

Introduction

More in Common is presently conducting one of the most extensive studies of the UK population in many years – asking people about their values, concerns, priorities and attitudes on a host of current issues. With interviews, conversations and surveys involving a representative sample of more than 10,000 people across the United Kingdom in 2020, we’re getting beyond the conventional categories of left and right and demographic categories. Deploying insights from social psychology and data science that More in Common has also used in the US, France and Germany, we are finding out how distinct segments of the British population feel about the future, and how we can build a stronger democracy and a society more resilient to the threats of division and extremism.

Ahead of September, this publication provides some interim results from our research relating to COVID-19 and community in Britain – from the latest round of surveys and conversations that we’ve held with people across the country in recent weeks. The fieldwork for this research was conducted by YouGov from June 19-28, 2020 with N=2,171.

The slides in this publication points towards seven broader findings relating to community life from this latest research, detailed over the page – the larger research project addresses a wider range of issues.

Media inquiries can be directed to media@moreincommon.com

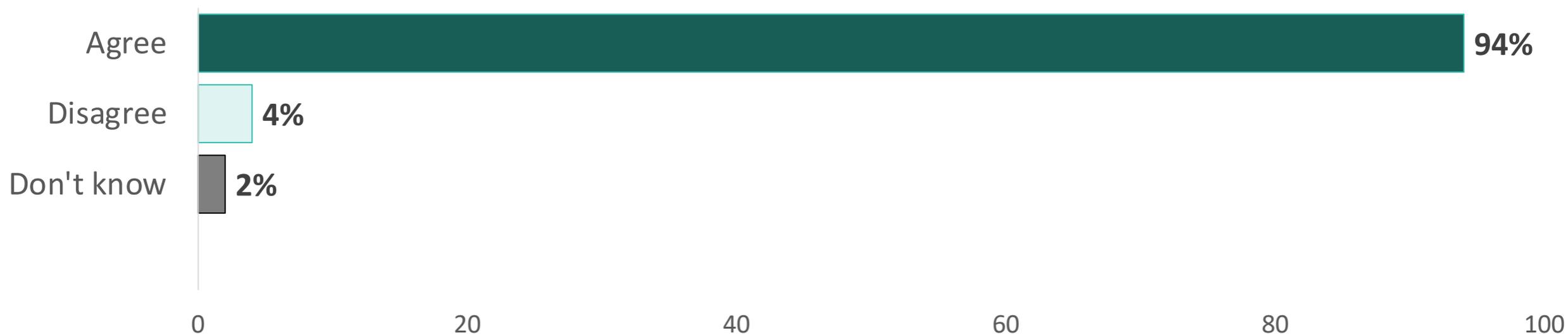
Community, Kindness and Fairness: Key Insights

1. Like many countries, the United Kingdom is going through hard times. One in six people know someone who people has died from the coronavirus, and two-fifths of the country have a friend or family member who has been ill. The economic fallout from the crisis is also spreading.
2. Against this backdrop, Britain's divisions have not disappeared. But the experience of COVID-19 has rebuilt a sense of social solidarity and reminded us that at our best, we come together and support each other. For example, we have heard many speaking enthusiastically about the mutual aid initiatives in their local communities, building foundations for a better future in which people are more connected and supportive of each other. At the same time, a large majority of the country is also concerned about old divisions returning. The challenge now is to find ways to build on the foundations of stronger local community connection, and not let the solidarity of the lockdown become just a fond memory of the past.
3. People feel a deep sense of gratitude for those who have been working on the frontlines of the NHS and essential services. Almost everyone in the country feels that the pandemic has shown us the importance of the NHS and public services, and there is a deep sense of pride in the NHS as a national institution. Britons also have an overwhelming sense of gratitude towards doctors, nurses and other medical staff, as well as many other essential workers. More than half of the population has actively participated in expressions of thanks for their efforts – in addition, millions of people have gone out of their way to support small businesses in their local area, or have donated money or volunteered their time to help those most in need.

