 percentage point gap – the biggest of any of the 27 country's we survey. By comparison the gap in Donald Trump's America is 13 percentage points.

Broadly similar numbers of both the Informed Public, 70 per cent, and the Mass Population, 72 per cent, bemoan the lack of fairness they experience in 2019 Britain. Similar numbers also expressed a desire for change, 73 per cent and 68 per cent respectively.

More than half of the Mass Population in the UK, 53 per cent, said they believed the socio-political system was failing them, with only one in seven, 14 per cent, saying it worked in their favour.

MEDIA – THE UK RELUCTANTLY SWITCHES BACK ON TO NEWS



Since the referendum nearly a third (29%) of respondents say they read political news more than they used to, and nearly a quarter (23%) are more vocal about politics, claiming they comment on it more than they used to.

Despite six in 10 Britons (59 per cent) saying they are fed up with hearing about Brexit, they are turning back on to news and media.

More than a third of people (35 per cent) said there were reading, watching or listening to more news than before. When asked why, a large majority of those (71 per cent) said they were doing so in order to keep up to date with the pace of events.

Overall, people are consuming more news and sharing it more than last year. News engagement increased by a massive 22 percentage points from 41 per cent to 63 per cent.

However, the increase in engagement did not translate to a particularly favourable view of the British media - more than half (55 per cent) said that their views were not represented in that space.

GROWING PUBLIC EXPECTATION OF BUSINESS

The public continue to look to business to fill the shortcomings of government with more than three in four Brits believing that CEOs should take the lead on change rather than waiting for the government to impose it - up 19 percentage points from 2018.

Equal pay, prejudice and discrimination, and training for the jobs of tomorrow were listed as the top areas where CEOs can create positive change.

The public now believe employees, not the customer, come first. Treating employees fairly was identified as the greatest obligation for business leaders (65 per cent), above treating customers well (47 per cent).

Britons are split on whether the way that business works today is good for British society - 48 per cent feel it is and 52 per cent feel it isn't. Asked why it isn't, the most common answer (67 per cent) was that companies thought profit was more important than looking after people, while half (50 per cent) thought that companies did not pay their fair share of tax.

However, when looking at the relationship between employees and employers, three in four say they trust their employer to do what is right, considerably higher than any other institutional relationship in the UK today.

Employees are also looking to their employer to help navigate and understand the frenetic current affairs agenda in the UK today. Half state they look to their employer to be a trustworthy source of information about social issues and other important topics on which there is not general agreement.

Investing in building trust with your employees pays dividends. High trusting employees have higher levels of advocacy, loyalty, engagement, and commitment to their employer (78, 68, 68, 82 per cent respectively).

Moreover, three in four state that how a company treats its employees is one of the best indicators of its level of trustworthiness. This year's study also highlighted the link between how trusted a



company is, and its bottom line with 60 per cent of Brits stating, ‘a good reputation may get me to try a product, but unless I come to trust the company behind the product, I will soon stop buying it.’

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

About the Edelman Trust Barometer 2019 and UK Trust Barometer Supplement

The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer is the firm’s 19th annual trust and credibility survey. The survey was powered by research firm Edelman Intelligence and consisted of 30-minute online interviews conducted between October 19 and November 16, 2018. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer online survey sampled more than 33,000 respondents, which includes 6,200 informed public respondents across 27 markets. All informed public respondents met the following criteria: aged 25-64, college-educated; household income in the top quartile for their age in their country; read or watch business/news media at least several times a week; follow public policy issues in the news at least several times a week.

To add further insight the UK supplementary survey was done by research firm Edelman Intelligence and consisted of 20-minute online interviews conducted between 18 December 2018 and 7 January 2019. The 2019 UK Supplement online survey sampled more than 2,000 respondents consisting of 2,000 general population respondents aged 18 and over, and boosts of high net worth individuals and those from low income households. The general population sample is nationally representative of the UK population with regard to gender, age and region. The overall margin of error at the 95% confidence interval for the general population sample is $\pm 2.2\%$.

For more information, visit <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>.

About Edelman

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Edelman is a leading global communications marketing firm, with more than 5,500 employees in 65 cities worldwide. Edelman partners with many of the world’s largest and emerging businesses and organizations, helping them evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. As the number one agency in the UK, a team of more than 550 brand, reputation and digital strategists drive award winning creative communication programmes.