

Third of people in England want coronavirus lockdown rule breakers to be jailed, survey shows

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A third of people are in favor of prison sentences for those who break coronavirus lockdown rules, according to a major new survey.

The poll of 5,000 people shows the country is split on how harshly to treat those who don't follow restrictions, with slightly greater numbers of the public objecting to the punishment, with 42% disagreeing.

The survey, run by the University of Exeter and ORB International in England, shows people have followed legal rules introduced to curb the pandemic since March.

Half of people said they had fully complied with the instructions to stay inside without physical contact with people from outside their home, 35% said they had mostly complied. A total of 3% said the instruction didn't apply to them, 2% said it wasn't possible to comply and 2% said they mostly had not complied.

Just 63% of people fully observed the order to only go outside their home for essential trips or for exercise, with 26% mostly complying and 3% mostly not complying.

Just 4% of people said lockdown should not have been introduced, while 5% said it was eased later than it should have been. Around half of people thought lockdown was eased too soon when restrictions were eased from July onwards, while 28% said it was the right time.

A total of 6% of people thought the Government had done a very good job enforcing lockdown restrictions in England, 27% thought it had done fairly well, 25% fairly badly and 18% very badly.

Professor Dan Stevens, from the University of Exeter, who led the survey, said: "As the pandemic continues, these results show some frustration and confusion among the public: including dim views of the government's handling of aspects of the virus outbreak and a willingness among roughly one in three people to see restrictions more rigidly applied.

"As we enter a new phase of local lockdowns and evolving quarantine rules, it will be interesting to see whether frustration eases or grows."

A majority of those who took part in the research thought the government had done well in managing demand at NHS hospitals, but only a minority thought that it had handled social care, schools or enforcing [lockdown](#) restrictions well.

Just 4% thought the Government had protected people in social care very well, 15% fairly well and 28% said they had acted fairly badly, and 34% very badly.

A total of 18% thought the Government had managed demand at NHS hospitals very well, 37% fairly well, 16% fairly badly and 12% very badly.

Just 7% of people thought the UK government had supported schools, including teachers and children, very well, 27% fairly well, 24% fairly badly and 14% very badly.

Dr. Katharine Tyler, from the University of Exeter, the project's principal investigator, said: "This first wave of our survey shows that people have strong views about the government's handling of the pandemic. In the next phase of the research, we will build on these findings to conduct in-depth interviews with individuals about their experiences of the pandemic to further deepen our understanding of its impact on society and people's lives."

Provided by University of Exeter

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