Key Insights (continued)

4. After years of hearing so much so much about the country's divisions, many people have been surprised by the positive experiences they have had in their local communities. Almost two thirds of the country now believes that most people in the UK care about each other, and a strong majority have themselves felt the support of others through the crisis. Since the first wave of our research in February (prior to the coronavirus), there has been a significant increase in people feeling that they are a part of a community where people understand, care for and help each other.
 5. At the same time, COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities and the differences in the circumstances of people's lives across Britain. There is a widespread sense that COVID-19 has brought lessons that must be heeded about our society – such as the need to pay the most essential workers better, and recognise better those on whom we most depend.
 6. People feel apprehensive about the future: the likelihood of further waves of the pandemic, the prospect of a severe depression, a lack of confidence in the way the pandemic has been managed, and fears that the country might emerge from these challenging times more divided. People are far more concerned about moving out of lockdown too fast rather than too slowly. As we move into a complex stage of the pandemic – the gradual lifting of restrictions – we are likely to experience more debates and disagreements, and the success of the next phases relies in part on public trust in scientific and political authorities.
 7. Despite these challenges, COVID-19 has the potential to be a circuit-breaker after the years of divisions and conflict. Two-thirds of Britons believe that despite our recent divisions, we can pull together as a society. There is a deep longing for a more united country that reflects our better values. This then is a call to leadership at every level of our society – from the small initiatives that help connect people locally, to leaders and decision-makers nationally who shape the country's direction and the public conversation.
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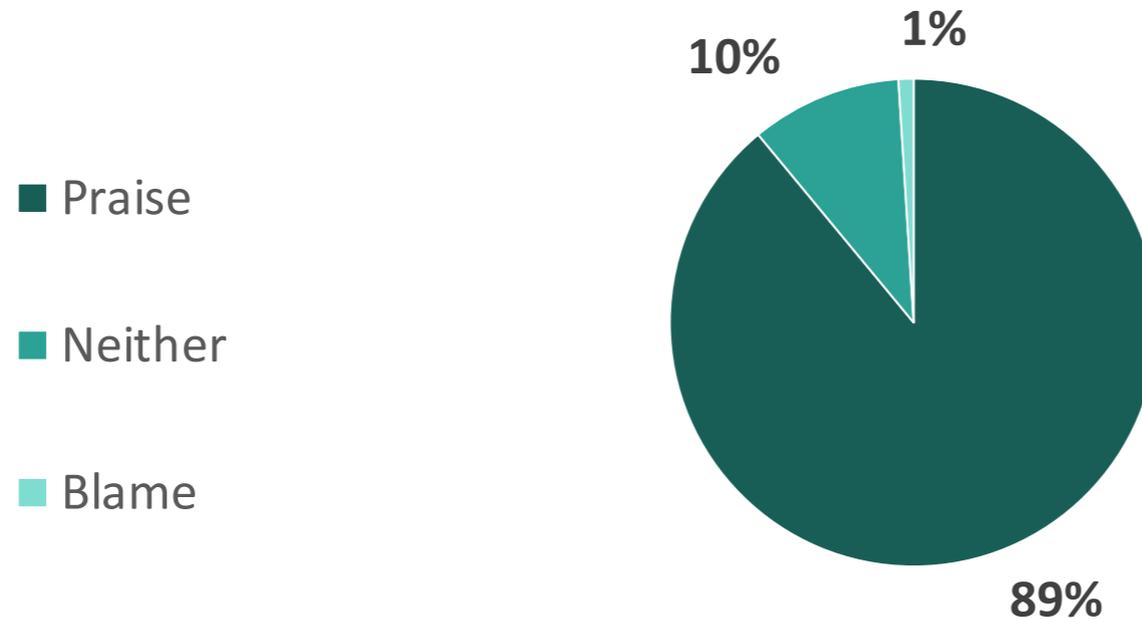
19 in 20 Britons agree COVID-19 has taught us the importance of the NHS



Agree or disagree with the following statements. “COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of the NHS and public services.”

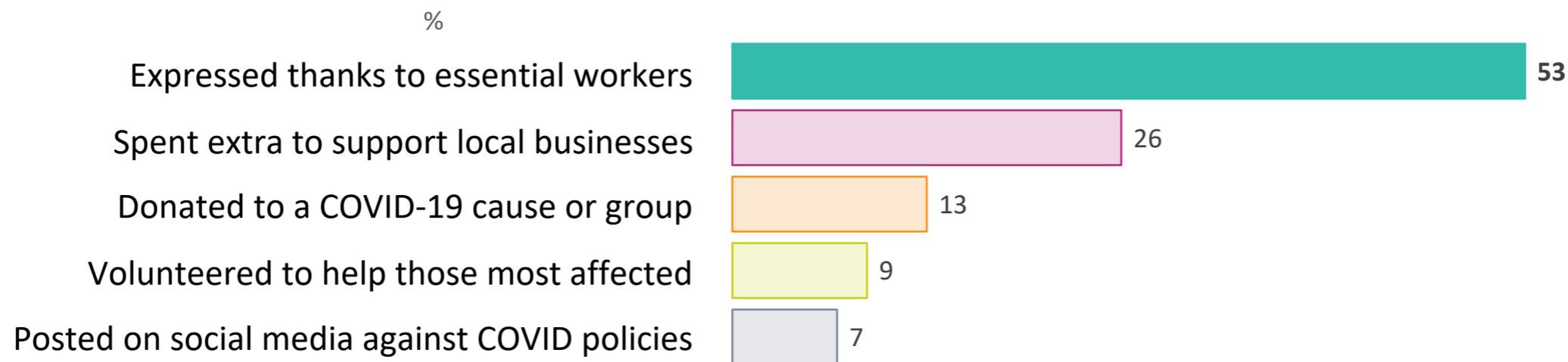
Strongly agree 76%, Somewhat agree 17%, Somewhat disagree 3%, Disagree 1%. Don't know 3%.

Britain says thank you to the doctors, nurses and other staff of the NHS



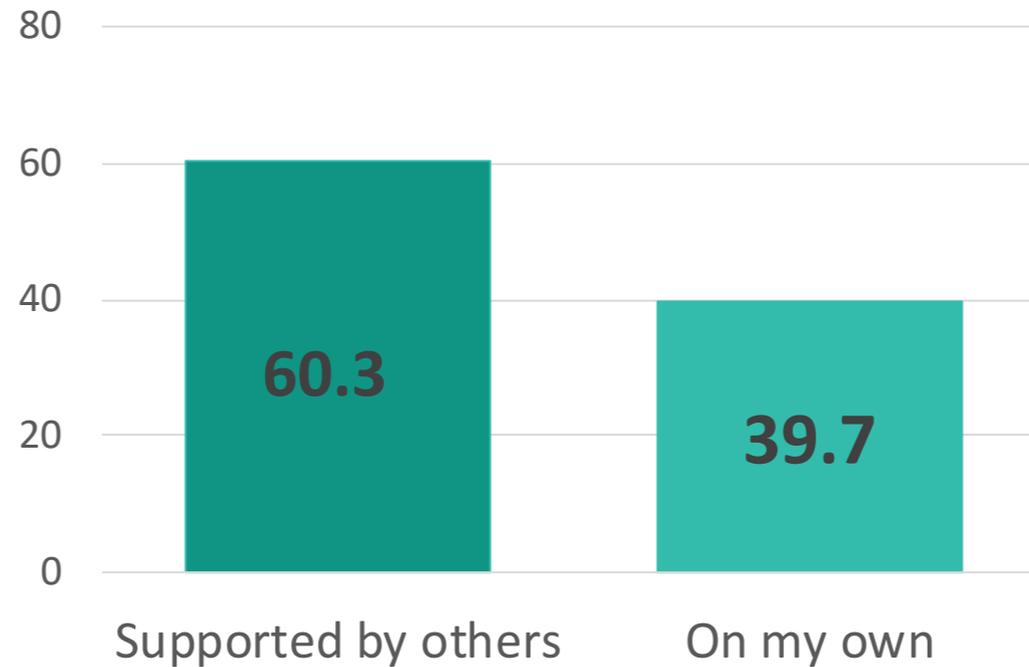
We asked Britons how they felt about the role of different parts of society in the COVID-19 pandemic, and whether they deserved praise, blame or neither for their actions. “Praise or blame – Medical staff, such as doctors and nurses.”

More than half of Britain has participated in ‘thankyou’ messages to essential workers



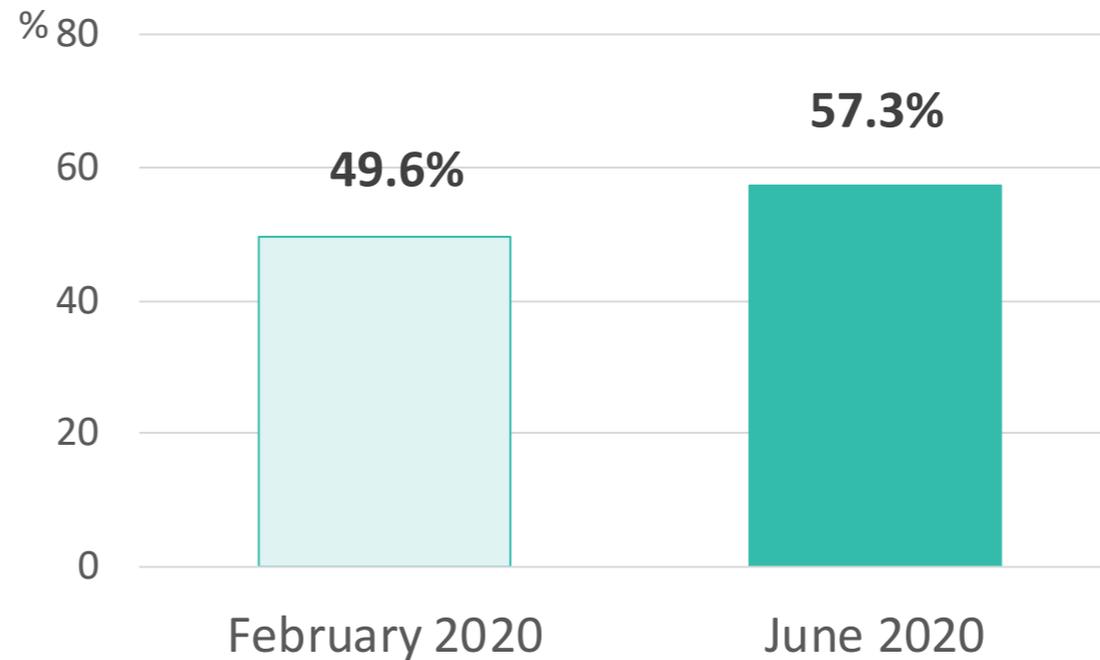
“In which of the following activities have you participated since the COVID-19 pandemic began, if any?”

Most Britons have felt the support and care of others during the coronavirus crisis



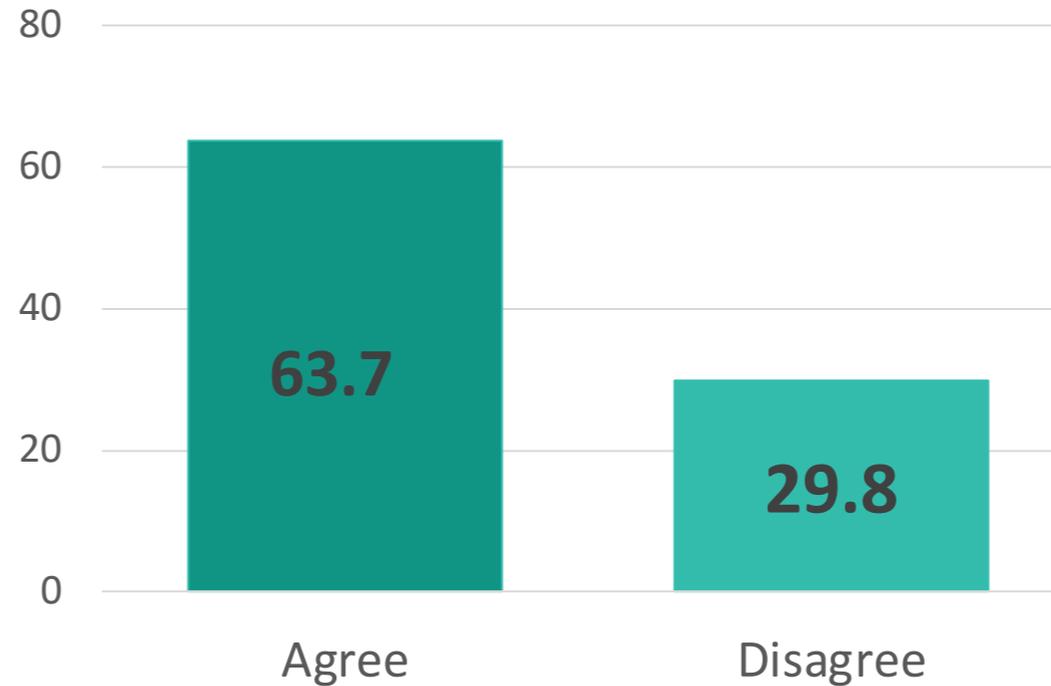
In this crisis “I have felt the support and care of others” vs “I have felt like I am mainly on my own”

COVID-19 has made more of us feel that we're part of a caring community



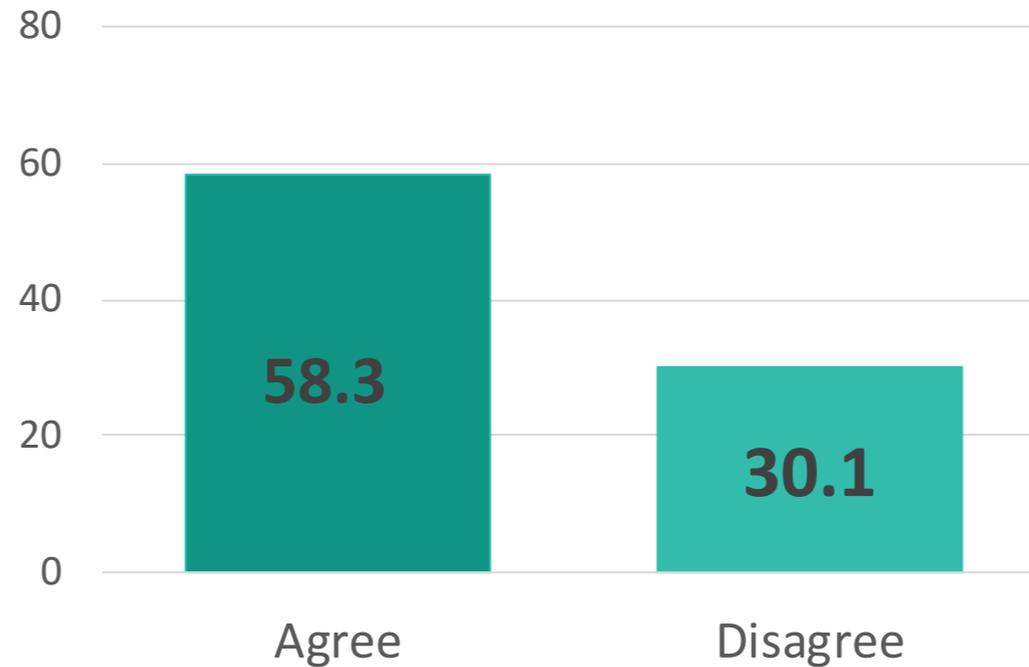
“I am part of a community – people that understand, care for and help each other.”

COVID-19 has shown us that most people in the UK care about each other



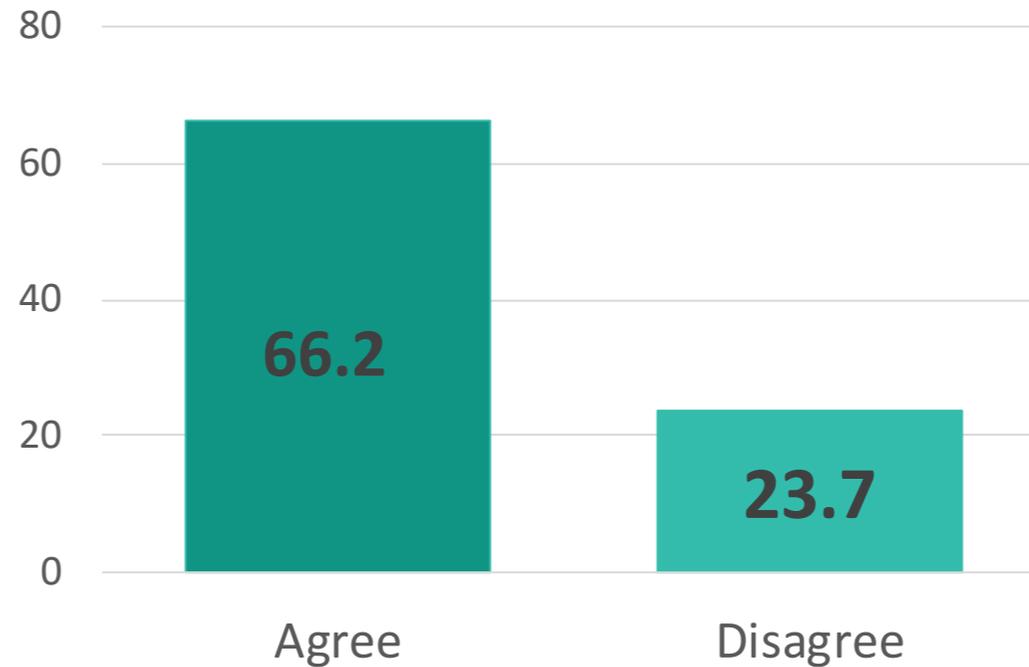
“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown me that most people in the UK care about each other.”

COVID-19 has made us more conscious of other people's circumstances



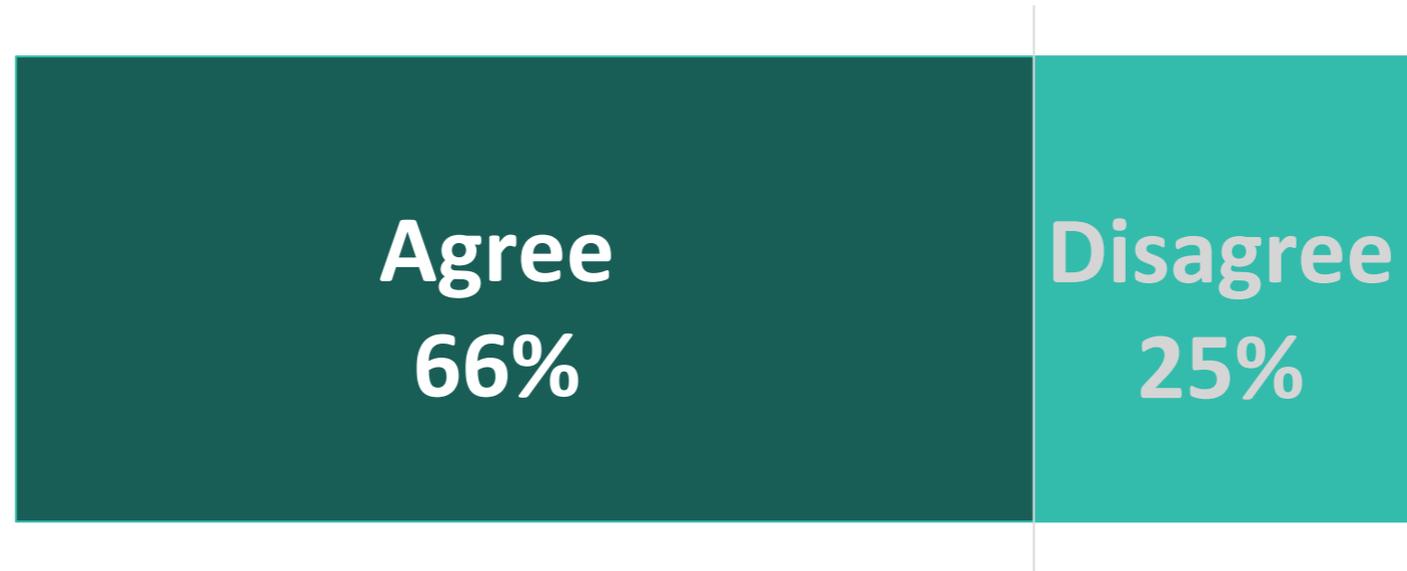
“The COVID-19 pandemic has made me more aware of the living conditions of other people in this country”

COVID-19 has made us more aware of inequality in Britain



“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the levels of inequality in the country”

After years of division, COVID-19 has been a circuit-breaker, showing us that we can pull together



“COVID-19 has shown us that no matter how divisive the debate around Brexit was, as a society we can pull together.”